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

**Minutes**

**14:00 – 16:00 BST, 26 June 2023**

Meeting convened at Lambeth Town Hall and via Teams

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

**Attendees In person:**

Janet Gardner (Waltham Forest College), Karima Khandker (Thames Water), Sophie Cloutterbuck (London Higher Civic Network), David Steed (DWP), Beth Wheaton (GLA), Hannah Candassamy (GLA), Alison May (London Borough of Lambeth), Mark Hilton (Business LDN), Evelyn Odeyemi (NHS), James Lloyd (TfL), Souraya Ali (GLA), Nina Hemming (NHS), Jackie Chapman (Capital City College Group) , Emily Dixon (London Higher), Mac Alonge (The Equal Group), Darren Desouza (London Higher), Shehreen Najam (GLA), Ruth Hitchings (London Borough of Lambeth), Poonam Flammarion (Cloud Reach).

**Attendees Via Teams:**

Rosemary Oduntan Oke (London Borough of Barking & Dagenham), Mary Vine-Morris (AoC), Dr Kate Daubney (University of London), Gemma Cook (London City Airport), Dianna Neal (London Council), Helen Connor (GLA), Tahera Jama (University of London)

**Apologies:**

John Soper (Middlesex University), Camelia Gamee (GLA), Urooj Khan (NHS), Paul Deemer (NHS), Claire Rae (University of London), Rebecca Baker (Film London).

**Discussion:**

1. **Welcome & Introduction:**

* Janet (in the chair) and Karima welcomed attendees to the meeting, including Jackie Chapman from Capital City College Group who have recently joined LAIN.
* Janet thanked Dr. Kate Daubney from University of London for her contribution to the group. Dr. Kate is leaving University of London, so stepping down from the group.
* Janet thanked Alison May for hosting the meeting and arranging lunch.

1. **Recap: Disability in the workplace**

* Janet recapped on the disability session in June and encouraged members to get in touch with Business Disability Forum (BDF) for further advice on supporting disabled colleagues and candidates.
* One to one sessions had since been held with members to reflect on that session and capture actions members were taking on disability in their workforce. These have been captured in a paper for the group along with top tips, resources and toolkits for good practice. Members were urged to share the paper with their staff leads on disability.

1. **Recent actions taken by members on disability**

**Gemma Cook (London City Airport)**

* Gemma gave an overview of actions taken by London City Airport since the last meeting which included:
* Sharing top tips from the meeting with colleagues.
* Joining up with their Passenger Disability Forum to share learning on the corporate side.
* Engaging specialist advice from Business Disability Forum.
* Running two sessions on disability with their line managers.
* Starting their journey on signing up for the Disability Confident Employer

**Janet Gardner (Waltham Forest College)**

* Janet took back the idea that some staff members may have developed a disability or long-term health condition during their time working at the college. Her HR team is now meeting everyone 1:1 to ensure the college has an up to date understanding of their needs.
* Waltham Forest College have also changed their student enrolment forms and the language used in them around disability.
* They recently ran a big careers event working with employers, job centres and stakeholders to support disabled candidates

1. **Supported Internships**

* Members of the group agreed that some of the greatest impact that member organisations have had is through supported internships.
* Members are urged to get in touch with James Lloyd (TfL) and Janet Gardner (Waltham Forest College) for advice on supported internships as they have both run very successful programmes, with 85% of candidates from Waltham Forest College’s programme with Whipps Cross Hospital progressing into permanent employment.
* Supported internships provide the opportunity for people to work in different departments and in different roles, discovering where their strengths and interests lie. This is more likely to lead to sustained employment.
* Members were encouraged to look at opportunities to develop new supported internship programmes or increase the number of places they offer.

1. **Race and Ethnicity Workshop**

* Mac Alonge from The Equal Group gave a presentation on race and ethnicity in the workplace (see attached slides).
* He emphasised the importance of obtaining and tracking granular EDI data across the workforce at every stage of their journey (application, short listing, interview, recruitment etc), identifying operational gaps, setting strategic targets, implementing strategic interventions and tracking progress. The second step is to refine, re-plan and repeat these steps.
* Mac highlighted structural issues across London including employment, earnings and mortality gaps for different ethnic groups. By identifying issues relating to racism through collecting relevant data, the Equal Group systematically worked through thematic areas such as recruitment (selection, interview, offer and on boarding process), renumeration, progression and promotion, retention and performance management.
* He outlined different approaches to creating more inclusive workplaces, including the GLA’s Workforce Integration Network’s Design Labs which The Equal Group ran. These were 12-month programmes supporting businesses to tackle the underrepresentation of Black men aged 16-24. The design labs created a space for businesses to come together and collectively explore the causes of underrepresentation in their workforces and the sector as a whole in a data driven manner. This led to them building action plans to recruit, retain and progress more young Black men in their businesses.
* Karima and Poonam (Cloud Reach) were invited to reflect on their experience of the programme. Key learnings included:
* The value of using data to understand the representation of different groups across the workforce and in different stages of the recruitment process.
* The importance of CEO buy-in and sponsorship of efforts to diversify the workforce.
* The importance of involving hiring managers directly in conversations about race/ethnicity, the rationale for diversifying the workforce, and new approaches to doing so.
* The barriers that requirements for particular experience / qualifications can present to recruiting from certain groups, and the value in approaching this differently with more of an emphasis on competencies and transferable skills.
* Mac encouraged the group to also reflect on small gestures, behaviours and interactions with colleagues that can make a big difference to their experience in the workplace and ability to progress. He encouraged members to reflect on their own career progression and identify the factors that had made a difference to them, including in relation to social capital in the workplace.

1. **LAIN programme updates**

Souraya Ali (GLA) provided the following updates:

* The LAIN Steering Committee met in early June and received an update on work programmes and progress across all the working groups – Procurement, Hiring & Skills, Mentoring Young People, Green New Deal and Place-Based.
* They were supportive of the work we are doing in the Hiring and Skills working group
* They were keen that we look at opportunities to support the Local Skills Improvement Plan in time, which has been led by LAIN member BusinessLDN
* They were also keen that we keep driving progress in the areas we’re focusing on and have a good story to tell in time for the London Partnership Board (co-chaired  by the Mayor of London and London Councils) in late Oct / early Nov (date TBC)
* This will be an opportunity to spotlight our progress – showing the change we’re implementing and the impact it’s having - and hopefully inspire others beyond the network to do more
* The Steering Committee agreed that we should collect information on our collective impact across all the working groups twice a year – at the end of the financial year and at the mid-year point.
* For the Hiring & Skills working group, this would be based on the set of core metrics that we discussed in the past and have worked to refine.
* An update against these metrics will be commissioned in September via Steering Committee members (where relevant).
* We have also produced a new comms toolkit which is due to be circulated imminently to all Steering Committee members, Working Group members and Comms Leads to help us talk more consistently and effectively about LAIN and the work we’re all doing.
* In the meantime, there is a new LAIN LinkedIn channel, which we encourage all members to follow: [(10) London Anchor Institutions' Network: Overview | LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/london-anchor-institutions-network/?viewAsMember=true)
* The LAIN team will also be filming new videos, so if you have stories you’d like to put forward for that, please contact [Souraya.Ali@london.gov.uk](mailto:Souraya.Ali@london.gov.uk)
* If you would like to contribute a guest blog (which the LAIN team can help to draft) then please also let Souraya know. Previous examples are here ([Blog 1 | London Anchor Institutions' Network (anchors.london)](https://www.anchors.london/blog) and include various contributions from members of this group.

1. **Wrap up and next steps**

* Mark Hilton (BusinessLDN) has put together the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for London. They would like to do a deep dive on particular barriers that some specific groups face in the workforce and in employment practices. Mark and his team would like to speak to members on this and where their organisations are at on this journey.
* James Lloyd (TfL) mentioned barriers to making apprenticeships more accessible. Jackie Chapman (Capital City College Group) informed the group that they are doing a lot of work in this area and volunteered to share resources if anyone is interested
* We are very heartened by the one to one sessions we have had with members and with the concrete actions that members have taken on disability in their workforce. We would request the members to continue to demonstrate progress and reach out for resources to other members and to the GLA if they need any.

**Next meeting:**

* In-person meeting, 2-4pm, 2nd October 2023. Venue: TBC. If anyone is interested in hosting the meeting, please kindly let us know.