

**West Dunbartonshire Council**  
**Race Equality Scheme 2008-2011**  
**Annual Report 2009**  
**October 2009**

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The report sets out the Council's progress in its Race Equality Scheme (RES) 2008-11. The previous RES was comprehensively reviewed in 2008 and this report provides an update on progress since the RES 2008-11 was introduced. The RES 2008-11 is now being carried forward into the Equality Scheme 2009-12.
- 1.2 A final report has already been produced on progress with the Disability and Gender Equality Schemes, which are also being incorporated into the Equality Scheme 2009-12. Many of the cross-cutting themes have already been covered in this report on Disability and Gender, approved by Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee in September 2009.
- 1.3 The Action Plan Review 2009 at Appendix 1 sets out progress on the Action Plan and provides the basis for this report and the means to identify the work which will be carried forward into the new scheme.
- 1.4 The following sections of the report focus on some background, a summary of progress on the RES on cross-cutting areas and more detail on progress on areas specific to race equality. Progress in terms of cross-cutting measures has been detailed in the Final Report on Disability and Gender and will not be re-iterated within this report as all of the cross-cutting measures also cover race equality.
- 1.5 Equality legislation requires that the schemes reflect the specific role of the Council as an Education Authority, and the report therefore has a separate Education section.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 Legislation
- 2.2 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 gives public authorities the general duty to promote race equality. Under the general duty, in carrying out their functions, public authorities must have due regard to the need to:
  - Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
  - Promote equal opportunities and
  - Promote good relations between people from different racial groups
- 2.3 In response to this and legislation on disability and gender, the Council has developed an approach which cuts across equalities strands in many key areas. This includes the Equality and Diversity Strategy, the Equality and

Diversity Working Group which oversees the implementation of this Strategy and the Equalities Liaison Group which covers all stands and allows joint working across services.

- 2.4 A cross-cutting approach has been developed towards elements such as training, impact assessment, monitoring and reporting and also carries forward into the Equality Scheme 2009-12. As noted, progress in these areas has been reported in the Final Report on the Disability and Gender Schemes. The Draft Equality Scheme 2009-12 contains sections on cross-cutting themes as well as separate sections on specific areas of Equality.
- 2.5 The Draft Equality Scheme 2009-12 refers to the separate Gypsy/Traveller Strategy 2008-11, which was developed and has also been revised and updated in 2009.

### **3 Progress of the Race Equality Scheme**

- 3.1 The attached Action Plan Review 2009 gives details of progress with the 54 actions of the RES. As this was a 3 year action plan in many cases the actions are being carried forward into the Equality Scheme, which contains a streamlined action plan covering the cross-cutting elements and actions on different areas of equalities, including Race.

#### Progress on Cross- Cutting themes

- 3.2 Progress in areas such as training, impact assessment and monitoring have been detailed in the Final Report on Disability and Gender produced in September 2009. Also in terms of Employment some progress has been detailed in this previous report.

The Following Section includes key areas of progress in terms of Race Equality outwith these cross-cutting areas.

## **4 Progress in Areas Specific to Race**

The following section gives details and some examples of progress in areas specific to Race.

### Involvement and Consultation

- 4.1 A Citizens Panel survey in 2008 included some questions on awareness of the Race Equality Scheme and an interest in taking part in a Focus Group. The response led to a Focus Group being held in December 2008, including members of local Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) groups as well as Panel members. The focus group was carried out as part of consultation on the RES and findings from this focus group have been incorporated into the Equality Scheme 2009-12. There were some useful findings including feedback on translation and interpreting services, requests for information on community languages and access to services, which will be followed up in the Action Plan.
- 4.2 There are also links with existing groups including the Ethnic Women's Group and Ethnic Minority Association. There has recently also been some contact from a member of the African community in West Dunbartonshire looking to set up a group. Consultation and involvement has been identified as an area to focus on as part of the Equality Scheme 2009-12, including extending consultation more widely across BME communities in West Dunbartonshire. It is hoped that some further work in developing consultation with BME and LGBT communities will be carried out in 2010 via a student placement.
- 4.3 Other sources of information such as English for Speakers of Other Languages(ESOL) learners, National Insurance Registrations and information from schools can give an indication of the increasing diversity of the population, including the increasing number of languages encountered within schools in the area.

### Translation and Interpretation Services

- 4.4 The Council provides translation and interpretation services on demand, including a telephone interpretation service and interpreters can also be arranged for face-to-face interviews.
- 4.5 Monitoring of the usage of these services has been developed and shows that uptake of translation and interpretation services is fairly minimal. Findings from the Focus group also highlighted some problems with the standard of interpreters provided and awareness of/ reluctance to request services. There was also a request for information in community languages

to be provided to relevant BME groups. These actions will be taken forward as part of the Equality Scheme 2009-12.

#### Racial Harassment

- 4.6 The Multi-Agency Racial Incident Monitoring (MARIM) group has been the focus for the response to racial harassment in West Dunbartonshire. This forum allows partners to work together to respond to incidents of racial harassment and members of BME groups are invited to attend meetings.
- 4.7 The Council also takes reports of racist incidents as a third party, and forms and reporting mechanisms are being revised with a move towards including different forms of harassment, including homophobic incidents and harassment on the grounds of disability.

#### Employment

- 4.8 Monitoring Reports are now published each November, covering Race, Disability and Gender within the workforce. The Employment Monitoring Report for 2009 is currently being finalised. The Report for 2008 shows that whilst the Council has comparatively few Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) employees, approximately 0.4%, compared with a BME population of 0.6% in the West Dunbartonshire Council area (working age population), its performance in this regard compares favourably with many other Scottish Local Authorities..
- 4.9 The Council is taking steps to improve on this position via the recruitment portal for public sector vacancies and will build links with appropriate organisations where possible such as the Ethnic Minority Enterprise Centre in Glasgow, and the Bridges Project.
- 4.10 The Council also signed a Local Employment Partnership (LEP) Agreement with Job Centre Plus in April 2009. LEP aims to identify and target disadvantaged groups in the local labour market, including BME groups, giving them an opportunity to participate in work experience, work placement or employment initiatives. The Council is also working with Trade Unions, including the STUC's One Workplace, Equal Rights project. These areas of work will be carried forward into the Equality Scheme 2009-12.

## Education

- 4.11 An Education Equality and Human Rights Group has been established to take forward the Equalities and Human Rights agenda in relation to education.
- 4.12 The group has developed an Action Plan and one of the key vehicles for taking forward the Equalities agenda will be the Rights Respecting Schools Award. This has been identified by the group and a pilot is being set up.
- 4.13 A working group has also been established to develop anti-bullying policies and strategies to tackle all bullying including discrimination.

## **5 Conclusion**

- 5.1 In 2008-9, progress has been made in the Council's Race Equality Scheme, and some examples of this have been provided in the report. As this was a 3 year scheme many of the actions have been carried forward into the Equality Scheme 2009-12. Much of this progress has been the form of measures which address a wider range of equality issues, including disability and gender equality. This pattern reflects the move towards a single equality approach, but does not diminish the Council's goal of promoting equal opportunity for different racial groups.
- 5.2 Some progress has been made in terms of consultation and involvement, such as working with existing groups and holding a focus group. It is hoped to extend consultation wider via links with other groups within the community and the possibility of developing this area of work, subject to staff resources being available to take this forward.
- 5.3 There is further work to be done, this will be achieved by building on progress noted, both in the cross-cutting measures and in areas specific to race equality. This will be taken forward via the Action Plan in the Equality Scheme 2009-12.

## **6 Contact Information**

- 6.1 Further information on the Council's Race Equality Scheme, can be provided by:

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