

Response from the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights: Creating a Fairer Scotland

21st December 2015

What do you think needs to be done to create a fairer Scotland?

The Scottish Government is consulting individuals and organisations to offer their views on what a fairer Scotland should look like in 2030, and the actions that need to be taken to make this vision a reality. These contributes will feed into the development of a Social Justice Action Plan.

The Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights believes that race equality should be central to the Scottish Government's Social Justice Action Plan. Scotland will not be a fairer place in 2030 if race equality is not high on the agenda.

Our vision for 2030, which we have articulated following ongoing research, policy development, and consultation with minority ethnic communities, grassroots community organisations, and practitioners, describes a Scotland in which minority ethnic people have economic, political, and social justice.

Aspects of this include:

1. There is a greater sense of social cohesion and unity between and within minority and majority ethnic communities, and minority ethnic communities feels safer and experience less racism;
2. The needs, priorities, and experiences of minority ethnic communities are reflected within governance and decision making structures through improved participation and representation at all levels;
3. Innovative and effective anti-racist practice is embedded throughout Scotland's educational system;
4. Scotland's minority ethnic communities experience fewer labour market, workplace, and income inequalities; and,
5. Minority ethnic communities in Scotland have equality in physical and mental health as far as is achievable, have effective healthcare appropriate to their needs, and experience fewer inequalities in housing and home life.

Eradication of institutional racism and the advancement of race equality must be seen as critical aspects of creating a fairer Scotland.

CRER is also working with the Scottish Government in the development of a Race Equality Framework for Scotland. As part of this work, CRER has conducted thorough desk and consultation-based research and produced an overview of identified and evidenced areas of inequality that must be addressed. Further information on this can be made available upon request.

Creating a fairer Scotland in which minority ethnic people have economic, political, and social justice

CRER believes that policy processes in Scotland must be based on a robust range of data on ethnicity. Evidence-based policy development should be critical to the Scottish Government's approach to equality. Robust data collection ensures inequality is not disguised, and offers a clearer picture of the problem to identify potential solutions.

Scotland's public sector must have improved capacity to tackle racial inequality and racism, and meet the needs of minority ethnic people. In order to better meet the Scottish Specific Equality duties, the public sector workforce must be confident in their ability to tackle issues concerning racism and inequality, and be able to identify and meet needs for service users of all ethnicities using a flexible and person-centred approach. The Scottish Government should take advantage of work being done to link up agendas, build capacity, and share information.

Scotland's minority ethnic led voluntary sector must become stronger, more effective, and sustainable. The contribution made by these groups is extremely valuable, and the Scottish Government must continue to invest in and support these groups to make an effective contribution to race equality in Scotland.

Creating a fairer Scotland in which there is a greater sense of social cohesion and unity between and within minority and majority ethnic communities, and minority ethnic communities in Scotland feel safer and experience less racism

CRER believes people in Scotland must experience greater cohesion and integration between all communities. While evidence demonstrates that minority ethnic communities have a strong sense of belonging in Scotland, it is also true that not everyone in the majority ethnic population accepts minority ethnic people as an equal part of Scottish society. Increasing community cohesion is vital to tackling racism and racial inequality.

Additionally, people from minority ethnic backgrounds in Scotland must be safer and have a reduced risk of facing racism. In 2013/2014, there were a recorded 4,418 racist hate crimes, or an average of 79 per week. Racism is not limited to violence; it is also experienced through institutional forms of discrimination and inequality, such as in employment or in accessing services. Tackling all forms of racism and hate crime must be a priority for the Scottish Government.

Furthermore, people who face racist incidents and hate crime in Scotland must experience better support through improved service provision and policy development. Despite considerable efforts to date by the Scottish Government and third sector organisations, under-reporting of hate crime is still an issue in Scotland. Increasing confidence in the criminal justice system and in reporting initiatives must occur to tackle this.

Public confidence in the fairness and transparency of the work of Police Scotland, including stop and search, must be improved. Concerns have been expressed about the relationship between Police Scotland and minority ethnic communities, demonstrating that more action is needed to increase the trust of the police among minority ethnic communities.

The needs, priorities, and experiences of Scotland's minority ethnic communities are reflected within governance and decision making structures through improved participation and representation at all levels

Minority ethnic people in Scotland must achieve fair and proportionate representation in politics, governance, and decision making. Minority ethnic communities have proportionately lower levels of representation throughout Scotland's political, governmental, and decision making structures; this ranges from holding elected offices to sitting on public boards. Fair, proportionate representation at local and national levels is essential to achieving race equality.

Similarly, minority ethnic people must have fair and proportionate influence on policy and decision making through effective engagement and involvement. While considerable efforts have been made to increase community engagement, further work is needed to guarantee engagement with minority ethnic communities is effective and appropriate, and to ensure the views of these communities are heard on issues that affect them.

Furthermore, minority ethnic people must have a fair and proportionate influence on community planning in their local areas. The community planning processes have a huge impact on the lives of minority ethnic people at a local level; all members of the community must have equal opportunities to be involved in these processes. As such, a commitment to race equality must be imbedded in the work of community planning partnerships to ensure minority ethnic communities are engaged and heard.

Informal community action within minority ethnic communities must be better understood and valued. Quantitative evidence on informal community involvement and formal involvement through volunteering, is sparse, but qualitative evidence suggests that this takes place on a wide scale. With better evidence gathering, best practice examples and opportunities to extend access to informal and formal volunteering could be identified.

Scotland's minority ethnic communities must have increased participation in arts, leisure, and heritage activities. Research shows that inequality in participation also extends to arts and leisure; these are areas in which increased participation from minority ethnic groups could be very advantageous and contribute to better overall wellbeing and community

cohesion. Minority ethnic communities deserve fair opportunities to access these activities, and to contribute to the culture and heritage of Scotland.

Finally, Scotland's approach to history and heritage must reflect the experiences, roles, and contributions of minority ethnic individuals and communities. The stories of these individuals and communities are often left out or are poorly represented in discussions and studies about Scotland's history. It is also important that Scotland's role in the transatlantic slave trade and in colonialism – and the impact of these global events on minority ethnic communities today – but be acknowledged and discussed. Both majority and minority ethnic communities need to better understand the story of Scotland's history to create social and cultural equality, and promote a pluralistic national identity for Scotland that allows all communities to feel ownership.

Innovative and effective anti-racist practice is embedded throughout Scotland's educational system.

Scotland's minority ethnic children and young people must experience a school environment which reflects their backgrounds, needs, and experiences in approaches to learning, teaching, and pupil support. While minority ethnic pupils in Scotland have higher rates of attainment overall, there are many areas in which changes in practice could create a more positive learning environment for minority ethnic pupils, and which could help all pupils benefit from an educational experience that promotes equality, empathy, and responsibility.

Minority ethnic pupils who face racism at school must be better supported and have confidence in the approaches taken to address racist incidents. Although policies to address racist incidents are in place, there is variance in practice; poor practice can significantly impact a young person's life and education. As such, efforts must be made to ensure prejudice-based bullying in schools is effectively tackled.

Similarly, Scotland's teachers must be better able to tackle racism and promote equality and community cohesion in the classroom. More effective approaches to addressing race equality in schools should be developed, and all teachers should have access to high-quality learning about racism and equality.

Scotland's teaching profession must better reflect the diversity of its communities. In addition to creating more equality in employment, this would positively impact pupils by demonstrating an inclusive and socially cohesive environment in schools and providing role models for minority ethnic young people.

Minority ethnic young people must experience better outcomes in completing further and higher education, and in transitioning into the labour market after completing their education. Despite high attainment levels and rates of entry into further and higher education after schools, minority ethnic young people do not receive the advantages that should come from these positive educational outcomes. Drop-out rates, unemployment,

and underemployment are proportionally higher for minority ethnic communities, which contributes to further inequalities and higher rates of poverty. Changing this is key to addressing racial inequality in Scotland.

Finally, minority ethnic learners must have equal access to financial and funding support for learning. This is especially important in relation to the Educational Maintenance Allowance and Individual Learning Accounts. More evidence is needed to determine whether these meet the needs of minority ethnic learners.

Scotland's minority ethnic communities experience fewer labour market, workplace, and income inequalities.

Scotland's public sector workforce must be reflective of its communities. Monitoring through the Scottish Specific Public Sector Equality duties suggest that minority ethnic people are disproportionately rejected at job interviews in the public sector in comparison to white Scottish applicants, and many public bodies have very low proportions of minority ethnic staff in comparison to demographic figures. Public bodies must invest additional effort in tackling discrimination and utilising positive action to tackle these inequalities. Furthermore, although data is limited for the private sector, anecdotal evidence suggests that similar action is required to achieve better equality in the private sector.

Minority ethnic people must experience less occupational segregation and fairer workforce representation across the labour market, by both ethnicity and gender based measures. Both women and minority ethnic people experience inequality in the labour market; this disadvantage is especially high for minority ethnic women. There must be more equality in the wider labour market through partnership working, and encouragement of good practice from the Scottish Government.

Also, migrants must face fewer barriers to employment in Scotland. Evidence demonstrates that recent migrants face significant barriers to employment, in addition to barriers related to structural and personal racism faced by the wider minority ethnic population. These challenges include recognition of overseas qualifications and experience, levels of English language proficiency, and employer perception of migrant issues. These barriers must be removed to ensure migrants have fair access to employment opportunities.

Furthermore, minority ethnic people living on low incomes in Scotland must experience less disadvantage connected to income and poverty. As minority ethnic groups are twice as likely to experience poverty as the majority ethnic population, there is a link between race and poverty which must be examined and addressed if there is to be fairness in Scotland. Minority ethnic communities must have access to effective support and advice to mitigate the impact of poverty, including access to welfare benefits for those eligible.

Minority ethnic entrepreneurs and business owners must have equal access to business and enterprise support. The rate of self-employment varies among ethnic groups, with some being over-represented (e.g. Pakistani communities) and some under-represented (e.g.

African communities). There is concern among minority ethnic communities about support for minority ethnic led businesses and development for business or social enterprise; research is needed to identify how to best address these needs.

Minority ethnic communities in Scotland have equality in physical and mental health as far as is achievable, have effective healthcare appropriate to their needs, and experience fewer inequalities in housing and home life.

Minority ethnic communities and individuals must experience better health and wellbeing through improved access to health and social care services which meet their needs. Although minority ethnic communities overall are less likely to have long-term limiting health conditions and disabilities than the majority ethnic population, there is variance among ethnic groups, as well as differences in how quickly treatment is accessed, such as in relation to mental health support. Furthermore, some health conditions disproportionately affect people of specific ethnicities, while some courses of treatment have been found to be less effective for those with specific ethnicities. The Scottish healthcare system needs to account for these issues, and be more responsive to the circumstances and particular needs of minority ethnic communities.

Furthermore, health and social care policy must improve through stronger evidence on ethnic health and care inequalities. Several programmes are addressing this need, and this work must be supported and good practice embedded throughout the integrated Health and Social Care Partnerships.

Minority ethnic communities must experience fewer housing inequalities. These inequalities include statistically higher rates of overcrowding and homelessness, as well as a need for improved access to social housing, as minority ethnic communities are disproportionately in privately rented accommodation. Additional issues and challenges exist for refugee and asylum seekers, particularly those who have been refused leave to remain in the UK, as well as migrants who are undocumented or have visa-related issues.

A Fairer Scotland

In short, Scotland cannot become a fairer society unless achieving racial equality is a priority. A fairer Scotland is one in which minority ethnic people have economic, political, and social justice. As such, the need for greater community cohesion, increased participation and representation, anti-racist practices in schools, fewer labour market and income inequalities, and improved equality in health, housing, and home life must be acknowledged and met.

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