**Equalities Briefing for Equality Champions**

**December 2021**

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| **SUBJECT: Equality & Diversity** |

**1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update and inform Equality Champions in relation to Equalities across the Council.

**2. Background**

2.1 All public authorities must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) set out in the Equality Act 2010. This means that all public authorities as part of their day-to-day business, must show how they will:

* *Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation*
* *Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and*
* *Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

**3. Progress Update**

3.1 As advised in the September briefing, work has been progressing on the review of the effectiveness of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) regime in Scotland. The next stage now is a Scottish Government Consultation, open from 13th December 2021 until 7th March 2022, which sets out a series of detailed proposals both for legislative changes to the Scottish Specific Duties and changes to the wider implementation environment. A meeting with SG officials and the members of the Scottish Councils Equality Network (SCEN) is taking place on 13th January 2022 to discuss this matter.

3.2 Further updates will be provided later but would also appreciate any feedback from Elected Members, Equality Champions and Colleagues to provide a collective response: The full consultation paper can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781802017427>

3.3 A six weeks’ British Sign Language (BSL) training course took place in October with 18 members of staff from Thriving Communities, including front facing Reception team and Employability team. It evaluated very well. There are plans to deliver further training courses using Scottish Government specific BSL Plans’ funding in 2022.

3.4 The Improvement Service officer, Miriam McKenna, delivered an informative training input to over 40 colleagues in November, on the Fairer Scotland Duty (FSD) Guidance, which had been published on 4th October 2021 during Poverty Awareness Week. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-duty-guidance-public-bodies/>

3.5Followingchangesat the Council meeting in December,members of the Equality Forum now include Councillors Laura Brennan-Whitefield, Iain Campbell, Ian Davis, and Helen Moonie. The Portfolio Holder for Economy & Culture is Councillor Chris Cullen. Recognition is given to Councillor Hugh Hunter for all his previous support to the Equality Forum.

**4. Next Steps**

4.1 Following the Fairer Scotland Duty training delivered in November across the Council by Miriam McKenna, a further input for CLT has been planned for January 2022. Following this a session will be delivered for all Service Leads.

4.2 Race Equality Training will be delivered in February by CEMVO to members of the Ayrshire Equality Partnership and a small representation from each Ayrshire local authority. Following this, it is hoped to roll this training out over the year. <https://www.cemvoscotland.org.uk>

4.3 The Gaelic Language Plan Monitoring Report of 2020-2021 had been submitted earlier this year to the Bòrd na Gàidhlig, as per our duty. They have now advised that due to the Bòrd undergoing a review of their processes to streamline their work, they will not report back to us until the new year. You will be informed in due course.

4.4 Across South, North and East Ayrshire Councils, we propose to engage with staff to gauge interest in establishing a pan Ayrshire Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) employee forum. Further information will follow in the new year. Please be assured, we will have a similar approach to other staff groups, at a later stage.

4.5 Further Briefings will be delivered regularly to Elected Members and Equality Champions and can be disseminated across all Services and Colleagues.

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