

Gender Pay Gap Action Plan update report People Plan Governance Board 12th March 2020

Context:

1. At 7 % and 12.6% Luton Council's mean (average) and median (mid-point) 2019 gender pay gap in favour of males can be seen to be markedly lower than the norm for the public sector (15.7 % mean and 16.8 % median). This is particularly encouraging given the range and nature of services provided by the council with a number of traditionally low paid services, such as refuse collection and some school catering services, retained in house.
2. The council has in place family friendly initiatives such as paid shared parental leave and other types of special leave, maternity leave, flexible working/hours, flexitime scheme, career breaks, a scheme to buy additional leave and a flexible retirement procedure. These initiatives aim to appeal to those with family related responsibilities, where balancing work and home commitments is essential for retaining employees within a workforce that is predominantly female. In addition, the council has developed a range of routes to enable employees to advance in their careers, such as apprenticeships, career pathways, secondment opportunities, the National Graduate Development Programme and management training. Alongside, these routes, the council is embedding check-ins, coaching and mentoring throughout the business to assist in personal development. Whilst all of the above applies equally to all genders, the council's profile – 34% male and 66% female – would suggest that females in particular should see the benefit.
3. Luton Council's gender pay gap is related to the gender composition of our workforce; where we have a higher proportion of women working in lower graded roles (68.2% quartile A and 72.7% quartile B) compared to the upper quartile D (63.8%), which adversely impacts on the average pay of women employed by the council (Appendix A). Starting salaries and appointments are consistently made at the bottom of the pay grade, thus appearing not to be the issue. We are aiming for a 34% / 66% gender split across all quartiles to align with the overall gender profile.
4. Gender pay gap is a complex issue and is impacted by a variety of factors. The purpose of a gender pay gap action plan is to establish a list of specific actions that will be taken to address the many drivers of the Council's gender pay gap, and develop a strategic approach to change.

Gender Pay Gap Action Plan: Luton Council

Key theme	Actions	Delivery	Target outcome
Promotion of flexible working	Promote take-up of flexible and part time working and shared parental leave arrangements, particularly at higher grades and within service areas (eg Children's Services) with low rates currently	HR Strategy Anne Davies December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased uptake of flexible and part time working and shared parental leave arrangements at higher grades and within low take up service areas Increase in new starters on less than full time contracts, particularly at management grades
	Create leadership briefings and an e-bulletin detailing case studies of male and female senior officers who work flexibly, home working, part-time, job shares etc to promote acceptance and culture change	Communications team & CLMT Martin Hindmarsh CDs & SDs December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above
Positive action around progression for women	Embed mentoring and coaching programmes, career pathways/core skills pathways and introduce a women's empowerment network, focussing on senior managerial roles in areas where women are under-represented e.g. Place and Infrastructure; senior Finance roles	HR Strategy Equalities team Lesley McNeill Denise Morgan Maureen Drummond December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in numbers of females becoming mentors and coaches An increase in numbers of M1-M8 females benefitting from a mentor or coaching sessions An increased proportion of females at Grade M1 and above Evidence of women aspiring into management roles accessing leadership & management development opportunities
Review of recruitment practices	A data driven review of the various recruitment channels/media being used with particular focus on recruitment into management positions (M3-M8)	HR Business Support Helen Davey December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment data to provide information on number of applications completed on a diverse range of platforms and equalities profile of final appointments
	Implement gender balanced recruitment panels where possible for senior roles (M3-M8)	HR Business Support Helen Davey December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender balanced recruitment panels where possible

Considerations:

1. Proposed actions have been cited as either effective or promising according to the Government Equalities Office's report – reducing the gender pay gap and improving gender equality in organisations: Evidence based actions for employers. https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/public/assets/pdf/Evidence-based_actions_for_employers.pdf
2. The Council will not tackle all of the drivers of the gender pay gap with short-term fixes, and it is acknowledged that actions will not have an immediate effect on reducing the headlines pay gap statistics but they will lay the foundations for a serious committed and long-term approach to achieving our aspiration of narrowing the gender pay gap in Luton Council.
3. The Action plan will be implemented over the next 12 months and reviewed on an ongoing basis, and annually in comparison with the published results of the Gender Pay Gap report each March.

Recommendations:

PPGB is recommended to agree the GPG Action Plan