



<b>Subject:</b>	LGSC Network of Diversity Ambassadors and The Rainbow Project, HereNI and Cara-Friend Centenary event.
<b>Date:</b>	21 February 2025
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Christine Sheridan, Director of Human Resources
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Catherine Christy, Corporate Human Resources Manager (Development)

<b>Restricted Reports</b>									
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p><b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b></p> <p>Insert number <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> <li>6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>									
<p><b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b></p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) Diversity Ambassador network and sponsorship of/attendance at the Rainbow Project, HereNI and Cara-Friend Centenary event.

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the content of this report.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<p data-bbox="272 362 427 394"><b>Key Issues</b></p> <p data-bbox="165 412 1477 595">3.1 Our Equality and Diversity Action Plan outlines how we will promote equality and diversity in our ambitions to create a city in which people love to live, learn, invest, work and visit. It also contributes to our compliance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Actions are categorised under the following corporate plan priorities:</p> <ul data-bbox="323 613 770 801" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing an inclusive economy</li> <li>• Living here</li> <li>• Cross cutting</li> <li>• Organisational priorities</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="165 869 1477 1254">3.2 The Local Government Equality and Diversity Group prioritises and influences equality, good relations, diversity and inclusion initiatives across local government in Northern Ireland. Sharon McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services is the current chair of the Group which attempts to bring together best practice across the sector and in so doing, seeks to integrate the priorities of the Group with the ongoing work of individual Councils. The Group identified a key implementation initiative: establishing a network of Diversity Ambassadors to actively advance the equality and diversity agenda within Councils.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1321 1477 1662">3.3 The Diversity Ambassadors will work within their Council and community to support delivery of the regional Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan and help to drive behavioural and cultural change across the local government sector. The role of the Diversity Ambassador is important because they will work at all levels helping to create a fair, accepting, inclusive culture which in turn will help to reduce the occurrence of discrimination allowing everyone to feel welcome, cared for, safe and valued. Please see Diversity Ambassador Role Specification attached at Appendix 1.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1729 1477 1912">3.4 In May 2023 all councils were asked to confirm the names of elected members or senior officers in diversity and inclusion champion or ambassador roles so that they could be invited to a programme of events for Diversity Ambassadors. The current list of BCC Diversity Ambassadors is as follows:</p>

**Elected member ambassadors.**

Cllr Aine McCabe - Gender  
Cllr Micky Murray - LGBTQIA+  
Cllr Anthony Flynn - LGBTQIA+  
Cllr Seamus De Faoite - LGBTQIA+  
Cllr Ruth Brooks - Disability

In addition, a number of elected members in the Disability Working Group also asked that they be invited to the programme of events.

**Officer ambassadors.**

Kate Bentley - LGBTQIA+  
John Tully - Race  
Christine Sheridan -all areas  
Nora Largey - all areas  
Catherine Christy - all areas  
Michael Johnston - Disability

3.5 From October 2023 to November 2024, a series of best practice events and information sessions took place, consisting of five sessions, offering Diversity Ambassadors opportunities to exchange insights and engage with subject experts. These sessions were facilitated by the Commission and supported by Equality and Diversity Group members Bronagh Hinds (DemocraShe) and Bernie Kelly (Vice Chair of the Local Government Staff Commission). A number of Belfast City Council diversity projects and initiatives were showcased across the events.

3.6 Looking ahead, the initiative aims to formalise a Diversity Ambassador Network to sustain collaboration, learning, and the sharing of best practices across Councils. In December 2024 the LGSC sought expressions of interest from elected member ambassadors and officer ambassadors across all 11 councils to co-chair the network going forward. Catherine Christy, Corporate HR Manager – Development, in Belfast City Council and Cllr Noeleen Hays, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, have been invited to co-chair the network in 2025/26. See Network Terms of Reference attached for further information.

3.7	<p><b>The Rainbow Project, HereNI and CaraFriend Centenary event</b></p> <p>An event is being held in Titanic Belfast on 8 March 2025, to celebrate a combined century of support and advocacy from three of Northern Ireland’s LGBTQIA+ organisations: The Rainbow Project, HereNI, and CaraFriend. Adding to the significance of this occasion, the prestigious Tolerantia Awards will also form part of this celebration. This renowned event honours individuals and organisations that have made substantial contributions to the promotion of tolerance and human rights across Europe. The Rainbow Project is a member of the Tolerantia Alliance and last hosted these awards in Belfast which were sponsored by the Council, back in in 2016.</p>
3.8	<p>As part of its agreed LGBTQIA+ diversity action plan commitment, the Council will be one of the named sponsors of the event, which includes a table for 10. Our LGBTQIA+, elected member and senior officer ambassadors have been invited to attend as well as members of the staff LGBTQIA+ network ‘Proud’, who commit a considerable amount of personal time and effort on top of their day jobs to support and manage the network.</p>
<b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b>	
3.9	<p><b>Financial</b></p> <p>There are no financial implications to this report as associated costs are included the agreed LGBTQIA+ diversity action plan.</p>
	<p><b>Human Resources</b></p>
3.10	<p>There are no human resources implications to this report.</p>
<b>Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Implications</b>	
3.11	<p>The delivery of the Councils equality, diversity and inclusion projects and initiatives will have a positive impact on our workforce and internal operations as well as communities across our city.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix One – Diversity Ambassador Role Specification</p> <p>Appendix Two - Diversity Ambassador Network – Terms of Reference</p>