

ELREC Newsletter

Edinburgh & Lothians Racial Equality Council
Promoting Racial Equality and Fighting Racial Discrimination



Issue 1
August 2004

Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of the ELREC Newsletter 2004. The Newsletter is one of the communication channels with our members and partners for sharing our work, information about events and issues that impact on race equality. As the Director, joining ELREC in January 2004, I am delighted with the progress that the organisation has made so far. In this issue, individual members of staff will describe their own area of work and current initiatives. To begin with, I will summarise some of the recent developments that have major significance for race equality locally, in Scotland and UK wide.

Commission for Equality and Human Rights

On 12 May 2004, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) published a White Paper, "Fairness for All – A New Commission for Equality & Human Rights". The purpose of this White Paper was to set out the Government's proposals for the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) in detail, including its role, duties and powers, and to outline the way in which it will deliver to its key stakeholders. The consultation process ended on 6 August 2004.

In general, there is support for the concept of a single body and improved tackling of barriers and inequalities – and multiple discrimination – through a cross-cutting approach and a more coherent approach to enforcing discrimination legislation. However, many opposed the proposals set out in the White Paper. Leading equality organisations felt that a single equality act should precede establishment of a single equality commission. They believe that a single equality act, harmonising laws in respect of each of the protected grounds

(gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age) is necessary for the effective functioning of a single equality commission. Without such legislation there are concerns that a 'hierarchy' of grounds will emerge.

Furthermore, there is a fear within the race equality field that the single body will lead to a dilution of the race equality agenda and the standard that has been set by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. There is also concern about the structure and funding arrangements for organisations that deliver local racial equality work such as Racial Equality Councils (RECs).

Leading equality organisations were disappointed that the proposed single body would regard enforcement as a tool to be used by the CEHR only as a last resort. They felt this represents a major departure from the position obtained by Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) when they were set up. They also believe this would give the wrong message to victims of inequality that the establishment of the CEHR would mean a reduction in support for them.

Within the Scottish Context, there is also legitimate concern that the CEHR is limited only to the six equality areas as outlined in the White Paper, as opposed to being empowered to operate within the broader range of equality grounds identified in Schedule 5 of the Scotland Act 1998.

It is anticipated that the CEHR will not be fully operational before the end of 2006 at the earliest. The CEHR will exist in a shadow form until it is launched on a fully operational basis.

An electronic version of the White Paper can be obtained from

www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk

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Scottish Executive Review of Race Equality Work

In March 2004, Margaret Curran MSP, Minister of Communities, announced that she would take a strategic look at local equality work given the changing context in which this work is being conducted. As part of the appraisal of Executive support for race equality activity, the Minister has written to a wide range of organisations seeking their comments on the following questions.

1. What are the main issues which the Scottish Executive should be addressing with regard to race equality?

2a) What are the key priorities in your area for race equality work and
b) What issues would you identify as emerging concerns?

3a) What have you found to be the most effective methods of delivering race equality work
b) What suggestions would you make for future delivery?

4a) What funding arrangements have proved most effective and
b) What improvements would you suggest could be made to funding arrangements?

5a) What difficulties have you found in promoting race equality and
b) What suggestions would you make for addressing these difficulties?

6 Bearing in mind the responsibilities of others in this field e.g. CRE, what structures, support, direction and/or provision should the Scottish Executive put in place for effective local race equality work?

ELREC would be happy to collate any responses you may have to the above questions and submit all responses collectively. Alternatively, you could send your written responses directly to:

Shahjahan Mir, Review of Race Equality Work, Equality Unit, Area 2- F, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ
shahjahan.mir@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
All responses must reach the Scottish Executive by 22 September 2004

City of Edinburgh Council Community Plan

The Edinburgh Partnership is currently preparing a new Community Plan for 2005 to 2009. A Community Plan for Edinburgh will set out priorities for the city which have been agreed by partners and communities, and will provide a framework for the action that partners will take to tackle these priorities to improve quality of life. The aim of the Community Plan is to improve services and outcomes for communities.

In the document "Preparing Edinburgh's Community Plan – A Working Document", the Partnership has identified a number of Key Challenges:

- Give children and young people the best start in life
- Improve facilities and services for older people
- Close the gap between disadvantaged communities and the city as a whole
- Improve health for all and reduce inequalities in health
- Improve transport and tackle congestion
- Improve the City Centre
- Provide quality education
- Improve opportunities and access to employment
- Ensure safe streets and safe homes
- Ensure clean, well-maintained streets, parks, public spaces and good local amenities
- Deliver a programme of low cost affordable housing
- Increase the opportunities to influence services to meet their needs

Views are sought on the following questions:

1. The Key Challenges are the most important issues facing Edinburgh and its communities – are there other challenges that we should include?
2. For each Challenge, problems and opportunities are noted. How can the problems be overcome? Can existing action exploit the opportunities or is something more required?
3. What action can Partners take in preparing their forward corporate and business plans, and setting their budgets, to tackle the Challenges and improve services?
4. What action can existing Partnerships take to address the Challenges?
5. How can the Edinburgh Partnership have maximum impact on these Challenges?

From ELREC's viewpoint, whilst considering the implications and impact of these challenges, it is important to include any issues that are particularly pertinent to the promotion of equality of access and good race relations.

Again, ELREC would be happy to collate any responses or comments you may have. If you wish to make a direct response to the Partnership, you can write to: FREEPOST SCO 3775, Preparing Edinburgh's City Community Plan, City of Edinburgh Council, Department of Corporate Services, Strategic Support Services, 12 St Giles Street, Edinburgh EH1 0BR. Or e-mail city.plan@edinburgh.gov.uk. For a full copy of the document, please contact the Community Planning Support Team at city.plan@edinburgh.gov.uk or on 469 3553 or 469 3842.

The final date for receipt of all responses is 8 October 2004.

*By Nina Giles
Director*

Community Development



Ali Abdoul Wahidi **Connecting with the BME** **Communities**

The last few months or so, many racist incidents have taken place in and around Edinburgh. Most of them happened in front of many people and during the day. It was disturbing though to think that when some people were racially abusing and assaulting others, others were standing watching as if it was one of the Edinburgh Festival performances on the Royal Mile.

Is Edinburgh becoming a more racist place to live than before? I am sure that many people have been asking themselves this question. Despite the efforts put by the equality agencies and others, it seems that we are now facing new waves of racist attacks never seen before.

Many people who consider themselves as British are now afraid to live here because of the constant racist attacks and discrimination they are facing in their every day lives. Some are even thinking

about leaving the country to go anywhere where they will feel at home and at ease. Others are feeling that perhaps going back to their parent countries of origin is the only option.

Yet, more work needs to be done, not only to raise more awareness on racism, but also to continue educating people particularly on the damage it causes. It is also indispensable to carry on providing support and assistance to the victims of these appalling attacks and abuses. The problem is still there and is becoming more and more serious every day.

Many people live in fear in their homes; and that is not right. There was at least one racist incident every month in Edinburgh since the beginning of the year 2004. Edinburgh and Lothians Racial Equality Council (ELREC), as an organisation

whose main aims have been to fight racism and promote racial equality, has a very important role to play in dealing with these problems.

That is why, from September onwards ELREC is committed to engaging itself with BME communities in order to be able to provide the best and more relevant support and assistance those communities need. Many surgeries are going to take place in your area; and you will be given the opportunity to express your concerns in any of the following:

- ❑ Racism/discrimination
- ❑ Human Rights
- ❑ Safety
- ❑ Housing
- ❑ Organise community groups
- ❑ Access to education
- ❑ Young people

Is Edinburgh becoming a more racist place to live than before?
We are here to listen to you to help you. Your fight is our fight. Do not suffer in silence.

ELREC is coming your way and it will be on your doorsteps from September 2004 onwards. We are here to listen to you to help you. Your fight is our fight. Do not suffer in silence.

By Ali Abdoul Wahidi
Community Development Officer

Welcome to the first edition of the ELREC Youth Zone newsletter. On this page you can expect to read about the latest news and features relating to the young people involved in the project. Also you will be kept up to date with news and views from young people themselves.

ELREC Engages Young People

ELREC is particularly pleased to welcome and introduce the most recent member of the staff team.

Aisha Sohail has freshly taken up the post of Youth Development Officer and has a background in Community Education, worked extensively with black and minority ethnic young people and has contributed to young people being involved in many projects throughout Edinburgh.

We fully encourage Aisha to develop her commitment in working with and for black and minority ethnic (BME) young people and wish her all the best in her new role.

It is



the vision of ELREC to engage young people from as many diverse backgrounds as possible in the work of the organisation, in addition to becoming increasingly involved in addressing issues affecting young people living in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

ELREC Youth Zone

Oh yes, I have taken the post of Youth Development Officer at ELREC . I am pleased and excited at this opportunity as it is new ground for ELREC , and this nature of work always brings challenges.....

Over the next few months I will develop a Youth Zone for young BME people aged from 14—21 yrs. The Youth Zone will be designed, decorated

and furnished by young people involved in the project. This will create a safe, comfortable and relaxed space for young people not only to chill out but also provide support and information in accessing other services.

The young people can also be part of a programme of events and activities planned by themselves. It is hoped that the Youth Zone will be a focus point where they can address issues that matter to them. Working with young people is

The Youth Zone will be designed, decorated and furnished by young people involved in the project.

great fun as it keeps me on my toes. Also it is an area where there is so much scope for development and change, so on this note I feel confident and pleased to be doing what I really enjoy!

*By Aisha Sohail
Youth Development Officer*



I am recruiting members for the ELREC Youth Zone so you should look out for the publicity, which will be going out very shortly. If you have any queries please contact me, details are on the back page.

*Being a member of
to some serious*

Edinburgh & Lothians Racial Equality Council

14 Forth Street

OPEN DAY

Wednesday 29 September 2004

11:00am to 2:00pm
and
6:00pm to 8:00pm

Come along to find out more about the work
of ELREC, tour the building and chat with
individual member of staff

Please inform us in advance of any special needs you may have, we will endeavour to meet your needs.

We regret that this building is not wheelchair accessible. However our staff are happy to arrange to meet with you at a location agreeable to you.



What sort of police service do you want?

Lothian and Borders Police want to provide the highest quality of service to all members of the community but we recognise that there are many who have difficulty in reaching us. Some may be concerned that they will not receive the proper level of care that they deserve. Others may feel that the police are not the kind of organisation they could join or be successful in. The Diversity Unit of Lothian & Borders Police are working to build confidence in all the communities that we will help and care for them when they need us. We thrive to be an organisation that people can be proud to join and where their skills and talents will be rewarded.

These are challenging goals that we cannot achieve alone. Our success relies upon the community and we need to listen to our community and demonstrate by our actions that we have been listening. We are not alone in wanting to consult and people are often inundated with requests from other organisations. It is a lot to ask people to give up their free time to speak to us but the police service has a unique role to play in affecting the quality of our lives and in tackling racism and other forms of discrimination. Without the views of the community, policing would have to be decided solely by the police and the politicians. This would not be the policing Edinburgh and Lothians people deserve.

We are looking at improving the way we consult the community. We want to provide access at each division to allow local people to have their say on operational issues and make a difference to what their local police do. At the same time we would also like to have a group that will look at the higher-level strategic issues and help shape those important policies. These are both important issues that shape the quality of your and your family's lives.

We are also looking at working with other agencies such as the Councils and the Health Boards to see if we can do this listening together, in a joined up fashion, to ease the burden on the community and create better links between organisations.

We need the voice of the communities to be heard. If you would like to play your part please contact ELREC at:

14 Forth Street
Edinburgh
EH1 3LH
(T) 0131 556 0441
(F) 0131 556 8577
(E) admin@elrec.org.uk

Chief Inspector George Denholm
Diversity Unit
Lothian & Borders Police

ELREC's Additional Funding Appeal

At the last management meeting it was reported that although major funding was in place to support ELREC, additional funding would help ELREC to, for example, maintain the building, upgrade computer equipment to improve communication to members and meet any unexpected costs. Professor Palmer, our President, agreed to chair a small Funding Committee. Anyone wishing to help this appeal can send donations to Professor Geoff Palmer at the office of ELREC. All cheques should be made payable to Edinburgh and Lothians Racial Equality Council. Professor Palmer has already made an important donation in support of his view that like other agencies, we are also capable of helping ourselves.

Educational Initiatives in Edinburgh and the Lothians for Children

This is to inform parents and children that there are two main out of school development programmes which operate in Edinburgh and the Lothians that are of value to children who hope to enter university.

One such programme is called SET—Science, Technology and Engineering initiative. This programme is funded by the Councils of the Lothians, Edinburgh City Council and The Royal Society of Edinburgh and is held at the

Heriot Watt University in the spring and summer periods. Children in the fifth and sixth year can ask their schools to send them on this programme. On this programme they are made aware of the value of university as a place for educational and scientific development. This programme is part of the education strategy of the Government to encourage children from all ethnic and social backgrounds to make careers in science, technology and engineering.

Professor Palmer is involved in the teaching of this programme at the Heriot Watt University and welcomes enquiries from parents and children about this important educational initiative.

Another initiative is called LEAPS—Lothian Equal Access Programme for Schools. LEAPS is a programme that helps your children to get into university. LEAPS is supported by all the Councils of the Lothians and Edinburgh City Council and is carried out by Heriot Watt University, Edinburgh University, Napier University, Edinburgh School of Agriculture and Queen Margaret's University College.

There are summer programmes and children are assisted financially to attend. The course is scientifically friendly and the essays done by the students at the end of the course can help students to get into university, if Highers

exam results are below expectations.

Ethnic children attend both these programmes and some have entered university on LEAPS results and have gained very good honours degrees.

Professor Palmer is also involved in teaching this programme at the Heriot Watt University and can be contacted if information is required.

By Professor Geoff Palmer
President

ELREC Subcommittees Structure

Membership Panel

Trishna Singh - Chair
Emma Crawshaw
Ijaz Nazir
Steve Kent

Personnel & Policy

Foysol Choudhury - Chair
Girijamba Polubothu
Naren Sood
Shah Noor Choudhury

Finance & General Purposes

Amjad Chaudhry - Chair
Shaheen Unis
Prof Braj Sinha

Fundraising

Prof Geoff Palmer - Chair
Foysol Choudhury
Amjad Chaudhry
Naren Sood

Back Page Information



Edinburgh & Lothians Racial 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.

We aim to:

- Work towards the elimination of racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups
- Promote and organise co-operation of the statutory authorities and voluntary organisations

We pursue our aims through:

- Individual Complainant Aid Service
- Education and Training
- Campaigning
- Publications
- Consultancy and Signposting

ADVERTISING

We welcome organisations to advertise on ELREC Community Newsletter, for example:

- **Promoting services**
- **Disseminating flyers**
- **Advertising**
- **Vacancies**
- **Consultations**
- **General marketing**

This service is available for a contribution of £50 to £100.

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

The newsletter is available on a quarterly basis.

Donations

ELREC is a registered charity in Scotland. We welcome donations however small, from individuals or organisations to help us to pursue our goal - *racial equality and justice for all.*

If you would like to share any interesting fundraising ideas with us, please give the office a ring.

CONFERENCE ROOM BOOKINGS

You can book our 20-seat meeting room on a half day basis.

£15

For members of ELREC

£20

For non-members

£5

Tea & Coffee for 10

£10

Tea & coffee for 11+

Please contact the office for any bookings

OUR TEAM



*ELREC Staff Team
Nina, Aisha, Julie & Ali*

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