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# FRED UPDATE 2018

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## Update on the work of the Forum for Research into Equality and Diversity 2017-18



As we commence a new academic year, it seems timely to provide an update on some of the work that the Forum for Research into Equality and Diversity has been doing over the last year and some of the exciting things that are coming up over the next 12 months. Many of you have been involved in working with the Forum during 2017/18 and we look forward to you being involved in 2018/19.

**Professor Chantal Davies with Dr Carole Easton (Chief Executive of the Young Women's Trust) launching positive action in apprenticeships research in Parliament in June 2018.**

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## Activity in 2017/18

The Forum has had an exciting year with a range of activity around equality and diversity:

*Positive action and higher education:* Professor Chantal Davies rolled out a workshop with Sheffield Hallam University on the impact of positive action for staff diversity in higher education in the UK in September 2017.

*The Human Rights Act 1998 and obligations on Higher Education Institutions:* Chantal led a workshop with Sheffield Hallam University on the implications of the HRA 1998 on Higher Education Institutions in the UK particularly in light of the PREVENT obligations. This took place in October 2017.

*Melting the iceberg: using positive action to address disadvantage and underrepresentation in higher education:* Chantal gave a keynote presentation at Bath Spa University Diversity and Equality Festival in October 2017.

*Using positive action in STEMM:* Chantal presented a workshop to staff and senior management at Sheffield University in November 2017.

*Kick It Out Workshop on equality in football:* Sophie Cowell presented a workshop on behalf of Kick it Out at Telford College of Arts and Technology Equality and Diversity Week in February 2018.

*The utility of criminal prosecution in the context of Female Genital Mutilation:* Caroline Chappell was invited to present a paper at the University of Salford FGM Conference in March 2018 looking at criminal prosecution in this area.

*March for Human Rights:* In March 2018, the Forum hosted the British Institute of Human Rights ([www.bihhr.org.uk](http://www.bihhr.org.uk)) in a 70th anniversary celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



*Not my employee, not my problem? Employer's liability for sexual harassment committed by a third party:* Dr John Morrow gave a keynote presentation at the ACAS North West Annual Conference in April 2018.

*Levelling the playing field? Using positive action to increase the representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Football Managers:* Sophie presented a lecture on positive action in football as part of the University of Chester Research Frontiers Lecture Series in May 2018.

*Responding to allegations of sexual harassment of employees by third parties:* John was commissioned to provide series of five training sessions across the North West for ACAS focussing on managing sexual harassment within the workplace during 2018.

*Inclusive assessment: a response to the experience of students with Dyslexia:* John presented a paper at the University of Chester Teaching and Learning Conference in June 2018.

*A theoretical consideration of EU and UK positive action law and policy in light of the English Football League's recruitment code:* Sophie presented a paper at the Sport and EU Conference at Edge Hill University in July 2018.

*'You can impose a rule all day long, but if people don't buy it, they'll find ways 'round it!': Perceptions of the English Football Leagues' interview rule:* Sophie presented a paper at the Sport and Discrimination Conference at Oxford Brookes University in September 2018.

*How to use positive action effectively and robustly in HE:* Chantal presented a workshop for staff at Liverpool University on positive action in September 2018.



Sophie Cowell presenting on positive action at Telford College of Arts and Technology Equality and Diversity Week

### **Postgraduate research activity**

Congratulations to Dr John Morrow who was awarded his PhD with a thesis focussing on SpLD students and academic assessment in March 2018.

Niel Gillard is continuing his doctoral research into female progression within law firms and is now well into his write up period.

Sophie Cowell continues her doctoral studies looking into the implications of positive action for football coaches in the UK and is now into her write up period. As part of her studies Sophie presented a poster at the University of Chester Diversity Festival 2018 and presented a paper titled *Emerging findings on perceptions of the English Football League's Mandatory Interview Rule* at the Faculty of Social Science Postgraduate Conference in February 2018.

### **Positive action research**

Professor Chantal Davies continues to research and disseminate work on the use of positive action in the UK. In addition to presenting papers nationally and internationally on this issue, she has also published several articles in this area.

This has led to a number of requests for the Forum to work with institutions across the UK in relation to the promotion of positive action (as above).

In particular, throughout 2017/18 Chantal has been funded by the Young Women's Trust and the Equality and Human Rights Commission to look at the use of positive action to address underrepresentation in apprenticeships. In 2017, a Young Women's Trust (www.youngwomenstrust.org) report "Making Apprenticeships work for Young Women" highlighted that young women are still largely absent from a number of sectors including Engineering, Construction and ICT. In particular, this report recommended that where participation of women is disproportionately low, employers should consider taking positive action to increase participation in this regard. Indeed a recent good practice guide showcased some of the ways in which organisations are already taking action to reduce these gaps through their apprenticeship schemes.

With this in mind, in June 2017 the Young Women's Trust commissioned and funded a research project led by Professor Davies into the attitudes towards and current use of positive action in relation to apprenticeships aimed at increasing the representation of women in sectors in which they are currently underrepresented across England (in particular Engineering, Construction and ICT).

This research has led to a report titled *Equality at work? positive action in gender segregated apprenticeships*. This report makes some robust recommendations in relation to the use of positive action in apprenticeships and more generally. The research findings were launched at a Parliamentary event in June 2018 and Professor Davies gave evidence based on this research to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Women in Work in July 2018.

A Northern launch of the Young Women's Trust positive action research report will take place at the University of Chester in March 2019 and will be open to business leaders, policy drivers and academics.

Copies of the summary and full report of the Young Women's Trust research can be found at:

[https://www.youngwomenstrust.org/what\\_we\\_do/publications](https://www.youngwomenstrust.org/what_we_do/publications)

In addition, the Equality and Human Rights Commission funded Professor Davies (in partnership with the Young Women's Trust) to carry out a literature review and host and report on a Roundtable event on positive action in apprenticeships in March 2018. This Roundtable was attended by leading employers, academics and policy drivers to consider the use of positive action in apprenticeships to address underrepresentation across the protected

characteristics in England, Wales and Scotland. Again, this report makes robust recommendations for practice, policy and legislation in this area and will be published in late 2018.



### **Student participation**

The Forum continues provide a vehicle and opportunities for postgraduate and undergraduate student participation and development. To date, the students have been extremely keen to make the most of volunteering opportunities. Notably they have provided vital support in relation to the events referred to above. Equally, the students have also participated in pedagogic research projects being rolled out. Hopefully, this has also fed into their learning and has and will continue to provide them with valuable experience.

In addition, we have seen the successful continuation of the scheme whereby a number of Level 6 student volunteers provided a supporting legal casework function for the Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race and Equality Centre (CHAWREC), in relation to the equality legislation. This year, several students

volunteered and gained experience on a weekly basis under this scheme.

### **Business, Academic and Community Links**

The Forum has continued to develop its links with business, academia and the community. Dr John Morrow sits as a trustee and Professor Chantal Davies acts as Special Legal Advisor with Cheshire Halton and Warrington Race Equality Centre (CHAWREC). Chantal has continued to sit on the board of the Equality Challenge Unit and has been part of the group overseeing the transition of the ECU into the new merged Advance HE. John has developed links with ACAS in the North West and has been commissioned to roll out a series of training sessions on their behalf this year (see above). Links continue to be developed with the national Equality and Diversity Forum (EDF) and WISE (Women in Science and Engineering). Sophie Cowell continues to develop her leadership activities in relation to equality in football. In particular, she has been appointed to the new Game Changers group which is a mentoring programme aimed at providing professional development opportunities with the aim of identifying and creating the future leaders of football. Alongside Kick It Out, the programme is supported by UCFB and the Premier League. We have also developed institutional links with Bangor, Strathclyde, Glasgow, Liverpool, Oxford Brookes University, University of Sussex, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield University, Bath Spa University etc. We continue to develop links with the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Young Women's Trust following the successful completion of research in the area of positive action (see above) and we are meeting potential new collaborators on a regular basis to seek to develop connections further.

### **Forthcoming events and activities**

The Forum has an exciting year ahead with a number of events to be rolled out during 2018/19 including the following:

*Positive action and higher education:* Chantal Davies will be providing a keynote at the Advance HE Athena Swan Awards Ireland in Dublin in November 2018.

*Introduction to the Equality Act 2010:* Chantal will be rolling out a workshop introducing the equality legislation for Advance HE in November 2018.

*Positive action and apprenticeships: exploring the use of positive action in apprenticeships in England, Scotland and Wales:* the report of the research commissioned and funded by the Equality and Human Rights Commission on positive action will be published in late 2019.

*Northern Launch of Equality at work? positive action in gender segregated apprenticeships:* Chantal and the Young Women's Trust will be hosting a Northern launch of the positive action research as part of the University of Chester Diversity and Equality Festival in March 2019.

*Mock Employment Tribunal:* John Morrow will be partnering with ACAS to roll out a mock employment tribunal focussing on discrimination issues in 2019.

Employment Tribunal Judge Muriel Robison and Visiting Professor David Perfect (Research Manager with the Equality and Human Rights Commission) will once again be providing support on their area of expertise in relation to equality and diversity throughout the academic year.

There are lots more events and work in the pipeline with work now focusing on strategic planning for the next 5 years. If anyone would like to input into this

process, please do let us know and we would be delighted to include you.

Contact [chantal.davies@chester.ac.uk](mailto:chantal.davies@chester.ac.uk) for further information.



Professor Chantal Davies giving evidence on positive action in apprenticeships to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Women in Work (July 2018)

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