1. Employment support and advice –
   a) What provisions are in place to help people from ethnic minorities to access employment support and advice? See below for response.
   b) What provisions are in place to recognise and address the lower employment rates among some ethnic minority groups compared to others? As we have insufficient evidence to confirm that this is an issue in the Stirling Council area we have no comment to make.
   c) 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? See below for response.

Response: 1a and 1c)

The Council’s Adult Education Service supports the skills development of our most vulnerable residents through the provision of literacy, ICT, personal development, confidence building programmes, and employability learning programmes for local people described as “Job Ready” to help them get work. It also delivers learning opportunities which meet the general needs of ESOL learners (English for Speakers of other Languages), to support them engage and participate in work, the community, and their family and personal lives. Current projects include ASPIRE and an ESOL Work Club:

- **ASPIRE** is a workplace learning and training project supported by funding from the European Social Fund. This supports people in employment who may be described as disadvantaged and at risk of losing their jobs because of a disability, low self-esteem or confidence, low skill level, ill health or because English is a Second Language. As of December 2014, 288 learners have been supported through this project taking part in training in a wide range of subjects including: ESOL; adult literacy and numeracy; computing; first aid at work; fork lift truck driving; web marketing; YouTube; website design; Excel; Sage Accounts; Sage for Warehouse; and Institute of Leadership and Management Team Leading Qualifications.

- **The ESOL Work Club** was launched in Stirling as part of the ASPIRE project for those who speak English as a second language and aims to support migrant workers looking for work. The programme supports English language development in a job search context, and focuses on CV writing, writing covering letters and interview techniques. The ESOL work club, as of December 2014, has supported 42 individuals, with 18 participants having successfully found employment.

2. Recruitment, retention and promotion -

   a) What evidence is there that discrimination in recruitment, retention and promotion is an issue in Scottish workplaces?

Response: We have insufficient factual evidence to confirm that this is an issue in the Stirling Council area. A lack of employment opportunity for members of ethnic minority communities was however identified as an issue during consultation with local equality stakeholder groups when developing the Council’s Equality Outcomes. Outcome 2 “Access to employment opportunities is improved for people with a disability, members of ethnic
minority communities and young people” and associated supporting Actions seek to address this issue identified primarily on the basis of experiential evidence.

b) What are the barriers that lead to unequal outcomes (including lower rates of employment and employment segregation)?

Response: Our experience and the continuing demand for ESOL classes in the Stirling Council area suggests the absence of or inadequate ability in English is a significant barrier to employment opportunity members of ethnic minority communities. We have insufficient evidence to comment on the issue of employment segregation in respect of BME employees.

3. Promoting positive action —
   a) what measures are being taken to tackle workplace discrimination and segregation;
   b) Response: None to date, specifically regarding members of ethnic minority communities
   c) is there a need for a scheme that recognises positive action taken by employers (a “double tick” scheme for example);
       Response; The declared number of Black and Ethnic minority employees in our total workforce rose from 0.8% in 2013 to 1.4% in 2015 - an increase of 75%. The actual proportion of BME employees in our workforce may in reality be higher as 22.9% of employees responding to the Employee Diversity Survey chose not to answer this question. In the Council area Black and Ethnic minority residents represent 3.2% of the total population (2011 Census).
       We therefore consider that there is insufficient evidence available to justify the introduction of such a scheme by Stirling Council
   d) What are the examples of good practice that have improved outcomes, and if so what has been the key to their success?
       Response: We aim to ensure that there are no barriers to individuals seeking employment with the Council and that it is an employer of choice. The Council participates in the development and use of the National Recruitment Portal (www.myjobscotland.gov.uk) and accepts applications in paper format which are then uploaded into the recruitment portal. Our Recruitment & Selection Policy ensures our recruitment procedures meet appropriate standards.

Liz Fraser
Communities & Partnerships Service
Stirling Council
24 June 2015