

STAFF FORUM – COUNCIL COMMITMENT AND SUPPORT

Council Commitment

Islington Council will facilitate staff forums which bring together staff with common identities and/or interests to further the Council's objectives in relation to equality, diversity and community cohesion.

The Council will enable the forums to be successful by

- Changing procedures and processes to achieve the target reduction of the disproportionate numbers of disciplinarians and grievances among equality groups, to the average.
- Ensuring that all departments treat staff issues seriously, appropriately and consistently.
- Providing a budget for each forum to deploy in meeting its aims.
- Allowing up to 8 hours of work time per member of staff per annum to attend relevant forum meetings (subject to the needs of the service) with additional consideration for staff that fall within more than one group (e.g. a gay man who has a disability).
- Allowing up to an additional 16 hours of work time per annum per member of staff who is the Chair of relevant staff forum (subject to the needs of the service).
- The Chair will be for a fixed 12 month term.
- Providing necessary data and information to the forum (e.g. employment statistics, lists of staff and new starters who belong to each of the target groups) to assist them in fulfilling their role.
- Communicating honestly and regularly with the forum.
- A named senior officer will be responsible for ensuring that the views of forums are represented to senior management and acted upon where appropriate (e.g. a quarterly report as part of the equalities monitoring to CMB).
- Including trade unions in the circulation of forum information and working constructively with trade unions to devise mechanisms for addressing individual concerns and influencing council policy and practice.
- Including notice of forum meetings in ICbulletin and posting key information relevant to the forum on dedicated pages on the Council's Intranet (Izzi) for each forum which will be maintained by EDU.

Aims

Islington Council will support staff forums which include the majority of the following aims:

1. Monitor and share information on issues that affect staff of all grades and backgrounds

2. Identify organisational barriers to employment and progression for staff from groups that are under-represented in the workforce or are at risk of discrimination
3. Identify opportunities for improving representation and enhancing the experience of working for Islington Council
4. Provide learning and development for staff that attend the forum
5. Provide staff with the opportunity to influence the Council's policies and practices in relation to equality and cohesion in the wider community as well as within the organisation
6. Assist in monitoring the extent to which the Council's commitments and plans are effective in practice
7. Facilitate communication between staff and the Council's top management
8. Facilitate the sharing of good practice across the Council and with outside bodies.
9. Assist the Council in ensuring that all departments treat staff issues seriously, appropriately and consistently.

Staff forums can choose to have additional aims or to amend the aims above to be specific to their target group. Staff forums that have completely different aims will not be eligible for support.

Success Criteria

Islington Council will support staff forums that have clear agreed success criteria which can be measured (e.g. through questionnaires) and include, but are not limited to

- Giving staff the confidence to pursue their career ambitions and excel.
- Having council policies and plans that incorporate the views of staff and are owned by staff
- Improved staff attitude survey results with no significant discrepancy between staff belonging to different groups.
- Staff are satisfied with the operation of the forum and feel that they and the council have benefited from its existence
- There is a good attendance at meetings and events
- Is seen to be making positive contribution to the council's key priorities

Membership and operation of the forums

Islington Council will support staff forums where

- Membership of the forum is open to all staff belonging to the group, regardless of their grade, within the council.
- The forum does not promote particular political or religious agendas and complies with the Council's Dignity for All policy by respecting staff that belong to groups other than their own.
- The meetings are not used to resolve personal grievances, though direct experiences can be used for illustrative purposes.

- Members are able to place items on the agenda provided the items relate to the aims of the forum and are able to support the item with a verbal or written brief if required.
- Arrangements are put in place to ensure financial probity of all monies allocated to the forum e.g. through the appointment of a treasurer and with budgeted and actual income and expenditure available to forum members and EDU.
- Meetings are held at disability accessible venues.
- Agendas are circulated no later than one week in advance of the meeting in a manner that is accessible to all staff and are also placed on the forum web pages of izzi.
- Minutes of meetings are published in a manner that is accessible to all staff and are also placed on izzi.
- Annual review of achievements of the forums are published in a manner that is accessible to all staff and are also placed on izzi.