

MINUTES

IFATE EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Meeting title: IfATE Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee
Meeting date: 7 February 2023
Protective marking: Official

Board members present: Robin Millar (RM) (the Chair), Jessica Leigh Jones (JLJ)
IfATE officials present: Beth Chaudhary, Strategy Director (BC); Avril Cooper, HR Director (AC); Governance Team (RCr); HR Team (CL); Head of Governance (SL); Head of Business Services Route Group (NM); EDI Project Team (LM); EDI Project Team (JS); Research and Analysis Team (JW); Head of Priority Projects (CW)

Other stakeholders present: Ruth Devine, Managing Director, SJD Electrical (RD); DfE (MF) (items 1-6); Mark McClennon, Chief Information Officer, Burberry (MM)

Apologies: Dayle Bayliss, board member; John Cope, board member; Rachel Cooper, Strategy Director

Item 1. Welcome and introductions

1. The Chair welcomed members and officials to the meeting.
2. Apologies had been received and accepted from Dayle Bayliss.
3. The Chair outlined the objectives for the meeting; these were to:
 - i. Hear from (and discuss with) a Route Panel Chair and Route Panel Member the EDI issues within their work for IfATE, and respective sectors;
 - ii. Provide final feedback on the EDI Strategy and receive updates on Objectives 1: Decision Maker, Objective 2: Authority within the Sector, and Objective 3: Employer; and
 - iii. Review and discuss the findings of our latest piece of thematic research on age and participation.

Item 2. Minutes and actions from the last meeting

4. The draft minutes of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) meeting of 09 November 2023 were approved without amendment.

Item 3. Annual report from the EDI Committee to the board

5. RCr introduced the item and explained that EDIC's Terms of Reference (ToR) allowed for the submission of an annual report to the IfATE board and Chief Executive, timed to support finalisation of IfATE's Annual Report and Accounts, summarising EDIC's conclusions from the work it has done during the year.

6. The committee considered a draft report on its activities prepared in advance of the meeting, and requested that the report be redrafted to include a greater focus on the impact of the committee. The Chair requested that a meeting of the IfATE board committee chairs should be convened in order that they can discuss and coordinate their committees' respective reports. Members commented that the report could usefully serve as the basis of a workshop or discussion to evaluate the committee's work over the last year.

Item 4. Review of EDIC Terms of Reference (ToR)

7. RCr introduced the item and explained that the current ToR required that EDIC reviewed its ToR on at least an annual basis, and to recommend any changes it felt necessary to the IfATE board for approval.
8. The committee considered its ToR and recommended that three amendments were made:
 - i. To extend the membership of the committee to include up to 2 independent members. This would include a Route Panel Chair, to provide direct input to the committee from an employer perspective and to provide a conduit through which the committee can communicate with Route Panels. It was suggested that the other independent member could be a member of the Apprenticeship Panel or the TQ Student Forum.
 - ii. To rename and reorder the EDI objectives to match the language and sequencing within the draft EDI Strategy. The descriptors for each objective would remain unchanged.
 - iii. To add the HR Director as a standing attendee of the committee, to reflect current practice.
9. The committee asked that the governance team and EDI Project teams revisit the ToR to ensure they retained a focus on strategy and impact as well as on reporting processes.

Item 5. EDIC forward look

10. EDIC considered its future work programme, which would be maintained as a live document and brought to each committee meeting. The Chair requested that he attend a future meeting of the Apprenticeship Panel.

Item 6. External speakers

11. The Chair welcomed to the meeting Mark McClennon, Chief Information Officer at Burberry and Chair of the Digital Route Panel, and Ruth Devine, Managing Director at SJD Associates and member of the Construction and the Built Environment Route Panel.
12. MM introduced himself and stated his belief that EDI issues are integral to leadership, adding that he was proud of the work IfATE did in helping to create a pipeline of talent for the future. Although he currently chairs the Digital Route Panel, digital skills are an increasingly-important factor for many other sectors.
13. Although good work had been done in expanding the range of apprenticeships available and in launching T Levels, his view was that more needed to be done in ensuring that the talent pipeline was diverse and inclusive by default. He thought that disparities could be seen in terms of the proportions of men and women in many apprenticeships and T Levels, and that whilst this was a systemic issue over which no one organisation had sole control, awareness, education and data were foundational to understanding the issues

and addressing them. IfATE could have a role in this, bringing together strategic partners to encourage better coordination. MM added that in his opinion there was a particular need to improve careers advice, and that whilst targets can be vital in driving behaviours, it was important to ensure that targets were well-defined, driving the right behaviours, and that any resulting data could be robustly analysed.

14. RD introduced herself and provided a high-level overview of the diversity in the construction sector, adding that the sector was male-dominated with an ageing workforce. Apprentices enjoyed high success rates on an individual basis, but higher numbers of apprentices were needed overall. Around 8% of construction apprentices were females, and although national representative bodies were making efforts to increase diversity in the sector, it was difficult to encourage increased diversity in the supply chain due to its fragmented nature.
15. Members asked how RD would describe the benefits of a diverse workforce and whether these benefits were understood within the sector. RD advised that the benefits of a diverse workforce were well-documented, especially in terms of overall success and problem-solving capability, but that some smaller employers were less likely to have access to HR expertise or had significant demands on their time in terms of managing day-to-day business. Some progress was however being made.
16. Members asked if there were any ways in which IfATE might be able to provide assistance, and asked whether the provision of a toolkit highlighting the benefits of a diverse workforce and the importance of exit and stay interviews would be useful. RD and MM emphasised the importance of clear messaging, the promotion of best practice and the cooperation of strategic partners such as careers services, colleges and other relevant agencies. EDIC members noted the recent joint announcement that in future, prospective applicants would be able to use the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) system to search for information on and apply for apprenticeships, and requested that a relevant UCAS official was invited to speak at a future EDIC meeting.
17. The Chair thanked MM and RD for their time and for sharing their insights.

Item 7. EDI Objective 2 and EDI Strategy

18. LM introduced the item and provided an update on EDI Objective 2 (IfATE as an influencer) and the work carried out on the EDI Strategy since the 09 November 2022 committee meeting. Following feedback from EDIC members and senior officials, the structure of the document had been revised and additional data had been incorporated within the draft strategy. LM added that the actions within the draft EDI Strategy had been further refined and that time-bound metrics had been identified against which progress towards those actions could be tracked.
19. Members thanked LM and the EDI Project team for their update and for their work on the strategy to date, and provided a steer on terminology to be used in the final document.

Item 8. EDI Objective 1 and EDI Framework and toolkit

20. NM introduced the item and provided an update on EDI Objective 1 (IfATE as a decision maker). A soft launch of the EDI Toolkit had taken place since the last EDIC meeting, and further communications were planned to coincide with the publication of the EDI Strategy. EDI considerations explicitly form part of the process for developing apprenticeship standards, with a dedicated area for these evaluations to be recorded.

Item 9. EDI Objective 3

21. AC provided an update on EDI objective 3 (IfATE as an employer) and reported that since the last update to the committee, the HR team had amended this element of the draft strategy in line with the feedback received from EDIC members. A series of time-bound measures and targets had been developed in respect of the four key areas of the employer component of the emerging EDI Strategy: recruitment and workforce representation; progression; inclusion; and declaration rates.
22. An action plan to support IfATE's commitment as an employer is in development and a first draft is expected to be completed by the end of February 2023. Members asked what work had been done to make IfATE staff aware of this ongoing work, and were informed that short updates had been provided to staff previously and that further communications were planned in the coming months.
23. Members noted the importance of apprenticeships to social mobility and asked if one of IfATE's apprentices would be able to speak to a future meeting of the committee.

Item 10. Thematic research: age and participation

24. JW introduced the item, which was based on a review of existing research supplemented by bespoke analysis of data on apprenticeship and traineeship starts published by the DfE. The first section of the report considered the categorisation used in reporting of apprenticeship data. The data published on a national level is often categorised by as under 19, 19-24 and over 25. The latter age group is especially broad and may hide differences in experience. This is less likely to accurately represent the views and experiences of older apprentices.
25. The second section of the report considered participation across different age groups. Bespoke analysis found that while people of all ages participated in apprenticeships, this was not equal across age groups. Although the number of apprentices aged 25+ had increased over recent years, there remained a decline in participation by age with people aged 45+ under-represented in apprenticeships. In recent years, the number of younger apprentices had decreased whilst apprentices aged 25-44 has increased. The evidence suggested that the 2017 apprenticeship reforms had impacted on employers differently, altering the types of apprenticeships available to different age groups.
26. Members asked whether there was a disparity in completion rates between age groups, and were informed that this would form part of a future deep dive into outcomes. The Chair recommended that IfATE met with organisations including the Open University to further explore this issue, as an organisation with significant experience of engaging learners of all ages.
27. The third section of the report covered a literature review of employment and training that had shown that older age groups face distinct barriers to entering apprenticeships. These included misconceptions that apprenticeships are for younger people or that learning took place at younger ages; ageism in the workplace leading to older age groups being less likely to be hired or given development opportunities; and personal preference for other training routes, which may be linked to older age groups having less awareness of potential learning opportunities.
28. Areas of research interest and gaps in knowledge were identified throughout the deep dive. This includes further research of the different experiences of older age apprentices and possible solutions, the cumulative impact of multiple characteristics and the age profile of the broader technical education landscape. JW added that publishing more

granular research, for example splitting data by narrower age groups, would improve understanding of different experiences. The report concluded by identifying recommendations for employers, providers and for IfATE to improve apprenticeships as an all-age programme.

29. The chair thanked JW for presenting the results of the deep dive, noting that further deep-dives would be presented to EDIC in due course.

Item 11. Any Other Business

30. No other business was raised. The Chair thanked members and officials for their attendance. The date of the next meeting is 05 April 2023.

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