

## Department of Materials EDIA meeting PS related

10am, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2022

### Hybrid Meeting

#### Attendees:

Tom Shearer, Jackie Moss, Susan hogan, Simeon Gill, Ross Nolan, Amanda Aspinall, Mark Chadwick, Charles Darko, Agate Stranka, Eden Cady-McKellar, Freyja Peters, John Warren, Raj Tandon, Joao Quinta Da Fonseca, Charlene Gallery, Damindi Jones, Ben Spencer, Nathan Murray, Helen Ryder

#### Apologies:

Shelley Rawson, Samantha Hickson, Michael Faulkner, Ryan Ngo, Helen Hann, Laura Ann Kavanagh, Elizabeth Jeffries, Jane Deakin, Rosy Boardman, Heather Murphy, Amy Benstead, Kathryn Downey, Andrea Taylor, Sylvester Boon

#### Purpose of meeting

To identify actions we can take at Department, School, Faculty, and University level to improve equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility for PS staff

#### Agenda

##### 1. Welcome and introduction

TS opened the meeting by thanking everybody that attended both in person and remotely. TS then went on to explain the purpose of the meeting was to identify actions we can take at Department, School, Faculty, and University level to improve equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility for PS staff.

##### 2. PS Staff to identify actions we can take as a Department, and

##### 3. PS Staff to identify actions we can take at School/Faculty/University level

Discussion was had that there seems to be no talk of EDI issues for PS staff during any meetings. All seem to be Academic or student led.

SH has spoken to EDI leads and would like to send out a survey to PS staff about how they feel the EDI strategy impacts on their roles and whether it can be spoken about in the same way it is by the Academic and student groups. There doesn't appear to be a PS only staff listserv for the faculty. It would have to be distributed to the PS staff via Department PS listserv. Suggested questions from PS staff are welcomed. Please send to [Susan.hogan@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Susan.hogan@manchester.ac.uk) SH would like to go around Departments physically beforehand to prep PS staff for the survey. The Survey will be anonymous. Possibly 6 questions and to include any other comments box. The idea of asking this of PS staff was agreeable but attendees wonder why it has taken so long to get here. The fact this is only just happening shows that we are not all 'equal'.

TS – being aware of what issues affect the different areas of staff would be a key point. The fact that there is no specific email for PS staff made it difficult when setting up the EDI committee and this will take time to set up.

SH to send survey link to AA to be distributed to Departments and hopefully include other buildings that are not included in Listservs such as Royce.

It was suggested that this could also be placed in Beeline or on other platforms as a way to ensure inclusion of PS staff at Faculty level and include domestic personnel and others.

RN – Placing it on Beeline will show that the University are taking it seriously.

**\*ACTION – Suggest creating a listserv for FSE PS staff**

It was suggested it would be better to put together a strategy before starting on questions for the survey. We should be helping PS staff by empowering them. Some PS are afraid to speak out when they feel there is an issue. Let them know their worth. It should be written in contracts that they should feel able to speak out about this at Managerial level. Will people be honest in the survey?

TS stated that is what this meeting was all about. A chance for PS staff to voice their opinions.

It was noted that some of the working conditions for cleaning staff are appalling and we need to take care of them as PS staff also. We should look at changing their employment terms so people are working in better conditions.

TS stated this is a good point to be looked at in the future, but for today we are including the groups that are in attendance in this meeting.

It was noted that pre covid there were known issues around maternity and people returning to full time work after reducing to part time. There was mention of surveys around this area but SLT were not approving so may need to have discussions with wider EDI leads about this.

It was told that SH is leading on the surveys so we can bring this to her attention but for the purpose of this meeting we are focussing on issues to bring to Dept and Faculty level.

It was mentioned that lots of surveys were carried out in the past but was difficult retrieving meaningful data, so carefully need to think this through for this survey.

TS – This is a good point to be considered

Concerns were raised about the University trying to move towards centralisation in all areas and the impact that this will have on PS staff having a voice as they will be disconnected from other channels.

TS stated it is important to try and maintain department identity for as many people as possible and this is a point that should be raised with the school.

It was pointed out that Technical staff will soon be known on Faculty level as opposed to sitting in a Dept so there will be a hole created in this area also. They will have access to Departmental forums. Anything to help keep channels of communication open will be essential.

There was suggestion it should be made priority to let people know where they can raise this kind of thing and have a voice.

TS – Do people know where to go to raise EDI issues in general?

Nobody had an idea.

TS this is what we need to check on. Are staff aware of where to go? We need to make this transparent.

**\*ACTION – TS to raise this at Faculty level.**

It was noted that this is where meetings like this become important, getting in touch with people in the same areas.

A lot of ground can be gained, good chance to incorporate people and make people feel a part of something.

TS questioned if attendees could think of any concrete actions to make people feel more included? None were noted.

Discussion moved on to the different roles of PS staff and what differences there were to people on Furlough leave, some being off for months and others only having a short period of Furlough. Questions were raised about what happens to people who have had caring responsibilities as there was no reintegration back into work.

TS suggested maybe trying to set up a caring fund but was not sure what this would look like.

Concerns were raised regarding trust issues around the hybrid working policy in relation to using this to look after children.

TS – what would be the ideal change to make? To remove that as a clause? It is a very untrusting clause insinuating we are not adult enough to balance working with looking after family.

It was noted that hybrid working has shown that people can be trusted to do this and that working in this way means flexibility for people as they can work around caring responsibilities to balance their priorities

TS – there is a very good point in there that can be raised with the school EDIA committee

This policy was previously challenged as there was no mention of PS staff in the description when this was made, but nothing came of this

TS was given the impression that there was no awareness of PS staff having a negative view of this funding

It was mentioned that nobody believes it is just Academics making these decisions. We are aware it is being made at Management/Faculty level. In some cases this is worse as a lot of the PS Managers should be helping give the PS staff a voice by organising these meetings and asking us these questions

TS - If we were to change the hybrid working policy, what would be the ideal outcome?

It was agreed that taking this section out of the policy would be more acceptable. **\*ACTION – TS to raise the removal of this policy at Faculty level**

TS – Lots of issues to raise at Faculty/University level. Any issues to raise at Dept level? We heard it is notable that PS staff do not generally have a voice in most committee structures and we need to provide a structure for this voice to be heard. It is not anticipated PS staff are going to attend general (FBT) meetings as they are generally predominantly Academic based. However, PS staff are integral to the running of the University so interpersonal relationships should be created

TS – Would be good to include on meeting agendas and item for PS staff to raise issues

It was noted that this is also recognised in Technical support. No technical staff were attending meetings so were unaware of requirements

**\*ACTION – TS to consider what meetings would be appropriate to invite PS staff to and create a list of meetings that PS staff should be invited to, and invite PS staff to more meetings.**

It was noted that more transparency is needed about what meetings are happening and trust people to attend appropriate meetings

Suggestions made that there should be more meetings that just PS staff are invited to. A lot of meetings have previously started off being PS related meetings but have then been turned into Academic meetings. A lot of people don't feel comfortable attending these meetings anymore. Not sure what causes it, depends on your Dept and role. Would be nice to have more meetings that do not involve Academics so that the PS staff can have a voice

**\*ACTION – TS to suggest setting up school level PS meetings to discuss how things work across the Departments**

It was suggested we need to get PS feedback to get honest core opinions so that problems can be solved. Don't think surveys are the answer to this.

TS – what else is there to try?

It was suggested to ask the questions of the PS staff – they may just be willing to answer

It was suggested that there needs to be a suitable chain of escalation

TS – We will work out a plan of how to address this

#### 4. Any other business

None given due to time constraints.

#### ACTIONS

Suggest creating a listserv for FSE PS staff	TS
TS to raise at Faculty level the fact that PS staff do not know where to raise and escalate EDI issues	TS
TS to raise the removal of the 'no children at home to be reason for Hybrid working' policy at Faculty level	TS
TS to consider what meetings would be appropriate to invite PS staff to and create a list of meetings that PS staff should be invited to, and invite PS staff to more meetings.	TS
TS to suggest setting up school level PS meetings to discuss how things work across the Departments	TS