

## Equalities Participation Network – 30 November 2023

**Present:** Myshele Haywood (GREC), Ru Carroll (Four Pillars), Roslynn Fowler (Aberdeen Action on Disability), Linzi Harrow (ACC), Mary Rasmussen (Guide Dogs), Alison Wilkie (Deaf Blind Scotland, attending on behalf of John Whitfield), Bertha Yakubu (African Women's Group).

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### Overview of 2023 EPN Meetings

10 meetings (including today) + EDI policy event in September  
Attended by 22 people in total from 18 groups or communities

#### *Topics/Speakers:*

- Reflection/planning
- Equality Outcomes
- Community Empowerment & Community Councils
- Intersectionality Workshop
- Discussion of EPN format, focus, etc.
- ACC website accessibility
- Scottish Human Rights Bill Consultation
- Discussion of EDI Policy event / Locality Plan Refresh Engagement
- ACC Budget Consultation

*2022 Topics/Speakers (for info)* – City Centre Master Plan; Equality Outcomes; City Voice, Hate Crime; Council Housing; Cost of living, benefits, energy bills; Funding for community groups; Recruitment at ACC; Civic Participation

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### Announcements/info

4 Pillars and NHS are doing blood borne virus screening at St Nicholas Square tomorrow (1 Dec) – there is also information about testing on their website: [fourpillarsuk.org/getting-tested](https://fourpillarsuk.org/getting-tested)

The African Women's Group is hosting a fundraiser gala on 17 December. Tickets and more information here: [tickettailor.com/events/africanwomensgroupscotlandscio/1033926](https://tickettailor.com/events/africanwomensgroupscotlandscio/1033926)

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### Possible topics for 2024

Open discussion of issues folk would like to consider next year, speakers to invite, etc.

**Decision-makers** – general sense of disappointment with engagement from key people, whether councillors or officers. Folk would like to get more decision makers along to meetings in the new year so they can speak with them directly.

**Pavement parking and 20mph zones** – the Scottish Government has legislated on these – how and when will they be implemented in Aberdeen? Possible wider discussion of road and pavement use issues, including incorrect tactile (corduroy) on Wellington Road, which is a hazard for visually impaired people (this was raised in September, so far no response). Linzi looked on ACC staff

website for information on pavement parking enforcement, it appears that the process has started for organising it, no indication of when it will actually happen.

**Artefacts and legacy of transatlantic slavery** – the research on this was completed and a banner is displayed at Aberdeen Uni, but the researchers have not followed up with African communities. They came to African groups when they wanted to speak to them for the research, but there has been no engagement on the outcome of the project. One person changed jobs so it's unclear who to contact. Myshele to look into this.

**Education** – lack of training for teachers in support for learning is a growing issue, especially with so many children now having additional support needs. Also the issue of 'ghost children' not attending school (often related to their own additional needs). It would be useful to invite someone from education and/or youth work to find out what's being done to support children, and to speak about community concerns.

Another issue was raised about children with additional support needs, where it appears that records of their needs are no longer kept. *Looking into this further, these are now called 'Individual Education Plans' and parents should have access to them – if someone has a concern they should contact the school and ask for a copy of all paperwork the school has for their child.*

**Domestic Abuse** – it would be useful to have speakers from some of the services for folk dealing with domestic abuse and gender based violence (a postcard with information about different services can be found here: [grec.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/vaw\\_postcard\\_2023.pdf](http://grec.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/vaw_postcard_2023.pdf)). It was noted that domestic abuse is a particular issue for older people and those with care needs, especially if their abuser is also their only or main carer.

*Hourglass Scotland is a charity campaigning to protect older people from abuse – they have a 24-hour free helpline for anyone seeking advice, support or information: 080 8808 8141. Their website is [wearehourglass.scot](http://wearehourglass.scot).*

An issue was also raised about two women being turned away from support because they had No Recourse to Public Funds – this should not have happened. Myshele to follow up with colleagues through the Violence Against Women Partnership.

**Other suggestions:** health (someone from the NHS and/or Health and Social Care Partnership for Q&A), spotlight/updates from different organisations, in-person meeting (possibly in the spring when the weather is better).

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### **What's New? (recent equality issues to note)**

**African Social Work students at RGU** have been having issues around the misunderstanding of cultural differences, for example different ways of doing things, 'unspoken rules' about clothing and behaviour, language issues with Doric, etc. More dialogue about this would be helpful, lecturers need to be aware. Myshele does guest lectures for the social work department and will get in touch with her contacts about this.

**Hate motivated posters** were seen in Bucksburn and Woodside. They were taken down – should also be reported. This can be done anonymously through the Police Scotland website or the GREC website: [scotland.police.uk/secureforms/c3](https://scotland.police.uk/secureforms/c3) or [grec.co.uk/hate-crime](https://grec.co.uk/hate-crime)

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**Date of next meeting: Thursday 25 January, 4:00-5:00pm**

**(no meeting in December)**

**Topic: TBC**