

Appendix1

Progress report 2019-2021

Review and progress report on Equality Outcomes 2017-2021

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires local authorities to produce a set of Equality Outcomes every 4 years and report on progress towards reaching these, every 2 years. Our progress report for 2017-19 was published in April 2019.

The table below details progress over 2019-2021.

Equality Outcomes	Progress Update
We have engaged and committed leaders, with the council and partners working together to reduce inequality, remove barriers and promote a culture of respect.	<p><u>LOIP</u></p> <p>Aberdeen City Council’s Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26 is focussed on tackling poverty and inequality, with the 3 Locality Plans central to the delivery of this agenda at a local level. The Locality Plan Annual reports demonstrate the progress made on a range of issues, such as attainment, community growing, employability and further education as well as the impact of working with – and in – communities.</p> <p><u>Equality Events/Motions</u></p> <p>A number of events lead by communities of interest were supported by the Council during this period. Elected members committed to a range of Equality events, including the launch of our BSL Plan in December 2018.</p> <p>From March 2020, however, a significant number of events were cancelled or postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resources were diverted to supporting the critical response to our communities.</p> <p>Events were subsequently reconfigured to be held online and Council leaders continued to lead and contribute to events, including most recently, the Holocaust Memorial Day on 27th January 2021 and an internal webinar hosted by the Chief Officer. There is also Elected Member and Director representation at the Disability Equity Partnership meetings to support the work of the group.</p>

In addition, the Council moved to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-Semitism, noted the Black Lives Matter movement, commissioning an anti-slavery exhibition and adopted the Paris declaration on HIV prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

Equality Ambassador's Network

The Equality Ambassadors Staff Network was launched in May 2018. The goal of the network is realising and developing equality for all staff at Aberdeen City Council. This network provides an opportunity for staff to develop their skills and network with colleagues across the organisation. As of August 2020, the EAN has 44 members. One of the aims of the group is to help increase awareness of, become involved in and organise equality and diversity events and activities.

Community Participation/Initiatives to tackle Inequality.

Within the framework of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, ACC has continued to tackle inequalities and reduce barriers in communities through its' community-led approach, for example, the Children's Services Plan 2017-2020 and the Tenant and Resident Participation Strategy which focuses on communities which may be adversely impacted by inequality.

Efforts to promote participation for those with protected characteristics continues through active support and investment in community forums and networks, such as the Disability Equity Partnership which reports to the Operational Delivery Committee, whilst initiatives such as the Rent Support Scheme for Care Experienced Young People addresses inequality by supporting them in their transition.

Through the [Fairer Aberdeen Fund and Common Good Fund](#), ACC provides funding to community organisations across the City who deliver local services that improve access and tackle equality and fairness issues.

In 2019 the Council established a Community Pantry in the Woodside Fountain Centre, in conjunction with Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE) to provide high-quality low-cost food to the local community. This was introduced here specifically due to data identifying the area as in particular need of this support.

The Champions Board (our approach to Corporate Parenting for Care Experienced Young People) allows senior leaders from across the Public and 3rd Sectors to collaborate on the development of services - outcomes from this include the Rent Support Scheme, CEYP being exempt from Council Tax and CEYP being involved in designing core services.

	<p><u>Integrated Impact Assessments</u></p> <p>Council and Committee reports all require assessments to determine their equality impacts - this has broadened the understanding of officers and Leaders across the Council in these matters, ensuring that the impact of equality and diversity issues are considered in policy and decision making at Council level.</p> <p><u>Procurement</u></p> <p>Guidance for commissioners has recently been developed to ensure that fairness and equality are considered when commissioning services and procuring goods from providers.</p> <p><u>Commissioned Services</u></p> <p>ACC has renewed Service Level Agreements with several organisations which support our equalities work through direct service provision – examples include the provision of mobility aids for those who are disabled, a Casework and Counselling Service for those affected by discrimination and hate crime; an Integration Support Service for refugees, direct support to those in the Deafblind community; and an intensive support service for families affected by multiple disadvantage, which has resulted in significantly improved life outcomes for children, young people, adults and communities across a range of domains.</p> <p><u>Training</u></p> <p>Training is available for all councillors, both as part of their induction as well as advice and support being readily accessible on an ongoing basis and a range of training and support is available to staff.</p>
<p>We have a clear action plan in place to deliver a Human Rights based culture within Aberdeen City Council</p>	<p><u>Commitment to Human Rights Act</u></p> <p>As a public authority, ACC is committed to the Human Rights Act 1998, respecting and protecting citizen’s rights when they make individual decisions, in the planning of services and development of policies. This includes the rights of children where specific work has been undertaken.</p> <p>A Human Rights and Children’s Rights impact assessment is an integral element of our revised Integrated Impact assessment and is undertaken in respect of all new and revised Council policies and significant Council decisions. The assessments are scrutinised by the elected members at committee in advance of reports being approved.</p>

	<p><u>Service Examples</u></p> <p>The Refugee Support hub is a multi-agency group of commissioned services that plan and provide support to the New Scot community. Extensive coordinated work has been carried out by various agencies through the support hub to tackle poverty within the New Scot community, from building an understanding of Social Security Scotland, their rights and entitlements as refugees, access to the warm home discount and to the recently available Child payments. The resettled community need to access clear and qualified legal advice to update their immigration status in the UK. Most advisors charge for this service despite economic inequality faced in the resettled communities. Also, the city of Aberdeen has very little access to this kind of advice, so to ensure families do not face further inequality during their immigration applications the Refugee Project has commissioned a legal firm to ensure support is available to individuals in need. Our report in 2019 reflected on our work to support and welcome refugees into the City. Since then, we have further committed to welcome more refugees into the City. As this work continues, we have enhanced our offer through the delivery of services to meet the Home Office Indicators of Integration Framework 2019 and the New Scot Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-22. Specific support is offered - ESOL classes, education support, health and housing, employability and social integration and civic participation classes.</p> <p>The Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) places children's rights at the very centre of the life and work of a school. It supports schools to create safe and inspiring places to learn where our children are respected, their talents nurtured, and they can thrive. To date, in Aberdeen city, we have 47 of our schools actively engaged in this programme with 22 of them having received their Bronze Award, 9 their Silver Award and 7 their Gold Award. Our ability to lead and support our schools with this award is recognised by UNICEF through our 'associate' status - 1 of only 2 local authorities in Scotland to have this status.</p>
<p>Older people and younger people have an empowered, actively involved community voice.</p>	<p>Younger People</p> <p><u>Examples of innovative practice</u></p> <p>Aberdeen City Youth Council acts as a citywide body that represents the views of young people living in Aberdeen. Each year the Youth Council agrees on a campaign that will make the city a fairer and more equitable place to live, study and grow up in. This year one of their campaigns is to improve the accessibility of physical activities for everyone. Members of the Youth Council are from a diverse range of backgrounds and interests.</p> <p>We recently established a Young Person in Housing Network, to ensure that voices are heard in relation to Housing issues and strategy across the City. This involves, tenants, Youth parliament and other Social Housing providers.</p>

Care Experienced Young People

Through our Champions Board, Care Experienced Young People have had the opportunity to influence service design including in Housing and Libraries services.

There also exists in the Council, the role of Children's Rights Development Assistant. This role is match funded through the Life Changes Trust and supports a 'rights approach' in promoting the needs of the Council's care experienced children, young people and young adults. It provides a tangible employment opportunity for care experienced young adults aimed at enhancing their knowledge, skills and experience and so their capacity and life chances. At its heart, the role promotes and supports the inclusion, participation and 'voice' of Aberdeen's care experienced children, young people and young adults in service development/delivery and through access to the same life opportunities as their peers.

Internship Programme and Portal for Care Experienced Young People - ACC developed an internship programme designed to provide opportunities for Care Experienced Young People to gain experience of working in the Council. This is evidence that the organisation is helping to develop disadvantaged young people and prepare them for employment.

Commissioned Services

The Refugee project commission a Youth Development Worker in acknowledgement that resettled children have had varied access to education, often missing several years. To tackle this inequality the youth worker works closely with teachers and EAL services to meet the needs of individual children. During COVID-19 they supported children to access digital devices, set up a homework club to support understanding of how to use the digital classroom and continued to carry out integration activities, for example, by creating opportunities for young people to participate in established youth groups digitally and (where social distancing allowed) in person. – <https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/media/5341/03-syrian-new-scots.pdf>

The Big Torry Noise Programme which was initially commissioned from 2014 – 2020 has been recommissioned from 2020- 2026, representing a major investment in inclusion and attainment.

Older People

Consultation

	<p>The Aberdeen Voice of Experience is a network and sharing information group whose purpose is to give older people in Aberdeen a strong, collective platform by ensuring representation in community planning and processes; bring together existing groups to share information and work together; and raise awareness of issues that affect all older people.</p> <p><u>Examples of innovative practice</u></p> <p>Aberdeen’s Library Service works in partnership with ‘Silver Surfers’ network, where older residents can be taught how to use computers in order to develop confidence, access and inclusivity. Our Equality Ambassador’s Network recently provided a platform for Silver Surfers to promote their work and raise awareness so that staff could continue to refer into the service.</p> <p>Child friendly city; tenant participation strategy,</p>
<p>Physical and social barriers are removed for those with a disability to access services and public space.</p>	<p><u>Disability Equity Partnership</u></p> <p>ACC commits Officer resource to supporting the Disability Equity Partnership which exists to bring about improvements to the lives of people in Aberdeen who experience exclusion because of their disability, through the promotion of a rights-based approach to disability equality. As a constituted part of the Council’s governance structure, DEP is used as a sounding board for consultation and advice especially for infrastructure projects and accessibility in civic spaces and as a strategic advisory group, the Partnership has been a driving force for positive social change. For example, DEP has had a positive influence on developments regarding accessibility, surfaces, signage and disabled parking spaces around the Union Terrace Gardens, Broad Street, Marischal Square, Robert Gordon’s College Triangle at Schoolhill, Windmill Brae, the annual Winter Festivals and the Last Straw – which was a contribution to eliminate the use of plastic straws.</p> <p><u>Commissioned Services</u></p> <p>ACC commissions several services to enhance support to those with a disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopmobility provides aids to assist disabled people when shopping. ACC also commissioned the purchase of a vehicle for transporting mobility aids. • The Deafblind Association provides direct support to local people in their everyday lives. • North East Sensory Service provides a range of direct support as well as advice and guidance to staff.

	<p><u>Customer Services</u></p> <p>All of our online processes have been assessed for accessibility through our Assisted Digital Integrated Impact Assessment.</p> <p>Customers can also ask a family member/friend/support worker to apply on their behalf for many of our services. For example, we have provided guidance and training to support workers at North East Sensory Services for the Blue badge application service.</p>
<p>We have in place support for BSL users to access services, information on services and to be involved in making improvements for the Deaf and Deaf/blind communities</p>	<p>ACC's BSL Plan was launched in December 2018 and sets out the actions that our Council and the Health and Social Care Partnership will take over the period 2018-2024 and has the same long-term goals as the national plan. Our Plan sets out what we currently do and what we aim to achieve by 2024.</p> <p>The Plan was developed through various consultation exercises carried out with BSL users, parents and carers, teachers and staff.</p> <p>ACC participated in the Landscape Review carried out by the British Deaf Association (commissioned by the Scottish govt) to review progress of ACC's BSL Plan.</p> <p>BSL is already being delivered in some ACC schools as part of the 1+2 Languages approach.</p> <p>ACC commissions the Deafblind Association to deliver direct support services to our deafblind community.</p> <p>It is recognised that crises like the current pandemic pose additional challenges for those with alternative communication needs. As such, resources were dedicated to ensuring the availability of information in BSL format, including child protection, health information, domestic abuse and bin collection schedules.</p> <p>Communication is ongoing to consider how we can improve our services to support the deafblind community. For example, we engaged intensively with North East Sensory Services to discuss how best to engage with BSL users and are now working closely with the British Deaf Association who have supported Officer's understanding of the BSL culture, how to gain and build trust and engagement using technology.</p>
<p>There is learning provision and accommodation in place to meet the</p>	<p><u>Practice</u></p> <p>We have a dedicated Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer who supports this community. For example, our plan to upgrade the travelling persons' site at Clinterty has involved strong engagement with the community building on relationships established over several years. The Officer is also trained in Third Party Reporting so that she can support families making reports of hate crime to the police.</p>

<p>needs of Gypsy/ Traveller families</p>	<p><u>Raising Awareness</u></p> <p>Following reports of bullying of young Gypsy/Travellers at a school in Aberdeen, a member of the community and the GTLO visited to deliver an awareness raising session which the young people engaged with positively.</p> <p>The Equalities Team arranged for a member of the Travelling community to deliver training sessions with elected officials, to raise awareness of the challenges and discrimination faced by Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland. A further session is being arranged for staff.</p> <p>A variety of partners organised activities at the May Festival in 2019 aimed at raising public awareness of Gypsy/Traveller culture, as well as the prejudice and discrimination faced by the community. Last year there were 264 reported crimes which is a reduction on the previous year</p>
<p>Aberdeen is a city of sanctuary with positive relations amongst Aberdeen’s diverse communities, where everyone is welcome and respected, regardless of religion, belief or background.</p>	<p><u>Practice Examples</u></p> <p>ACC has partnered with third sector organisations and local community representatives to create the Shared Futures partnership. Shared Futures aims to widen the welcome to migrant and hidden communities in Aberdeen city, which has benefited refugees resettled by the Refugee project. Most recent events include digital sessions to increase awareness of traditions, cultures and barriers facing the diverse communities of Aberdeen, including an Awareness Session for ‘Gypsy and Traveller Communities’ and ‘The Human Cost of Brexit- A Round Table Discussion.’</p> <p>The Refugee Project are supporting Aberdeen University in their journey to become a University of Sanctuary. Representatives from the Youth work team and social work have joined the discussions to promote accessible resources and programmes to support the continuation to higher education for communities who may face barriers. Addressing barriers for Migrant communities, Refugees, Unaccompanied Asylum- Seeking Children and care experienced people is the current priority.</p> <p>The New Scot Strategic Partnership continues to work together to promote an active welcome for Refugee families resettled through the United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), ACC has committed to resettling a further 6 households in 2021 above and beyond our initial commitment through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS). The partnership brings together key partners such as NHS Scotland, Police Scotland, the Health and Social Care partnership, Education, the Department of Work and Pensions and various teams from ACC to promote rights respecting practice and share key resources and practice.</p> <p><u>Empowering Communities</u></p>

The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 came into force for public sector bodies on 23 September 2018. ACC is committed to ensuring that information on services and performance is accessible to all so that people feel welcomed, respected and part of our community. Examples of how we have done this are:

- We follow guidance on best practice to engage with communities to ensure meaningful discussion with community groups (Scottish Government's Community Engagement Guidance, EHRC Engagement and the Equality Duty: A Guide for public authorities; CPP- Engagement, Participation and Empowerment Strategy)
- We use the InterTrans Service to provide BSL and community languages where needed, producing easy read formats and translated communications as required.
- Throughout COVID, it has been crucial that health and service information has been provided in accessible formats: the ACC website is available in over 80 languages; critical information translated into Arabic has been provided and delivered in hard copy to the Syrian Refugee community; Doctors of the World information on migrant's mental health and wellbeing (available in 27 languages) was made available on the ACC Facebook page; every Syrian refugee family was provided with a laptop and support to use it so that they could maintain contact with relatives as well as access service information
- Virtual meetings were recently set up to engage community groups to hear their views about our Equality Outcomes: Gypsy Travellers, Aberdeen City Youth Council, The Muslim community, The Jewish community, The African Council, LGBT+ and Disability Equity Partnership.
- Three Social Listening events were held in Aberdeen in August, to assist the Scottish Government's Social Renewal Advisory Board in its remit. These included people with protected characteristics where possible, to ensure we understood what communities expected of the Council during and following the Pandemic response. Reports are available for these sessions.

A key component of the integration work carried out by the Refugee project is to ensure customers have access to clear, up to date legal information to empower them to lead safe and secure lives in Aberdeen. As our customer base speak Arabic, this information is translated to be accessible. Further to this we know there are members of the community that are illiterate in Arabic and English, so we endeavour to hold information sessions where topics are presented, clear concise information is shared, and customers are able to discuss the topic and ask questions. Most recently there was a change in UNHCR information processing which highlights the link between resettled families and their families still in Middle Eastern countries. The refugee project held a session where we discussed information directly from the UNHCR, how this impacted the service we provide and how it affects the customers.

	Digitally isolated members of the community who lacked the skills to access the online service were supported through doorstep visits and given practical access advice.
<p>In Aberdeen there is a culture in which women’s lives, opportunities and confidence are improved.</p>	<p><u>Example of Innovative Practice</u></p> <p>The Priority Families Service (PFS) is a commissioned service which works with those affected by complex and inter-related needs. An Employment Coach from the Foyer is part of the team:</p> <p><u>Case study – Foyer Development Coach (DC)</u></p> <p>During lockdown, the Development Coach started working with three new Priority Families mums individually. She introduced herself by phone and then kept in contact weekly. During these weekly calls, she encouraged the mums to consider doing video calls, but they were all very reluctant due to a lack of confidence. They all said, ‘I don’t like to see myself on the screen!’</p> <p>Slowly as relationships and trust built, they each agreed to have 1 to 1 video session to start City & Guilds units – Developing Personal Confidence and Dealing with a Problem.</p> <p>After several weeks, all three were nearing completion of the two units and the Development Coach asked how they felt about coming together as a group, to continue to the next level of qualification.</p> <p>Without hesitation, all three said yes, and the new group was established.</p> <p>This has been a highlight for the Development Coach. Having never met her or each other in person, it is testament to their newfound confidence having been taken out of their comfort zone, that they are now ‘socialising’ and learning virtually. The Development Coach has also set up a private group for them on FB Messenger so that they can communicate and support each other with their learning out with the usual sessions.</p> <p>All are looking forward to a proper catch up and coffee, but meantime will continue to ‘meet’ weekly on Zoom.</p> <p><u>Addressing Gender Inequality</u></p> <p>The Refugee Project Strategic Partnership and Service Support hub shared concerns of gender inequality in access to services, opportunities, and information in Aberdeen for resettled women. To address the negative implications and impact of this inequality we asked a commissioned partner to organise a New Scots Gender Inequality Virtual Workshop, in which statutory bodies, third</p>

	<p>sector organisations and members of the Aberdonian community will develop a planned approach to engaging women in informed and empowering ways. This workshop aims to embed inclusive practice across many agencies and create a shared action plan for professionals working with New Scot families.</p> <p><u>Domestic Abuse</u></p> <p>The Council works with 3rd Sector organisations to support victims of Domestic Abuse and funds Grampian Women’s Aid to provide refuge for victims. We recently created a new post, Domestic Abuse Co-Ordinator, who works across the Council. The postholder has helped the Housing Service develop a Domestic Abuse Policy. The Council is an important partner in the Violence Against Women Partnership, and through our Housing Policies ensure priority for families and households who need safe rehousing due to domestic abuse.</p>
<p>Aberdeen is an LGBT+ friendly city where LGBT+ communities can confidently express their identity and views.</p>	<p><u>Practice Example</u></p> <p>LGBT- Zone Youth</p> <p>Group meets twice per month, continuing throughout the pandemic online and face to face in Westburn Park in the periods of 2020 that have allowed this. The group are supported by two ACC Youth Workers, supporting young people 12-25 years for Aberdeen city young people and shire due to no current provision for young people in shire out with school.</p> <p>(15) Zone Youth LGBT+ Facebook</p> <p>Group Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner of Grampian Pride Committee- responsible for hosting the ‘youth space’ in 2018 and 2019 Pride Village. • Were part of BBC Scotland documentary on social media’s effects on young people and relationships. BBC Scotland - Teenage Kicks: Love, Sex & Social Media, 15-year-old Ryley talks openly about sexting among school children • Young people supported to present at the Gay Straight Alliance Conferences • Tackling homophobia in schools presentations by young people • Hosted workshop with young people at NHS wellbeing conference on being an alliance • Youth activism work on a campaign called ‘Use ‘It’ Right’.

- YP writing blog posts for LGBT Scotland [#OurLives Blog post: Cameron | LGBT Youth Scotland | LGBT Youth Scotland](#)

Four Pillars are a charity within Aberdeen that support LGBT people and alliances. ACC staff quite often refer parents of young people on to them as they run a Trans Parents peer support group. [Four Pillars – Supporting Grampians LGBT+ Community \(fourpillarsuk.org\)](#)

