**London Anchor Institutions’ Network (LAIN) Hiring & Skills Working Group**

**Minutes**

**14:00 – 16:00 BST, 02 October 2023**

Meeting via Teams

**Co-Chairs:** Karima Khandker (Thames Water) (In the Chair) & Janet Gardner (Waltham Forest College).

**Attendees:**

Janet Gardner (Waltham Forest College), Karima Khandker (Thames Water), Sophie Cloutterbuck (London Higher Civic Network), Alison May (London Borough of Lambeth), Mark Hilton (Business LDN), Evelyn Odeyemi (NHS), James Hackett (TfL), Souraya Ali (GLA), Jackie Chapman (Capital City College Group) , Rosemary Oduntan Oke (London Borough of Barking & Dagenham), John Soper (Middlesex University), Camelia Gamee (GLA), Michael Heanue (GLA), Hamida Ali (GLA), Divya Patel (London Fire Brigade), Helen Connor (GLA), Randhir Auluck (University of Westminster), Rachel Williamson (GLA), Claire Southwood (NHS), Claire Churchill (NHS), Rohan Gupta (London Councils), Stephen Jones (London Chamber), Claire Rae (University of London), Shehreen Najam (GLA).

**Apologies:**

Rebecca Baker (Film London), Darren De Souza (London Higher), Dianna Neal (London Councils), Paul Deemer (NHS Employers), David Steeds (DWP), Gemma Cook (London City Airport), Tahera Jama (University of London), Mary Vine-Morris (AoC), James Lloyd (TfL), Nina Hemmings (NHS).

**Discussion:**

1. **Welcome & Introduction:**

* Karima (in the chair) and Janet welcomed attendees to the meeting, including Divya Patel from London Fire Brigade who has recently joined the working group.
* Karima thanked Jackie Chapman from Capital City College Group for offering to host the meeting, and apologised for moving it online, due to expected train strikes.
* Karima welcomed a few new colleagues including those representing other colleagues who could not attend on this occasion. The colleagues who introduced themselves included: *Michael Heanue* (GLA*), Rachel Williamson* (GLA), *Stephen Jones* (London Chamber of Commerce and Industry), *James Hackett* (TfL).
* Karima also provided a brief recap of the discussions the working group has had over the past six months, looking at how to create more inclusive workplaces and increase recruitment of disabled staff and those from minoritised ethnic backgrounds.
* Karima then introduced the aims of the day’s meeting being to explore strategies to support the retention and progression of colleagues from under-represented backgrounds particularly those from minoritised ethnic background or those with disabilities and/or long-term health conditions.

1. **Focus on retention and progression of colleagues from under-represented backgrounds**

* The following colleagues presented on programmes focusing on retention and progression that they were implementing in their organisations:

1. *Hamida Ali (GLA)*

* Hamida shared the GLA’s EDI statement highlighting three excerpts:

1. London is best served by a GLA that is equal, diverse, representative and inclusive. GLA wants a workforce that reflects London’s diversity and its inclusive approach in terms of all aspects of diversity;

2. All staff at GLA should have the same positive experience of working and progressing;

3. All staff should have a feeling of belonging in the GLA

* From the GLA’s EDI statement flows the workforce EDI strategy called ‘We Belong Here’. It’s a 3-year strategy which was launched last year. There are 3 strategic objectives that all the GLA’s corporate workforce EDI activities sit within:

1. Develop collective and individual accountability;

2 Grow a genuinely inclusive working culture that fosters a sense of belonging and;

3. Establish a workforce that reflects London’s diversity across all directorates and at senior levels

* Hamida outlined 3 programmes that the GLA is implementing with a focus on retention and progression:

**Aiming High**

* This leadership development programme is targeted at colleagues at Grade 9 and below (salary of around £59k).
* The GLA has 800-1300 colleagues in the organisation who fall into those grades and therefore are eligible for this programme.
* This is a 2-year programme being delivered by an external provider, which includes residential elements, action learning sets, coaching, sponsorship and mentoring. 50% of places are reserved for disabled colleagues and those from minoritised ethnic backgrounds who are underrepresented in the workforce.

**Targeted programme for colleagues at Grades 2-4**

* This programme is specifically aimed at staff in the facilities management unit to ensure that they can access progression opportunities.
* It was initiated following an independent review which highlighted the over representation of Black men within GLA’s security function.
* The programme involves tailored career coaching and then training to respond to identified needs in areas like IT skills or literacy and numeracy, Mentoring is also being provided by members of the senior leadership team.

**Good Growth Sponsorship Programme**

* The ‘Good Growth’ directorate developed a co-sponsorship programme of reciprocal mentoring which aims to tackle underrepresentation of disabled and minoritised ethnic staff.
* Having been recognised via the ‘challenge sessions’ that the Chief Officer holds with all Executive Directors on EDI, the programme is now being rolled out across the organisation.

*Questions and answers included;*

* *When you talk about over-representation of Black men in your security team, does that apply to the senior management of that team as well?*

GLA - The answer is no, Black men are overrepresented within GLA’s security function however that is not reflected in the senior management of that particular unit.

* *Regarding targeting progression programmes for people with disabilities, can they self-define or do they need to be formally registered as having a disability?*

Self-definition will be the guiding principle. We just did a pulse survey focused on Inclusion. Although only 9% of staff have formally registered with the GLA that they identify as disabled, 19% of respondents to the pulse survey identified in that way. This is a challenge. We are trying to establish a culture that feels sufficiently inclusive that colleagues can feel they can share that information with us.

* *The duration of the programme is 24 months. Is there a particular reason you choose this time duration? Is that connected to retention and long term talent development needs in the organisation?*

This programme is a departure from what we have done in the past. Colleagues who have been working on this come from the civil service where they have been working on programmes including their future leader scheme programme. The GLA has drawn some of the learnings from these experiences, hence this programme is more structured and is longer in its duration.

* *What are the resourcing implications for these programmes?*

The GLA secured £700k through the corporate budget setting process for the current and next financial year for EDI programmes, of which Aspiring High is one of the biggest ticket items. . But it's not just the finance that is required for these programmes, significant people resource is equally important.

1. *Randhir Auluck (University of Westminster)*

* Randhir Auluck leads University of Westminster’s Business School.
* Randhir sat on interview panels where she observed brilliant BAME candidates but somehow, they were not rated as high as others, and this was linked to how they spoke about their leadership and how they spoke about themselves
* Randhir had the resources to put together a programme and so she piloted it in her school.
* The programme was open to mid-level staff at the university in academic and non-academic roles.
* It consisted of a half-day session, with 90-minute diagnostic interviews with each participant, then a follow up day, then 3-4 months later an organisational event bringing people together.
* The programme was very successful with participants reporting significant impact on their confidence and progression outcomes.
* London Higher ran a mini version of it as part of the Global Majority Mentoring Programme.
* The programme involves participants reflecting on their own capabilities as well as the wider impact of institutional culture. It’s powerful having the two things running in parallel i.e., bringing together senior management and people’s lived experiences, and making recommendations for institutional change to senior management.

1. *Jackie Chapman (Capital City College Group)*

* Jackie briefly presented on a leadership development programme which launched across the college group this month.
* This programme is targeted at managers and aims to support them to help under-represented groups to progress through internal promotions.
* Following previous experience, they decided that small interventions are not enough to effect meaningful change and so are introducing this 2-year programme in partnership with an external provider.
* They are not targeting a particular group but working everybody, to ensure they have the same skills and are using the same terminology.
* They will monitor internal progression and whether colleagues with certain characteristics are promoted quickly as a result of this training.

1. *Karima Khandker (Thames Water)*

* Karima discussed supporting progression of apprentices by embedding apprenticeships as part of workforce planning.

1. **Developing a Granular Understanding of the Workforce**

* The following colleagues discussed emerging practices around intersectionality:

1. *Hamida Ali, (GLA)*

* Hamida discussed the GLA’s new emphasis on tracking existing colleagues’ socio-economic backgrounds and assessing whether has an impact on issues like progression.
* The GLA is now collecting information on socio-eco background at recruitment stage but have only been monitoring that since July. They also collect anonymised information from existing staff through staff surveys.
* They use questions recommended by the Social Mobility Commission. The key one they recommend is ‘what was the occupation of the main household earner when the individual was aged 14’.
* Through this exercise, they have found that 49% of staff identified from a professional socio-economic background. The national benchmark is 37% so the GLA is somewhat over-represented in that context. 14% identified from an intermediate socio-economic background, whilst the national benchmark for this is 24%. 22% of respondents identified from lower socio-economic backgrounds and the national benchmark is 39%.
* The GLA has a social mobility staff group. It is a staff led group that is keen to challenge the organization to do more in this area.
* The GLA is keen to do more to understand intersectionality (a priority in the EDI action plan) and is interested to hear what colleagues in the hiring and skills working group are doing on this.

1. *Karima, (Thames Water)*

* Karima discussed Thames Water collecting socio-economic data on new hires and also analysing data from exit interviews to identify any trends in relation to staff leaving the business.
* Thames Water have been collecting socio economic data on new hires for a year. They want to do the same for the existing workforce but are waiting for a systems upgrade to enable this.
* Much as they do when asking new recruits about criminal convictions, they make clear in asking for this information that they are doing so because they have made a commitment to having a diverse workforce and are collecting the data to track how well they are delivering against that commitment.

1. **LAIN programme updates**

Souraya Ali (GLA) provided the following updates:

* The LAIN steering committee met recently and decided that LAIN will progress a focus on childcare as a sub-theme contributing to the overall goal of creating more inclusive workplaces. A working group will be established to progress this and will work closely with the Hiring and Skills working group, supported by the LAIN Programme team.
* **Action**: If you know of colleagues who would be interested in joining the childcare working group, please let Souraya know by 20 October.
* LAIN have asked anchor members to submit their progress against their pledges and commitments by 4th October. Headlines will be shared at the London Partnership Board meeting on 17th October, where we will also be asking member of the Board to commit to some of the same commitments as LAIN members i.e., LLW/GWS accreditation, apprenticeships, supported internships, pay gap reporting and achievement of Disability Confident
* LAIN is currently in the process of filming new impact stories across the network – there is still time for members to put ideas forward.
* **Action**: If you have an idea for a video story to tell, please let Souraya know by 20 October

1. **Wrap up and next steps**

* Members to consider if there are any specific topics they would like to investigate
* Michael Heanue from the GLA will talk us through his work on supporting people from the criminal justice system into employment
* We will recap some of the sessions on prison leavers and care leavers and discuss further steps we will take from these sessions
* We will capture some of the actions members have taken and play those back in our next meeting in January

**Next meeting:**

* In-person meeting, 2-4pm, 8th January 2023.