

Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Racial Equality in Scotland

Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st February 2017

Attendance

Present:

Fulton MacGregor MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament (Convener)
Richard Lyle MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament
Jatin Haria	Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (Secretariat)
Rebecca Marek	Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights
Kaliani Lyle	Race Equality Framework Adviser (Speaker)
Donny Jack	Scottish Government
Harriette Campbell	African Caribbean Women's Association/WSREC
Nikhat Yusaf	City of Edinburgh Council – Additional Support for Learning Service
Sandra Scott	City of Edinburgh Council – Additional Support for Learning Service
Kash Taank	Glasgow Life
Audrey Coltart	Pilton and West Granton Community Council
Geri McDonnell	Pilton and West Granton Community Council
Nicholas Morris	PKAVS Minority Communities Hub
Zoe Holliday	Refugee Survival Trust
Micheline Brannan	Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
Faten Hameed	Scottish Iraqi Society
Nicola Hay	Show Racism the Red Card
Trishna Singh	Sikh Sanjog
Davidson Chademana	STUC Black Workers' Committee / University and College Union
Aidan McGlynn	University of Edinburgh
Madeleine Beveridge	University of Edinburgh
Khalida Hussain	Voluntary Action Fund
Mohammed Razaq	West of Scotland Regional Equality Council (WSREC)
Hayley Buyers	Individual
James Miller	Individual

Apologies:

Bob Doris MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament (Vice Convener)
Anas Sarwar MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament (Vice Convener)
Adam Tomkins MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament (Vice Convener)
Jackie Baillie MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament
Pauline McNeill MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament

Raza Sadiq	Active Life Club
Michael Giannandrea	Central Scotland Regional Equality Council (CSREC)
Arun Gopinath	Central Scotland Regional Equality Council (CSREC)
Arezo Darvishzadeh	Ethnic Minorities Law Centre
Lynsey Blyth	Ethnic Minorities Law Centre
Martin Hayward	Equality and Human Rights Commission
Nahid Aslam	Pakistan Association
Mohammed Afzal	PKAVS Minority Communities Hub
Gozie Joe Adigwe	RNIB / STUC Black Workers Committee

Ephraim Borowski	Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
Sandra Deslandes-Clark	SEMPERscotland
Naseem Anwar	University of Strathclyde
Anita Shelton	Individual
Sufraz Yousaf	Individual
Zahra Hassan	Individual

Welcome and Introductions

Convener Fulton MacGregor MSP called the meeting to order at 18.20 and welcomed members to the meeting. He then read apologies that had been given.

The Convener then introduced Kaliani Lyle, the Scottish Government Race Equality Framework Adviser.

Presentation and Discussion: Kaliani Lyle, Scottish Government Race Equality Framework Adviser

Kaliani Lyle provided an overview of her role as the [Scottish Government Race Equality Framework Adviser](#), a position which she accepted on 24th November 2016. She is an independent adviser appointed by the Scottish Government, working four days a month, to provide strategic independent expertise, insight, and advice in taking forward the actions and commitments outlined in the Framework. She expressed that she saw this meeting as an opportunity to sense-check her approach to the role.

Ms. Lyle spoke about the Race Equality Framework for Scotland, published on 21st March 2016. She noted the five key areas for action in the Framework, namely community cohesion and safety; participation and representation; education and lifelong learning; employability, employment, and income; and health and home.

She also noted that she accepted this position on the understanding that her post was practically focused and would make a real difference to the people affected by racial discrimination in Scotland. She stressed that the adviser is not responsible for delivery – that is for the Scottish the Government. Rather, she will act as a critical friend to offer challenge and drive forward action.

Ms. Lyle then outlined a selection of key actions she wished to progress to advance racial equality in Scotland. She stressed that these points were her suggested way forward and were, at this stage, simply ideas. She was hopeful that after priorities and targets have been agreed by the government, a delivery plan with timescales would be developed.

Her key proposals included:

Employment

- Binding targets for BME participation in economic regeneration and infrastructure projects linked to public investment (e.g. City Deals, House Building Programme), with quarterly returns to monitor progress and the numbers of minority ethnic people accessing jobs.
- An increase the BME participation rate in Modern Apprenticeships, with an annual review of progress made
- Provision of funding for positive action schemes for graduates as routes into employment post-qualification in sectors where BME groups are under-represented and/or to aid in career progression

- Development of a skills acquisition programme for older BME women and new migrants, establishing pathways between pre-employment and jobs
- Leadership from the Scottish Government in getting the public sector and professional bodies to commit to parity of BME employment, backed up by a time-limited programme of action to deliver on these commitments; this must include improved capacity to tackle discrimination in recruitment and selection
- Use of contracting in procurement as a tool for establishing targets in employment of and service delivery for BME communities

Poverty

- Implementation of recommendations of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation report 'Poverty and ethnicity: key messages for Scotland'
- Diversification of income base by exploring microfinance initiatives and/or grant-in-aid support targeted at BME women, as the people hardest hit by austerity and the tax and benefit changes are African and Asian women
- Implementation of recommendations of "Independent Advisor on Poverty and Inequality: Shifting the curve - a report for the First Minister" with particular attention paid to the needs of specific groups

Housing

- Implementation of the Affordable Housing Investment Programme to invest in larger properties so that a sufficient proportion of the 50,000 affordable homes that are to be built meet the needs of larger BME families
- Implementation of the Scottish Government's action plan to improve standards in the private rented sector to improve the housing conditions of BME families

Gypsy/Travellers

- Progression of work underway to support improvement of outcomes for Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland, particularly focusing on accommodation and education
- Following consultation with members of the Gypsy/Traveller community in spring/summer 2017, the production of a document outlining the programme of work for the future

Ms. Lyle noted that hate crime was not included in these priority areas because work being carried out on the recommendations of the "Report of the Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime, Prejudice, and Community Cohesion" was progressing work in this area.

Ms. Lyle stressed that a sense of urgency was vital to the success of the Framework and to tackling racism in all its forms. She expressed hope that Scotland may counter a trend of global fear and intolerance to create a fair and just Scotland for all ethnic groups. She said there was a need for a movement in Scotland to see real racial equality.

Ms. Lyle then asked the CPG if she could take a sense-check of the direction she had outlined. It was decided that all members would, in turn, introduce themselves and speak about their hopes for the implementation of the Framework and their opinions on the actions Ms. Lyle had outlined.

Comments and concerns expressed included:

- The need for action, progress, and change - not just more talk and research
- The need for an action plan with timescales and details of delivery

- Difficulties engaging with elected officials and the need for reciprocal engagement to empower communities
- Agreement of the importance of employment and poverty as priority areas
- Challenges associated with improving minority ethnic representation in Modern Apprenticeships, including (a) the need to consider what skills minority ethnic groups need and what apprenticeships could be developed to meet these and (b) the need for involved organisations to communicate to bring about cohesion change together
- Strong support for the development of apprenticeships for older minority ethnic individuals and microfinancing schemes for minority ethnic women
- The need to work with the private sector to achieve employment aspirations, not just the public sector
- The lack of race-specific detail on poverty alleviation and eradication in the Fairer Scotland Framework
- The importance of life-long education; as negative attitudes towards minority groups filter through the media, there is a need for diversity and equality education to break the cycle of discrimination and hate
- Difficulties in working with schools on education on diversity and equality issues
- The need for appropriate and practical tools for teachers to address equality and racism in the classroom
- Disparities between educational attainment and employment
- The differences among various minority ethnic communities and the need to recognise this
Recognising needs of the Eastern European community in racial equality work
- The need for right to work for asylum seekers, as the current state of affairs is disempowering, bad for the economy, and bad for community cohesion particularly as refugees and asylum seekers have been exceptionally enterprising in countries in which work is allowed
- The importance of culturally appropriate sites for Gypsy/Traveller communities and challenges with educational engagement
- The need to consider current Gypsy/Traveller policy and action schemes and improve as needed
- Links between the priorities identified and the Scottish Government's Promoting Equality and Cohesion Fund
- The need for racial equality audits to ensure the attitudes of services and public bodies are changing
- The need to use funding to drive forward equality and a need to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of equality work carried out by organisations funded by the Scottish Government
- The role of funded voluntary organisations and public sector bodies in addressing racial equality and an examination of the effectiveness of these bodies
- The need for a review of the Scottish Government's key strategic partners, particularly the impact of these partnerships, policy cohesion with the Scottish Government, and links to communities
- The role of community organisations in implementing the Framework; these groups need time to build relationships (especially with young people) and cannot just be used by public bodies and intermediary organisations to tick boxes; support is needed and the role of grassroots organisations must be acknowledged and appreciated

Ms. Lyle noted during discussion that she too wants to see action and emphasised the need to act now and pressure the government to see change in 2030.

Ms. Lyle then summarised the points raised during discussion and asked that those present email her directly with any additional comments they may have.

It was also agreed that the CPG would invite the Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security, and Equalities to attend a future meeting of the CPG to further discuss the Framework and its implementation.

Mr. MacGregor also noted that he was leading a Members' Business debate on Modern Apprenticeships on 2nd March and that CPG members could send in issues he could raise in the debate ahead of this.

Discussion: Commission on Parliamentary Reform

As there was insufficient time to discuss the Commission on Parliamentary Reform, a paper questionnaire was circulated to members and Rebecca Marek committed to emailing the group for feedback to compose a response to the Commission.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15th November 2016 were approved by the group.

Close

The Convener brought the meeting to a close at 19.30 and thanked everyone for their attendance.

The next meeting will be announced in due course.