

Ayrshire Equality Outcomes Events

Summary of responses

Introduction

Public organisations across Ayrshire are working together to produce a set of joint equality outcomes.

We want to develop an Ayrshire where our people have the best possible life chances and experience equality of opportunity in all aspects of life. To help do this, a number of us have come together to develop shared equality outcomes. We believe by working together we are in a better position to benefit all.

This report details the themed responses received in the Equality Outcomes Survey Monkey and at locally held shared outcomes events (Appendix 1) which were promoted widely through leaflet drops at key buildings, media coverage including local tabloids and public facing websites during Autumn 2016.

At the time of consultation there were 5 outcomes, however, as a result of the feedback collected in the survey and shared outcome events the outcomes have been rewritten, renumbered and reduced to 4 (*2 and 4 merged*).

Outcome 1: In Ayrshire people experience safe and inclusive communities

(Originally Outcome 1 was: In Ayrshire people will feel that they are in safe, inclusive and fair communities; No matter who you are you will feel safe, included and be treated fairly.)

Security

There was an awareness that perceptions and experience would be markedly different for people living in different communities, with some people feeling that they lived in a safe and inclusive community while others would never have that experience. It was suggested that the traditional community needs to be restored and that until we change the culture and educate people in how to live, our streets and feeling of inclusivity within our communities will never improve. A lack of respect and discipline, poor parenting, and soft police approaches were blamed for the increase in anti social behaviour, crime, and drugs by some. The council should work in conjunction with the police more effectively to address the issues raised around the visibility of Police as people reported that they didn't feel safe out on the streets (especially after dark), and the increase in levels of crime and drug use due to insufficient deterrents.

Discrimination and Hate Crime

All members of the community should be offered and have access to the same opportunities in life and work, be part of a society that values and respects them, with no one cohort being seen to be given special treatment while others are excluded. Equity of service should be provided across the board, thereby reducing the difference between rich and poor, sex, gender, stereotype, race, religion and ability.

People in communities need to be educated on diversity, forms of discrimination, hate crime and acceptance of people for who they are, as many people said they encounter prejudices and don't feel safe or included. There needs to be more training and awareness around third party reporting as there appears to be a lack of confidence in reporting issues such as hate crime, and knowledge of the availability of reporting centres or indeed the processes involved. There was concern about predetermined views, attitudes and opinions towards people with protected characteristics. All staff, and in particular front facing staff, require training to better understand the specific needs and issues facing people in the community and be more welcoming and open-minded.

Inconsistent funding allocation was blamed on some areas being more prosperous while other areas are disadvantaged in terms of local facilities and amenities, housing, services and transport links. Some people in Ayrshire rural communities find themselves very isolated and unable to access services, especially where co-inequalities exist such as disability or frailty.

Communication

Public bodies need to improve communication and get the message out that everyone is affected by equality issues be proactive rather than reactive to equality issues, They need to recognise that service users are different and varied, listen and engage more with customers, service users, and communities, and use a broad set of approaches.

Child Protection

The safety of children is imperative and each individual has a role to play in this. Most children genuinely have no place of their own to socialise and provision of facilities to rectify this issue is urgently needed. With respect to certain protected characteristics, more has to be done within schools and training centres to educate and be role models, rather than leaving it to a certain individual within the school who happens to be interested or have a particular protected characteristic.

Outcome 2 - In Ayrshire people have equal opportunity to access and shape our public services

(Originally this was Outcome 3: In Ayrshire people will have equal opportunity to access and shape our public services; No matter who you are you can help us make our services better for everyone.)

Shaping services

Accessing and engaging with services can be problematic for some due to stigma and the attitudes of providers. It is difficult to shape services in a positive way when budgets are being cut, however, through discussion with partners, employees, public and other groups, many aspects for inclusion and consultation can be achieved, and locality planning and a focus on community empowerment should improve the situation.

As a greater range of public services are being centralised in population hubs, rural areas are experiencing a withdrawal of support for community halls, reduced policing, losing local offices, poor transport links, and very little in the way of facilities and services. The public should be involved in reshaping Gp services to improve access for

people to see their GP and reduce the number of people who fail to attend. The design of public areas and services needs to be looked at to ensure inclusivity.

Empowerment Bill and General Accessibility

The public sector should provide clear communication (in various formats) on the services, power and information accessible to them, and better opportunities for people to access information, education and training on how to participate and influence local governance.

Consultation and Engagement

There is marked distrust and distaste towards South Ayrshire Council due to inadequate consideration of community views on public services when making decisions, with Council meetings and committees closed to the public. Council plans, public services and engagement needs to be open, accessible and transparent to ensure people are kept informed, trust in the organisation, feel valued and engage in the future. The council website needs to be made simpler, and local notice boards and resources should be utilised more to promote events and consultations in communities.

Engagement feedback should be provided (even if it is negative), in written format or in feedback sessions on what has been agreed, done, or an explanation into why certain things could not be done.

User Groups

The needs of different equality groups need to be recognised, understood and support charities invited to put forward service users and project managers for participation in consultation events. All walks of life should be promoted and people empowered to be able to talk freely about their gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, etc without fear of prejudice or recrimination. A pro-active creative and innovative approach is needed to reach people from groups who do not normally participate, as people must believe that it is possible for them to contribute to policy and access and shape public services. Colleges need to be more involved within communities and vocational courses should be used to engage and integrate people with additional support needs and give them practical skills for moving forward into employment.

Communication

Good practice needs to be learned from and shared, and more events should be held to ensure communities have a voice and revive community spirits as bringing people together allows the opportunity for people to learn from one another and appreciate another perspective.

Police Scotland

Police Scotland talked about opportunities to shape their services and what forum or way they could do this. There was some discussion about the benefits of having more police on the street and having the same police officers on the beat to develop knowledge of local areas, build relationships and provide continuity and consistency for people.

Outcome 3: In Ayrshire people have opportunities to fulfil their potential throughout life

(Originally this was outcomes 2 and 4- (2): In Ayrshire people will have a positive experience of learning, working and living in our communities; No matter who you are you will have an equal opportunity to contribute to, live and work in our local communities/ (4) In Ayrshire people will have accessible opportunities to maximise their potential to develop their skills for life, learning and working; No matter who you are we will support you to develop your skills.)

Outcome

The outcome must be realistic in creating opportunities as it is only an "opportunity" if you can access it? There were mixed thoughts on whether the opportunities for an individual to fulfil their potential is determined by their environment, funding and resources available, or down to the individual, their attitude and experiences. People can reach their goals at different levels as everyone has different capabilities, but their potential can still be fulfilled. Some people have limited access to or experience of IT Programmes and are unaware about how they might get involved. A graphic flow map of educational opportunities and how and where people can go to for information should be sent out by post or made available in public buildings and online.

Engagement

People appreciated being asked their views, and suggested that meetings should be held to explain what is to be achieved before decisions impacting on communities are made. Environments need to be created that utilise resources to equip local people and allow them to grow and develop, thereby providing a good work life balance. If people are healthy and not bowed down by debt and workload, they are more likely to engage.

Community and Transport

The traditional town and the high street as the vibrant part at the centre of community was lamented, but the fabric of so much of Ayrshire has been allowed to deteriorate due to lack of funds and a lack of awareness and prioritisation. Public transport needs innovative solutions to be found to assist rural commuters (including students) with mixed groups of people involved to explore routes. Build better road connections to ensure every community within Ayrshire has a direct link into their main administrative town and car share should be encouraged.

Diversity and cultural activities complementing the existing traditional menu available should be developed and supported to demonstrate what Ayrshire has to offer and attract more people to Ayrshire. Community projects would help to build confidence, break down language barriers and improve cultural awareness over time. The integration of Syrian families promotes a positive message about how people can embrace our culture whilst at the same time maintaining their own religion and belief. Some areas are very insular and are difficult places to live for people just moving into the area. A higher profile of how members of the community can report hate crime is

needed as a few respondents said they felt isolated, were fearful of abuse at times, and that hate crime still exists within some Ayrshire communities.

Before practices and funding is put in place, it is essential to plan and look at potential impacts in advance recognising all people with protected characteristics as this could create inequalities. Tangible examples in workplaces that have made a difference to communities, should be used as a template to start new ventures on a small-scale from the ground up, focussing on practical things that will actually happen, are achievable and transparent. There need to be more opportunities for school leavers so the outcome is important for the future workforce. Voluntary support workers would be an option for older people requiring support.

A positive equalities experience should be available and services must be pro-active in engaging with people who do not access council services and hard-to-reach groups. The language used in consultations needs to be simple and consistent to encourage everyone to take part. Public bodies need to communicate and publicise the work and projects they are responsible for as sharing of information and transparency is crucial. Partnership working allows comparative data to be shared across the Ayrshire councils. The best initiatives begin within the local community resident groups taking the lead on issues and supported by agencies.

Recognition was given to the partnership work that is ongoing with Ayrshire LGBT+ Development group to ensure that employee groups in the workplace have visible and well-publicised information and feel safe and supported to come out as LGBT.

Partner agencies need to work together to support people released from the prison service, especially those with addictions and help them stay on the right track by showing them positive stories of individuals who have turned their life around with the appropriate help and support. It was noted that the experience of accessing job centres, etc. is not positive, and can leave people feeling demoralised and negative impacting on their mental health, making it more difficult and challenging for them to remain mentally well and get back into employment.

Disability opportunities

Specialised childcare for a disabled child is too expensive and limited locally to facilitate a parent to work, and part-time work opportunities that pay enough to cover the childcare needed are rare. Parent carers of disabled adolescents can feel excluded in the workplace community. More projects, funding and alternative ways of engagement needs to be done to raise awareness of opportunities and to support people with Learning Disabilities who often fall through the gaps e.g. Project search for young people with learning disabilities. Barriers to people with a disability achieving their occupation of choice need to be identified, removed and prioritised as required and active support should be provided for disabled people to access facilities. Vulnerable people should be given what they need and entitled to without the intervention of parents or carers. There needs to be better support and diagnosis for people with mental health conditions, and for agencies to share strategies.

Education and local resources

Further education should be free and available to everyone. Local community venues and schools should be equipped to allow them to be utilised more out of hours and recreational facilities should be built in outlying areas. Learning institutes need to look at more attractive ways of promoting community based learning and offer an expanded variety of evening classes to ensure that everyone's learning requirements are identified, including non vocational courses and pick up those who do not have positive experiences of education or were not ready to learn at a young age. There needs to be proper training courses for staff involved with career development for young adults, and more engagement between schools and colleges with families to encourage ambition in our young people. Disengaged children need to be identified and have 1-1 mentoring to gain an understanding on the reason for their disengagement and re engage them in education. Classes to build self esteem and deal with bullying should be encouraged to enhance life chances and schools and colleges should strongly promote extracurricular study activities. Better equality, understanding and inclusion is needed in schools about the barriers to learning for those with sensory impairment or additional support needs and effective supportive strategies, as well as additional training for teachers and learning support staff.

Modern apprenticeships and work

Public bodies need to make more use of initiatives like modern apprenticeships to open up new area of life for young people. Ayrshire needs to concentrate on investing in a wide variety of industries and technologies to stop people moving away and working further afield, and to encourage workers to come to the area with sufficient housing to encourage people to want to stay. Managers need to be aware of the impact working practices and environmental factors have on people, (especially those with long term conditions) and promote self management of health and well being by using developing skills for life. Jobseekers should be made aware of learning opportunities including volunteering within the third sector and encouraged to apply as learning and life skills will increase if employment opportunities improve. Accessible support such as workshops funding and grants require greater promotion and could take down barriers and give opportunities to those who would benefit and would want to learn, work and live in communities. We must be mindful of protected characteristics. i.e. young people, ethnic minority communities.

To keep people living an enhanced, active, happy, and independent for longer in their homes (rather than care facilities) after retirement, it is important to have access to early interventions, befriending schemes, task teams and family friendly service and more forums for people to network, build positive relationships. (not solely reliant on voluntary sector)

Intergenerational work

Engagement with the third sector could help to create and support Intergenerational work opportunities. Older members of the community have wide and varied life experiences which could be shared with others, particularly younger members of the community and more effort should be made to allow older and younger people to learn and work together as it is believed sharing these life experiences can have a positive

effect on learning, working and living in our communities. There was agreement from Ayrshire College expand their intergenerational learning and work opportunities within communities for young and old. There should be retirement opportunities available as well support for lifelong learning opportunities.

Outcome 4: In Ayrshire public bodies are inclusive and diverse employers

(Originally this was outcome 5:- In Ayrshire public bodies will be seen as employers of choice for all people; No matter who you are you will see public bodies as a place you want to work.)

Policies

All Ayrshire employers should be encouraged to continually review its priorities and equality impact assessments to meet public service standards. Staff should be aware of the various policies and practices which can be implemented and signposted to support where necessary. Alternatives to public body employers with vocational skills and new money to invest are required. Equality legislation requirements and Public Sector Equality Specific Duties were discussed in terms of the need to publish the equality statistics for service users, employees and job applicants to ensure there is an equal distribution in terms of protected characteristics.

Recruitment Practices and work

The council needs to improve its reputation as an employer with regard to being honest and transparent in terms of recruitment. There were mixed views around the recruitment processes. i.e. artificial equality with positive discrimination versus best candidate should get the job. Jobs should be advertised more widely rather than just on websites. Public bodies should try to have a workforce reflective of their local population, take steps to make themselves attractive employers, focus on getting maximum employment into the area and use consider modern apprenticeships (ensuring the real living wage is the minimum paid). Public bodies have a duty to employment and need to be seen as role model employers, leading by example and treating people fairly and in a non-discriminatory way in terms of the range of people employed and by employing more people who fall into socio economic groups.

Mental health and wellbeing of staff

Job opportunities should not be restrictive and consideration should be given to flexible working. People should be valued for their integrity, commitment and compassion, and we should make sure that existing staff are mentally well, as happy staff equals happy customers. The policy and process of "organisational change" can make staff feel devalued.

Social responsibility

All members of the community need to be listened to, respected and involved in the decision making process about changes to the Town or village they live in and public services should meet the needs of communities. Buildings that are empty should be utilised to allow projects to flourish. People living in rural areas who do not own a car

would benefit from better leisure facilities but there is a lack of credence paid to the rural voice.

Local Authority and Community Planning partners must work in partnership to reduce and ideally remove defined barriers and obstacles to reaching employment. Anyone with a disability should be assessed for employment that suits them. It would be good to see real opportunities and greater support for disabled young adults and LGBTQ people in the community to socialise and feel included in a social, safe, visible, non-judgmental and nonthreatening environment to combat social isolation. Facilities should be modernised to be available to all to use without deciding or declaring a sexual orientation, and modes of address should be more generic too.

An improvement in access to services and involvement in the community for adults with any hearing impairment would have a positive impact on people affected which results in communication issues and who retreat from their local communities and remain hidden.

Appendix 1

Engagement Schedule

Date	Venue	Protected Characteristics
21 September 2016	Saltcoats Town Hall Countess St Saltcoats KA21 5HP	All
27 September 2016	County Hall County Buildings Wellington Square Ayr KA7 1DR	All
29 September 2016	East Ayrshire Council Headquarters 91A London Road Kilmarnock KA3 7BU	All
5 October 2016	Stewarton Academy Cairnduff Place Stewarton KA3 5QF	Age (young people), Disability, Race, Religion and Belief, and Sex
5 October 2016	St Kentigern's Church Hall Dunbar Drive Kilmarnock KA3 7PP	All

6 October 2016	Cumnock Academy Ayr Road Cumnock KA18 1EH	Age (young people), Disability, Race, Religion and Belief, and Sex
6 October 2016	Doon Academy Ayr Road Dalmellington KA6 7SJ	Age (young people), Disability, Race, Religion and Belief, and Sex
7 October 2016	Kilmarnock Academy 15 Elmbank Drive Kilmarnock KA1 3BS	Age (young people), Disability, Race, Religion and Belief, and Sex
25 October 2016	Ayrshire Minority Ethnic Communities Association (AMECA) Kilwinning Campus Ayrshire College Kilwinning	Age, Race, Religion and Belief and Sex
27 October 2016	Ayrshire Minority Ethnic Communities Association (AMECA) Ayr Campus Ayrshire College Dam Park Ayr	Age, Race, Religion and Belief and Sex
1 November 2016	Ayrshire Minority Ethnic Communities Association (AMECA) East Ayrshire Council Headquarters 91A London Road Kilmarnock KA3 7BU	Age, Race, Religion and Belief and Sex
15 November 2016	Let's Talk About Trans Transgender Conversation Café Kilmarnock Campus	Gender Reassignment, Sexual Orientation and Sex

	Ayrshire College Hill Street Kilmarnock	
17 November 2016	Let's Talk About Trans Transgender Conversation Café Kilwinning Campus Ayrshire College Kilwinning	Gender Reassignment, Sexual Orientation and Sex
22 November 2016	Let's Talk About Trans Transgender Conversation Café Ayr Campus Ayrshire College Dam Park Ayr	Gender Reassignment, Sexual Orientation and Sex