Employment support and advice-
- what provisions are in place to help people from ethnic minorities to access employment support and advice;
- what provisions are in place to recognise and address the lower employment rates among some ethnic minority groups compared to others;
- are there any innovative approaches being taken to address the challenges some people from ethnic minorities may experience in trying to access employment advice and support?

As a percentage of the working age population for North Ayrshire (16-64 age group, 1.1% are from an ethnic background – this is approximately 970 people. There is some variation across age groups (16-24 -1.4%, 25-34 – 1.5%, 35-49 -1.2%, 50-64 -0.7%)

North Ayrshire employability and skills services are available to, and promoted to all North Ayrshire residents regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or age.

These services are advertised in an open and consistent manner using local press, North Ayrshire Council website and social media. All vacancies identified through employability and skills services are also available on universal job search website through Job centre plus.

Services are delivered in through outreach in local communities to support and improve the process of accessibility of services to all. This is being cemented with the development of employability hubs across North Ayrshire which will bring together a range of providers and services in a single location within local communities.

Targeted interventions have also been delivered, for example, there has been an Afghan relocation programme between the Home Office and North Ayrshire Council since 2015. The Afghans relocated to North Ayrshire were offered support with CV preparation, Interview skills, and positively promoted to employers across North Ayrshire. This has already resulted in a job outcome
Recruitment, retention and promotion—

- what evidence is there that discrimination in recruitment, retention and promotion is an issue in Scottish workplaces;
- what are the barriers that lead to unequal outcomes (including lower rates of employment and employment segregation)?

Promoting positive action—

- what measures are being taken to tackle workplace discrimination and segregation;
- is there a need for a scheme that recognises positive action taken by employers (a “double tick” scheme for example);
- what are the examples of good practice that have improved outcomes, and if so what has been the key to their success?

With the relatively low number of ethnic minorities within the North Ayrshire population, it is difficult to provide definitive evidence relating to recruitment, retention and promotion within North Ayrshire workplaces.

The evidence of economic activity based on 2011 census suggests that economic activity amongst ethnic groups is higher than for the overall population. The census summarised shows that:
- Ethnic groups have higher overall employment rate than total population (61.9% v 52.0%)
- Ethnic groups have slightly higher % of people employed as employees (47.1% v 46.0%)
- Ethnic groups have much higher % of people self-employed (14.8% v 6.0%). For Asians this rises to 17.9%.
- Ethnic groups have a slightly lower unemployment rate than the North Ayrshire population as a whole (6.4% v 6.9%)

In terms of support, North Ayrshire offers a range of comprehensive business services to the local business community. This covers all aspects of business support including account management for growth businesses, support for SMEs, start-up and growth support through business Gateway, entrepreneurial support and builds on the strength of the wider public sector business support offer under the banner of Team North Ayrshire.

These programmes also provide advice and support to businesses for HR support relating to recruitment, retention and promotion of staff.

These services are available to all businesses in North Ayrshire and are advertised and promoted in a transparent fashion to encourage all businesses and residents to engage with the programmes.
North Ayrshire also delivers a Modern Apprenticeship programme for local businesses and this is positively targeted at youngsters who are disadvantaged from the labour market including ethnic minorities and disabilities. This programme supports businesses develop their workforces of the future.

We take a wider partnership based approach to equalities work through the Ayrshire Equality Partnership and North Ayrshire Council also recognises its own responsibilities as an employer. Key to this is our Equalities Policy which has an aim of being an equal opportunities employer in both employment and service provision. This includes equality actions across:

- Action Planning
- Service Planning
- Communications & publications
- Accessibility
- Community Planning
- Strategic links
- Consultation
- Working Groups/Committees
- Training & development strategy

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