

EQUALITY OUTCOMES

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Policy and Resources Committee on the work being undertaken to review the published set of Equality Outcomes. This work is part of the Improving Equality Outcomes project led by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The paper makes recommendations for the committee to approve proposed changes to the Council's Equality Outcomes following advice from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), and for consultation to take place on the agreed outcomes.

EQUALITY OUTCOMES

2. SUMMARY

This report outlines the revised changes made by Argyll and Bute Council to the published Equality Outcomes as required by the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee:
- Approve the revised changes to the set of published Equality Outcomes
 - Agree to consult on the proposed Equality Outcomes

4. DETAIL

- 4.1. The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 places a number of requirements on public authorities. One of the duties included the Council publishing a set of Equality Outcomes by 30th April 2013. Separate requirements were placed on the local authority and the education authority.
- 4.2 The Council approved the set of Equality Outcomes at the meeting on 25th April 2013 and the outcomes were subsequently published on the Council website.
- 4.3 The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) carried out a project in 2013/14 to monitor how well Scottish public authorities had met the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) specific duties.
- 4.4 The Commission found that many public authorities, including the Argyll and Bute local authority and the Argyll and Bute education authority could benefit from clearer more measureable outcomes.
- 4.5 In response to the project undertaken, the EHRC have created a programme of work that will directly support the public authorities whose outcomes they feel would benefit most from improvement.
- 4.6 This programme, Improving Equality Outcomes Project, commenced in late June 2014 and support has been provided to Argyll and Bute

Council by the EHRC in progressing with the review of our equality outcomes. As a result we will publish our renewed outcomes in October 2014 and will be expected to report in 2015 on:

- Any progress we can identify having made towards achieving the original set of outcomes
- Activities and results of the work within this project
- Where possible, progress towards meeting renewed outcomes

4.7 The initial feedback provided by the EHRC was that the equality outcomes for Argyll and Bute Council (both the local authority and the education authority were published in the same report) would benefit from having an improved structure and rationale as to why the outcomes were chosen, clearer links to local and national evidence and the detail of how we will measure progress towards achieving the set outcomes. In addition it would be beneficial for us to revise the wording of some of our published outcomes.

4.8 Based on the advice of EHRC a revised set of proposed equality outcomes are listed in the table below:

Published Equality Outcome	Proposed change to the Equality Outcome
More people are actively engaged in local decision making	No change
Our service delivery is sensitive to the needs of all users	More people are confident that service delivery is sensitive to their needs
The needs of individuals who provide unpaid care and support are recognised including young carers	Carers are more confident in having their needs recognised
The individual needs of care are recognised	Recipients of care are more confident in having their needs recognised
The gap in educational attainment between protected characteristics has been reduced	No change
Bullying of young people in schools is reduced	No change
We have improved engagement with protected groups	Our approach to engagement reflects the diversity of all our communities

4.9 In order to engage with and involve our communities in the development of the revised Equality Outcomes, a consultation process will take place with the proposed equality outcomes made available on the website and also sent to groups representing the different protected characteristics that have a presence in Argyll and Bute.

5. ACTION PLAN

- 5.1 Improvement and Organisational Development will continue to work with Heads of Service to develop robust performance measures which will allow progress to be monitored and scrutinised in an effective manner.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The revised Equality Outcomes meet the requirements of the public sector equality duty. Following approval of the outcomes, an action plan will be developed in liaison with all services.

7. IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Policy – The Equality Outcomes set out the Council’s policy position in relation to Equalities and assists in delivering the Council’s corporate objectives and meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty specific duties.
- 7.2 Financial – No Implications
- 7.3 Legal – The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 includes a duty for public authorities to publish equality outcomes and report on progress

Any person, including the EHRC, can apply to the Court of Session for judicial review of a public body that they felt was failing to comply with the general duty.

For the specific duty, the EHRC can only enforce.

- 7.4 HR – No implications
- 7.5 Equalities – As part of the Equality duty, the council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations
- 7.6 Risk – Failure to publish Equality Outcomes could result in adverse publicity for the Council.
- 7.7 Customer Service – No Implications

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