

# MINUTES

## IFATE EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Meeting title: IfATE Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee  
Meeting date: 7 September 2022  
Protective marking: Official

Board members present: Robin Millar (RM) (the Chair), John Cope (JC), Jessica Leigh Jones (JLJ) (from Item 2)

IfATE officials present: Beth Chaudhary (BC), Avril Cooper (AC), Rachel Cooper (RCo), Governance Team (RCr), Head of Priority Projects (CW), EDI Project Team (LM, JS), Research and Analysis Team (SAr, JW), Head of Business Services Route Group (NM), Head of Communications (PS)

Other stakeholders present: Lynette Leith (Vice Principal Curriculum, Hull College), Department for Education (PR)

Apologies: Dayle Bayliss

### Item 1. Welcome and introductions

1. The Chair welcomed the members to the meeting and invited officials to introduce themselves.
2. Apologies had been received and accepted from Dayle Bayliss.
3. The Chair outlined the objectives for the meeting; these were to:
  - i. Discuss the committee's immediate views on both our external speaker's presentation and IfATE's research into geography and deprivation;
  - ii. Agree the procedure for the approval of the EDI Strategy and note the procedure for the approval of the EDI Operational Framework;
  - iii. Provide IfATE officials with clear steers on the draft EDI strategy, and any areas that the committee considers should either be changed or developed further; and
  - iv. Provide IfATE officials with views on the communications and engagement plan for the EDI strategy.
4. The draft minutes of the EDI Committee meeting of 12 May 2022 were approved without amendment.

### Item 2. External speaker: Lynette Leith, Vice Principal (Curriculum) at Hull College

5. The Chair welcomed Lynette Leith to the meeting. Lynette provided an introduction to her role and her work within Hull College.
6. Lynette outlined the challenges faced by many of the college's students including socio-economic deprivation and low prior attainment and set out some of the programmes provided by the college. These included a large and varied FE offer including T Levels

and skills bootcamps. Lynette outlined some of the successes achieved by the college and its students; these included working directly with local employers to place students in jobs within industries with high or growing demand in their locality.

7. The committee asked about the barriers and challenges facing the college's cohort and students, and was informed that deprivation was a significant factor in the outcomes achieved by students. One example given was that the attainment gap between high ability students from deprived backgrounds and lower ability students from more affluent backgrounds, begins to widen from around the age of seven. It was stated that this challenges providers who face such deprivation and attainment issues since the funding thresholds and mechanisms do not adequately address the impact of multiple deprivation in education.
8. The committee asked how the college developed its FE offer for students, and was advised that decision-making was based on the needs of the community served by the college. It was noted however that sometimes funding streams and other initiatives could be quite short-term, which had implications for longer-term planning.
9. The committee asked how the college could work toward ensuring that their learners were well-placed to apply for job opportunities, and was advised that in addition to having good outcomes from their chosen course it was important for learners to develop the wider and softer skills that are important in the workplace, and that are needed in a 21<sup>st</sup> century environment.
10. The Chair thanked Lynette for her presentation, and IfATE was invited to visit Hull College in the future.

### **Item 3. Thematic research: geography and deprivation**

11. Research and Analysis team (JW) introduced the item, which was based on a review of existing research and supplemented by bespoke analysis. The intention of the research project was to provide an evidence base to support future actions and decisions, and was based around three key areas:
  1. the definition and measurement of disadvantage;
  2. apprenticeship take-up by people from disadvantaged backgrounds; and
  3. barriers faced by disadvantaged learners considering an apprenticeship.
12. With regard to the first key area, it was noted that there were a number of definitions that could be used for deprivation including the bottom two deciles of income, free school meal entitlement and national statistics such as the index of multiple deprivation (IMD). The IMD is the measure most commonly used in the context of apprenticeships, however this was noted to be an imperfect measure as it was based on the characteristics of a geographical area rather than a person-centred measure. As such, it included some individuals that ought not to be included whilst missing others that should, and was thought to underestimate the number of disadvantaged people by up to 30%.
13. The committee was informed that the outcomes of the research would be published, along with caveats related to the analytical and classification methodologies. The committee noted that, where data does not help in resolving issues, there may need to be changes in data gathering methodologies, and suggested that unique learner identifiers may prove useful in collecting accurate person-centred data.
14. With regard to the second key area, the committee was informed that people from the most deprived areas are accessing apprenticeships at a similar rate to people from other

levels of deprivation but that there were geographical and gender differences creating differences in opportunity. In addition, apprentices from the most deprived areas tend to undertake apprenticeships at lower-levels and in specific routes.

15. The committee commented that the analysis was showing important conclusions, and that it would be important to focus on the most important data in order to develop clear, compelling and succinct information that could be shared easily. The committee noted the importance of IfATE's role as an influencer of partners, and its strategic voice in the areas for which it is responsible.
16. The committee was informed that much of the research related to the third key area about focusing on the barriers experienced by younger people, and that different conclusions may potentially apply to people of other age groups. This would form the basis of a further deep dive in future.
17. The chair thanked JW for presenting the results of the data deep-dive, noting that further thematic deep dives would take place in future.

#### **Item 4. EDI Strategy**

18. The committee was presented with a draft procedure to approve the draft EDI Strategy. Committee members noted the importance of building EDI considerations into the approvals process for individual products. It was agreed that committee members should undertake further work with the Strategy Directors on the feasibility of IfATE working with local authorities to examine the regional take-up of apprenticeships from an EDI perspective.
19. The committee agreed the approval process for the EDI Strategy. Once prepared, approval of the final EDI Strategy would be agreed by correspondence.
20. The current iteration of the draft Strategy was presented to the committee. Members noted the importance of partnership work and maintaining focus on IfATE's priority in this area, which is to ensure that employers can draw from the widest talent pool possible.
21. The draft communications plan was presented to the committee, and members were asked how they might be able to personally support and publicise the EDI Strategy once published. Members responded that they would be happy to help publicise the adoption of the Strategy, but that it would be helpful to have a list of specific requests on which they could act.

#### **Item 5. EDI Operational Framework**

22. The Head of Business Services Route Group introduced the draft Operational Framework, designed to ensure that EDI issues are approached in a consistent, systematic way.
23. The committee noted the importance of emphasizing to trailblazers the benefits of a diverse workforce for employers, and were informed that a pilot had been launched with three trailblazers already. Once finalised and approved by IfATE's Change Board, the Framework would be used by IfATE officials, Route Panels and the Compliance Board when considering IfATE products for approval.

## Item 6. Any Other Business

24. The committee discussed a short briefing note prepared by the HR Director with regard to the mechanism used by IfATE staff in raising EDI concerns in the workplace. The committee was informed that no formal grievances had been received over the last two years and that, historically, the frequency of grievances was low. Despite this, IfATE remained committed to investing effort and energy in listening to staff, and how IfATE can do more to create the conditions in which they can flourish and do their best work in service of IfATE's customers. The HR Director praised the work and role of IfATE's Diversity and Inclusion Network, highlighting its role in enabling issues to be raised anonymously.
25. JLJ informed the Committee that she had co-written a paper on 'L&Ds role in enabling social mobility' and would share with the committee after the meeting.
26. The Chair thanked members and officials for their attendance. The date of the next meeting is 09 November 2022.

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