

## **UPDATE REPORT**

### **EQUALITIES EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES**

#### **Corporate and Adult Services**

Since the last report to the Diversity Forums, about the challenges and opportunities of improving representation from Equality Groups in this Directorate, we have been involved in a number of initiatives.

These initiatives are:

We have been doing lots of Awareness Raising Events particularly targeted at minority communities to showcase employment opportunities in the Council at the Masjid Mosque in Rosehill Street in May, and at Rosehill Surestart in August 2008.

The Masjid Event in particular was aimed at the Pakistani Community who are under-represented in the Council's workforce. The aim was to provide people with information about the range of jobs available and to provide careers and qualifications guidance, as well as advice about how to make job applications. Both events created significant interest in the local communities.

A further careers event was supported at the Westfield Centre in September 2008 relating to jobs in Cleaning and Catering.

The JET initiative has been actively supported in our Directorate in order to encourage young people from the Pakistani Community to take up traineeships that are on offer. This is so that they gain the experience necessary to enable them to be 'job ready' as permanent posts become available for which they can apply. To date there are 3 trainees, one is in Property Services and there are two in Housing and Advice. In the pipeline are two further traineeships, one in Adult Social Services and one in Corporate HR.

Additionally the Directorate also supports Modern Apprenticeships in employment as part of our equality initiatives. Currently there are four such Apprenticeships, one in Corporate HR, one in Member Services, one in Communications and one in Legal Services. Of these two are minority ethnic people and two are women. Eight Apprentices have gone on to gain permanent employment within the Council.

One of the difficulties of employing Modern Apprentices in Adult Social Services has been the prohibition on under 18s from delivering personal care. However a recent policy change by CSCI, the Government's Care

Inspectorate, indicating that they are now willing to relax this requirement has enabled us to re-open the question of the appointment of young people at the age of 16 to care jobs and to develop initiatives with an equality content for this purpose.

Representatives from our Directorate have also appeared on Radio Iklas to provide information about job opportunities in our Directorate.

The efforts by our Directorate in relation to equality initiatives have not just been confined to the employment of minority ethnic people. It has been recognised that not enough has been done for people with learning difficulties in respect of employment opportunities and so six traineeships have been established within the Directorate to give people with learning difficulties the opportunity to experience work. One of the posts is in a day centre for people with learning difficulties, one post is in Democratic Services, one post is in the Learning Difficulties Administration team and two posts are in Administration Support at St Mary's Gate.

A Job Coaching and Support Service in Learning Difficulty Services is actively working to support and encourage the trainees and is working with the rest of the Council and the private sector to create further traineeships that will benefit this group of people.

Underpinning all of the above work has been continued activity in relation to Recruitment fairs and the use of Care Ambassadors to promote jobs in our Directorate to the wider community.