

The Highland Council

Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities Committee – 5 December 2013

Agenda Item	12
Report No	CPE 54/13

Annual Survey of Performance and Attitudes 2013: Equalities Analysis and Attitudes to Prejudice and Discrimination

Report by Depute Chief Executive

Summary

This report updates Members on public attitudes to prejudice and discrimination resulting from analysis of responses to questions about equality and diversity included in the Council's Citizen's Panel Survey 2013. There continue to be indications of improvements in support for tackling prejudice in Highland.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Highland Council's 2013 Public Performance and Attitudes Survey (PPAS) was completed by the Citizen's Panel in the summer of 2013. For a third year the survey included a number of attitudinal questions to gain an understanding of public attitudes towards equality and diversity covering views on:
 - Prejudice
 - Accepting communities
 - Diverse communities
- 1.2 The report on [Highland Council Performance and Attitudes Survey 2013](#) was analysed by the UHI Centre for Remote and Rural Studies and is available on the Council website. Most of the content was [reported to the Council meeting in September 2013](#). This report focuses on the Community Life section, pages 60-72.
- 1.3 The questions on attitudes to prejudice and discrimination are based on a number contained in the 2011 [Scottish Social Attitudes survey](#) (SSAS) which is carried out every 4 years and therefore allows for some comparisons at national level. The pattern of responses to equivalent questions between the two surveys is broadly similar. Generally, responses in Highland in 2011 were slightly less positive about diversity but views in Highland in subsequent years appear to have become more accepting of diversity.
- 1.4 For the Highland Youth Voice (HYV) conference in November 2013, members of HYV were surveyed on some of the same questions including those on attitudes to prejudice and discrimination. Due to the small number of responses (30) the feedback cannot be used to reflect young people's opinions generally; however the results can be seen as insights and are shown in *italics*.

1.5 As a public body, the Council has a duty to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity; and
- Foster good relations.

The Council has made a commitment across each of the themes in its Programme 'Working Together for the Highlands' to implement its equality plan, A Fairer Highland, to meet the general and specific duties of the Equality Act (2010) and to aim to ensure that people are treated fairly and with respect.

1.6 It is useful to understand public attitudes towards equality and diversity in Highland and how they might change over time to help target action to support the fulfilment of the Council's equality plan.

2. Public Performance survey: Views on prejudice and diversity

2.1 Views on Prejudice

In response to the question which asked respondents to indicate which statement most closely matches their view on prejudice, there has been an improvement in responses each year. As shown in Figure 1, in 2013, 74% of respondents felt Highland should do everything it can to get rid of all types of prejudice, compared to 70% in 2012 and 67% in 2011.

In Scotland in 2011, 72% of respondents to the SSAS felt that Scotland should do everything it can to get rid of all types of prejudice.

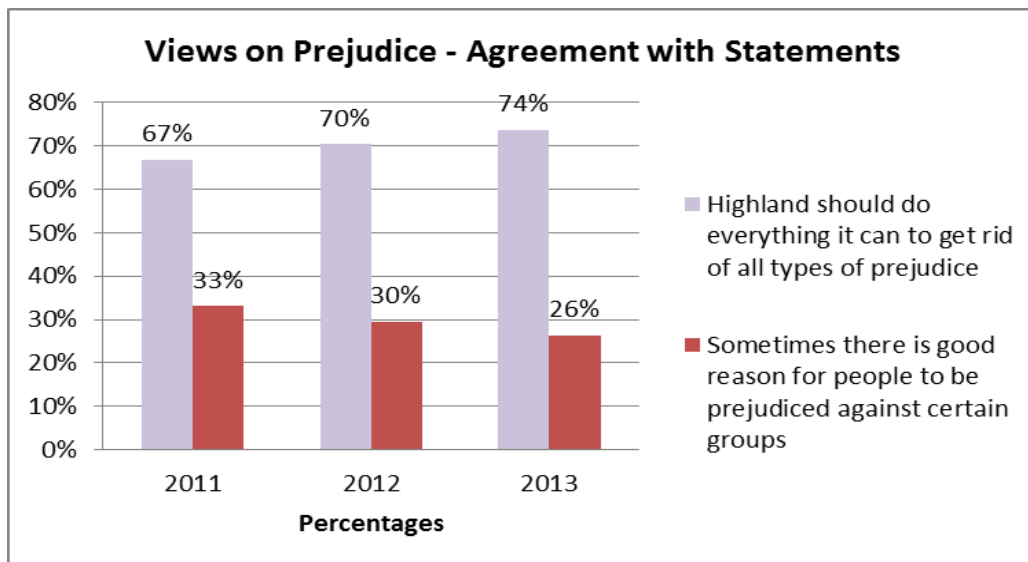


Figure 1

In 2013, 93% of HYV respondents agreed with the statement that Highland should do everything it can to get rid of all types of prejudice. This more positive view from young people reflects the analysis by age of the Citizens' Panel as 81% of Citizen Panel members aged under 24 years agreed with the statement compared to the 68% of respondents aged 65+.

2.2 Accepting Communities

In response to the question “To what extent do you feel your community is accepting of people coming to live here from outside the Highlands?” results were the same for 2013 as they were 2012, 86% felt their community was accepting and only a slight improvement on the 2011 results (85%).

A less positive view is provided by those young people responding as part of HYV where 33% said their community is not accepting of people coming to Highland from elsewhere compared to 14% of the Citizens’ Panel.

2.3 Views on Diverse Communities

Respondents were asked whether they would prefer to live in an area “with lots of different kinds of people”, or “where most people are similar to you”. The results in 2012 and 2013 were identical with 52% saying they would prefer to live in an area with lots of different kinds of people. This compares with 47% saying this in 2011 and when a majority said they would prefer to live in an area where people were similar to them.

The 2013 survey results show again that age seems to matter in the responses given as 64% of people aged under 24years would rather live in an area with lots of different people, compared to 38% of those 65years+.

Also this is even more marked in the HYV survey, where 90% of HYV respondents would prefer to live in an area with lots of different kinds of people.

2.4 Diverse communities: Views on Relationships with People from Certain Groups

The Panel were asked how they would feel if a friend or close relative married, or formed a civil partnership or a long-term relationship with people from certain groups. Figure 2, below, shows a comparison of the results on the degree of unhappiness reported for 2011, 2012 and 2013:-

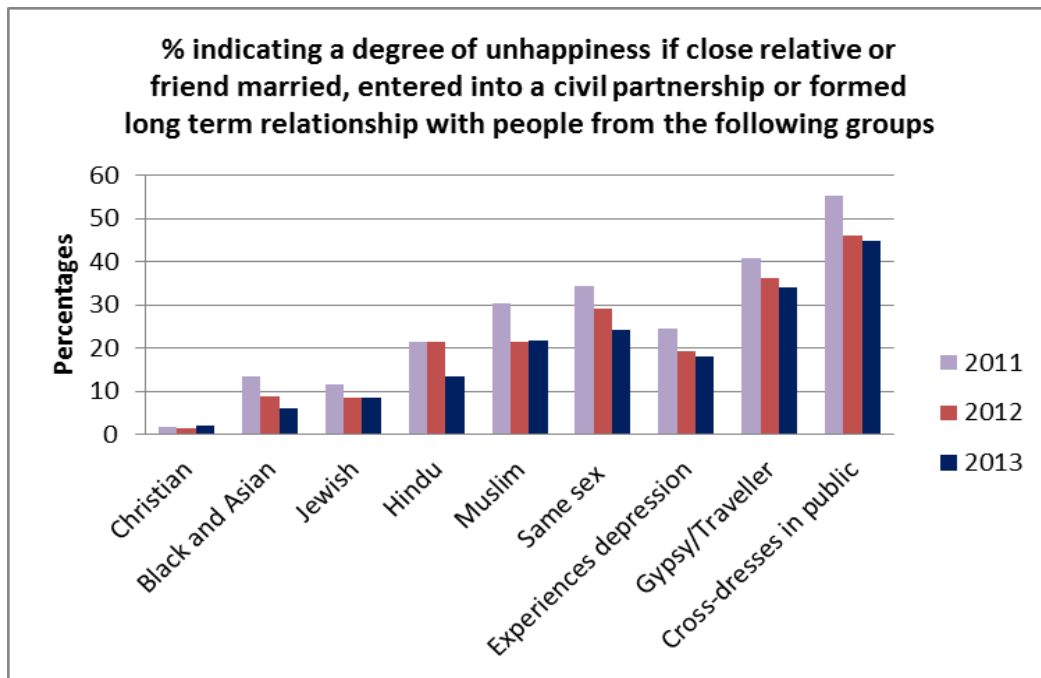


Figure 2

Levels of unhappiness are generally falling across most groups. The most unhappiness should a friend or close relative marry, form a civil partnership or form a long-term relationship is consistently with people who cross-dress in public (including transgender), Gypsy/Travellers and someone who is of the same sex.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 There is a welcome trend towards more positive attitudes towards diversity in Highland. Although just over a quarter (26%) of respondents in 2013 still felt that sometimes prejudice against certain groups can be justified, this has dropped significantly from a third (33%) in 2011.
- 3.2 The attitudinal surveys also highlight that certain groups continue to be more likely to be the subject of more widespread discriminatory attitudes and this is more marked in Highland than for Scotland as a whole. Discriminatory views were most likely to be expressed in relation to cross-dressing and transgender people, lesbian and gay people, and Gypsy/Travellers.
- 3.3 The analysis also shows that some sections of society are more likely than others to feel prejudice is acceptable, and to express discriminatory views about particular groups, particularly older people, men, and those resident in the Highlands for more than 10 years.
- 3.4 Capturing trends in changing attitudes to prejudice and diversity in Highland will:
 - Help improve our understanding of different experiences and views of different groups within the community, and identify areas for service improvement. Members are invited to meet with representatives from the Highland LGBT community after the meeting.

- Provides measures for a number of the Council's Equality Outcomes and support the commitment in the Council's programme to implement the Fairer Highland Plan including the general and specific duties of the Equality Act (2010), ensuring that people are treated fairly and with respect.

4. Implications

- 4.1 Resource Implications – there are no additional resource implications arising from this report.
- 4.2 Legal Implications – this report and the equalities analysis of the public performance survey and attitudes contribute to the Council's work to meet the legal requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 4.3 Equalities Implications – this report includes actions from the Council's Equalities Plan, A Fairer Highland, which aims to address inequalities and discrimination. It contributes to the duty to gather and use evidence on equalities matters.
- 4.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever – there are no known climate change implications arising from this report.
- 4.5 Risk Implications – equal opportunities are considered as part of the Council's approach to risk management as an issue affecting all services. Failure to demonstrate that the Council meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty could result in legal action and reputational risk for the Council.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to consider and note the contents of the report.

Designation: Depute Chief Executive

Date: 22 November 2013

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Background Papers:

[Highland Council Performance and Attitudes Survey 2013](#)

[Scottish Government, Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2010](#)