

Race Equality Framework for Scotland

Action Forum on Education, Employment & Income

Workshop Summary

Introduction

The Scottish Government hosted an Action Forum on Education, Employment and Income on 27th August 2015 in Edinburgh. This was the third of four themed Action Forums designed to involve key stakeholders in the development of a new race equality framework for Scotland. The framework is intended to tackle racism and promote equality. It will be in place from 2016 to 2030.

More information about this work, which is being carried out in partnership by the Scottish Government and CRER, is available at the [CRER website](#).

This Action Forum on Education, Employment and Income was planned with assistance from a Reference Planning Group comprised of people with expertise in relevant fields from Government, the public sector, race equality organisations and the wider voluntary sector. The Reference Planning Group identified key issues and evidence, and suggested potential Action Forum invitees whose skills and experience would be valuable to the policy development process.

Following discussions with the Reference Planning Group, a wide range of participants were invited to take part in the Action Forum based on their professional expertise. They included people working at both strategic and operational levels from both the public sector and voluntary sector in Scotland. To aid discussion, participants were provided with an interim evidence paper and information on the format of the Action Forum in advance.

This Action Forum was co-hosted by CRER.

Strategic Action Forum

The agenda for the first part of the day was aimed at providing context and focus to inspire the workshop sessions. This was delivered through the following presentations:

- Welcome and introduction – Gavin Gray and Luska Jerdin, Scottish Government
- Setting the scene – Carol Young, CRER
- Keynote Speech - Naomi Eisenstadt, Poverty Adviser to the Scottish Government

The workshop sessions drew participants together into groups focussing on two areas related to the theme of Education, Employment and Income:

- Education and lifelong learning
- Employment, employability, income and poverty

With assistance from a facilitator, these groups completed an interactive workshop split into three sessions. This was designed to seek effective solutions and ideas for action. Facilitators recorded the agreed feedback in workbooks specially designed for use within the policy development process.

Each of the three sessions progressed discussion towards solution focussed outcomes:

- Workshop 1: Setting and prioritising our goals
- Workshop 2: Opportunities, challenges and responsibilities
- Workshop 3: Reaching our goals: potential solutions

The following workshop summary draws together a brief overview of the collated results from the three workshop sessions.

There was much cross-over in the issues and priorities identified by groups looking at the three topics. To avoid duplication, this paper provides a summary of views rather than a full record of workshop results; this also means that in some cases, issues raised by workshops may appear under a different topic heading than originally intended. Whilst goals and solutions are detailed for each topic, the wider context of discussion throughout the three sessions (particularly the second session) has been summarised into a brief description of participants' views. The contents of this paper do not represent Scottish Government's views or position.

Workshop summary

A total of 26 participants took part in the workshop sessions. Appendix 1 lists the organisations taking part. This includes only those who were able to attend on the day, and is not reflective of the full list of organisations invited to participate.

Participants were grouped according to their area of work into workshop tables looking at the three topics. In total, there were three tables:

- One table discussing education and lifelong learning
- Two tables discussing employment, employability, income and poverty

It was originally planned to have separate workshop tables for employment and employability, and income and poverty. However, several attendees for the income and poverty group were unable to attend, making the numbers untenable. The groups were therefore combined. Nevertheless, as some of the issues are quite distinct, the following summary will present these two areas of discussion separately.

Participants on each table agreed feedback to be recorded by the facilitator in a workbook. The results of these workbooks are summarised below by topic heading, with an additional heading to cover issues of overarching or strategic significance which were identified by the groups.

It should be noted that the feedback collated here represents the views of participants; these views have not been subject to fact checking or other scrutiny. Although each group agreed on the content to be recorded in their own workbook, the collated feedback reflects the views of the individuals participating in the workshops and cannot be seen to reflect the views of all present at this Action Forum.

Overarching strategy and policy

A number of policy issues and strategic areas were identified as important to improving race equality in education, employment and income. In many cases, discussion about strategy and policy issues hinged on the importance of understanding what works for race equality and using this to implement positive action.

General issues in terms of strategic approaches included:

- The need to define terms used more clearly and to understand what definitions of terminology mean for research and data collection purposes, especially in relation to ethnicity categories
- Concerns around understandings of mainstreaming and the need for institutions to acknowledge approaches targeted at specific equality groups as being part of a mainstreaming approach
- Ensuring race equality is central to all future policy and legislation development in Scotland, particularly in the event of any future constitutional change
- Understanding the constantly changing demography of Scotland's minority ethnic communities and taking account of this in policy development
- The need for Government and the Public Sector to make better use of Equality Impact Assessment
- Specific issues affecting migrants may be best dealt with through a specialised approach rather than as part of general race equality work (for example through the establishment of an integration and migration service similar to those in many European countries, and more immediately through making better use of existing resources such as the COSLA Migration Policy Toolkit)
- The risk that the effectiveness of the race equality framework for Scotland could be hampered by loss of political will, changes in political leadership or lack of continued effort and ongoing review
- Evaluating what has been done so far on race equality in Scotland and using learning to maximise effectiveness of the new framework

Specific policy areas identified as important included:

- The Scottish Specific Public Sector Equality Duties¹
- Curriculum for Excellence²
- A National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People³
- The Fair Work Convention⁴
- The Equal Opportunities Committee inquiry on Race, Ethnicity and Employment⁵

Education and Lifelong Learning

Discussion focussed on three main areas - inclusiveness within the educational environment; anti-racism and tackling prejudice based bullying; and schools' engagement of minority ethnic communities and parents.

Issues raised by participants included:

- Training and support for educators and other front line staff in education / communities
- The need to ensure that approaches to education (whether through teaching or pupil support) are inclusive and take account of the differing needs and experiences of pupils in all ethnic groups
- Concerns that the the SEEMIS red-amber-green risk matrix used in schools to track risk will fail minority ethnic pupils as it concentrates mainly on areas that are within the pupil's control – for example attendance, effort and behaviour – and so doesn't take account of the impact of racism, ostracisation etc. that specifically impact these pupils
- Representation of minority ethnic people within the educational workforce
- Tackling barriers to minority ethnic parental engagement with schools and with their children's learning, and more broadly, engagement

¹ [The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2012](#)

² See Education Scotland – [The Curriculum in Scotland](#)

³ [A National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People](#)

⁴ [Fair Work Convention](#)

⁵ [Race, Ethnicity and Employment Inquiry](#)

between schools and other educational institutions and the wider community

- The need to use varied methods in achieving this, for example online resources work well for some parents but face to face engagement needed for others
- Tackling racism and prejudice based bullying in schools, and the need for more consistent and transparent approaches / strategies
 - Current approaches often seen as not fit for purpose (even if policies are in place, often not implemented sufficiently)
 - Leadership at Local Authority level; Education Authorities to have clearer frameworks on anti-racism and anti-bullying
 - Importance of involving parents, local communities and a wide range of school staff in this – a ‘whole school’ approach
- Reflecting structural racism and white privilege within education on racism and inequality
- The challenges of engaging staff in schools and further and higher educational institutions in anti-racist / race equality work in the face of many competing demands and reluctance to engage created by fear of ‘getting it wrong’
 - Potential to reward good practice, for example through an award for teachers / educators
- The importance of learning from and engaging with voluntary sector projects which work on issues around race equality and education, and the challenges of maintaining this work in a short-term / project based funding environment
- Ensuring that minority ethnic people who drop out of education (further and higher education) get adequate careers guidance and employability support
- Educational Maintenance Allowance system has a number of barriers for minority ethnic young people, especially those who are recent migrants or refugees without leave to remain who will be unable to access payments due to residency criteria (young minority ethnic people who meet the residency criteria or have been born in Scotland may also face barriers due to the requirement to have their own bank account)
- The Individual Learning Account eligibility rules create some barriers for College ESOL learners

Example goals:

‘Diversity and race equality training and support to be embedded in programmes of teacher training; integral and linked to CPD’

‘Local Authority race equality policies and strategies for schools to be reflective of and developed with local minority ethnic communities (and linked to relevant local and national strategy)’

‘Clarify and understand what we mean by engagement (in relation to parental and community engagement by schools and educational institutions) – develop different approaches to real community engagement’

Potential solutions:

- Positive action to increase the number of minority ethnic entrants to teaching, to reflect the minority ethnic population in Scotland
- Research to understand issues around recruitment and retention of minority ethnic teachers and lecturers
- Development of a race equality toolkit for use across educational environments in Scotland
- Support mechanisms for educators, including upskilling opportunities, mentoring, forums and networking opportunities, good practice sharing and creating ‘safe spaces’ for discussing issues around racism and race equality
- A national approach to tackling racism and prejudice based bullying in schools which links clearly to local policy and strategy
- Chartermark for community engagement for schools / parent councils to promote engagement of minority ethnic parents, linked to training and development opportunities
- Using the Parental Involvement Act 2006 to underpin engagement with minority ethnic parents
- Inclusive methods of recruiting parents to parent councils, including promoting the status of local community languages and improving links between schools and community organisations

Employment and Employability

Participants were concerned about employment inequality in the broadest sense – from access to employment and workforce representation to career development and positive action. Creating effective practice to remove the barriers that prevent minority ethnic people from achieving their career aspirations was a key focus.

Issues raised included:

- Structural and personal racism and discrimination remain serious barriers to equality in all of these areas
- Under-representation of minority ethnic people within the workforce overall and individual workplaces / occupations
- The need for workplaces to create environments where minority ethnic people's experience and qualifications are valued and recognised, and they feel free to be proud of their ethnicity / origins
- Issues around recruitment and barriers to entering employment, particularly around the deficit in appointments at interview stage for minority ethnic applicants
- Assessing the race equality impact of existing employability support work in the public and voluntary sector and learning from this
- Race equality in workplace progression and sustaining employment
- The role of Public Sector Equality Duties in increasing race equality in public sector employment
- Recognition that changes implemented to increase race equality can also have wider benefits for everyone
- Resistance to change amongst employers, and how to challenge this
- The need for an aspirational leadership approach from Government and public sector
- Role models and how these can be identified and promoted
- Importance of open, honest discussion and debate about racial inequality in employment
- Addressing employment barriers for migrants:
 - o Making better use of and further developing existing approaches to qualifications recognition (e.g. NARIC at UK Level; Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework)

- Creating a robust benchmarking system for recognition of English language capability, linkable to job requirements and addressing employer's assumptions about language capabilities
- Improving access to high quality vocational ESOL provision
- Recognising the differing barriers and types of discrimination faced by newer migrants and established minority ethnic communities in employment, and ensuring activity tackles all of these appropriately
- Identifying and promoting practice that works in reducing employment inequalities, and the need for open, transparent partnership working across sectors to understand what works and doesn't work
 - Where efforts have failed, crucial to understand whether the problems lie in the approach itself or the implementation
- Ensuring that race equality is embedded in any future reviews or refreshes of the Scottish Government approach to employability

Example goals:

'Minority ethnic people have fair and proportionate representation at all levels, grades and occupation types in Scotland's public sector'

'Proportionate, equal, fair access to employment'

'We understand what works and doesn't work to reduce employment inequality in the long term, and can implement best practice'

'Eradicating racism and discrimination – compliance with legislation at least'

'Celebrating diversity and recognising qualifications and experience within the workplace'

Potential solutions:

- Meaningful, mandatory equality training for public sector; this should be evaluated and monitored to help assess progress
- Standardised approach to improving race equality in employment across the public sector in Scotland, for example including a comprehensive, locally responsive benchmarking system on minority ethnic representation and progression

- Strengthening enforcement of the Scottish Specific Public Sector Equality Duties (e.g. through a different 'watchdog' with more power than current EHRC)
- Highlighting cases of workplace discrimination and racism to raise awareness
- Better use of exit interviews to identify reasons for failure to retain minority ethnic staff
- Support for minority ethnic people who are new to the labour market, including school leavers
 - Person centred approach involving parents / carers
 - Internships, work experience and placements
- Positive action measures in Scotland's public sector
 - Innovative recruitment approaches to address current under-representation of minority ethnic groups in successful job applications within the public sector
 - Role models, peer support, networking and mentoring for minority ethnic workers
 - Target setting for minority ethnic representation in the public sector workforce, with leadership and action planning to meet targets
 - Support for career progression through clear progression plans and targeted professional development
- Standardised, flexible system for recognising overseas qualifications and experience which is user friendly, with awareness raising for employers (e.g. establishing a recognition centre) and linked to re-qualifying mechanisms for those who need them
- Supporting English language development in the workplace for those who need it by linking public sector employers to ESOL providers to enable new workers with basic English to improve their ability
- Public Sector employers to work with employability providers, voluntary sector organisations and Skills Development Scotland to address the career aspirations of minority ethnic people

Income and Poverty

Much of the discussion on income and poverty centred around mitigating the impacts of poverty; it was perceived that, although the Scottish Government lacks direct control over many issues affecting income such as welfare reform and the minimum wage, there are many ways in which it can act to support those affected by poverty. Access to appropriate advice and support for minority ethnic individuals was also a primary focus of the discussion.

Issues raised included:

- The interaction of poverty / deprivation and both personal and structural racism
- Support currently available for minority ethnic people in need of money / welfare advice comes from a wide range of statutory and voluntary sector sources; need to ensure people are aware of what's available
- Peer education and empowerment needed for people on low incomes to assert their rights
- Partnership working between voluntary sector specialist services for minority ethnic people and mainstream service providers can be successful, lessons can be learned from good practice examples (however lack of sustainable funding puts this at risk, and public sector partners do not always value or respect voluntary sector work as they should)
- Ensuring services offering support and advice are able to meet the needs of a diverse range of service users; whilst monitoring take up is useful, the individual experience should be high quality regardless of numbers needing to use the service
- The need for all possible efforts to mitigate the impact of policies which have a financial impact on minority ethnic people – from welfare reform to spousal visa charges – and the importance of Government working with the voluntary sector to build effective policy responses to this
- Concerns that advice and support provision often fails minority ethnic people, particularly for refugees and migrants where cases are complex due to residency / migration / leave to remain related issues

Example goals:

‘Both communities and agencies understand rights and entitlements and appropriate support is being accessed’

‘Scottish Government is a strong champion for all minority ethnic communities, large or small, in their negotiations with UK Government and in mitigating the impact of UK Government policies’

Potential solutions:

- Ensuring that the Scottish Government develops robust policy responses that support race equality in relation to income and poverty; working closely with the third sector can help to achieve this
- Better availability and dissemination of comprehensive, up to date guidance on entitlements and rights for minority ethnic people, including any implications of residency status
- Peer education and peer advocacy programmes to empower minority ethnic communities to understand and assert their rights
- Increased resources for advice and support from third sector organisations to enable better promotion and outreach, and more partnership working with statutory services
- Support and training for public sector and voluntary sector workers to understand entitlements and rights, including any implications of residency status (this should be mandatory for projects funded by the Scottish Government)
- Ensuring that Scottish Government policy development takes account of race equality aspects, e.g. the economic situation for minority ethnic communities
- Recognising that those on very low incomes or without income (e.g. refugees who have been refused leave to remain) need additional support to access advice and support, for example money to travel to appointments

Next steps

This summary will be shared by email with the participants who took part in this Action Forum. In the longer term, all four Action Forum summaries will be available to view online. All participants will receive an email with a link to access these.

The results from the four Action Forums will be included in the overall evidence base for development of the race equality framework for Scotland, alongside desk based research and evidence from other engagement activities (including the Community Ambassadors Programme which links grassroots community organisations into the policy development process).

For more information about this Action Forum Workshop Summary or wider work around developing a race equality framework for Scotland, please contact:

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Appendix 1: List of organisations participating in workshop sessions

African Council

BEMIS

BEMIS Gathered Together Project

Bridges Programmes

Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland

College Development Network

COSLA

CRER

KWISA

respectme

Scottish Government

Scottish Refugee Council

Show Racism the Red Card

Skills Development Scotland

STUC Black Workers Committee

Universities Scotland

University of the West of Scotland

YCSA