

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

2ND DECEMBER 2019

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES – SHEENAGH REES

Matter for information

Wards Affected: All wards

Fair Play Employer Scheme Update

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update Members in relation to the Chwarae Teg Fair Play Employer Scheme, which the Council signed up to in February 2019.

Executive Summary:

This report provides Members with an update in the relation to the actions have been undertaken since February 2019 in line with the Fair Play Employer Scheme, including a gender equality review of the Council's policies and practices, a gender equality survey of the Council's workforce, and the outcome of benchmarking to determine the Council's current 'award level'. This has led to the development of a Gender Equality Action Plan, with evidenced based actions to improve gender equality and reduce the Council's gender pay gap.

Background:

The Chwarae Teg Fair Play Employer Scheme

Chwarae Teg is a charity established 25 years ago, that aims to "inspire, lead and deliver gender equality in Wales". Chwarae Teg campaign on gender equality issues, carry out extensive research, and also seek to provide practical advice and support to women and to employers in Wales.

The Council joined the Chwarae Teg Fair Play Employer Scheme in February 2019, a scheme that supports organisations to develop gender equality action

plans, based on analysis of available workforce data, consideration of employer practices, matched to evidenced based best practice recommendations, including actions to reduce gender pay gaps.

The Scheme includes a baseline assessment, with a detailed gender and diversity survey, and benchmarking against sector and organisation in order to determine a current “award level”, which Chwarae Teg have categorised as Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. The aim of this is help an organisation understand in some detail where it is performing well and to identify areas where action can be taken to improve the overall rating. The ratings are split into 9 areas:

- Business Diversity
- Flexible working practices
- Internal communication
- Working relationships
- Learning & development
- Recruitment selection
- Performance Management
- Organisational Culture
- Reward & recognition

Gender Equality Review and Survey

Since February, Chwarae Teg has carried out an extensive review of the Council’s policies and practices, and a survey of the Council’s workforce. This survey did not include Council employees employed by School Governing Bodies because of the differences in management arrangement and gender pay gap reporting. Further consideration will be given to this in future as the project moves on.

In June 2019, 3,504 employees (approximately half of the Council’s overall workforce) were invited to participate in the anonymous survey, with a very good response rate of 32%.

Based on the survey results, I am pleased to report that Chwarae Teg has awarded the Council the **Fair Play Employer Award at Silver level**.



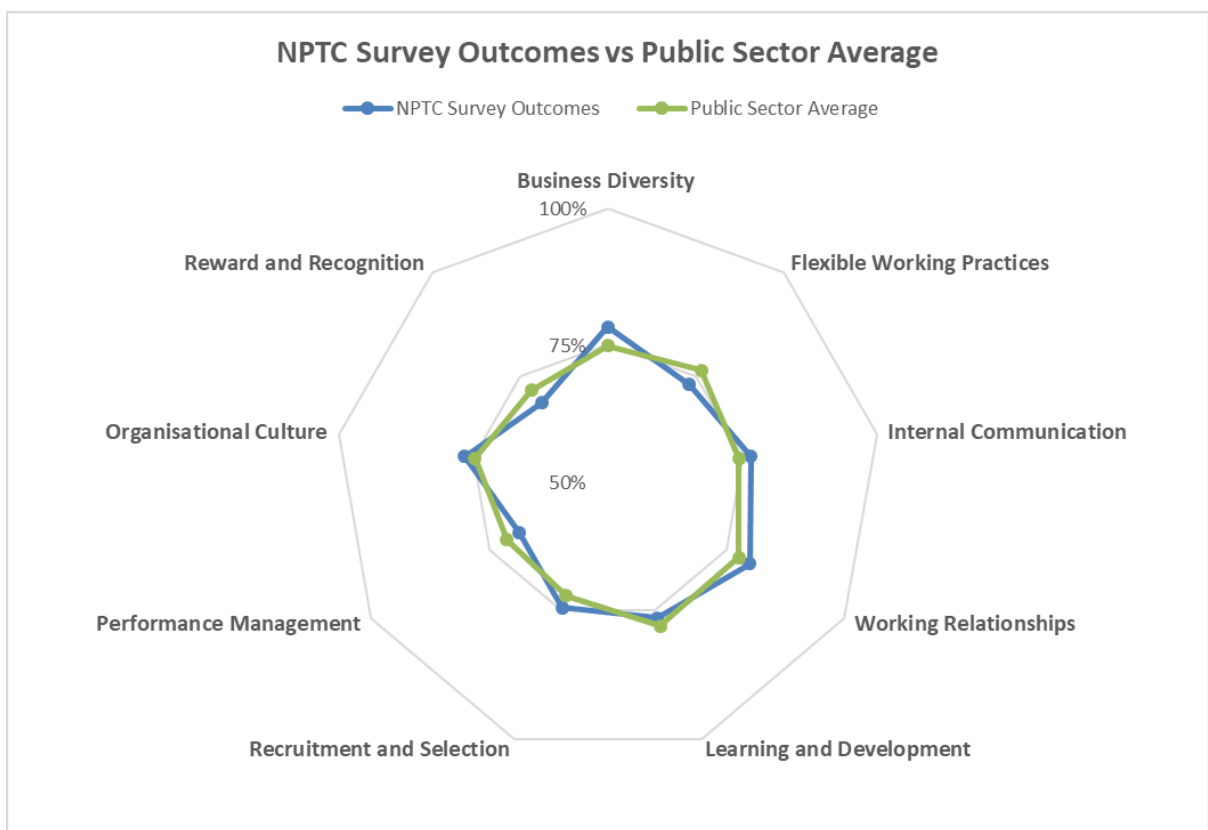
Chwarae Teg advise that this is a significant achievement, and that it confirms the Council's commitment to making a difference to the recruitment, retention and progression of women working.

Chwarae Teg have provided the council with a full report detailing the feedback provided by employees in response to the survey questions. This is attached at Appendix 1.

The report provides very detailed feedback in relation to the survey questions, for example, Members will be pleased to note that 86% of respondents agree that diversity is embraced at all levels in the Council and 95% of respondents report that they can be themselves in the workplace.

The table and diagram overleaf show how the Council benchmarks against the public sector average in the 9 areas covered by the survey:

Client Results	NPTC Survey Outcomes	Public Sector Average
Business Diversity	78%	75%
<i>Flexible Working Practices</i>	73%	77%
Internal Communication	77%	74%
Working Relationships	80%	78%
Learning and Development	77%	78%
Recruitment and Selection	75%	72%
<i>Performance Management</i>	69%	71%
Organisational Culture	77%	75%
<i>Reward and Recognition</i>	69%	72%



In 5 of the 9 categories, the Council outcomes are above the public sector average, and within a 4% range on all categories. The report highlights some very positive feedback for the Council in relation to business diversity, internal communications, working relationships, learning and development, recruitment and selection and organisational culture.

Whilst overall the report shows that there are no areas of serious concern for the Council, it does identify key areas where there is room for improvement:

Flexible working practices

Positively, 80% of respondents agree they are supported culturally to work flexibly and 81% agree they are confident they can make a request for flexible working. However, only 61% agree that everyone in the organisation is supported to work flexibly – interestingly there is more disagreement among male respondents. This highlights potential inconsistencies in the application of the Council's flexible working policy across the Council. Chwarae Teg suggest measures to raise awareness of flexible working practices at all levels within the organisation, and to monitor the outcomes of flexible working requests. There is also evidence that raising awareness of flexible working can lead to a reduction in gender pay gaps.

Performance Management

Only 63% of employees agree that they have a regular review of their performance which highlights inconsistencies in the implementation of the Council's performance management policy. 55% of employees reported that they have a clear progression path. Chwarae Teg suggest measures to improve the consistency of how our managers manage performance, as well as the creation of a mentoring scheme to increase the numbers of women in senior roles and to develop female talent.

Reward and Recognition

31% disagree that reward and recognition is fairly distributed regardless of gender and the report also points out what we already know, that the Council has a gender pay gap. The action plan sets out a number of specific measures in relation to reward and recognition, and to help the Council reduce its gender pay gap.

Action Plan

In response to this survey feedback, the Council has developed an Action Plan with the support of Chwarae Teg. This is provided at Appendix 2. The Action Plan has been endorsed by the Council's Equality and Community Cohesion Group.

The Action Plan has 5 objectives, with a number of actions set out under each objective:

- To ensure the Council is a diverse and inclusive organisation;
- To promote, facilitate, analyse and monitor flexibility in the workplace at all levels (from top down) to enable women to progress and to ensure compatibility with a multi-generational workforce;
- To ensure a fair and transparent recruitment and selection process that encourages a wider talent pool and facilitates a more equal gender balance;
- To ensure the talent pipeline promotes female talent and progression and increases the number of women in senior roles; and
- Recognition and rewards to be managed transparently and kept fair regardless of gender or any other protected characteristic to ensure employees feel valued.

Chwarae Teg will provide ongoing support to the Council in delivering the actions set out in this plan. For example Chwarae Teg are supporting the development of an internal mentoring programme and will provide bespoke training to mentors who volunteer to support this programme.

Financial Impacts:

There is a cost to the scheme, and for an employer the size of NPT, Chwarae Teg charge a complete package price of £10k plus VAT for a 12 month subscription. Funding has been identified within the HR budget to continue the Council's membership of the scheme in 2020 / 2021 (as a result of vacancies created via VR and in order to deliver permanent saving in 20/21, the department has an underspend in the 2019 / 20 salary budget).

Integrated impact assessment:

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for monitoring / information purposes.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

No implications

Workforce Impacts:

This proposal is positive for the Council's mainly female workforce as it seeks to understand reasons for the Council's gender pay gap and implement actions which will reduce it.

Legal Impacts:

No implications.

Risk Management Impacts:

Implementation this proposal is to support the Council's Strategic Equality Plan commitment.

Consultation:

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members note the update in relation to the Fair Play Employer Scheme and receive a further update in six months.

FOR INFORMATION

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Chwarae Teg “Neath Port Talbot Equality and Diversity Strategy Report”

Appendix 2 – Fair Play Employer Gender Diversity Action Plan

Officer contact

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