

Aberdeenshire's Equality Outcomes

Progress Report 2015

Executive Summary



Equalities – it runs through everything we do

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EQUALITY OUTCOMES PROGRESS REPORT 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Equality Outcomes set a focus on how services will use their resources most effectively to make a tangible difference to our residents and meet the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Census data provided in our [Mainstreaming Equalities Progress Report 2015](#) provides the equalities context within which Aberdeenshire Council operates and which informed the development of our six Equality Outcomes as published in April 2013, which are outlined below:

The Equality Outcomes:

- 1. Aberdeenshire Council employees, Councillors, the Aberdeenshire Licensing Boards and the Aberdeenshire Education Authority have an increased understanding about the challenges facing people from different groups and will respond to their requirements.**
- 2. Members of the public are able to access our services with ease and confidence.**
- 3. Aberdeenshire Council is an inclusive workplace where employees are respected and have an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential.**
- 4. Communities and businesses understand, welcome and respect diversity.**
- 5. Everyone enjoys equal access to education, training and employment.**
- 6. Access to life opportunities is enhanced by reducing barriers.**

Aberdeenshire has made progress towards achieving the Equality Outcomes. From April 2013 Services represented at the Corporate Equalities Group including the Education Authority and Licensing Boards considered the example actions set out in [Aberdeenshire's Equalities Mainstreaming Report & the Equality Outcomes](#) (The Report). Relevant links between the example actions to service plans as well as workstreams were identified to ensure progress towards achieving the Equality Outcomes.

Engaging with residents is a key element to our approach and we have worked in partnership with Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC). Over 2013/14 and 2014/15 a number of community engagement events were held across key areas within Aberdeenshire to consider our progress towards the Equality Outcomes. Additional data has been utilised to demonstrate our progress – including our Reputation Tracker, Citizen's Panel surveys and the council's employee survey. From May 2015 we will be revising our approach and developing plans to engage our communities in order to seek feedback on our progress



Progress towards achieving the Equalities Outcomes will be monitored within 'Aberdeenshire Performs', our performance improvement framework. There is regular reporting to committee and Directorate Management Teams against these plans. Furthermore we have created a model to record the progress of the Equality Outcomes within our current performance system, Covalent. Services have identified performance indicators from service strategies and plans which are currently meeting Equality Outcome priorities. A range of indicators have been identified that will help Aberdeenshire evidence how we are delivering the Equality Outcomes and these will be developed further. A full list of performance indicators that contribute to the achievement of the Equality Outcomes is available on Ward Pages and council website. The future challenge is to ensure further measurements and performance targets are built on Covalent to demonstrate the relevance between service performance indicators and the Equality Outcomes.

The following provides evidence to demonstrate progress towards each of our six Equality Outcomes. Data is provided which includes examples of service delivery and performance data extracted from Covalent. It should be noted that Outcomes One and Three are relevant to Mainstreaming and therefore reference is made to the content provided in [Aberdeenshire's Mainstreaming Equalities Progress Report 2015](#).

The following provides evidence to demonstrate progress towards each of the Equality Outcomes.

Equality Outcome 1

Aberdeenshire Council employees, Councillors, the Aberdeenshire Licensing Boards and the Aberdeenshire Education Authority have an increased understanding about the challenges facing people from different groups and will respond to their requirements.

This is a mainstreaming action. An e-learning equality and diversity package is being rolled out across Aberdeenshire which aims to raise awareness. Please refer to the Aberdeenshire's Equalities Mainstreaming Progress Report 2015 which also contains full details on the three Licensing Boards, the Education Authority. Progress is being made towards this outcome.

Future Actions

- Continue to progress mainstreaming actions, including the roll out of training and awareness material across the council.



Equality Outcome Two

Members of the public are able to access our services with ease and confidence.

A range of projects support this Outcome. The Communities Service have led projects on facilities for mobility scooters in sheltered housing, housing stock improvement programme and private sector housing information leaflets have been translated in Lithuanian, Polish, Latvian and Russian. Infrastructure Service have ongoing projects such as loop systems in sheltered housing common areas, Aberdeenshire Council Transport Initiative (ACTI), The Ranger Service and Disability Access Compliance. The Equality Act 2010 compliance works is part of the "Footways" works within the maintenance programme. There is a rolling programme which was agreed with disability groups and is concentrating on town centre improvements such as dropped kerbs and tactile pavements. Property service employees are trained to carry out access audits which enables a list of remedial works to be compiled. Funding has been allocated to a programme of remedial works in the capital plan, which is now 90% complete. The remaining 10% will be completed as the office accommodation realisation programme is rolled out.

Improving the Customer Experience Project (iCE) aims to increase customer choice and accessibility to service users at a time and in a way that meets their needs. iCE applies a "digital by choice" approach that ensures that whilst online service delivery is the preferred channel, the traditional means of contact such as phone and face to face will continue to be available for those that require them. Benefits and opportunities attaching to online service delivery include increased accessibility to services, particularly for those with mobility, visual impairment, literacy, or for those where English is not their first language, as the project and associated technology develops.

Performance indicators identify that the majority of services have scored high on satisfaction in the Citizen's Panel but low scores identified for roads maintenance. The Census 2011 highlighted that Aberdeenshire has the highest car ownership and as a rural area covering 6313km² there is greater reliance on the roads for many of our residents in order to access services. As part of the Infrastructure Service's service plan, roads are a priority and will continue to be monitored.

Future Actions

- Continuing progress of major projects and focusing on the customer when identifying areas for improvement. This will contribute to residents having improved access to services.



Equality Outcome Three

Aberdeenshire Council is an inclusive workplace where employees are respected and have an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential.

The Human Resources information and the mainstreaming actions in relation to inclusive workplace are within [Aberdeenshire's Equalities Mainstreaming Progress Report 2015](#). Aberdeenshire Council has a high percentage of females in the workforce. 70% female and 30% male possibly due to the nature of the posts and also the number who are part-time workers. Information is captured to record the percentage of the highest paid 5% employees who are women. This percentage has increased during the last two years highlighting there is a high percentage of women who are in the top 5%.

Future Actions

- Improve monitoring of workforce profile and recruitment data to better inform the organisation regarding decision making and policy development.

Equality Outcome Four

Communities and business understand, welcome and respect diversity.

The evidence which highlighted areas of inequality identified a lack of understanding and suspicion between groups who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Racism was identified as a problem in some parts of Aberdeenshire. In addition, communication and language barriers were identified when accessing services. Bullying at school and in higher education was also reported in April 2013.

A considerable number of projects have been in place that will contribute to addressing the issues identified. This includes ensuring access to community resources, community substance misuse services and specific projects such as "Confidence to Cook" groups. The Change Fund project which has funded until 31 March 2015, has been used to employ part-time development workers in Huntly and Stonehaven. The project works with local businesses, services, facilities and community groups to raise awareness on the effects of dementia. These projects will end in March 2015 but will be evaluated to form the basis for funding applications to develop dementia-friendly communities in other areas of Aberdeenshire.

An options appraisal was undertaken in relation to the development of a Gypsy/ Traveller Stopover site. A public meeting was held to consider available options which formed part of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017 Main Issues Report consultation process. All equality groups have the opportunity to engage on the future local development plan through this consultation. This provides the opportunity to inform discussion on the main issues to be addressed on the proposed plan. A major difference that the consultation document (i.e. the main issues report) will make is the opportunity it provides all groups to have their say in the forthcoming local development plan.



The review of day services for people with disabilities (IDEA project) is making good progress with five of the seven Locality Development Groups now having completed. Action plans setting out how we will respond to the feedback from IDEA community engagement meetings are being taken forward to ensure people with disabilities are included in their local communities and have equal access to opportunities.

Early Years Project is progressing with the “Garioch Community Kitchen” which is used by a wide and varied section of the community including primary schools/ academies. They also provide classes for parents and children, healthy weight management and more recently fun events such as “canna cook winna cook”.

On 26 September 2013 the Spotty Bag shop in Banff received The Northern Star Business Diversity Award. This category, which is part of the annual Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce event, rewards businesses which show their recruitment practices to be fair and open, resulting in the employment of people with diverse backgrounds and abilities.

Inclusive Inverurie initiative has improved local understanding and awareness of disability access issues and has linked these to economic benefits.

Prejudice Incident Reporting 2013 & 2014:

There has been a decrease in the number of prejudice incidents and hate crime in Aberdeenshire. During 2014 there were less incidents compared to 2013 however most reports received related to race and homophobia incidents. Civil partnership related incidents were reported for the first time in 2014.

The Education Authority participate in the Stonewall Education programme with ambassadors in schools providing peer support. This may have contributed to a reduction in the number of homophobic related incidents reported in schools.

Future Actions

- Improve our community engagement process to establish inequalities and identify actions to address these.
- Improve promotion of the Prejudice Incident Reporting process.
- Improve the information received from prejudice incidents in order to better understand the areas and trends in Aberdeenshire.



Equality Outcome Five

Everyone enjoys equal access to education, training and employment.

Aberdeenshire Council, the Education Authority and the Licensing Board are committed to ensure that all residents in Aberdeenshire enjoy equal access to education, training and employment. Evidence identified a lack of understanding between groups with different protected characteristics. Positive action initiatives will contribute to providing opportunities for everyone to participate in society.

Human Resource & Organisational Development continues to increase the promotion of the Modern Apprentice scheme which is available to applicants of all ages, whilst actively promoting the scheme amongst persons under the age of 19.

A number of projects are in place which contribute to this Outcome including Huntly Employability Group, Support for Unpaid Carers to Gain Qualifications Project Search - Supporting Individuals with Learning Disabilities, Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ), Shared Lives and the Older Peoples Charter in Aberdeenshire.

The Tackling Inequalities Project has delivered the Early Years Strategy and development of the Child Care Partnership. The development of up to ten centres which offer early intervention and preventative facilities for children aged 3-5 and the development of two centres providing early intervention services to children aged 0-3. Parents have the necessary support to be in employment through the availability of high quality, flexible, accessible and sustainable early years and childcare services.

The Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) Award recognises achievement in putting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of a school's planning, policies, practice and ethos. A rights-respecting school not only teaches about children's rights but also models rights and respect in all its relationships: between pupils and adults, between adults; and between pupils. In Aberdeenshire we now have 118 schools at various stages in the Rights Respecting Schools process. Seven schools have gained the prestigious Level 2 Award.

The Education Authority, in partnership with local organisations, offer support to young people with special needs to access work. One such project being "Project Search" which is an employability initiative delivered by the University of Aberdeen for young people with special needs, increasing their confidence and skills to apply for jobs. For one year young people attend University to participate in an employability course and at the same time undertake Work placements. Twelve young people graduated from Project Search, University of Aberdeen on 3 July 2014 with most being successful in gaining employment. Other projects include the global citizenship peer support programme which aims to raise attainment and achievement for children and young people.

The Education Authority have identified a high percentage of pupils entering positive destinations (that is young people progressing to work, employment or training on leaving school), although this is less so for Looked After Children. This continues to be a priority area for improvement.



The Licensing Boards have embedded equalities within their policy statement and provide employee training.

Future Actions

- Continue to progress projects supporting residents into employment, training and education.
- The Education Authority will continue to monitor the destinations of young people and taking required actions to improve, particularly for Looked After Children.

Equality Outcome Six

Access to life opportunities is enhanced by reducing barriers.

The key issues raised in relation to this equality outcome were the lack of suitable affordable housing and poor health outcomes for vulnerable or disadvantaged groups in addition to geographical areas of deprivation. Community consultation identified prejudiced views in relation to Gypsy/ Travellers. The importance of ensuring access to life opportunities is available to all and the need to promote awareness across different groups is recognised.

Each council service has a range of projects to address the issues identified. For example Adult Care Management have introduced Self-Directed Support which enables service users to choose the care package for their needs enabling them to access a wider range of opportunities. Housing education for the homelessness has been provided. Support is available to people where English is not the first language thereby taking steps to empower families and young people. Affordable housing is a key priority this has a strong performance indicator as noted at Figure 1 below. The Tackling Inequalities Service provide support for all age groups.

Figure 1

Title			
HSWSP1B 1b) Number of waiting list applicants who access affordable housing		965	PI
SPI2SP07g Number of waiting list applicants who access affordable housing		1,430	PI

The Education Authority have provided extensive continuing professional development for employees and multi-agency colleagues thereby increasing capacity to support children and young people’s mental health. Mental health was reported as a key concern across the protected characteristics.

Future Actions

- Continue with and identify new projects to positively contribute to this Equality Outcome.

Full details are available in the full report [Aberdeenshire’s Equality Outcomes Report 2015](#).



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www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/equalities