

Equalities Participation Network – 30 October 2025

Present: Myshele Haywood (GREC), Matt Carter (ACHSCP), Roslynn Fowler (Aberdeen Action on Disability), Baldeep McGarry (ACC), Marion McLaughlin (Aurora Autism Consulting), Mary Rasmussen (Guide Dogs), Allison Wilkie (Deafblind Scotland), Hector Williams (GREC), Bertha Yakubu (African Women's Group).

Apologies: Carol Hannaford, Ells McHaffie, Katrina Michie

Equality Outcomes – Community Action Plan

Baldeep explained that feedback from EPN, DEP and many other community groups were used to develop the Equality Outcomes and the Action Plans to achieve them. The Action Plan (see separate document) is currently out for consultation, to be approved by the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee on 26 November.

Themes – Inclusion, Access, Participation, Value – designed to ensure people feel included, can access services, participate full, and feel their contributions are valued.

EPN is part of each element of the Action Plan, even where it's not mentioned.

Marion – is the plan for Aberdeen City, or Aberdeenshire as well?

Baldeep – specific for Aberdeen City.

Hector – data listed under 'current baseline' – where does it come from?

Baldeep – feedback from other reports, a survey earlier this year, etc.

Marion – important to remember that folk participating in the survey are self-selected, so likely to have negative experiences with ACC.

Baldeep – there's also a high proportion of 'neutral' answers – been trying to dig into what that means.

Specific actions for EPN:

- "Promote the purpose and function of the Equality Participation Network to ensure membership includes people from diverse backgrounds and lived experiences."
- "Strengthen and develop our community engagement approach and refresh the community directory."

Roslynn – it will be good to update the directory – a lot of groups have been lost in the last year or so – all agreed this will be a topic to discuss in the new year.

Marion – what does it mean to "strengthen and develop our community engagement approach"?

Baldeep – thinking about what to do to encourage groups to engage who aren't engaged already.

- "Continue to deliver on a calendar of community events to celebrate and promote diversity and equality."

Everyone agreed to share information about upcoming events for ACC to help promote. It's also a chance for decision-makers to connect with communities, encourage them to come to events or share press releases to spread the word, etc. EPN to put together a calendar in the new year, alongside updating directory.

Marion – Autistic Pride will be 18 June.

- Promote information about accessibility and communication support options available to citizens and share with partner organisations to increase awareness. We will offer easy to read materials, translations, digital tools, and ensure our updated website is mobile-friendly and accessible.

Marion – who is on the panel/group doing this?

Roslynn – BBC journalists are rewriting materials, programme descriptions, etc, with new guidance, starting next year. Some disabled people are involved in the process of setting up special programming after the news to cover the key points, looking at different ways of sharing information with different communities.

Baldeep – ACC comms team are creating guidelines to unify materials, have been on trainings for using existing guidelines, but there are still challenges.

All agreed to work on a checklist of things to think about, similar to the EPN spaces document.

Baldeep to share current accessibility guide (edit – this is being redeveloped alongside changes to the website).

- “Collaborate with individuals who have experienced access barriers when developing new and redesigned services, ensuring alignment with established accessibility standards.”

Marion – Important to include organisations, not just individuals. Also note the difference between groups run **for** disabled people vs. groups run **by** disabled people (e.g. Disabled People's Organisations – DPOs).

Baldeep – organisations will be part of this, also DEP, EPN, etc.

- “Create a Citizen Advisory Panel (CAP) to gather lived experience and improve the way we gather and use feedback to shape our services.”

Baldeep – this will be in place by April 2026. Also noted current systems for feedback – Contact Us page on the ACC website – when feedback is sent through there, it gets logged and someone has to respond.

- “Promote platforms where people can access employment and volunteering opportunities in the city.”

Baldeep – any tips on how ACC can advertise jobs to a wider audience?

Marion – look at the advert itself, how it's worded, etc. Guides are available on Aurora website: <https://www.auroraconsulting.scot/knowledge-centre/work-employers>

Bertha – direct email makes it easier to forward to people by email and on WhatsApp. Also important to acknowledge diversity, mention that applications are welcome from people in under-represented groups – seeing a lack of diversity in the organisation discourages people from applying.

Possible future EPN session specifically on recruitment and retention, with ACC HR staff? (February?)

Date of next meeting: Thursday 27 November, 4-5pm, online.

Topic: Accessing National Library of Scotland resources