

Cross Party Group on Racial Equality in Scotland

Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th January 2016

Attendance

Present:

Hanzala Malik MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament (Deputy Convener)
Christian Allard MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament
Anne McTaggart MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament
Rebecca Marek	Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (Secretariat)
Lesley Warren	Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights
Naira Dar	CEMVO Scotland
Arun Gopinath	CSREC
Nila Joshi	Edinburgh Interfaith Women's Group
David Watt	Education Scotland
Elisabetta Spano	ELREC
Naren Sood	EMCC
Martin Hayward	Equality and Human Rights Commission Scotland
Sandra Deslandes-Clark	SEMPER Scotland
Faten Hameed	Scottish Iraqi Society
Nicola Hay	Show Racism the Red Card Scotland
Trishna Singh	Sikh Sanjog
Gozie Joe Adigwe	STUC Black Workers' Committee
Rohini Sharma Joshi	Trust Housing Association
Davidson Chademana	University and College Union
Naseem Anwar	University of Strathclyde
Colin Clark	University of the West of Scotland
Khalida Hussain	Voluntary Action Fund
Zahira Hassan	Individual

Apologies:

Bob Doris MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament (Convener)
Jamie McGrigor MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament (Deputy Convener)
Jackie Baillie MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament
Jatin Haria	CRER (Secretariat)
Fiaz Khan	CEMVO
Foysoil Choudhury	ELREC
Ehtisham Ullah Khan	ELREC
Geoff Palmer	ELREC
Naeem Khalid	Frae Fife
Kash Taank	Glasgow Life
Nicola Livingston	Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
Micheline Brannan	Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
Meg De Amasi	Stirling Multicultural Partnership
Nasar Meer	University of Strathclyde
Mahmud Al-Gailani	VoX Project, Mental Health Foundation
Mohammed Razaq & Harriette Campbell	WSREC / ACWA
Mohammad Afzal Chaudhrey	Individual
Anita Shelton	Individual
Khalid Parveaz	Individual

Welcome and Introductions

Vice Convener Hanzala Malik MSP called the meeting to order at 18:00, and welcomed attendees to the meeting.

Attendees introduced themselves in turn.

Presentation and Discussion: UK Shadow Report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination – Lesley Warren, CRER

Lesley Warren provided an overview of the work CRER is undertaking to compile the Scottish elements to a UK Shadow Report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Her presentation addressed the following topics:

- The definition of racial discrimination and race equality, according to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).
- The history of the Convention.
- The articles of the Convention.
- The membership of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which includes no one from the UK, but does include a representative from Ireland.
- The contents of the UK State Report
- The preparation of a Shadow State Report coordinated by Runnymede with input on Scottish-specific issues from CRER.
- The expected timeline for the progression of CERD, which is as follows:
 - March 2015 – State report submitted
 - March 2016 – CERD appointment of UK rapporteur
 - March – July 2016 – Review of state report and submissions from NHRIs/civil society
 - June 2016 – Rapporteur draws up a “list of themes” to focus on in examination
 - July 2016 – Submission of shadow reports (one month before the session)
 - August 2016 – CERD meetings in Geneva, with UK examination date to be announced
 - September 2016 – CERD committee press conference to publicise concluding observations from this session
- The Scottish issues to consider for CERD reporting, including:
 - Devolved areas, such as policing, the criminal justice system, education, housing, and health
 - UK policies applied nationally, such as integration policy, immigration, and employment
 - CERD wanting only one state report, despite differences in nations due to devolution
 - In the 2011 CERD observations, Scotland was not mentioned and there were no specific recommendations to the Scottish Government
 - The Scottish Government has given their report to the UK Government to compile the UK State Report, but this has not been made public
- The Scottish evidence inside the UK State Report, including:
 - Integration policy
 - Race Equality Statement 2008-2011 and Race Equality Framework (to be published in Spring 2016)
 - Provision of £24 million to organisations and projects
 - Strategy for Integrating Refugees 2013
 - Scottish Government to develop a gypsy/traveller strategy
 - Housing – private rented sector tribunal (more accessible to those with English as a second language); homelessness decreased (although minority ethnic statistics are static)
 - Health and mental health – no evidence from Scotland

- Education – Additional Support for Learning (2004) and Curriculum for Excellence, but no mention of the Children and Young People’s (Scotland) Act 2014
- Criminal justice – Scottish Government strengthening legislation around hate crime
- Employment – no mention of Scotland or modern apprenticeships
- The concerns highlighted in previous reports, including:
 - The need to develop a race equality strategy to promote equal opportunities
 - Show commitment to tackling ethnic inequalities in education, housing, health, and employment, and to tackle discrepancies in the criminal justice system
 - Ensuring austerity measures do not disproportionately affect those from minority ethnic communities
 - The budget reduction of the EHRC, as well as decisions to remove or not implement parts of the Equality Act 2010
 - UK-wide concerns, such as the disproportionate use of stop and search, the persistent gap in employment and educational attainment, the failure to regulate racist practices in the media, the importance of accountability for race equality at a local level, and the Dale Farms evictions
- CRER is compiling a Scottish-specific shadow report, and needs evidence from devolved policy areas and suggestions of recommendations to be made to the Scottish Government.

The Chair thanked Lesley Warren for her presentation.

Lesley Warren accepted questions and comments from members. Issues explored included:

- The importance of addressing intersectionality in the report, particularly disability.
- The upcoming report from the Equal Opportunities Committee, which is exploring inequalities in employment and ethnicity.

It was agreed that if members wish to submit information and opinions as part of the CERD consultation, they should email Lesley Warren directly as soon as possible.

It was also noted that organisations are free to submit their own shadow reports to CERD if they wish.

Presentation and Discussion: Challenging anti-refugee racism in our communities – Professor Colin Clark, University of the West of Scotland

Professor Colin Clark spoke to the group about the importance of challenging anti-refugee racism in Scotland’s communities. His presentation touched on the following topics:

- A brief overview of his academic work, including his research interests in immigration and asylum seekers.
- His articles on the CRER blog (<http://www.crer.org.uk/crerblog/entry/a-crisis-of-racism-and-refugees>) and Third Force News (<http://thirdforcenews.org.uk/blogs/show-solidarity-against-racism-in-scotland>), which inspired this discussion.
- The need for solid evidence to inform policy and shape governments’ responses in relation to the ongoing refugee crisis.
- The Economic and Social Research Council provided funding to 8 projects to research the matter; however, all of these projects were based at universities in England. Results are expected this year.
- The importance of recognising that Scottish people, overall, are eager to help and welcome refugees and the Scotland Welcomes Refugees website.
- The importance of public statements on the refugee crisis that are based in evidence, especially from elected officials and the media.

- The need for strong leadership and positive responses to refugees in Scotland, such as the response of the Paisley Daily Express.
- Scotland's policy levers can only change so much and progress so far; immigration related issues remain reserved to the UK Government.
- As such, there are wider issues to consider such as the extreme contrast between the policies and rhetoric of the UK and Scottish Governments, the conflict between security and international human rights obligations, and the potential impact of the EU membership referendum and the potential repeal of the Human Rights Act.

The Chair thanked Colin Clark for his presentation, and noted the racist element to the refugee crisis and the importance of addressing this.

Colin Clark accepted questions and comments from members. Issues explored included:

- The positive support offered by many housing associations and social landlords in Scotland.
- Research fatigue, and the development of research and reports that are soon forgotten. This is changing, and it is important to focus on the impact research has.
- The presence of homelessness and deprivation here, and the role of the UK and Scottish Governments in pressuring governments in the Middle East to help and create safe havens for refugees there.
- Displaced Iraqi refugees without funds or support, and the importance of acknowledging that ISIS is not only in Syria and that many refugees are fleeing from Iraq as well.
- The refugees in camps who do not have money to be smuggled to Europe, and the importance of providing resources and support for them as well.
- The importance of not creating a 'hierarchy of oppression,' and providing resources and help wherever the need is urgent, including refugee camps and in the Mediterranean, in line with international obligations.

Member Update: Healthy diet and lifestyle guide for BME older people – Rohini Sharma Joshi, Trust Housing Association

Rohini Sharma Joshi addressed the group about a new healthy diet and lifestyle guide aimed at minority ethnic older people. Her presentation touched on the following topics:

- The national project with a focus on minority ethnic older people aims to raise awareness of the needs and barriers to services communities may face in regards to healthy diet and lifestyle.
- The project engaged with communities and asked them about information needed.
- A simple guide was compiled on diet and lifestyle, following consultation with 35 organisations and input from the NHS and the Scottish Government. It examines issues particular to minority ethnic communities.
- The report is available in six community languages from here: <http://www.equalityscotland.com/6/12/Publications/Publications.html>

The Convener thanked Rohini Sharma Joshi for her update.

Rohini Sharma Joshi accepted questions and comments from members. Issues explored included:

- Topics covered, and the number and diversity of minority ethnic communities involved.
- The use of the report as a baseline and starting point for other organisations and future research.
- The possibility of developing a toolkit for use within communities.

Member Update: Educating migrants and refugees in Scotland – David Watt, Education Scotland

David Watt offered an update on the work of Education Scotland in relation to the education of migrant children and young people and refugees. His presentation touched on the following topics:

- The importance of inclusive education, and empowering teachers to challenge discrimination.
- As a whole, minority ethnic pupils are ahead of the national attainment average in Scotland, although there are differences among minority ethnic groups.
- A report from the OECD that highlighted Scotland as a positive example in education and one of the top three countries in the OECD for migrants due to social inclusion and the performance of minority ethnic pupils.
- Overall, minority ethnic pupils fare better in education in Scotland than in most of Europe, with the exception of Gypsy/Traveller communities. Education Scotland is working to address this.
- Children with English language support are going onto positive destinations at the same rate as the average.
- Education Scotland is looking at the experience of minority ethnic pupils in school, and addressing prejudice-based bullying.
- Education Scotland will also look at the underrepresentation of minority ethnic pupils in Modern Apprenticeship, and the diversity of the teaching force within Scotland.
- The focus at the moment is on helping refugee children and young people to be engaged and supported in school, and to work on addressing bullying and discrimination in schools.
- All the reports and resources referenced are available on the Education Scotland website here:
<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inclusionandequalities/equalities/antiracism/index.asp>. Specific links will be sent to the members of the Cross Party Group.

The Convener thanked David Watt for his update.

David Watt accepted questions and comments from members. Issues explored included:

- The age of the data used in the reports.
- Whether it is better to present data for minority ethnic communities all together, or whether it is better to break the data into specific ethnic categories, as breaking the data down could be divisive among communities and numbers may become too small to be relevant. However, presenting the data all together makes it difficult to identify specific communities that may face additional barriers and inequalities.
- The importance of quoting the relevant sample size when utilising data about minority ethnic communities.
- How the performance of minority ethnic pupils are monitored and tracked throughout their time in school.
- The difficulty for minority ethnic pupils who are second, third, fourth, etc. generation classifying themselves on monitoring forms.
- The issue of underemployment of minority ethnic individuals, and the importance of using statistics on education to generate positive results.

- The wider issue of destinations after school, and the expectations on minority ethnic pupils.
- The importance of acknowledging that good educational outcomes do not always translate into employment, and the importance of researching this further.
- The impact of cutbacks on local schools and communities, and engagement with schools by Education Scotland to decide how best to use resources and support pupils.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved, following one change in the attendance record. It was agreed that further clarification would be sought regarding the presentation of research from Dr Nasar Meer. This section will be looked at again at the next meeting of the CPG following clarification on matters.

Matters Arising

There were not matter arising.

Any Other Business

There were several contributions to Any Other Business, including:

- Discussion about awareness of racial discrimination and inequality across Europe being low, primarily due to a lack of coverage of these issues in the Scottish and British press. There was a question about whether media coverage of this was monitored at an EU level. It was agreed that the Secretariat would write to the Scottish MEPs to inquire further about these issues.
- The launch of the Equality and Human Rights Commission’s report “Is Scotland Fairer?” on 21st January. Members should email the EHRC for an invitation.
- The upcoming report from the Equal Opportunities Committee of the Scottish Parliament on race, ethnicity, and employment.
- Issues related to the presence of sectarianism within Muslim communities in Scotland, and the potential role of the Scottish Government in mitigating this.
- The “I’ll Stand with You” campaign to support minority ethnic students at the University of Strathclyde.
- The rise in Scotland of subtle racism, and the efforts of the current generation in learning to cope with this.
- The importance of reflecting on achievements in race equality in Scotland, and the need to build upon these.

Dates of Future Meetings

The final meeting of the CPG in the current parliamentary session will take place on Wednesday 9th March at 12:30 in the Scottish Parliament. After this meeting, the CPG will dissolve, but can be re-formed in the new session.