

## **Athlone Equality Officers Network meeting May 2nd, 2008 in Athlone Chamber Offices**

**Present:** Joe Ryan, Athlone Extrusions, Alan Lee, IO Systems, Liz Moran, M&C Specialties Wojciech Gatkowski, Prince of Wales Hotel, Joe Lecumbre, IO Systems, Liz Hayes Corporate Community, Andrew Pierce Collane HR

**Apologies:** Tom Ryan Ganlys Hardware, Nicola Brownrigg, Alienware, Derek Hennessy Athlone Credit Union

### **Matters Arising:**

Opportunities for the forum involving Athlone Institute of Technology

- IBEC has a programme for Equality Officers certified through DCU(?)
- The programme could be hosted by AIT and delivered by IBEC
- Would run on weekends or evenings
- Delivers HETAC certification
- A FETAC option was also raised: The forum could be used to potentially pilot a FETAC Level 6 Module for Equality Studies. The Training commitment would be somewhat less than the IBEC option and the FETAC Module might be useful to anyone working towards a FETAC certificate. More discussion required.

### **Expansion of Panel to include social partners**

- Joe Lecumbre suggested he could participate on a regular basis as a representative of Congress (ICTU). He also suggested the inclusion of a number of the larger companies in the area as well as state/semi-state agencies. Initial feedback is that which Joe's participation will be helpful the forum is made up of SME businesses and there is a concern that the larger companies and agencies could drive the agenda away from the needs of the SME sector businesses. Further discussion required.

### **FAS sponsorship for network training events**

- Alan Lee is to try and get the FAS Training CD
- Andy is to request someone from FAS (Gerry Johnson or Terrie Clarke) to come to the June meeting to answer questions concerning FAS sponsorship for the training

### **Network sponsorship of a local event**

- Collane has agreed to sponsor a fixture for Athlone Town Football club for a corporate event (Limerick 37, August 31<sup>st</sup>)
- The half-time has been donated to the network to create publicity for the project and to give the member companies an opportunity to showcase their support for Equal Opportunities in the Workplace
- Suggestions for the event were as follows
  - The half-time event could involve young people from 9 to perhaps 16 in some sort of activity related to soccer and emphasizing the role of diversity
  - ATFC had suggested a parade with the children holding flags of the nations involved in teams from all the FAI clubs
  - It could involve some sort of soccer related activity such as
  - Penalty shootout: a "shootout" against goal-keepers from AT junior goalkeepers. Each company would be left to find children to represent them. Discussion suggested that the time available would make a shootout difficult to finish if each player were to

- take a series of shots to determine a winner. Additionally, it would take a great deal of coordination to manage age groupings in a way to make it a fair competition
- A short game -- Ireland vs. the world: The children could be divided into two teams who would play a short game across the midfield. The main point was that some level of competition would make the event a bigger attraction. T-shirts might be provided by the chamber. Discussion suggested "Ireland against the world" could send the wrong message. Companies would have to find players in a specific age group (i.e. 10 -11 year olds to make it fair). Who would assemble the teams, who would referee, who would coach ...
  - "Take a shot against discrimination" or "Score a goal for Equality": this is a suggested alternative to the options above. The companies could have as many kids from across all age groups. Each employer would provide their own shirts for the youth representing them—the network could agree a gtheme but the companies could design their own shirts. Companies would also provide their own signs (Athlone Extrusions scores for Equality). Young people only have to show up on the day, wear their company t-shirt, get a picture with their company sign, with the group and take as many shots as time allows. Goals could be open or tended by an ATFC junior. Could use two goals, spot under 10s at one distance, under 12 at another and 13 and up at another, Would only need spotters and someone to send the youth on. A network member could compere. More discussion required

**Closing comments:** Andy distributed copies of recent Equality Tribunal decisions.

**Next meeting:** There are several people who would attend but who have difficulty making Friday meetings. It was decided to try a Wednesday to see if a midweek meeting might be better attended.

**Date for next meeting is 4th June, 2008, 9-11 at the Chamber offices**

**Meeting Ends**