Employment support and advice:-

**Q. What provisions are in place to help people from ethnic minorities to access employment support and advice?**

A. The council’s Economic Development unit helps people find employment in the Angus area with the assistance of key workers within the strategy and employability team. These workers provide support and advice to the indigenous population, but one key worker has a specific focus on assisting ethnic minorities.

It is a similar situation within the council’s welfare rights service. Support is available to the local population, but advice is provided which is specific to ethnic minorities, for example, changes to immigration rules, the benefits they are entitled to etc.

Voluntary Action Angus (VAA) is a third sector partner which provides work experience through volunteering, and is open to everyone. Many eastern Europeans in particular have engaged in volunteering. VAA also provides information and advice on a wide range of issues such as employment, benefits applicable to migrant workers etc.

There are several Citizens’ Advice Bureaux in Angus which also provide information and advice on a wide range of issues and people’s rights, including employment.

**Q. What provisions are in place to recognise and address the lower employment rates among some ethnic minority groups compared to others?**

A. There are no specific provisions in place to address this issue, apart from providing all people with the most appropriate advice and support to enable them to compete effectively. Interpreters are provided on request if people want to access support or advice from council services and they do not understand English.

**Q. 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?**

A. The council, along with our partners in fire, police, NHS Tayside, Women’s Aid and Gangmasters Licensing Authority, hold annual roadshows to farms to inform seasonal workers about living conditions and safety, but also about employment issues such as the minimum wage, exploitation, deductions from wages, NI issues etc. These roadshows are always well received and appreciated, and information
about their rights is provided in several languages. Many workers return year after year, and some have gone on to study ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) here, or undertake courses in, for example, tourism or secretarial studies at college in Arbroath and found permanent employment in the area.

Recruitment, retention and promotion:-

**Q. What evidence is there that discrimination in recruitment, retention and promotion is an issue in Scottish workplaces?**

A. In Angus Council, there is little evidence due to the very low numbers involved. In terms of recruitment, the comparative success rates are:

White Scottish 8.29%, Asian 2.78%, Black and African 4.35%, Eastern European and Other White Ethnic 5.66%. In terms of promotion, the success rates are White Scottish 10.77% compared to Eastern European and Other White Ethnic 6.9%.

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

A. In general, the main barrier is language. In Angus, however, there are hundreds of seasonal migrant workers, and employers such as farmers have told us that they promote workers who speak the main languages to supervisory posts, therefore sometimes it can be beneficial.

The transferability of qualifications could be another issue for some employers – it may be easier to employ someone with traditional qualifications than to wait for validation of those from overseas. This could also lead to some people accepting lower paid jobs than those they are qualified to do, for example, manual posts which need no particular qualification.

Promoting positive action:-

**Q. What measures are being taken to tackle workplace discrimination and segregation?**

A. The council does not discriminate against any employee on the grounds of any of their protected characteristics, and would treat any unlawful discrimination as potential disciplinary action.

The council’s Induction e-learning is compulsory for all employees, and includes a section on equalities. There is also an equalities and diversity blended course which is compulsory for managers, and optional for other staff. This course contains training in recognising and eliminating discrimination. The council also provides
recruitment and selection training which is compulsory for all managers to ensure that they do not unlawfully discriminate when recruiting staff.

**Q. Is there a need for a scheme that recognises positive action taken by employers (a “double tick” scheme for example)?**

A. The difficulty with such a scheme is confining action to positive action and not falling foul of positive discrimination which is unlawful. Such a scheme should not be necessary, and the council would need more details about what the implications of such a scheme would be before commenting.

**Q. What are the examples of good practice that have improved outcomes, and if so what has been the key to their success?**

A. As stated, language is a key barrier. The council provides free ESOL classes for people whose first language is not English, and these are very well received. They are delivered in innovative ways, and from our evidence of improved equality outcomes in 2013, we highlighted several case studies. One example was of a single mother from Poland who had been employed in several unskilled jobs in Angus (such as working in a chicken factory), but after undertaking ESOL classes her language improved to such an extent she was able to apply for secretarial jobs and improve her career prospects.

Richard Stiff  
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Angus Council  
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