

Race Equality and the 2018-2019 Draft Budget: Evidence Submission from the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights

The Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER) is a Scottish strategic anti-racism organisation which works to eliminate racial discrimination and promote racial justice across Scotland. Our primary concern in relation to the Draft Budget Scrutiny 2018-19 is its potential effect on BME communities. We are keen to ensure that equality is given full consideration in the scrutiny of the budget and that, in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED), provision is made to ensure the Scottish Government is able to effectively eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations.

As such, we are grateful for the opportunity to give evidence to the Equalities and Human Rights Committee and provide a few key points for consideration. We have highlighted four recommendations as the committee prepares comments in advance of the publication of the draft budget.

Key Recommendations

1. Ensure race equality is mainstreamed throughout the Equality Budget Statement, with individual portfolios acknowledging where inequality is present and allocating resources accordingly.
2. Encourage the Scottish Government to specify investment to evaluate the effectiveness of funding third sector bodies and projects, as well as its own internal equality work, to ensure work to achieve equality in this manner is effective.
3. Ensure the provision of funding to fill the most crucial race equality evidence gaps, as detailed in the Equality Evidence Strategy.
4. Encourage the Scottish Government to appoint an individual with race equality expertise to the Equality and Budget Advisory Group.

Equality Budget Statement / Equality Impact Assessment

The Scottish Government publishes an [Equality Budget Statement](#) as part of the budget development process. This statement provides an overview of the budget by protected characteristic, as well as individual portfolio chapters.

While this publication is welcome, CRER believes it offers insufficient consideration for race equality at present. The 'Race' section of the 'Overview by protected characteristic' chapter commits funding in the Equality Budget to implement the [Race Equality Framework](#). However, given the cross-portfolio nature of the Framework, we would expect to see commitments for funding from other departments whose work is directly pertinent to the Framework, such as Education and Skills; Justice; and Economy, Jobs, and Fair Work.

The section also commits to investment in third sector organisations, without further detail as to how this funding furthers race equality. (This is addressed fully in the next section of our evidence.) This is also true

for the Equality Budget funding allocation for the race equality intermediary bodies¹ – the commitment to funding is explicit, but the contribution made to achieving race equality (demonstrated by relevant evaluation and assessment) is not.

The race section as a whole concentrates largely on funding relevant to the Equality Budget. However, to fully address race equality, commitment (and investment) is needed across various portfolios. For example, the Justice portfolio chapter includes significant detail on the impact of the budget on women and girls, but neglects to examine issues relating to race equality, such as discrepancy in access to legal aid. The Economy, Jobs, and Fair Work portfolio chapter does not note (or allocate funding to address) the ethnic penalty faced by BME groups which inhibits their full and equal participation in the workforce. More details of the race equality implications of the Work Place Equality Fund, the Youth Employment Strategy, and City Deals would be particularly relevant. While the Race Equality Framework is noted, it is in the context of recognising overseas qualifications for recent migrants, which will not have an impact on the Scotland-educated BME individuals who disproportionately struggle to find employment which matches their qualifications. Even the Communities, Social Security, and Equalities portfolio chapter notes, for example, funding for affordable homes without citing the inequalities faced by BME groups in accessing quality social housing.

To fully mainstream race equality, budget implications for BME groups must be considered and acknowledged on a cross-portfolio basis, and the Equality Budget Statement must acknowledge this. The Race Equality Framework presents 30 goals for the Scottish Government across various portfolios and departments, essentially setting out the work to which each government department has committed. We believe the budget and its equality statement should have cognisance of these commitments and better detail how funding allocated through the budget will assist in meeting these goals.

Overall, we believe that if the Equality Budget Statement is intended to serve as the budget's Equality Impact Assessment, more detailed work is needed. If an Equality Impact Assessment was properly carried out for each funding portfolio and, indeed, each activity within, this would go a way towards addressing the concerns we have expressed. Accurately assessing the impact of equality by portfolio and activity is key.

Equality Funding

The Communities, Social Security, and Equalities portfolio chapter lays out funding for the third sector. While the commitment to protect funding for the sector is certainly welcome, CRER notes that – across government – organisations and projects are frequently funded without robust evaluation procedures built-in to measure their effectiveness. In the context of race equality, the government should ensure that its investment in organisations and projects designed to reduce the inequalities faced by BME communities is successful in bringing about change. If not, it is possible that significant investment has not made a discernible impact, and that the funding could have been more effectively allocated. As part of funding for the third sector, the budget should also ring-fence money to evaluate the effectiveness of the sector to ensure it is receiving value-for-money and making a marked impact for equality.

We also note that this section could also better detail the internal equality work the Scottish Government is conducting, rather than focusing primarily on external funding allocations. We would ask that in addition

¹ While CRER does receive project funding from the Scottish Government related to aspects of the implementation of the Race Equality Framework, we are not an intermediary body.

to evaluating the work of externally funded projects and groups, the Scottish Government also examine the effectiveness of its own work.

Equality Evidence

The Equality Budget Statement notes a commitment to improving equality evidence, citing a commitment made in the Fairer Scotland Action Plan to publish an [Equality Evidence Strategy](#). This is also in line with a key goal of the Race Equality Framework to ensure that policy processes are based on a robust range of data on ethnicity (Goal 4).

This strategy has now been published, detailing several gaps in equality evidence. For race equality in particular, there were notable evidence gaps relating to workforce data, the ethnicity pay gap, benefit take-up, prejudice based bullying, hidden homelessness, participation in civic society, and several others. We also note that the quality of evidence on poverty in BME communities is sparse and largely reliant on UK Government held data which is difficult to disaggregate to a Scottish level.

While the strategy outlined where gaps were present, it did not specify how these gaps would be addressed. While some of these can be addressed by ensuring public bodies and others adhere to requirement and duties already set out – such as workforce data in the public sector – other gaps will require bespoke research to fill. The strategy notes that the government will carefully consider the most cost-effectively way to address gaps and that, “in order to justify expenditure on [areas where there is no data at all], the gaps would have to be of the highest priority”.

CRER believes that fully understanding the inequalities faced by BME communities, particularly in relation to employment and poverty, should be a high priority for the Scottish Government. As such, we are hopeful that the 2018-19 budget will provide funding to fill the most glaring of these gaps to ensure we have a full understanding of race inequality in Scotland. Only then can we ensure that all possible steps are being taken to tackle persistent inequalities.

Membership on the Equality and Budget Advisory Group

The [Equality and Budget Advisory Group](#), a non-statutory group convened by the Scottish Government to help shape the equality approach to the budget, has a membership which includes five Scottish Government officials, as well as representatives from the Equality and Human Rights Committee, COSLA, Glasgow Caledonian University/Scottish Women’s Budget Group, and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The Equality Network previously sat on this group, but to the best of our understanding, no longer does so.

CRER notes that, aside from gender equality, there is not specific representation of individuals with expertise in the protected characteristics, including race. We have raised this issue in the past and the government has iterated that it is not possible to represent every characteristic and that it was confident that there was appropriately relevant expertise around the table.

While we acknowledge there may be difficulty in representing race equality on the advisory group, we believe that not doing so leads to more difficulties. Without a race expertise perspective, it is likely that the wider group will neglect to consider all pertinent issues and that BME groups will receive less consideration in the development of the budget and the equality statement. We ask that the committee query this with the government to assess whether its position has changed, and whether changes could be made to

ensure the membership of the group includes a diverse range of equality experts, including representation from the race equality sector.

We appreciate the committee's time and consideration on this issue, and look forward to exploring race equality issues further in oral evidence.

Contact

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