

# Policy and Sustainability

10:00am, Tuesday, 21 March 2023

## Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme

Executive/routine  
Wards  
Council Commitments

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 To continue with our current membership of Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion and benchmarking tool until the end of our current 4-year D&I strategy and Plan with a view to reviewing the organisations with whom the Council partners and accesses benchmarking, including the Stonewall Champions Programme, post 2024.

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# Report

## Stonewall Diversity Champion Programme

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 A motion was passed at Council on 10 February 2022:-
- (1) Agrees to approach Stonewall Scotland with the intention of joining their Diversity Champions programme.
  - (2) Agrees to begin submitting annual information to the UK Workplace Equality Index.
- 2.2 This paper provides an up-date in respect of this motion in the context of our agreed Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan and includes further information regarding the programme and costs.
- 2.3 Following a Council motion in February 2022, officers have engaged with Stonewall, colleague network Chairs and the Councillor who authored the motion regarding participating in the Stonewall Diversity Champion Scheme.
- 2.4 This report discusses the relevant issues surrounding this decision and provides further information regarding the scheme offered by Stonewall. This information is intended to allow a full discussion at Policy and Sustainability Committee.
- 2.5 The response to the motion is scheduled to be brought before Policy and Sustainability Committee on 21 March. This was previously scheduled for Autumn 2022. However, a decision was taken to delay, initially in order to explore the options and implications in more detail, and latterly to enable discussion at the Council's Diversity and Inclusion Focus Group which met in January 2023 (although in the event the agenda item was not covered).

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 Becoming a Stonewall Diversity Champion involves an annual cost of £2,500. As a Champion an employer has access to a range of resources to support our policies and practices for LGBTQ+ employees:-
- a dedicated point of contact within Stonewall and access to expertise and best practice advice in respect of LGBTQ+ in employment related matters.
  - discount on events and learning opportunities as well as free networking events and seminars for our employees
  - use of the Diversity Champions logo for internal and external branding including job posts, emails, and newsletters. Access to Stonewall's Proud

Employers website, a jobs board for LGBTQ+ candidates exclusively for Diversity Champions.

- the opportunity to take part in benchmarking through the UK Workplace Equality Index including tailored feedback for the organisation. No additional cost is charged for participating in the index. The associated costs will involve the resource to complete the online submission (estimated 2/3 days) and any subsequent actions from the tailored feedback which cannot be determined at this point.

3.2 There is currently no budget allocation for joining the Champion Programme and participating in the UK Workplace Equality Index.

## **4. Main report**

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4.1 The City of Edinburgh Council is a member of the Employer's Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI) and covers all aspects of Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace including LGBTQ+. The cost of membership is £4,500 per annum

4.2 The benefits of membership cover a similar range to those of Stonewall and are extended across all nine protected characteristics including:-

- Dedicated Member Relationship Manager
- Instant access to the Member Helpline for expert support and advice
- Access to Masterclass, workshops, events, training and consultancy services
- Significant discount on training and consultancy services
- Access to research material, employer guides, case studies
- Access to our TIDE inclusion diagnostic and benchmarking tool free of charge

- 4.3 As a member the Council is able to participate in ENEI's evaluation and benchmarking tool which measures our approach and progress on diversity and inclusion (D&I) across all legally protected characteristics including LGBTQ+ in the following areas:
- Workforce
  - Strategy and plan
  - Leadership and accountability
  - Recruitment and attraction
  - Training and development
  - Other employment practices
  - Communication and engagement
  - Procurement
- 4.4 Similar to Stonewall's Equality Index, there's also opportunity for guidance and support to identify and prioritise actions.
- 4.5 The Council is currently in Year 3 of a 4-year Strategy and Action Plan co-designed with the Diversity and Inclusion Focus Group (including trade union, colleague network and elected member representation) which is working towards a long-term and ongoing aim of creating a working environment where people can be at their best.
- 4.6 The Council is utilising the ENEI evaluation and benchmarking tool to inform and measure progress towards this aim. Whilst this tool does not focus in the same level of detail on LGBTQ+ employees alone, it does provide an in-depth self-assessment of diversity and inclusion across all nine protected characteristics, evaluating activities and outcomes.
- 4.7 There are six colleague networks and the Council is working closely with them to understand the barriers their members experience to inclusivity and the challenges they face in their working lives. Colleague networks are represented on the Diversity and Inclusion Focus Group which provides a steer on actions to be undertaken in pursuit of a more inclusive culture for all colleagues. To date the approach has been to work across all nine protected characteristics equally via the ENEI TIDE tool. Joining the Stonewall Diversity Champion programme in year 3 of a 4-year strategy is likely to raise questions from other networks regarding prioritisation of resources.
- 4.8 Having met with Stonewall to understand the detail and cost of the Diversity Champion Programme, it's clear that membership could support inclusion for our LGBTQ+ workforce. The specialist support provided through membership would help achieve inclusivity for our LGBTQ+ colleagues so they feel valued, included and able to be themselves, something we're aspiring to achieve for all colleagues.
- 4.9 Rather than joining Stonewall now, it would support our progress to complete our current strategic plan cycle and involve our colleague networks in discussions for next steps at the end of the current 4 years, including the benefits of joining the Stonewall Diversity Champion Programme and any other relevant organisations.
- 4.10 As an employer the Council is committed to improving the experience of LGBTQ+ colleagues at work. We are clear that we want to remove barriers and

discrimination, particularly for transgender colleagues who face considerable challenges in the midst of public debate. Reported challenges include bullying, isolation, pressure to conceal identity as well as difficulty with name changes, toilet and changing facilities. As part of our current Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan the Council has started to address the challenges including starting work on specific e-learning “modules” to be designed by people with lived experience of being LGBTQ+.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 If this recommended approach is accepted, the Council would engage the colleague networks and the D&I Focus group in reviewing the next phase of our strategy from 2024 with a view to considering which external accrediting bodies (including Stonewall) may be appropriate to support further progress towards creating a working environment where people can be at their best. The Council would continue with our current membership of Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion and benchmarking tool until the end of our current 4-year D&I strategy and Plan.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 Annual cost of membership is £2,500.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 There is likely to be internal and external interest regarding the Council’s decision around joining Stonewall. In the event of not joining, there would be engagement in activity which clearly states our support for our LGBTQ+ colleagues. A motion to Council on 9 February 2023 requests that Council Communications channels be used to publicly share a statement of support for the trans community in Edinburgh at this time.
- 7.2 In the event of the Council joining Stonewall, there would be engagement with Colleague Networks to position the decision and state our ongoing commitment to all colleague networks. In addition, advice would be sought to understand if this decision required an Integrated Impact Assessment.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 Links to <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/stonewall-champions> and <https://www.enei.org.uk/>

## **9. Appendices**

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N/A