

Minutes of Meeting of
Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Racial Equality
2014 Annual General Meeting held on 19th November 2014

Present:

Bob Doris	MSP (Convener)
Hanzala Malik	MSP (Deputy Convenor)
Jamie McGrigor	MSP (Deputy Convenor)
Anne McTaggart	MSP
Jatin Haria	CRER (Secretary)
Carol Young	CRER
Harriette Campbell	ACWA
Kash Taank	Glasgow Life
Alan Cowan	GREC
Naeem Khalid	Frae Fife
Faten Hameed	Roshni
Rebecca Marek	Scottish Youth Parliament
Sandra Deslandes-Clark	SEMPERscotland
Shaben Begum	SIAA
Vicki Burns	Show Racism the Red Card
Trishna Singh	Sikh Sanjog
Davidson Chademana	UCU/STUC Black Workers' Committee
Mahmud Al-Gailani	VoX (Voices of Experience)
Mohammed Razaq	WSREC
Mridula Chakraborty	CRER Political Shadowing Scheme
Jennifer Roberts	CRER Political Shadowing Scheme
Anita Shelton	Individual

Guest speakers: Hakim Din and David Watt, Education Scotland; Rami Okasha, Care Inspectorate; Khalida Hussain, Voluntary Action Fund

Apologies:

Jackie Baillie	MSP
Claudia Beamish	MSP
Nila Joshi	Edinburgh Interfaith Women's Association
Chris Oswald	Equality and Human Rights Commission
Pat Elsmie	Migrants' Rights Scotland
Meg De Amasi	Stirling Multi Cultural Partnership
Mohammed Afzal Chaudhrey	Individual

Welcome

Convenor Bob Doris MSP welcomed attendees to the meeting.

AGM 2014

The formal Annual General Meeting was commenced, with all existing office bearers being proposed for re-election unopposed. The office bearers for the Cross Party Group on Racial Equality in Scotland for 2014/15 are therefore:

Convenor – Bob Doris MSP

Deputy Convenors – Hanzala Malik MSP and Jamie McGrigor MSP

Secretary – Jatin Haria, CRER

Attendees noted the draft annual report presented by the secretariat. Any amendments, including requests for additions to the membership list, are to be submitted to Carol Young.

Guest Speakers: Hakim Din and David Watt, Education Scotland; Rami Okasha, Care Inspectorate. 'Race Equality in Regulation and Inspection.'

David Watt provided an introduction to the work of Education Scotland, which is the national body in Scotland responsible for supporting quality and improvement in learning and teaching.

He then outlined some information about the importance of equality to Education Scotland's work, including the following key principles:

- Eradication of inequality and ensuring achievement
- Addressing equality and promoting inclusion within inspections
- Fairness and tackling bullying
- Learners' experience is reflected in every inspection report
- Building capacity on equality and seeking improvement in relation to equality within the education system

Hakim Din provided his perspective on how equality concerns are reflected in his work as an HM Inspector of Education. He related examples of good practice on race equality in schools, particularly in regard to anti-discrimination work.

David and Hakim accepted questions and comments from members. Issues explored included:

- Developments in foreign language provision, which are moving faster on some languages (Mandarin and Cantonese) and less so in others (Punjabi and Gujarati); MSPs working with communities to campaign for better provision
- Reductions in Urdu provision; this is a local policy matter which members agreed appears to be a retrograde step
- Reductions in ESOL provision in some areas; Education Scotland would expect schools to be providing appropriate support
- Distress experienced by families whose children are not attending due to lack of support, with social work intervention sometimes occurring
- Concerns that some asylum seeking children may be refused access to school over disputes as to whether they are of an eligible age
- Tackling racism and promoting race equality within schools remains a challenge; there are methods of assessing experience of bullying and discrimination at schools but these have limitations, including reliance on schools to randomly select pupils for participation in inspection activities
- The majority of perpetrators of racist incidents are young white men in their late teens and early twenties; anti-racist activities have not worked with them, challenge to ensure positive engagement of this group at school
- At a recent conference, Black teachers stressed that they felt race equality had 'dropped off the agenda' and work must be done to address this
- The importance of tracking attainment by ethnicity with as much disaggregation as possible, and the role of the new Insight tool in enabling this
- The need to work closely with community groups to reduce isolation for minority ethnic pupils, including high performing groups such as Asian girls – potential for isolation and exclusion from extra-curricular activities reflected in the Wood Report yet schools are often not tackling this
- The balance between Scottish resident and foreign student numbers in Higher Education

David Watt raised an upcoming review by OECD of their publication 'Equity and Equality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools.' Bob Doris requested that further information on the review be provided when available; this was agreed.

Rami Okasha presented an overview of the work of the Care Inspectorate, the independent scrutiny and improvement body for care services in Scotland.

A focus on equality is ensured in the following ways:

- A holistic approach which focusses on leadership, staffing, environment and quality of care, with inspections prioritised according to level of risk
- The Care Inspectorate seeks improvement where needed and can investigate individual complaints, unlike many regulatory and inspection bodies
- Their work takes a human rights approach; this will extend to the update of care standards being carried out by the Scottish Government
- The Care Inspectorate supports targeting of services for specific groups but also insist on equality being embedded into mainstream services
- Inspectors adjust inspection processes according to need, including language translation; the Care Inspectorate is a member of Happy to Translate
- Care plans are expected to reflect cultural, language and religious needs; activities on offer should support cultural identity
- Early years services are encouraged to go beyond tokenistic representations to provide a higher quality of diversity activity
- Representation amongst staff is acknowledged to be important, with concerns about the low numbers of minority ethnic staff in the childcare sector

Rami accepted questions and comments from members. Issues explored included:

- Accessibility of care services for minority ethnic individuals
- Accessibility and representativeness of information on the Care Inspectorate's services; additionally it was suggested that a specific leaflet on the approach to equality could be useful
- Service user input to inspection process, and use of former service users or family members as volunteers to assist in inspections (Education Scotland also recruit volunteer lay members)
- The role of enforcement action and the complaints process
- The difficulties faced by Black and minority ethnic professionals working in care services – power structures act to disempower

Eleanor McKnight of CEMVO Scotland submitted an update in relation to this agenda item to the secretariat to present in her absence, as she was unable to attend:

- CEMVO Scotland has worked on a project with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland to embed race equality more firmly into scrutiny considerations. Findings of community led research will be published in a report which will identify three commitments for local policing inspections -

workforce (tackling underrepresentation), hate crime (reliability and validity of data, national crime recording standards and management of reported crimes) and community engagement models and results.

- CEMVO has met with key Inspectorates (including the EHRC) to build partnership working and explore additional tools such as a generic set of race equality principles for inspection bodies.

Members noted this update, and the Convenor requested that CEMVO Scotland submit more detailed information on this work for circulation to members.

Anne McTaggart MSP, Jamie McGrigor MSP and Hanzala Malik MSP left the meeting.

Guest Speaker: Khalida Hussain, Voluntary Action Fund. 'Scottish Government Equality Unit funding programme 2015/16.'

Khalida Hussain presented information about the Scottish Government equality fund, which is managed by VAF. This included an overview of priority areas and number of current projects working on each over 2014/15. In total, 60 organisations are funded with over 20 working specifically on race equality and racial discrimination issues. These projects have resulted in a range of positive outcomes, a selection of examples were outlined.

The new funding round for 2015/16 is now open with funds of up to £3million available. Details of the application process and priority areas are available online. Applications should reflect specific Scottish Government national outcomes, plus partnership working and social capital.

Khalida accepted questions and comments from members. Issues explored included:

- The ability for projects to include up to 20% contribution to core costs within their applications to the Equality Fund
- Evaluation of the previous funding round, and the potential for VAF's report to Scottish Government on this will be made publicly available
- Plans to create cluster groups of successful applicants so that projects can support and learn from each other
- Concerns about the restrictive range of Scottish Government equality outcomes within criteria, particularly in terms of race equality

- Clarification that the Equality Fund is one of several methods of investment in equality work undertaken by the Scottish Government

The Convenor agreed to write to the Minister with responsibility for equality to raise concerns about the potential for applicants to feel unduly restricted by the focus on particular equality outcomes, which do not include race equality in the broad sense.

The secretariat will seek information on the full range of investment in equality work by the Scottish Government and circulate this to members.

Legislative programme updates - highlights of the year ahead for racial equality in Scotland

Carol Young provided a paper with some current and future key policy/legislative issues; members should submit any further suggestions for inclusion, as this can be used throughout the coming year to assist the CPG to focus its activities.

The Convenor reiterated that the CPG would welcome information on any relevant policy and scrutiny work being undertaken by non-parliamentary members.

Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes were checked for accuracy, with no amendments or matters arising.

Dates and topics of future meetings

The meeting dates for 2015 are:

Wednesday 18th February

Wednesday 24th June

Wednesday 28th October (AGM)

Each meeting will be held at 6pm; non-Parliamentary members should arrive at least 15 minutes before for security purposes.

Potential topics for future agenda items were discussed. These included:

- Input on engaging with minority ethnic communities from Breast Cancer Care Scotland (who have offered to attend) and possibly also a prostate cancer charity – the secretariat will explore this possibility

- Race equality and mental health care
- Update on improving representation of minority ethnic communities within the Modern Apprenticeship Programme – the secretariat will arrange this.

The Convenor reminded members that, as always, they are encouraged to email proposals for agenda items to the secretariat for consideration.