

*Aberdeen City Council's
Equality Outcomes and
Mainstreaming Progress Report
2015*

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1. Introduction

Our Vision is for Aberdeen to be an ambitious, achieving , smart city. We will ensure all citizens are encouraged and supported appropriately to make their full contribution. In order to achieve this we will challenge inequalities wherever they exist and bring our communities closer together.

2. Why we publish Equality Outcomes

Aberdeen City Council like other public authorities has for the last two years published equalities information, so that we demonstrate compliance with the Equality Act 2010 to give due regard to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it
- Fostering good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

In support of the general duty and to respond to the two requirements of the specific duties the council are required to publish:

- A mainstreaming report;
- A report on progress made towards achieving equality outcomes published in 2013;
- Annual employee information together with details of the progress made in gathering and using the information to better meet the duty; and
- updated gender pay gap information.

3. Progress on Equality Outcomes

Appendix 1 is a landscape table which evidences the progress and achievements across the council in delivering the Equality Outcomes.

4. Community Engagement

The basis of our community engagement has always been the strong relationships we have developed with our communities of interest and of the part which they play as our “critical friends”. The role of “critical friend” is being further developed as we review our funding arrangements and expectations with our voluntary organisation partners, for example, Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC).

Our effective community involvement with, for example, the Lesbian, gay, Bisexual and transgender plus Others (LGBT+) community, is regularly recognised by Stonewall Diversity Champions in their annual Workplace Equality Index score. We have built new and strengthened existing relationships, supporting community groups and voluntary organisations so that we foster good relations and optimise opportunities for partnership working to advance equality of opportunity.

There are examples of our community engagement exercises and feedback at Appendix 2.

We have worked over the years with Gypsy/ Travellers to encourage and support their representation on forums and now have Gypsy/ Traveller representation on our Grampian Inter-agency Group and on the Civic Forum, which is the community voice of Community Planning.

We are building links with two new groups – the Aberdeen Multicultural Centre and the Nigerian Women in Aberdeen Association, with both groups being keen to take lead roles in this year's One World Day event.

Education officers worked with the Ethnic Minority Forum to deliver a workshop on removing barriers and increasing the participation of ethnic minority parents in parents' councils as part of the "Gathered Together" project. This year has seen links further developed with the Romanian Society. Members of Aberdeen Multicultural Centre were supported by the Council's Cultural grants budget to deliver an excellent programme for International Mother Language Day on 22 February 2015, which attracted several hundred participants.

People with disabilities have been involved in council plans for the Duthie Park restoration, the Art Gallery and Music Hall renovations. We have worked extensively with the Disability Advisory Group over the last year so that it becomes more welcoming and accessible to all and more focused on tasks, solutions and outcomes and less on receiving presentations. Officers are working hard to help ensure that there is an inclusive access panel or accessibility forum for the city so that there is broad representation to present the issues of the wider community of disabled people to the council. This group, as per the Disability Advisory Group, should include input from young people, from families where there are children with disabilities and from ethnic minority communities who represent Aberdeen's cultural diversity.

We recently followed a consultation with NESS (North East Sensory Services) Users' Forum, by an afternoon and an evening session joint consultation with the British Deaf Association for BSL users around the Equality Outcomes (2013-15). We recognise that this is a very marginalised group who are also experiencing the impact of the nationwide shortage of BSL Interpreters.

Similarly we acknowledged that we needed to strengthen our Interfaith relationships and our equality work around this theme. We participated in Aberdeen Interfaith meetings and identified key contacts to involve in the planning and delivery of activities around Holocaust Memorial Day and One World Day.

From a joint "Women of Faith and No-Faith" workshop which we ran with partners Engender in November 2014, we are building a network of contacts who have expressed an interest in a Women and Faith forum in the city. As with the other equality forums/groups we will provide support and assistance in establishing a new forum.

To meet our duty to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations, we deliver (sometimes with partners) and support voluntary sector organisations to deliver events to mark International Days locally, such as International Women's Day on 8 March, LGBT+ History Month in February and, Gypsy/ Traveller History Month in June. These bring together different groups to break down cultural barriers and raise awareness of their different needs. Aberdeen City Council, as a member of the European Collation of Cities Against Racism (ECCAR) , personalised the ECCAR poster for International Day against Racism on 21 March and promoted widely by electronic and hard copy, the unambiguous message, "Aberdeen against Racism".

We also try to link people from across the different groups with protected characteristics so that people see themselves as having multiple identities, for example, having more young people now from Aberdeen City Youth Council represented on the Ethinc Minority Forum and trying to involve more young people on the disability groups.

City Voice Aberdeen, the city panellist survey, has for the second year asked a series of questions on equality to measure any difference in attitude over the year. Last year the most popular response to the question "What more could the council do to improve the quality of life for people from different equality groups in the city?" was "Actively encourage integration/interaction between groups." This year, that answer came well down in 8th place at 3.7%. Within this year's top 2 answers were:

- "Ensure equality for all, not just "equality groups"" (10.2%) and
- "Everything's okay as it is- no improvements necessary" (7.5%).

This demonstrates the need to promote more effectively the council's statutory duties to foster good relations and advance equality of opportunity and to raise awareness of the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010, so that people understand that we all have one or more of the protected characteristics.

5. Integration of Equality and Human Rights

We recognise that whilst we have integrated a Human Rights Assessment into our Equality Impact Assessment process, we have some way to go to achieve a rights – based culture. It is also acknowledged that there is an outstanding piece of work to mainstream the Scottish National Human Rights Action Plan (SNAP) into the activities of the Council. The opportunity has therefore been taken at this juncture of reviewing the Equality Outcomes to add as outcome, "Human Rights based culture within our organisation" so that a Human Rights dimension is woven into the equality agenda for change.

We have reviewed and streamlined our Equality Outcomes to provide a sharper focus with clear priorities and targets, to integrate a human rights dimension and to

strengthen the outcomes for the Licensing Board. The new Equality Outcomes for 2015 – 17 appears at Appendix 3.

6. Mainstreaming Report

The specific duties require us to report on the progress we have made to make the general equality duty integral to the exercise of our functions: to mainstream equality.

Mainstreaming equality means integrating equality into our day-to-day working. We do that through:

i. Leadership/Commitments:

Leadership helps to shape the culture of an organisation and is extremely important in the context of the mainstreaming duty

- The Chief Executive, Angela Scott was the key speaker at the Annual General Meeting of Aberdeen Women's Alliance in the summer of 2013. Aberdeen Women's Alliance is the consultative forum for women who live and/or work in the city to provide two way communication between women and the council and community planning partners.
- The Lord Provost, Councillor George Adam visibly demonstrates his on going commitment to Equality by addressing and hosting many of the community events with diverse audiences. For example

In August 2014 , the Lord Provost addressed the very successful 'One World Day' event in the city centre where he reinforced the fact from the 2011 Census that Aberdeen is the most diverse City in Scotland.

The Lord Provost has hosted celebratory events, for International Women's Day 2014 and 15, which marked women's contributions as assets to their communities, workplaces and to city life. These events have reflected the diversity of Aberdeen's international communities and have each attracted more than 200 women each year. The events have also proved to be successful networking opportunities which have allowed groups to further integrate city wide and so have fostered good relations.

International Women's Day 8th March 2015, Beach Ballroom



- Our elected members, leaders and senior officers understand their commitment to equalities through briefings, awareness raising campaigns by poster and on council Intranet site. We have active cross party elected member representation on our Disability Advisory Group, the Older People's Advisory Group and the North East LGBT + Development Group. Our elected members regularly support events such as the Rainbow Family and Friends Day, International Day against Transphobia and Homophobia, International Day for Older People and the Holocaust Memorial Day.
- About 200 employees and councillors signed the "No Bystanders" pledge in November 2014. The "No Bystanders" pledge was launched by the Stonewall, the organisation which champions LGBT+ issues in the workplace. The pledge was broadened to apply to all the protected characteristic groups and aims to tackle bullying and abuse. It encourages everyone to take a stand against bullying, harassment by checking their own language and intervening when they hear offensive language from others.

By signing the No Bystanders pledge, our staff, elected members and senior officers reinforced the message that bullying, harassment, prejudice or discrimination will not be tolerated in the Council.



- Following an organisational restructure, the Community Planning Team which includes the Equality staff is now located within the Communities and Housing Service, as part of the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Directorate, reporting to that committee. The new Director and Head of Service have each stated their commitment to making equality happen and are quite clear that they want to see strengthened focus on the links between the central strategic work and equality of opportunity as delivered through positive outcomes from front line services, for example, education, housing and employment.

Being closer to colleagues in Housing and Infrastructure services should have a direct, positive impact on mainstreaming equality through to service delivery.

ii. Partnership Working

- We have built new and strengthened existing relationships, supporting community groups and voluntary organisations so that we foster good relations and optimise opportunities for partnership working to advance equality of opportunity.
- To ensure best value services, we reviewed our arrangements with several voluntary organisations receiving grants from the Council's Equality budgets to ensure they are helping us to deliver our Equality Outcomes.

There has been less partnership work at a local level with the Police and Fire Services on the equalities agenda since the centralisation of their services. The impact of the loss of resources locally has meant less joined up working on equality and community development.

However the review of the city's Community Plan and the Single Outcome Agreement, currently taking place, may be the time to refresh those opportunities for joined up working.

We have been working with Aberdeen University, the Robert Gordon University, Gay Men's Health and Shell through the North East LGBT+ Development Forum to address the challenge of LGBT+ bullying in schools and further and higher educations establishments.

We have continued to work closely with colleagues at Grampian Regional Equality Council on activities and events to mark local and national events, e.g., Rainbow Days, International Day for Older People, International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia and National Social Justice Day.

We are part of the Access ABZ Forum, an example of working with the private sector, to help the continuous improvement and review of Persons with Restricted Mobility (PRM) at the airport.

iii. Engagement with other Services

The Corporate Equalities Team work collaboratively across services with key council officers and within partnerships, to mainstream equality across and throughout services so that we deliver positive outcomes. Examples of this include: The Grampian Gypsy/ Traveller Interagency Group, the Disability Advisory Group, the Older People's Advisory Group and the North East LGBT + Development Group.

The corporate lead for the development, production and implementation of the Council's first Gaelic Language Development Action Plan lies with the Equalities Team who work across the council with colleagues from Education, Infrastructure and Communication services .

iv. Communication and Access

We refreshed and relaunched our Accessible Communications Guidelines to take on board the barriers to communication with the council which people had raised with us.

<http://thezone.aberdeen.net.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=21972&slD=6023>

We have produced our first Equality Outcomes Newsletter in alternative formats including BSL so that the public are kept up to date with our progress and achievements.

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/council_government/equality_and_diversity/eqd_equality_diversity_home.asp

We have worked very closely with the chair of the Learning Disability Group to ensure that documents produced and published about equality issues are available in an easyread format.

All our council published documents come with the option of requesting that document in an alternative format or community language. Our Inward Migration Working Group has contributed to the Integrate Grampian Welcome brochure "Living and Working in North East Scotland" which provides an introductory guide to incoming workers and their families. This document was also translated in European community languages.
http://www.aberdeenshirecommunitysafety.org.uk/welcome_leaflet/index.htm
!

We part fund the post of Minority Ethnic Outreach worker based within Langstane Housing Association to provide guidance and informed advice to people from ethnic minority communities in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. People contact the project worker for:

- Housing enquiries and advice on housing options available
- Assistance with housing applications and Homehunt registrations
- Where appropriate, representation before local authorities and other organisations in housing-related cases
- Referrals to relevant organisations for further assistance.

Our InterTrans service deals with an average 360 requests for interpreting and translation per month (2014-15), a 33% increase from an average 270 requests per month for financial year 2013-14. The most frequently requested languages are Polish, Russian, Lithuanian, Mandarin and Latvian. These statistics follow the change in demographic trends of Aberdeen's communities, where we see the increase in the ethnic minority population from 7.2% of Aberdeen's population in the 2001 census to 23.5% in the 2011 census. Aberdeen is now the most diverse city in the U.K.

The 4,563 migrant workers who registered for a National Insurance number in Aberdeen during 2012/13 represented 2.9% of the city's working age population. This is the second highest proportion in Scotland, after Edinburgh at 3.1%. 22% of the migrant worker total are Polish people.

We now meet with our Interpreters/ Translators twice per year so that we can all raise and resolve issues smartly to ensure the service is continually improving. This has proved a great opportunity for improving working relationships, networking and sharing information.

The InterTrans service co-ordinators and the development workers played a key part in Code the City Aberdeen which took place in July 2014. This is an annual civic hacking event where over 50 volunteers with a shared interest in making life better, worked over the weekend on projects involving coders, designers, writers and service experts. The plan is to make the Intertrans service more web-based with work being requested and assigned through a

web based system, thus reducing the current time spent on administering the system.

The Council's Gaelic Language Plan sets out our aims and ambitions for Gaelic in the local authority, our schools and communities over the next five years. The plan details how we aim to increase the attainment, usage and visibility of Gaelic in Aberdeen.

v. Training and Awareness Raising

The Council has in place two on-line interactive modules one entitled 'Diversity and Equality Essentials' and the other 'Managing Diversity and Equality'.

Targeted at all employees, 'Diversity and Equality Essentials' covers the key provisions of the Equality Act and the general and specific employer duties relating to public organisations. The 'Managing Diversity and Equality' is aimed at managers and supervisors and provides users with practical guidance on managing diversity and equality issues, helping them to assess their strengths and areas of development in respect of leading diverse teams.

As part of the recruitment and selection course, 'Smarter Selection', there is a section covering 'recruitment and the law' which covers the aspects of the Equality Act and a range of case study scenarios on various protected characteristics. This is to train managers in the avoidance of unlawful discrimination when recruiting and selecting.

To complement the above, a 'Pit Stop' training session has just been developed on diversity and equality. The 'Pit Stop' programme comprises short one hour sessions designed for those employees who may only have limited time to attend training. This session is based around a video entitled 'Respect' which features various scenarios constituting discrimination and/or harassment in the workplace. After watching the video, there follows a discussion with participants on the scenarios, to hear their perceptions and views on each case so that we raise awareness of diversity and equality issues and emphasise the need for all employees to adhere to the core behaviour of 'respect' in the workplace.

vi. HR Activities

- We held a diversity and equality fair on employment at the Council's headquarters building with a range of stalls covering the various protected characteristics to raise awareness of employment equality and diversity amongst staff.

The informal feedback from participants was positive and it appears to have met its objective of raising awareness of diversity and equality issues amongst those employees who attended the event. The completed evaluation questionnaire confirmed this.

This event is an example of the Council trying to mainstream diversity and equality issues amongst the workforce.

- An LGBT+ event in conjunction with the employee counselling service (timefortalking) raised awareness of the availability of the counselling service for any potential users among our LGBT + employees. Managers, colleagues, relatives/friends of LGBT+ employees were also invited.
The event evaluation survey generated mainly positive comments regarding its usefulness. The numbers making use of the employee counselling service are regularly monitored.
This event is an example of the Council engaging with and supporting LGBT+ employees we ran.
- We ran several employability skills sessions targeted at ethnic minorities to assist individuals with understanding recruitment and selection processes, in making job applications and preparing for interviews.
The evaluation survey information was used to shape the subsequent events. The numbers of ethnic minority candidates applying for and being appointed to Council jobs will continue to be monitored to identify if numbers are increasing.
- We designed and promoted a set of posters for internal use in the Council to raise awareness of diversity and equality in employment. This was complemented by equality related posters for external use to promote working for the Council and highlight the organisation as an equal opportunities employer.
- We have produced a set of guidance notes to assist with the management of employees undergoing IVF treatment or proposing to undergo such treatment. Comments and informal feedback will be monitored through the HR Service Centre and through the HR teams on the effectiveness of the guidance. The guidance is an evidence of the Council recognising that some employees will wish to undergo IVF treatment in order to become pregnant and being a caring employer with supportive provisions available to assist those employees.
- Our annual review of the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index gave us a revised score plus feedback so that we could take action to continually improve as an LGBT+ friendly employer.
- A consultation with employees to hear views on the setting up a prayer/meditation room facility at the Council's headquarters will now be used to inform and progress the plans for same.

vii. Equality Impact Assessments

There has been renewed focus on Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments (EHRIAs) over the two year period, with a surge of interest in

the excellent external training provided by **Diversity at McKenzie**. Working in partnership with the trainer we reviewing and re launched the Council's EHRIA guide and form to make it more user friendly and accessible. We are currently updating the online training module around this.

Through positive and proactive help from colleagues in Legal Services, report authors are now completing checklists with evidence of EHRIAs being completed.

Reports requiring an EHRIA are being identified more promptly and the Equalities Team is offering advice at drop in sessions for report authors to complement its on going consultancy and advice service.

The number of EHRIAs published on our website has increased from 527 in 2013 to 597 in 2015.

Example: We can evidence two examples where working with communities of interest has led to a rethink in terms of improving service design to meet people's identified needs. In designing the new Aquatics Centre, a partnership between Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeen University and the Sports Village, installing a new pool with glass all around immediately excluded Muslim women from swimming.

There was in particular a group of Muslim women who had regularly used the previous swimming pool at Linksfield for women only sessions, who were now displaced. Linking community representatives from the Muslim group with officers from Culture and Sport led to the development of women only swimming sessions at the beach Sports and Leisure Centre pool, which has proved popular for both Muslim and non Muslim women.

In a similar way, active involvement by disability groups resulted in the replacement of the revolving door at the main entrance of Marischal College to an automatic sliding door. This is now far more accessible not only for wheelchair users and for other people with disabilities, but also for older people and for parents and carers pushing buggies.

Improving access for groups with protected characteristics improves the customer experience for others too.

viii. Procurement

7. Education Equality Outcome Progress Report 2014/15

Whilst the contents and detail from the contribution by Education have been integrated into Appendix 1 – Progress on Equality Outcomes, the information

appears here too at Appendix 5 so that the Education Authority can evidence the production of a stand alone document to meet legislative requirements.

8. Licensing Board Equality Progress Report 2014/15

Whilst the contents and detail from the contribution by the Licensing Board have been integrated into Appendix 1 – Progress on Equality Outcomes, the information appears here too at Appendix 6 so that the Licensing Board can evidence the publication of a stand alone document to meet legislative requirements.