

ELREC Newsletter



Edinburgh & Lothians Regional Equality Council

Promoting Equality and Fighting Discrimination

Welcome to the thirtieth issue of the **ELREC's Community** Newsletter which aims to bring our readers news and information about our work as well as the latest developments related to equality.

From the Chair



Welcome to this edition of our newsletter. Over the past two months we at ELREC have had a few events that have been of significance. On the 19th of October we had our 40th AGM at the magnificent Civic Centre in Livingstone, West Lothian. Keynote speakers at the event included the DCC Steve Allen and our President, Prof Geoff Palmer OBE. The meeting also elected Mrs Azra Sharif-Qayyum and Mrs Shamylla Syed as new members to the board. I welcome them to the board and look forward to their support in better governance of ELREC.

We conducted the Equality Election Manifestos meeting on the 28th of November to speak with party leaders

and representatives on how they were progressing the equality agenda in each of **their party's election** manifesto for the elections due in May 2012. The meeting provided members of protected characteristics an opportunity to engage in a robust discussion on equality issues. Panel members at the meeting included Cllr Andrew Burns, Leader of Labour Party, Cllr Jeremy Balfour, Leader of Conservative Party, Cllr Phil Wheeler, Liberal Democrat Party and Cllr Norman Work, Scottish National Party. From the meeting it was very clear that our communities are asking for inclusion and the opportunity to be a part of the political process, which will lead to a better understanding of issues and mainstreaming of our communities in the wider society. We hope to conduct a follow up meeting in March 2012 and look forward to receiving further information about the steps that will be taken by political parties to address some of the concerns raised during the meeting.

The Schedule 7: Stop and Search at Airports Consultation Meeting was held on 01 December 2011. Speakers at the event included Mr Kenny MacAskill MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice, ACC Colin McCashey, National Co-ordinator of Counter Terrorism Unit, Mr Marco Biagi MSP, Edinburgh Central and ACC Iain

Livingstone, Lothian and Borders Police. The meeting provided members of Edinburgh and Lothian communities an opportunity to participate in a discussion and to air their experiences related to Stop and Search at Scottish airports. At this meeting it was very clear that the participants would wish the Stop and Search powers under Schedule 7 to be used in a prudent and sensitive manner.

We have also been conducting Focus group seminars to involve people of protected characteristics in community planning. These focus groups were held in East Lothian, Edinburgh and Midlothian and a meeting will be held in West Lothian in early 2012. These focus groups allow people of protected characteristics to participate in the community planning process and get their voices heard.

I once again take this opportunity to encourage membership in our organisation. We are particularly interested in encouraging members of protected characteristics to join us so that we, as an organisation, are more representative of our widened remit. In this regard we would be much obliged if you could help us by encouraging individuals and organisations known to you to join ELREC. More details about our membership can be found by visiting: www.elrec.org.uk/member.htm

Foysoil Choudhury MBE
Chair

Issue 30
December 2011

Honorary President
Prof Geoff Palmer OBE

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Editorial

During the past three months, there have been lots of exciting developments in relation to advancing equality. The Scottish Government launched its consultation on Public Sector Equality Duty Revised Draft Regulations in September. The consultation was closed at the end of November and the responses will be available for viewing in January 2012 on the Scottish **Government's website**.

The revised draft regulations contain key elements such as:

- Equality Outcomes
- Mainstream Equality
- Assessment and Review
- Employment Information
- Gender Pay Gap Information
- Equal Pay Statement
- Procurement
- Scottish Ministers Duty
- Publication Duty

Draft Regulations were first introduced to the Scottish Parliament in January 2011 and considered by **the Parliament's Equal Opportunities Committee** in March 2011. The Committee did not support them. Scottish Ministers subsequently withdrew those draft Regulations and agreed to look at them again.

The Scottish Government expects that the outcome of the consultation will be published and draft regulations laid before the Scottish Parliament in 2012.

ELREC is keen that the regulations will be approved by the Parliament as we currently do not have Specific Duties in Scotland to assist the public authorities to meet their General Duty. Hence, we have made a positive response to the revised draft regulations proposed by the Scottish Government.

Last year, ELREC was involved in

organising Our Marriage, Our Rights Seminar as a member of Direct Approach to raise the awareness about the harmful practice of Forced Marriage. We are pleased that the Forced Marriage etc. (Protection and Jurisdiction) (Scotland) Act 2011 came into force on 28th November 2011. The legislation will provide robust, solid protection for both men and women who are in a forced marriage or under threat of one. It introduced Forced Marriage Protection Orders, which will safeguard the rights of individuals being forced to marry and carries with it, a criminal offence, which if breached, could mean that perpetrators face a prison sentence **and/or fine**. **ELREC's Chair, Foysoil Choudhury MBE** said this to support the new Act.

"It is a positive tradition that parents of many minority ethnic communities wish to be involved in selecting future spouse for their children. This involvement is to ensure success of the marriage. Young couples are consulted at every process and no marriage will be arranged without the explicit consent from either party.

Unfortunately, due to financial, immigration or misguided cultural reasons, young people are being coerced into accepting a marriage against their choice. We, as members of these communities, have a duty to prevent this happening. Hence, Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council, where I am the current Chair, has been active in raising awareness about the danger of Forced Marriage and assisting public sector agencies to provide better support to those who are affected.

By having an open dialogue about Forced Marriage will help communities to understand that it is illegal as well as culturally and

religiously unacceptable."

Another proposal that ELREC is supportive of, is the Equal Marriage consultation. The Registration of Civil Partnerships Same Sex Marriage consultation paper sought views on the possibility of allowing religious ceremonies for civil partnerships and the possible introduction of same sex marriage. ELREC responded positively that religious ceremonies for civil partnerships should no longer be prohibited and that same sex marriage should be introduced so that same sex couples have the option of getting married, if that is how they wish to demonstrate their commitment to each other. The closing date for this consultation was 9 December.

ELREC welcomes the passing of the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications Bill at the Scottish Parliament on 14 December 2011.

Two offences will be created by the legislation, targeting sectarian behaviour in and around football matches and on the internet. Those convicted could spend as long as five years in prison and be banned from football grounds. This legislation will strengthen our effort in tackling hate crime in all sections of Scotland.

From January onwards, ELREC will have more events to promote local neighbourhood engagement and fostering good community relations. We hope you will be able to take part and also encourage you to share information about our events amongst your networks so we have greater participation from people who live, work or study in Edinburgh and Lothians at these events. More information will be made available in due course so please keep an eye on ELREC events page:

www.elrec.org.uk/events.htm

Nina Giles

Director

Framework for Equality and Rights 2012 - 2016

In November 2011 the Council approved a period of consultation on a new 'Framework for Equality and Rights 2012/16'. This framework will describe the Council's response to the Equality Act 2010 and human and children's rights legislation and will replace the Council's current 'Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Scheme 2009/12'. Specifically, it will outline (i) an improved approach to equalities impact assessment, (ii) monitoring equal pay, occupational segregation and equality within employment, (iii) a list of equality outcomes to advance equality of opportunity (iv) improved approaches to mainstreaming equality, especially within procurement.

The consultation will run until 31 January 2012, further information is available by visiting our website at: www.edinburgh.gov.uk/equalities or by emailing Nick.Croft@edinburgh.gov.uk

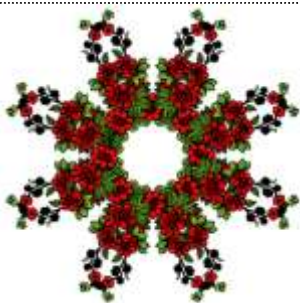
The health benefits of Ethnic Coding in the NHS

(Presented by Prof Geoff Palmer OBE as part of his keynote address at ELREC's 40th AGM. Prof Bhopal is chair of the Ethnic Coding Task Force committee. Prof Palmer is a member of this committee.)

Although our health care system is undoubtedly one of the best in the world and very good value for money, as shown by many independent international reports, it still has challenges in showing that it is providing equivalent quality of care across all the ethnic groups that comprise our modern-day societies. So what can we as members of the public, and organisations representing the public, do to help? Obviously, information helps. At an individual level we can talk to our carers and tell them about ourselves and our needs, and how these might be different to the population as a

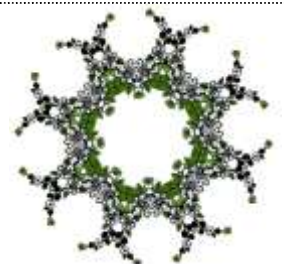
whole. At a more collective level we need to help the service acquire and analyse information to check that it is meeting its own goals of equal quality of care according to needs across all sectors of society. In practical terms, this means that an ethnic group code needs to go on health records. This ethnic group code can be used by individual clinicians to deliver the best quality of care they can to the patient in front of them. There are many examples of how this is useful. One simple one is that if the clinician knows the patient in front of them is an Indian male Muslim, they will know that the person has a higher risk of diabetes than the average male, is likely to fast during Ramadan meaning there will be issues to discuss around medications, and is more likely to be a smoker but not an alcohol drinker.

At service level, health care utilisation statistics can be produced by ethnic group, and we can examine health status patterns also. Although the intention to collect such data have been explicit in the NHS since 1991, putting this into practice has only happened recently. In NHS Lothian, currently, We have the Ethnic Coding Task Force chaired by Prof Raj Bhopal that is helping the hospital and GP sector to move from very low rates of ethnic group recording (about 5% of records in hospitals) to the target of 90% by 31 March 2012. We are now more than halfway towards this goal. ELREC and its constituent members can help a great deal. Firstly, we can communicate to our people that this is important. Secondly, we can lobby for not only the collection of such information, but also its proper utilisation. Colleagues, please help.



Season's Greetings

from everyone at
ELREC



Please note that during the festive period, ELREC's office will be closed from Saturday 24 December 2011 to Sunday 8 January 2012. The Office will reopen on Monday 9 January 2012.

with you



for you



Changes in the Diversity Unit at Lothian and Borders Police

The Diversity Unit of the Safer Communities Department, Lothian and Borders Police has seen many changes over the last few months. Superintendent Kevin Murray is now in position as head of Diversity. Supt Murray was previously head of the **Edinburgh's Central Policing Team** and has a varied and diverse policing experience to share with the unit. Inspector Dennis Hunter has taken over from Inspector Helen Boyle and Temporary Chief Inspector Dianne Bruce has also recently joined the unit. All three officers are experienced operational leaders who look forward to developing the relationship between the police and the community.

Lothian and Borders police is currently reviewing the Remote Reporting scheme with a view to encouraging further use of the service. The scheme exists to make the Force more accessible to people

who may not want to approach the police directly and remote reporting agencies have been identified throughout the range of protected characteristics. Remote reporting is viewed as being vital in the effort to establishing the true extent of hate crime and in building trust and confidence between communities and the police. A consultation exercise involving police and partner agencies has now been completed and results from this will be circulated over the next few weeks.

The Force is also working towards having the capability to report hate crime online after ACPOS (The Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland) have endorsed True Vision an online reporting product currently used by various forces in England and Wales. Further details of this will be available in due course. Other initiatives currently managed by officers within the department

include work with Happy to Translate to ensure that victims of crime have access to relevant information and materials in their chosen language. Work is currently also underway on reviewing existing laws in relation to residential and mobile home legislation which will be of interest to the gypsy traveller and wider community.

The effects of the harsher economic environment have become increasingly evident and a number of protests have already been witnessed in Edinburgh, and the wider world. The up and coming weeks and months will bring similar events and industrial action. Lothian and Borders Police will play a vital role in maintaining public safety and security in addition to facilitating any peaceful protest and will maintain close consultation with various partner agencies and trades unions to both facilitate and mitigate the effects of any action.

Project ARGUS

Project ARGUS is a National Counter Terrorism Security Office initiative, exploring ways to aid you in preventing, handling and recovering from a terrorist attack. It achieves this by taking businesses through a simulated terrorist attack. This simulation identifies the measures to take for preventing, handling and recovering from a terrorist attack. It provides you with a unique opportunity to both learn from and contribute to valuable lessons helping to protect you, your business and your community, whether you are a national chain or a small business.

The event explores your options; what is likely to happen in the event of a terrorist attack; and what your priorities should be. Project Argus highlights the importance of being prepared and having the necessary plans in place to help safeguard your staff, customers and your company assets.

What can you expect?

Project Argus is a free event which, using a multi-media simulation, takes you through a terrorist attack. A series of questions and challenges are put to you, both individually and as a group. You will work in small syndicate groups with other local business representatives and develop your responses to the attack. The whole event including a break will last approximately three hours. To assist you it is worth reading two previous guides also produced by the **National Counter Terrorism Security Office**. **'Secure in the Knowledge'** is your guide to business continuity and **'Expecting the unexpected'** your guide to business security and sharing information securely.

For more information visit: www.nactso.gov.uk/OurServices/Argus.aspx

Shape the direction of citizen eHealth in Scotland

The Scottish Government is looking for your help in shaping the direction of citizen eHealth in Scotland. eHealth means using computers and new technology to improve healthcare. When your health information is held on computer, it is easier for NHS staff who look after you to get information about you quickly. This helps them give you the best possible care.

eHealth is developing a citizen eHealth Strategy which will cover the range of electronic contact that citizens have with NHSScotland. The government would like to know how citizens would like to see this developed as well as gathering information on what online services they already use and any concerns they may have. We would like to capture views from as many people as possible and this survey is the first stage in that process.

There are a number of ways that citizens could interact with NHS Scotland over the internet which could help improve their healthcare. The government would like to hear views on what are seen as the most important po-

tential benefits and considerations in this relatively new area, as well as any ways in which you already do this.

Please complete the short online survey by visiting:



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/citizen-ehealth>

It should take no more than 10 minutes and data gathered will be used for statistical analysis to help inform development of the Citizen eHealth strategy for NHSScotland and for no other purpose. No personal information which could be used to link a response to an individual will be collected.

For more information on eHealth and your health rights, please visit: www.hris.org.uk

Focus group: diverse community in community planning

A series of focus group discussions were held over November – December 2011 across Edinburgh and Lothian by ELREC CPP. The key aim was to facilitate engagement of members from different protected characteristics, namely race, faith, disability, age and other equality groups, in community planning (CP) processes at a local level. It was the first time members from different protected characteristics groups had come together in this way to raise their concerns and issues. Feedback was taken from the participants; this will be collated to

build up a joint initiative for the future. Such meetings were held at Midlothian on the 23rd November, East Lothian on the 29th November and in Edinburgh on the 7th December 2011. Everyone concluded that there are needs for the facilitation of multi-equality engagement in CP at the locality/ neighbourhood level but that the CP process also plays a crucial role in fostering engagement by being supported by other agencies. Many participants of the focus group, outwith the BME group, have also shown their interest in

becoming members of ELREC. The need to raise awareness amongst diverse local communities in light of the recent Equality Act 2010 is another key finding from the discussion.

The **West Lothian Focus Group** meeting will be held on **24 January 2012** from 1 pm to 3 pm at Bathgate Partnership Centre, Lindsay House, Southbridge Street, Bathgate, West Lothian, EH48 1TS

For more information please go to: www.elrec.org.uk/events.htm

Police engagement meeting: Bangladeshi Community

Further to last year's meeting a follow up police engagement meeting with Edinburgh's Bangladeshi community was held on the 15th November 2011 at Tynecastle High School, in order to review progress. This is the third meeting since such an engagement initiative was launched in Winter 2010. In collaboration with Bangladesh Samity Edinburgh (BSE), ELREC and Lothian and Borders Police (LBP), members of the Bangladeshi community spoke about their experiences of racially motivated incidents. Chief Superintendent David Carradice and Chief Inspector Richard Thomas of 'A' Division at LBP, took part in discussions. A draft work plan was initiated to create a community based network in West Edinburgh & Pentland in order to foster effective and regular communication with the Police and victims of hate crime. Various agencies and community groups based in West Edinburgh will be involved with this network, to help provide a long term sustainable engagement. If you are interested in further such meetings you can contact Bangladesh Samity, by email: bangladeshsamityedinburgh@yahoo.com

A 'remote crime reporting centre' based in BSE is currently operational. BSE encourages the local community to contact them for any kind of support or assistance to report hate crime incidents.

Events Picture Gallery

40th Annual General Meeting

19 October 2011 at West Lothian Civic Centre, Livingston



The AGM in progress at the West Lothian Council Chambers



A few of the board members and special invitees pose for a picture after the meeting

Equality Election Manifesto Meeting

28 November 2011 at Augustine United Church, Edinburgh



L to R: Cllr Andrew Burns, Leader - Labour Party, Cllr Phil Wheeler, Liberal Democrat, ELREC Chair, Mr Foysoil Choudhury MBE, Cllr Norman Work, Scottish National Party, Cllr Jeremy Balfour, Conservative Party - Leader and ELREC Vice Chair, Mr Shami Khan



A section of the participants

Schedule 7: Stop and Search Consultation Meeting

01 December 2011 at European Hall, City Chambers, Edinburgh



L to R: Mr Marco Biagi MSP, ACC Iain Livingstone, LBP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice Kenny MacAskill, ELREC Chair, Mr Foysoil Choudhury MBE, National Co-ordinator of Counter Terrorism Unit ACC Colin McCashey and ELREC Vice Chair Mr Shami Khan



The consultation meeting in progress

For a list of our future events please go to: www.elrec.org.uk/events.htm



Equal marriage, religious freedom and democracy

One side called on the Scottish people to support marriage as a privilege to be denied to the unworthy, claiming support from scripture and tradition: the other side called on the Scottish people to support equal marriage for the sake of love, religious freedom, and human rights.

From 2nd September to 9th December, the Scottish government held a consultation on whether the ban on marriage for same-sex couples should be lifted. They received a record-breaking 50,000+ responses – including 28,000 postcards distributed by the Catholic Church to parishes across Scotland, and 19,000 condensed consultation forms distributed by a rainbow coalition that included the Equality Network, the Scottish Youth Parliament, Amnesty International, Unison, the Humanist Society of Scotland, LGBT Youth Scotland and NUS Scotland.

The Scottish government will now take at least 12 weeks to consider the responses they received. Given the scale **of the response, they may need more time. It's right that they should do so.** We know from the 2010 Scottish

Social Attitudes Survey that a majority of people in Scotland support ending the ban on same-sex marriage. **Scotland's democracy is founded not simply on majority rule, but on the principle of mainstreaming equality across all strands – race, religion, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and gender identity.** Consultation is key to proper governance in Scotland.

Democracy is not simply majority rule: the rights of minorities must be respected. To call for a referendum on whether same-sex couples should be allowed to marry, and whether religious organisations that wish to do so should be allowed to carry out marriage ceremonies, would be to allow the majority to vote on whether a minority group should have equal rights. That is not Scottish democracy: that is tyranny.

No religion should be forced to celebrate the marriage of same-sex couples against their faith. No religion should be forced to deny a faithful couple marriage because a larger religious body outvoted it.

Jane Carnall, Information Project Coordinator, Equality Network, www.equality-network.org

SEStran launches Thistle Assistance Card

People with disabilities often need a little more time to get on and off public transport and to have a safe and comfortable journey to their destination. That is why SEStran have come up with the SEStran Thistle Assistance Card.

The aim of the SEStran Thistle Assistance Card is to help anyone who has difficulty in using public transport because of their age, disability or illness. It is credit-card sized and comes with a selection of easy to read symbols on stickers that will inform the bus driver about any extra assistance that will make the driver aware of your disability and of any extra help that you may need during your journey.

The card is supported by a wide range of voluntary organisations and most bus operators in South East Scotland.



How does the Thistle Assistance Card work?

Each SEStran Thistle Assistance Card comes enclosed with a supply of peel-off stickers which show different

disabilities and others which highlight the type of help you need. These should be attached to the card, which you should present clearly to the driver when using public transport. The driver will then be able to quickly see what you need. On the back of the card you can add any extra details that you may think will be useful to the bus driver.

The SEStran Thistle Assistance Card is free and is available from a range of outlets throughout South East Scotland. For more information on where to obtain your card, visit: www.sestran.gov.uk

A list of stockists is available using the relevant link on the home page.

Volunteer With ELREC

Volunteering with ELREC is a great way to develop your skills, meet new people and work as part of an enthusiastic team. Volunteering is a process of exchange. The people who volunteer for ELREC are an exciting, dynamic and diverse group who share a willingness to contribute their time and talent towards promoting equality and fighting discrimination. How you contribute and how much time you contribute differs from person to person. We're always looking for helpful and reliable volunteers, so why not make good use of your skills, get involved and join our volunteering team?

For more details visit our volunteering page: www.elrec.org.uk/volunteer.htm, contact the ELREC office on 0131 556 0441 or email us at: admin@elrec.org.uk

Back Page Information



ADVERTISING

We welcome organisations to advertise in the ELREC Community Newsletter for:

- Promoting services
- Disseminating flyers
- Campaigns
- Vacancies
- Consultations
- General marketing

This service is available for a contribution of £100.

To find out more, please contact Nina Giles on 0131 556 0441 or admin@elrec.org.uk

Our newsletter is published every quarter in March, June, September and December of each year.

CONFERENCE ROOM

You can book our 20-seat meeting room on an hourly basis for £20 per hour (reduced rate for small charities and community groups)

Tea & Coffee £1 per head

Please contact the ELREC office for additional information or to make a booking.

DONATIONS

ELREC is a registered charity in Scotland. We welcome donations, however small, from individuals or organisations to help us to pursue our goal - *equality and justice for all*. Please send donations by cheque favouring **"Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council"**

If you would like to share any interesting fundraising ideas with us, please call our office, we would like to hear from you.

SERVICES

Edinburgh & Lothians Regional Equality Council (ELREC), founded in 1971, is a voluntary body and charitable company made up of individual members and representatives from a wide range of organisations. ELREC has a remit to work across the areas of City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and West Lothian Councils.

Our Objectives

- to work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination
- to reduce inequality and promote a culture of human rights
- to promote good relations between persons of different groups without distinction

We pursue our aims through:

- Engagement with communities of protected characteristics
- Complainant aid for victims of discrimination and harassment.
- Support for communities in influencing change by facilitating interaction between communities and authorities
- Consultancy on equality policies, procedures and delivery of customised training on equality matters

To contact us:

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