

Ayrshire Equality Outcomes Event

Saltcoats Town Hall

21st September 2016

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.

The information provided below is the output of discussions from the Equality Outcomes Event held in North Ayrshire, in Saltcoats Town Hall on the morning of 21st September 2016.

Outcome 1: 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.

Q1: In what way do you find this outcome meaningful to your community?

It was suggested that the themes of Safety, Inclusiveness and Fairness can be linked to many other issues facing local communities including poverty and other related disadvantages. As such, there is a concern that without a clear message regarding the definition of this outcome, it may become open to interpretation, with perceptions varying across Ayrshire.

There is a concern that this outcome is looking at too many facets and that safety, inclusivity and fairness are separate issues and may require different approaches to improve.

Overall it was questioned if this outcome is 'too ambitious'. Further, in relation to the three aspects, measuring improvements in these areas may prove difficult. How do we know what is Fair and how would we measure it.

Q2: How might this outcome make a positive difference to the lives of people in your community?

Organisations should adopt Asset Based Approaches that help build on the strengths and experiences of local communities. We need to start by looking at what is good in our communities and not dwelling on the negative. This should be supported by clear (plain English) messages from key organisations.

Need to motivate local communities to participate – how do we do this?

We need to ensure communities have the facilities and resources to flourish. We also need to better identify the priority groups in our communities to ensure their voices are heard.

Joint messages and involvement from all public organisations and community planning partners will be needed to make a real difference. As public organisations, we should be constantly challenging attitudes. Also, our frontline staff should be knowledgeable and considerate in their understanding of equality and diversity issues.

Outcome 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

Q1: In what way do you find this outcome meaningful to your community?

It was agreed that the Outcome was important to the whole community being able to participate in community life and get involved in helping their community. It was recognised that there is potentially a very positive economic benefit of supporting people to live, learn and work in the area.

There is benefit in being open and honest about the amount of resources available to make a positive difference to the lives of people in the community.

In one group, discussion quickly focussed on the 'learning' facet of the outcome, initially addressing how challenging it would be to improve the learning outcomes of Ayrshire residents. The focus on 'Learning' raised the concern that it may supersede the 'Working' or 'Living' elements of the outcome.

Further questions were raised that suggested measuring the quality of working lives or living in communities may be difficult to quantify.

Q2: How might this outcome make a positive difference to the lives of people in your community?

There needs to be a recognition that academic and scholarly achievements are not the only routes to a positive working life. Services and communities need to be able to recognise strengths and skills in young people that can be nurtured into valuable individual assets. We need to be aware of the opportunities available for the less academic in our communities.

It was recognised that people – coming from different backgrounds and social circumstances – will have different work ethos and motivations. We need to support those who are demotivated to encourage a positive view of learning and work.

We need to challenge poor perceptions and encourage tolerance, caring and understanding between residents in communities, we need to recognise the impact that poor financial support has to the positive outcomes of people in the area. Overall, we need to see a culture change across the board and support people to become more 'community minded'.

#equal4u

We need to work together, between our communities and public bodies to create a positive environment in which people can live, learn and work.

It is important that jobs are located in Ayrshire and it is seen as a good place for businesses to relocate to. We need to ensure the area has a good skills base to attract potential employers.

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.

Q1: In what way do you find this outcome meaningful to your community?

General agreement that the outcome is appropriate, but with the recognition that it is dependent on communication. It was agreed that the outcome was meaningful and would clearly make a difference to the whole community and in particular, to the most vulnerable and those living in poverty. It was highlighted that there is benefit in being open and honest about the amount of resources available to make a positive difference to the lives of people in the community.

Q2: How might this outcome make a positive difference to the lives of people in your community?

It was suggested that focussing on localities within our communities would be an important mechanism to allow local people to engage with services and community planning. We need to develop these locality structures in a way that include robust community engagement techniques – this includes ensuring the right people are involved with locality structures.

Following on from this is the need to support local voluntary groups develop, grow and become self-sustaining. Local voluntary groups can often be the voice of the most disengaged in our communities. However, we also need a strong and regular message from local leaders (Councillors, Chief Execs, etc) to underline how important public participation is and prevent local people from disengaging with the process.

It is also essential that people get feedback on any engagement they are involved. Demonstrating that the public's input can affect change will be a powerful motivator for future engagement work.

A robust transport infrastructure is needed in all areas of Ayrshire to ensure all residents can access services and take part in community life equally.

An issue raised that when organisations go through Structural Change, they re-name and re-brand services making it difficult for people to know where to locate a service they need.

Outcome 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.

Q1: In what way do you find this outcome meaningful to your community?

It was agreed that this was a good outcome and would be meaningful for local residents and communities.

It was highlighted that this outcome would, for example, lead to expectant mothers being provided greater opportunities when pregnant and not be side-lined or have their learning put on hold.

It was questioned whether this outcome should have a health element to it, assuming that health concerns may be a barrier to lifelong learning. People should be better aware of managing their own health conditions.

Q2: How might this outcome make a positive difference to the lives of people in your community?

Highlighted that this outcome is relevant to all protected characteristics. A suggestion was that we could look for opportunities for intergenerational work and take the development of skills out into the local community.

We should build on the positive work that is ongoing. We need to look at providing more support to those with disabilities that want to access the work force. This could be achieved by further developing and working with the voluntary sector.

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.

Q1: In what way do you find this outcome meaningful to your community?

This outcome was considered positive as it promotes fairer access for people in the job market. It will help us focus on the family friendly policies that are available in public sector bodies.

It seems like common sense to have this outcome, but some concern was raised about public body's ability to tackle bullying and harassment. It was highlighted that some companies can discriminate against people who wish to work part time or refuse to do long hours. This underpins the importance of this outcome.

Q2: How might this outcome make a positive difference to the lives of people in your community?

While many public organisations have positive flexible working arrangements for staff, this isn't the case in all. In some case, employers can be inflexible with their working time arrangements which may prove difficult for some people (carers, lone parents, new mothers etc). Promotional work around the benefits of flexible working schemes could help.

The range of jobs available in the public sector needs to be promoted. Concern that people view working for the NHS as, "only nurses" or those within the Council as "Office Workers". Need to highlight that there are varied roles and skills sets required in these organisations. A suggestion was to create a pictorial website showing staff statements from various different jobs. We need to promote a positive image of public sector organisations where staff thrive in a nurtured and supportive environment.

A barrier to public sector jobs is the emphasis on advertising only through specific websites (MyJobScotland, SHOW, etc) – this benefits only those who are aware of the existence of these sites. There is no blanket universal approach to advertising jobs and careers that does not always rely on electronic methods.

It is recognised that there is the additional challenge of balancing good working practices while still meeting core business requirements. We need to be creative in our approaches and solutions.

Attendee List

Name	Designation	Organisation
Sheena Campbell	VAWP	NAC
Catriona Milne	Social Work (student)	NAC
Scott Bryan	Team Manager	NA HSCP
Andrew Hale	Equality & Health Officer	AC
Billy Fisher	Learning Officer	SA HSCP
Maureen Kater	Health Improvement Officer	NHS A & A
Mhairi Strawhorn	Health Improvement Practitioner	NHS A & A
Katy Anderson	PC	Police Scotland
Tony Harkin	Local Authority Sergeant	Police Scotland
Jacqueline Keltie	E & D	NHS A & A
Elaine Savery	E & D	NHS A & A
Fiona Gartland	Team Manager	Barnardo's
Euan Lees	Community Development Worker	NAC
Pam Maxwell	Director	Lead Scotland
E. Goodwin	Patient Feedback Manager	NHS A & A
L Finlayson	Strategic Management Officer	SAC
Mary Davie	QI Lead	NHS A & A
J McConville	AVJB	Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board
Joe Cullinane	Council Leader	NAC
Pam Crostulaite	Team Manager	NAC
Danny Sweeney	Team Manager	NAC
Adrienne Maloney	Social Worker	NAC
Albert Bruce	SFRS	Fire & Rescue
Linda Bratton	Patient Network	Patient Network
Andy Swanson	Organisational Development Lead	NA HSCP

#equal4u