

The Highland Council

Education, Children and Adult Services Committee - 28th August
2014

Agenda Item	20
Report No	ECAS 37/14

School Equality and Diversity Policy/Toolkit

Report by Director of Care and Learning

Summary

All Highland Schools will have an active and revised Equal Opportunities Policy in place based on a new Promoting Equality and Diversity Policy/Toolkit; and delivered equality, diversity and children's rights training by 2017. This report provides Members with background information and an update on progress.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Equality Act 2010 introduced a General Duty for Public Authorities in Scotland to have due regard for the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation;
 - Advance equality of opportunity (including removing or minimising disadvantage; taking steps to meet the needs of individuals; and encouraging participation);
 - Foster good relations, which involves taking steps to tackle prejudice and promote understanding
- 1.2 The specific duties to support the General Duty apply to Education Authorities as "listed bodies" in their own right.
- 1.3 The introduction of a standard Equality and Diversity Policy/Toolkit and associated training will facilitate all Highland Schools development of active Equality and Diversity Policies. This will contribute to all of the Education Outcomes in the Council's Equality Plan – A Fairer Highland (see Appendix 1), and will directly implement Outcome 15:
"Staff and pupils have a greater awareness of how they can support equality through delivery of curriculum for excellence and wider school approaches following the principles of the Highland Practice Model and SHANARRI"
- 1.4 The Education Improvement Plan makes the commitment that all schools will have had training in equalities legislation and have an active equalities policy in place by 2016/17.
- 1.5 This requirement is also outlined in *For Highland's Children 4* Outcome 13: *"Children, young people and their families are supported well to develop the strengths and resilience needed to overcome any inequalities they experience"*. This will be measured by:
 - The number of schools with the new equal opportunities policy in place, increases;
 - The number of school staff participating in equality and diversity training, increases.
- 1.5 Achieving equalities outcomes is an underpinning commitment of Working Together

for the Highlands 2012 – 17, the Programme for the Highland Council.

- 1.6 The Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014 received Royal Assent on the 27th March 2014. It introduces a requirement to provide reports on actions taken to advance the meeting of requirements under the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Equality and Diversity Policy/Toolkit, GLOW resources and training include information on children's rights which will increase staff awareness of the UNCRC.
- 1.7 Work to progress equality and diversity work in Education is overseen by the Care and Learning Equalities Working Group which has representation from Primary and Secondary Head Teachers, the Quality Improvement Team, Health Improvement, specialist staff working with children and young people with additional support needs and interrupted learning and the LNCT. The membership of the Group is about to broaden to reflect the wider Care and Learning Service.
- 1.8 Work associated with the introduction of the Policy/toolkit includes: the development of a GLOW Equality, Diversity and Children's Rights site on Highland GLOW; and a review of the current bullying policy which will be launched in November 2014 to coincide with National Bullying Week. A report accompanying the revised Education Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidance will be submitted to this Committee in November.

2. Progress to date

- 2.1 The Promoting Equality and Diversity Policy/Toolkit can be found on the Council website under Education and Learning, Education Policies, Child Wellbeing and Safety.
- 2.2 An hour long awareness raising session on equality, diversity and children's rights was delivered to each of the May Head Teacher meetings. The purpose was to:
 1. Raise awareness of the Equality Act 2010 and associated legislation;
 2. Alert Head Teachers to the requirement in the Improvement Plan as detailed at 1.3 of this report;
 3. Let Head Teachers know about resources to assist with this process: Policy Toolkit; Highland GLOW Equality, Diversity and Children's Rights web site;
 4. Provide a "heads up" that the Bullying Policy is being reviewed with a November launch planned.
- 2.3 The Policy/Toolkit was well received but concern was expressed from Head Teachers about being asked to cascade training, which appears to arise from the pressure of other demands and lack of confidence in the subject matter. Work is ongoing to identify how to support this process.
- 2.4 Work is ongoing to enable Head Teachers to record when they have introduced their revised Equal Opportunities Policy and delivered training in the School Profile Portal.

3. Implications

- 3.1 **Resources:** Work is ongoing to identify how to support the implementation of training and introduction of good quality individual school Equal Opportunities Policies. Additional resource may be required, but this will be identified from within existing budgets.
- 3.2 **Legal, Equalities and Risk:** The introduction of the Equality, Diversity Policy/Toolkit

and associated training for school staff significantly contributes to meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the new requirements to promote children's rights as set out in The Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014. It will reduce the risk of litigation due to non-compliance with legislation.

4.3 **Other Implications**

4.3.1 There are no climate change/carbon clever, rural or Gaelic implications that arise from the content of this paper.

5. Recommendation

5.1 Members are asked to:

- Note the progress of the development and implementation of the standard Equality and Diversity Policy/Toolkit and associated training;
- Agree that a report on the revised Education Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidance be submitted to this Committee in November 2014.

Designation: Director of Care and Learning

Date: 18 August 2014

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Education Equality Outcomes (Numbered as in *A Fairer Highland*)

HIGH LEVEL OUTCOME 1: People are, and feel, free to live their lives without harassment and discrimination, and can take part in community life	
5.	Pupils and school staff have a greater understanding of prejudice based bullying and its impact. <i>Protected characteristics: All</i>
6.	Pupils and school staff feel more confident in reporting prejudice based bullying incidents that they have experienced or witnessed <i>Protected characteristics: All</i>
HIGH LEVEL OUTCOME 2: People benefit from public services in a fairer way, and are able to have their say about them	
11.	Increase the number of young people leaving school moving into positive and sustained destinations <i>Protected characteristics: All</i>
12.	Reduce gender segregation in positive and sustained destinations for young people leaving school. <i>Protected characteristics: Gender</i>
13.	Fulfil the potential achievements of pupils with ASN. <i>Protected characteristics: Disability, race</i>
14.	Reduce attainment and achievement gaps between boys and girls. <i>Protected characteristics: Gender</i>
15.	Staff and pupils have a greater awareness of how they can support equality through delivery of curriculum for excellence and wider school approaches following the principles of the Highland Practice Model and SHANARRI. <i>Protected characteristics: All</i>
16.	We will meet the needs of children and Families who have experienced interrupted learning. This includes Gypsy/Traveller and Roma Children, and young carers. Children with ASN <i>Protected characteristics: Race</i>
17.	Increased attainment for children and young people from deprived areas. <i>Socio-economic impact</i>