

Cross-Party Group on Challenging Racial and Religious Prejudice

Tuesday 29th March 2022 at 6pm on zoom

Present

Foyso Choudhury	MSP
Anas Sarwar	MSP (Chair)
Kaukab Stewart	MSP

Non-MSP Group Members

Sofia Akbar	Al Masaar
Sabah Aslam	
Nasim Azad	Council of British Pakistanis (Scotland)
Ephraim Borowski	Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC)
Alessandra Cecolin	University of Aberdeen
Faten Hameed	Scottish Iraqi Association
Peter Hopkins	Newcastle University (Secretary)
Rabia Ihsan	NASUWT
Hatice Tugba Ikizler Fearnley	Turkish Consulate General Edinburgh
Eunis Jassemi	Office of Martin Whitfield MSP
John McKendrick	Glasgow Caledonian University (invited speaker)
Jacqueline Merchant	Scottish Parliament
Raza Sadiq	Active Life Club
Linsay Taylor	MEND
Kazim Ukka	Community Policy Forum

Apologies

Pam Gosal	MSP
Stephen Kerr	MSP
Fulton MacGregor	MSP

Tash Taank	Glasgow Life
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Welcome

Anas Sarwar welcomed everyone to the meeting, and everyone introduced themselves in turn. It was noted that we are continuing to follow up on Islamophobia inquiry and the actions emerging from this.

Previous minutes

The request for further information about health inequalities in relation to religious and racial prejudice was followed up on. Some information is available via the [Measuring use of health services by equality group](#) (2017) report but other than this, the data is limited, especially in relation to religion and belief.

The minutes were agreed as an accurate account of the meeting with Lindsay Taylor proposing they be approved and Stephen Kerr seconding their approval.

Poverty and race/religion in Scotland

Professor John McKendrick (Professor in Social Justice and co-Director of the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit, Glasgow Caledonian University) was welcomed to the meeting. Professor McKendrick shared key statistics and background evidence about poverty in Scotland with particular emphasis to issues of race and religion. The following points were noted:

Scotland is uniquely positioned in the UK with explicit commitments – including a legal obligation – to tackle poverty

- The [Child Poverty \(Scotland\) Act 2017](#) committed Scotland to eradicate child poverty by 2030
- [The Scottish Attainment Challenge](#) is focused on narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Both of Scotland's national commitments have been 'refreshed'

- [Best Start, Bright Futures](#), Scotland's second child poverty delivery plan, was released last week
 - Tackling the problems associated with poor return from the labour market for ethnic minority families – particularly women – is focused in the plan
- Tomorrow (March 30th) the second iteration of the SAC is released.

There have been several reports in the last decade on ethnic minorities and poverty in Scotland

- [Ethnicity, poverty and the data in Scotland](#) (2021)
- [Economic outcomes for minority ethnic groups in Scotland](#) (2020)
- [Community consultation on poverty and ethnicity in Scotland](#) (2011)
- [Poverty and ethnicity in Scotland: a review of the literature](#) (2011)

The way in which poverty data are collected means that it will be too expensive to have accurate annual estimates of the risk of poverty among many ethnic minority populations. This is unlikely to change.

To provide any annual estimate, it is necessary to group together ethnic groups by world region. This often disguises risk rate.

However, these data have not prevented minority ethnic children from being identified as one of the six priority groups in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017

- As a priority group, actions to tackle child poverty - local and national – must consider the likely/probable/actual impact on minority ethnic children

Each of Scotland's 32 local authorities - in conjunction the local Health Board - must publish an annual [Local Child Poverty Action Report](#) to explain what has been done and what is planned to tackle child poverty locally.

Questions and discussion

Key questions and points of discussion focused on:

- There being an assumption of success because of individual success but this doesn't apply to whole communities – often applied to deprived communities and not only ethnic minority communities.
- Tendency to focus on the 'Asian' category but less so on emerging communities such as African communities and groups but lack of data on this means they tend to be combined as one whole.
- Scotland Child payment, school/college places, housing, employment rates and gender issues in specific communities.
- Need to collect different types of data and use local poverty intelligence
- Minority ethnic households more likely to be in private rented accommodation
- There is no silver bullet to solve this issue, so a societal transformation is needed.
- Need to challenge situation of in-work poverty
- School meal entitlement
- Where the Turkish community would appear in terms of ethnicity
- Religious prejudices faced by Muslim youth
- Representation and leadership, including at Board level
- Responsibilities and duties to challenge discrimination and prejudice
- Importance of allyship and diverse communities speaking up on issues of prejudice
- Need for qualitative data as well as quantitative data
- Need for action on the ground and to respond actively to data
- Need to pay more attention to dietary requirements as well as school meals
- More links between academics and policy researchers and the need to bring together expertise.

It was noted that the key themes of the CPG including allyship, justice, education, media(social), public services, employability, and gender issues

AOCB

Nothing further to report.

The next meeting is scheduled for 31 May 2022.