

ELREC NEWSLETTER



PROMOTING EQUALITY - FIGHTING DISCRIMINATION - FOSTERING GOOD RELATIONS

From the Chair

“Welcome to ELREC’s Lockdown newsletter.

This quarter has been very busy and challenging but in a very different way. However, some of the positives in these times has been knowing that we are all in it together, we are all at home, working, socialising, and doing the same things each day, at home. Never have we been so thankful for the internet, and things that matter to us the most, family and our service providers, than at times like these.



Its been natures way of telling us to slow ourselves down and re evaluate ourselves and our impact on this planet and life around us. So as you know businesses and organisations have been closed during this time due to Covid but thanks to social media and the internet, we have been able to adapt our work here in ELREC and still provide some of our services.

We have been working on two new projects during this time, providing food parcels to local bme families and Equally Informed project which provided lockdown and Covid specific information to people with little or no English literacy. I want to thank the funders and our staff for their hard work on both projects.

All our other projects, Communities for Conservation, True Colours, Equalities Engagement and Open Arms have all had to adapt and do their best in the situation. They have all moved some of their classes and work online and continue the work. We also had our Annual General Meeting online which went very well and attended by 46 people so thank you to our guest speakers and all those who attended.

Thank you to everyone especially our volunteers, Parveen Ishaq, Fran Sobierai, Mitra Rostamipour Zanjani, Mizan Rahman, Fahmida Huczewska, Diline Abushaban, Tangila Akter, Mahmood Rajah Khan, Rafiqul Islam, Humayun Kabir, Shahnoor Choudhury, Adrian

Barbascumpa, Jean Matthieu Gaunand, Catrinel Gheorghiu and Ronnie Whitehouse, who have dedicated their time during lockdown for worthy work.

My condolences on the passing of Saroj Lal who was the first bme teacher and worked worked imaginatively to transfer race relations from a police activity to a community activity. This improved race relations in the community which helped to develop the concepts of inclusion and diversity. Mrs Lal was a first light of racial equality which we can still see today.

**Foyso! Choudhury MBE
Chair**

ELREC AGM 2019

'Everything has a silver lining' this goes for most things and our AGM was no exception. Even during difficult times like such, we as a humanity find ways to not only survive but thrive. As many of you know, we had the AGM scheduled for March 2020 but due to Covid -19 it was cancelled, and we then went into lockdown. During this time everything went digital and Zoom is now a very common source of conducting meetings, workshops, and classes. So, we also decided to host our AGM online via Zoom on Wednesday 5th August 2020 and it was just as wonderful as the 'real' deal. Read more [here](#).



Honorary Members

Honorary Patron:

The Rt. Hon. Frank Ross, Lord Provost
of the City of Edinburgh

Honorary President:

Prof. Sir Geoff Palmer DSc OBE

Board Members

Chair: Foyso Choudhury MBE

Vice Chair and Convenor of Personnel

Subcommittee: Shami Khan DL

Treasurer: Cllr Carl John

Company Secretary: Rajnish Singh

Convenor, Membership Subcommittee:

Jessica (Zonghong) Yang

Convenor, Finance and General Purposes

Subcommittee: Irina Lazarenko

Convenor, Volunteering Subcommittee: Azra

Sharif- Qayyum

Convenor, Education Subcommittee:

Magdalena Sajnaga

Board Members: Irshad Ahmed. Ijaz Nazir,

Shahid Riaz, Jing Si

Staff

Office Manager: Parveen Ishaq

Administrator: Franciele Sobierai

Finance Officer: Adrian Barbasumpa

Equalities Engagement Project: Mizan Rahman

Support and Advice Service: Parveen Ishaq

True Colours Project: Didem Kaner Ural

Open Arms Project: Mitra Rostami

Communities for Conservation Project Lead:

Jean- Matthieu Gaunand

Community Link Officers (CLO):

David Tai- Chinese CLO

Ewelina Lukaszek- Polish CLO

Fahmida Huczewska- South Asian CLO

Verena Aedo- Spanish CLO

About us

Edinburgh & Lothians Regional
Equality Council (ELREC) founded in
1971, is a voluntary body and charitable
company made up of individual
members and representatives from
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

We pursue our aims through

Engagement with communities of
protected characteristics
Complaint 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 customized
training on equality matters.

Edinburgh & Lothians Regional
Equality Council (ELREC)
14 Forth Street Edinburgh EH1 1LH
(T) 0131 556 0441
(E) admin@elrec.org.uk
(W) www.elrec.org.uk
Charity Number: SC007896
Company Number: SC183419



From the Honorary Patron - Lord Provost Frank Ross

ELREC has, alongside much of Edinburgh's substantial civil society, been a key contributor to assisting and protecting our most vulnerable groups, helping to; maximise inclusion, grow wellbeing, and improving skills and access to employment, whilst leading on a range of equalities and rights and justice initiatives.



These have been important services, not just in repairing the impact of lockdown, the release phases and in our living with COVID, but also as we look ahead to a new city in a new-

normal, and I would therefore encourage ELREC to actively engage with ongoing discussions, as we, as a city, all look to regain the ground lost over the last few months, where, due social distancing requirements, we will all have to adjust our product or service or expectations of each other.

I want to record, on behalf of civic Edinburgh, my sincerest gratitude for the efforts of the ELREC Board, Staff and Volunteers and partners, in your collective efforts to minimise the impact of coronavirus upon our most vulnerable citizens. Your help and support in such dark times, especially to those most vulnerable or highly dependent and their families will have been most gratefully received, and I know, will have made a marked and positive improvement to those most affected across our BME and wider communities.

From the Honorary President - Prof Sir. Geoff Palmer OBE

Different parts of the country are talking of the links to chattel slavery and we must change attitudes and start with schools and tell children why black people are in this situation. The curriculum must teach the truth.

"Its easier to mend broken children than mend broken men."

Do not let things be nice to do, make it part of the curriculum and it becomes the attitude of the people we produce in the future.



I have given interviews for Canada, Japan and South Africa, Jamaica and other Caribbean connections and the world is interested not in me but in Edinburgh and what it is doing. What we are doing in our city is going worldwide and has attracted the attention on the world.

The Henry Dundas statue in St Andrew square has been there for 199 years and its taken us this long to change the placard to include the word "slavery" on it. It may have taken a long time but its been worth it and truth be told.

Edinburgh is a city that is seen by the world as doing something about Black Lives issue and I am grateful for ELREC for making lives better for its BME communities in Edinburgh and the surrounding areas.

Sarah Boyack - Member of the local government and communities committee

In June we had an excellent debate in the Scottish Parliament Showing Solidarity with Anti Racism, which enabled people to reflect on the Black Lives Matter agenda too. It was an unusual debate with cross party agreement and strong reflections on what we need to do to act now.

We agreed:

- That we need to establish a Museum of Slavery in Scotland,
- To address the findings of a recent report from the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination which recommended that Scotland's school curriculum should

contain "a balanced account of the history of the British Empire and colonialism, including slavery and other grave human rights violations."

- Support for the establishment of the Scottish Government expert advisory group on COVID-19 and the impact on ethnic minority communities, and for action now to best support black and minority ethnic (BAME) workers and their families as the health and economic crisis unfolds and for the collection of detailed data through Public Health Scotland on the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups, to assist in identifying the reasons for differential impacts".

There were powerful speeches from members from across the political parties.

Before I finish my remarks, I wanted to mention Saroj Lal - who sadly died in March this year - her son Vineet has been in touch with me and I've put together a cross party motion for debate and will help organise a Scottish Parliament meeting where we celebrate and discuss her contribution, which will enable us to address her contribution to her pioneering work on race relations. I'll keep you posted and hope it will give us the opportunity to reflect on what's been achieved in the 50 years since she began teaching, not only as the first BAME teacher at South Morningside Primary, but certainly among the very first in Edinburgh (and among the earliest in Scotland).



From the Board

Cllr Carl John, Treasurer

Firstly i would like to thank all those who voted for my re-election to the board. I still very much believe in ELREC and all the continuing projects and all the good outcomes we have achieved in the past.

Since March 27th i have been in lockdown and for 17 weeks of that time i have been in isolation working from home as I have 3 of the 5 special categories that were said to be most at risk. Having unfortunately missed the AGM i note from the reports and the minutes that we continue to drive ahead with many projects which in these difficult times both financially and availability bringing new and unexpected problems.



Once again i would like to thank our staff and volunteers for going the extra mile to ensure that we continue to help the most needy in society. I hope that very soon we will see the Corona Virus being controlled and allowing everyone including myself getting back to working to carry out the many functions that ELREC has provided to the public over many years. Again i appeal to our wonderful staff and volunteers to keep safe as we could not do what we achieve without you.

Rajnish Singh, Secretary

We are all living in unprecedented time from March 2020 when the lockdown started due to COVID-19. For the first time we could say that most part of the world came to a standstill. Initially, I could see a lot of nervousness and confusion about the virus and also about the way to manage the crisis. Slowly, we started understanding a lot more about the virus and getting used to the terms of lockdown, the new normal. From then until now COVID related restrictions and news have taken the centre in each and every aspects of our life. The impacts it has on every



aspects of life and economy are huge and would take a number of years to recover. There are a number of relevant news items we come across so would not expand more on it.

For ELREC we had to conduct our re-scheduled AGM over Zoom, which is again a part of this new normal. I would like to extend a warm welcome to all the new faces on the board and look forward to working with them. And wish all my fellow board members and staff at ELREC to stay safe.

Police Scotland – Message to Communities



Message from Chief Superintendent Sean Scott

Policing over the last four months has been something I have ever seen before. We were given new powers and had to learn quickly. I must say though that communities came together fantastically in the last 4 months, and we have not had major issues to report.

During these rather difficult times we wanted to be as tolerant as possible and the last resort was to enforce however Edinburgh and the bme communities have been fantastic with adhering to the rules. We may not have got it right every time, but we took the right approach and have a new survey online for feedback, so please do have a look at this on our website and send us feedback.

Going forward we closely monitor social tensions and are working very closely with our partners so that we can provide the right protection service to our local communities.

Crime is dramatically down last number of months, but anti-social behaviour has increased but not any great levels to cause any worry.

I thank ELREC and other partners for their continuous efforts and support making our work easier.

Manager's Update

These few months have been busy despite the lockdown. We have continued much of our work and moved our project workshops and classes online. Support and advice work has continued during the full period of the lockdown as people have felt more isolated and anxious with organisations being closed and no face to face interactions.

Currently in ELREC we have 6 projects, 2 of which are lockdown/Covid specific and for a short period of time. All the projects are doing well and funders have been very flexible so we are thankful for that.



During lockdown ELREC had many queries on hate and racist incidents aimed mostly at our Asian communities. With the help of Police Scotland we were able to resolve these quickly by getting information and support to those affected and prevent further incidents. We have also had few cases of racism in schools and have been able to work closely with partners and other groups to work on this.

The Covid 19 lockdown has affected all communities differently. Due to the food project we witnessed the poverty some communities face, many are in poor quality housing with no social contacts with other members of their community, low incomes and finding it hard to make ends meet, and isolation with many families unable to socialise due to groups and services being closed and kids in digital poverty. This period of time has shown us the work that still needs to be done in our local communities. And the importance of local groups and services which many rely on.

Our AGM 2020 took place online with great attendance and dialogue as well as inspirational words by our honorary president Sir Geoff Palmer and Lord Provost, Fran Ross who summed it up by saying "Since March 2020, our city has been closed to protect ourselves and others from the virus and lives have been disrupted such as schooling, businesses as well as our traditions. I thank local groups for observing lockdown and celebrations which fell during this time, could not be celebrated like they normally would". However these last 4 months have seen communities being resilient and coming together like nothing I have ever seen. During this time volunteering had also trebled - Rt Honorary Lord Provost, Frank Ross, Edinburgh City.

Sir Geoff Palmer stated that "Edinburgh is a city that is seen by the world as doing something about Black Lives issue and I am grateful for ELREC for making lives better for its bme communities in Edinburgh and the surrounding areas". He told us that Edinburgh is being talked about worldwide and the work on its slavery past and changes which will set the tone for future generations.

I totally agree with the importance of volunteers and their remarkable work during this difficult time which helped deliver many vital services, so thank you to everyone involved and I hope that we can continue to work as a community for the greater good.

Parveen Ishaq
Officer Manager
pishaq@elrec.org.uk

Support and Advice

This service has always been busy and popular amongst our communities and Covid/lockdown has been no exception. Between June -August 2020 we have dealt with 35 enquiries, from lockdown information to housing, poverty, and legal matters. The lockdown has been particularly difficult on people who are already isolated such as single parents, elderly, people living alone, refugees and anyone who lost their jobs due to Covid.



Some cases are much more straight forward than others nonetheless its still a worry or concern for that individual or family involved.

Many organisations have been closed so its not been easy getting people the help they need. Below is a breakdown of the queries we have dealt with over these three months:

Query	Number
Housing - anti social noise/ household breakdowns/ bidding for new properties/council tax/private landlord matters/	11
Legal - immigration/ employer tribunal court case/ Complaint re legal decision	4
Benefits - financial /food help	5
Covid Related - Furlough and employer issue	3
Police - online abuse/criminal check/	2
Racism - hate	5
Other	5

Parveen Ishaq
 Support & Advice Coordinator
 pishaq@elrec.org.uk

ELREC Covid Projects

Food Support

ELREC has been working in partnership with Edinburgh Community Food and Fareshare to provide food parcels to bme families in Leith. We got a small grant from Leith Decides and Port of Leith Housing for this work and to top up the food parcels with halal meat and items specific to bme families. This project has been very popular due to the challenges of the lockdown and Covid which has had bigger impact on certain groups more than others. We have been able to provide 30 parcels each week to our local communities since June 2020. We thank the partners, funders and our volunteers for delivering this work during this very difficult and unusual of times.

Please support our work: gf.me/u/ywi2fm





ELREC FOOD SUPPORT

We are providing food support to BME families that are unable to access food as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic in Edinburgh.

Please contact us on **Tuesday** between **12:30pm to 5pm** each week at 0131 556 0441 or at covidleithsupport@elrec.org.uk to request food support.



COVID 19

Wsparcie dla społeczności
mieszkającej na Leith

Jeśli zmagasz się z trudnościami z powodu pandemii możemy Ci pomóc.

Zadzwoń 0131 556 0441 lub napisz covidleithsupport@elrec.org.uk

LEITHCHOOSES
LOCAL MONEY FOR LOCAL PROJECTS



COVID 19 Leith Community Support

Si estás pasando por dificultades y necesitas ayuda, es posible que podamos ayudarte.

Ponte en contacto con nosotros por teléfono 01315560441 o por email covidleithsupport@elrec.org.uk

LEITHCHOOSES
LOCAL MONEY FOR LOCAL PROJECTS



COVID 19 Leith Community Support

اگر در دوران قرنطینه دچار مشکل مالی و کمبود مواد غذایی هستید، ممکن است واجد شرایط دریافت کمک از طریق ما باشید.

با ما از طریق تلفن یا ایمیل تماس بگیرید
Tel: 01315560441
Email: covidleithsupport@elrec.org.uk

LEITHCHOOSES
LOCAL MONEY FOR LOCAL PROJECTS



ELREC Covid Projects



Equally Informed

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown and other emergency measures in place in the country, thousands of marginalised people in Scotland, including the ones in Edinburgh and Lothians lack access and understanding of the basic information on how to keep themselves and their communities safe and well. They include people who do not speak English, people with no or low literacy, and people without access to different forms of communication.

The project aims to provide information in a simple and accessible form to minority communities in Edinburgh and Lothians about Covid-19 pandemic, which include information on health and safety, national and local regulations and measure, and available support services. The target group are people from migrant and refugee backgrounds with no or low English language abilities living in Edinburgh and Lothians.

Information related to Covid-19 are collected from official resources, including the UK and the Scottish Government, local authorities, and the NHS. The content is translated into Arabic, Bengali, Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), Farsi(Persian, Afghan, Tajik), Polish, Romanian, Russian, Spanish and Turkish languages, and further disseminated it to the community members in our network that we have been supporting and in contact with through our other projects.

EQUALLY INFORMED

Are you from any of the following communities living in Edinburgh and Lothian?

<p>Arabic - العربية</p> <p>Bengali - বাংলা</p> <p>Farsi/Persian - فارسی</p> <p>Mandarin/Cantonese - 古文 or 文言</p> <p>Polish - Polski</p>	<p>Romanian - Română</p> <p>Russian - Русский</p> <p>Spanish - Español</p> <p>Turkish - Türkçe</p> <p>Urdu - اُردُو</p>
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Do you need clarification on any of the current COVID-19/Lockdown guidance on health, social distancing rules, travel, support available in Scotland?

If yes, then contact us, and we can advise you in your language.

Contact us at 07585097086 or email us at equally.informed@elrec.org.uk

Follow our social media channels:

@Equallyinformed

@elrecuk

@InformedEquallyUK

07585097086

#Scottish Wellbeing Fund

Adrian Barbascumpa
 Equally Informed Coordinator
adrian.barbascumpa@elrec.org.uk

True Colours

Hello from the TRUE Colours group!

With the lockdown restrictions easing, we hope everyone and their family and friends are experiencing some form of normality while keeping safe and well...

As social distancing rules are still in place, True Colours is now offering online workshops for schools. Please contact didem.kaner@elrec.org.uk if you are interested.

Our videos on Hate Crime, Cyberbullying, Islamophobia and LGBT are on social media. Covid-19 related support for young people is also available. Please visit us on Facebook and on Twitter and email us for more information and help.

On June 20th, True Colours took part in an online event "Young People - Black Lives Matter" with Score Scotland and Passion4Fusion. It was hosted by story teller and social commentator Mara Menzies. Cynthia Gentle who organised the Holyrood BLM protest also joined us while Lisa Williams shared some background of Scotland's black history. A big thank you to all the speakers, young people who attended and the organisers!

As always, we are looking for volunteers - this time to work from home - to help us work towards a more understanding and accepting society. TRUE Colours volunteers have a chance to raise awareness about human rights and equality, and to talk about issues that are important to them and improve public speaking skills, develop confidence and work with like-minded people from different backgrounds. All are welcome!

We are looking forward to meet again with volunteers and students and staff in schools and youth clubs! Until then, please stay safe!

Didem Kaner Ural
TRUE Colours Project Coordinator
didem.kaner@elrec.org.uk



**YOUNG PEOPLE
BLACK
LIVES
MATTER**

Image: @s.j_sphotography

Online discussion for young people about the BLM movement.

A space to hold discussions and ask questions.

Speakers:
Cynthia Gentle
Organiser of the BLM Protest at Holyrood

Lisa Williams
Black History tours Edinburgh

**Saturday
20 June
2pm**

jennifer@scorescotland.org.uk
didem.kaner@elrec.org.uk

Communities for Conservation

With the continued lockdown, we moved most activities online. The team attended thematic online training from the CCF and interacted with other CCF projects to share learning. We met with Home Energy Scotland to review partnership and participated in their training.



Energy

The team delivered energy 'phone' visits using whatsapp or zoom to support community members to save energy at home during the lockdown. We particularly helped clients to switch to green suppliers and alleviate debts. One client qualified to the Warmer Homes Scotland's scheme for a new central heating system. We have now resumed our home visits with added conditions.

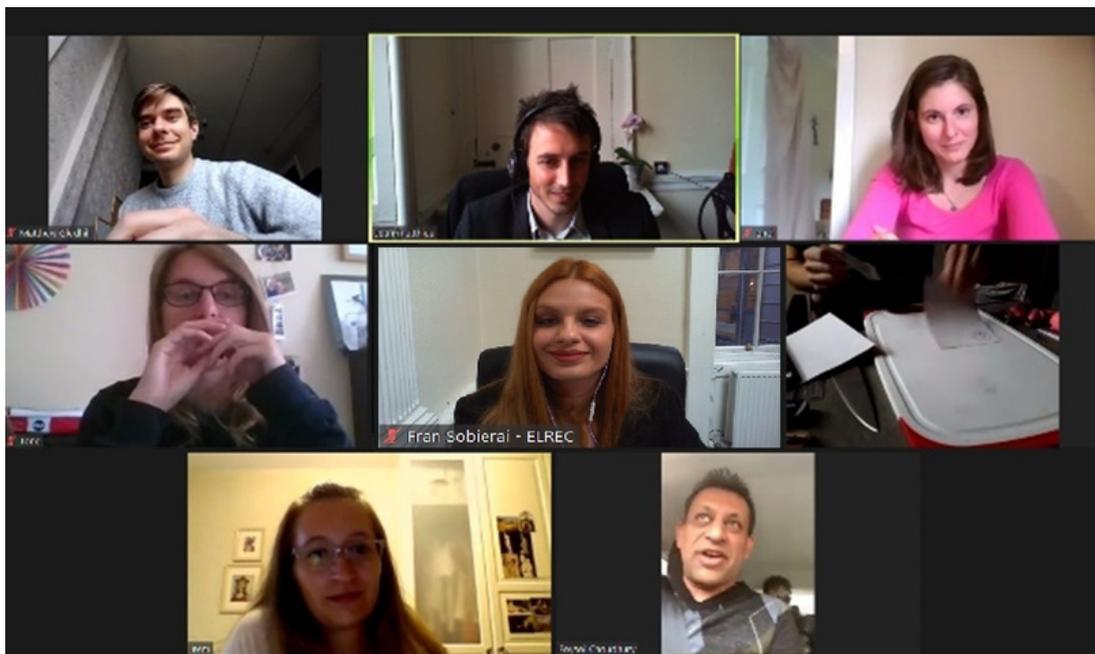
Online Workshops

We ran numerous online workshops during the lockdown on energy efficiency, climate change, upcycling and zero waste with our different communities. We ran programmes with the Sudanese Community Association, the Polish Scouts and the 50+ group.

We organised an Eco-Eid attended by 8 families where we ran upcycling and sustainable cooking activities. *'This was the only thing that made us feel it's Eid, my child was very happy and were inspired to make their own Eid cards after that.'*



The Climate Emergency Scotland met to discuss future plans and published 2 editions of the magazine [available here](#).



We organized a Talk in Spanish with Mr Ardita, an International Lawyer on “Is it time for the Declaration of the Rights of Nature?”. In partnership with Eco Arran, we screened David Attenburgh’s “Climate change: the facts” with 111 registered participants and facilitated the ensuing facebook discussion.

We organised 14 online zero waste workshops on upcycling, sustainable cooking, clothing repairs and mask making where we discussed textile and food waste facts, tips on how to reduce waste and taught simple practical clothing repair and upcycling techniques.



The £10K from the National Lottery Fund’s Awards for All for the Edinburgh Climate Festival will be spent in summer 2021.



Low Carbon Transport

Government reported that Cycling increased by 200% since lockdown and the Scottish government announced £10m of funding for councils to provide temporary space on the roads this way. As a result of the increased interest in cycling, our bike library has seen a lot of interest and we lent bikes and electric bikes to many. We also resumed our Saturday cycling classes with limited numbers and physical distancing which were very popular.

Testimonial: *“I was nervous of cycling again after a gap of 15 years, but I need not have worried. This class is very convivial and supportive and goes from the basics of riding a bike without falling all the way up to cycling on major roads. The instructor is excellent and can help you no matter what stage you are at. Highly recommended!”*

We have received £2,000 funding from Cycling UK to help repair people’s bikes. So far we have helped 30 people to get their bikes back on the road and we have a few vouchers left. If interested, please get in touch cfca@elrec.org.uk



Our next Driving Efficiency Training is on Saturday 26th September 2020 - Only 2 slots left at 10:30am and 2:30pm.

To all drivers... Would you like to learn how to save up to 15% of fuel when driving? You will be able to learn how to save up to 15% in fuel!

Take part in this free 45 minutes one to one driving efficiency training with a professional driving instructor and learn how to save up to 15% FUEL. Limited spaces. Book your slot via: <https://ecodriving1.eventbrite.co.uk> or by emailing cfce@elrec.org.uk



The session lasts around 45 minutes during which James, our driving instructor will advise you on how to:

- Reduce your fuel consumption.
- Reduce the risk of accidents.
- Lower the vehicle's wear and tear on tyres, brakes and clutches.

It normally costs £60 per session but since it is funded by the Climate Challenge Fund, we offer it for FREE.

Due to anticipated high interest, it is first come first served. We require a £20 refundable deposit to guarantee attendance (this can be paid in cash at our offices or by bank transfer).

***The car will be wiped down in between participants and it will be mandatory that both the participant and the instructor wear face masks.

Clothing repair service

Do you have any clothes needing repaired? We can fix it!

Just drop in Mon-Friday 9:30am-5:30pm at ELREC, 14 Forth St, EH1 3LH.

-Clothing repairs and alterations

-Custom tailoring.

-Remaking and tailoring clothes to your individual requirements.

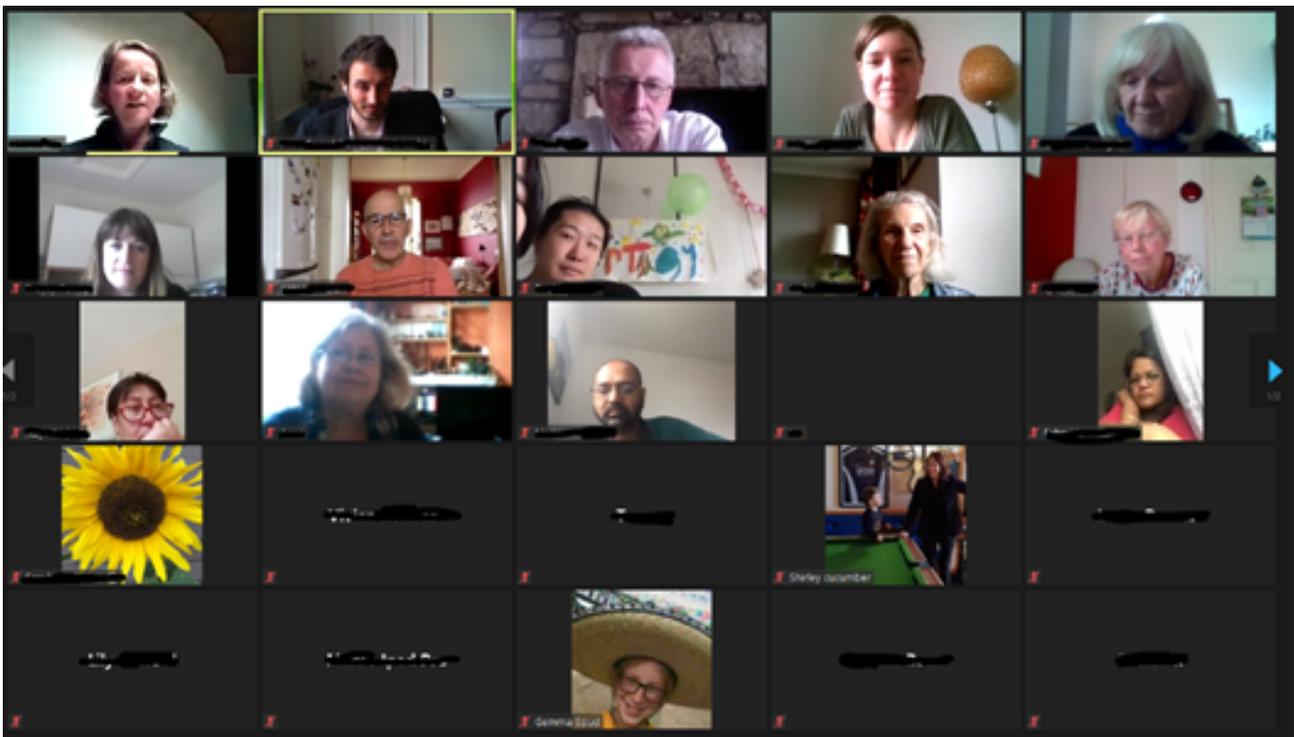
-Shortening, Lengthening, Adjusting seams, altering darts, repairing zips or tears, etc. -
Special orders (dress making, pillows and cushions, chair cover).

Come along and give it a try!

Our volunteer expert tailor has over 10 years of experience as a professional tailor. For any queries, please email cfc@elrec.org.uk

Food growing

We have moved the weekly RBGE's Edible Gardening group meetings to zoom and organized 15 well attended online sessions, brilliantly led by RBGE staff Elinor on topics including composting, seeds sowing, pests and disease, planning your plot, companion planting, cuttings, pruning, the ABC of seed sowing, seeds saving, foraging and more. The feedback on these was extremely positive. "Thank you so much Elinor for this compost session. It was so interesting! I'll start this right now. ☐" "Thanks for organising during lockdown ☐☐



Diline organised 6 sessions at the Iqra garden attended by 12 participants in total. 2 online sessions were also organised. Mums were very happy to see plants growing. Tips and advice were given on how to get seeds and composting.



Case study from the Iqra community garden:

“Salwan is a Syrian refugee lady who’s been through traumatising experiences during the war. She joined the Iqra community garden with her two children 7 and 5 year olds. Salwan found the garden a great opportunity to practice what she used to do at her home city of Homs in Syria, where she used to plant many herbs and vegetables. She said that she never thought that ‘you can grow anything in a cold country like Scotland!’ She added that the garden gave her the opportunity to connect with others when she was feeling isolated and knowing hardly anyone in her new city. Salwan started to grow some veggies and herbs in her garden after learning some tips from ELREC CFC’s sessions at Iqra. Her two children were very engaged in the activities and made their own watering cans during a small up-cycling session as part of the Iqra gardening, Salwan said that they hardly ever throw any milk bottle away now as the children like to keep them to make watering cans and becoming creative making other things too. One day we were informed that one of Salwan’s children sadly had a brain tumour and had to go through a big operation, this hit deeply all the other participants and everyone were very supportive to Salwan, providing regular visits and cooking meals when needed as well as constant moral support as she didn’t have any family around. At the end of the year, the daughter happily recovered after her operation and came back to normal. Salwan said that those three months were the hardest times of her life and that thanks to the support of everyone she met in Iqra community garden, she wouldn’t have coped as she did. Salwan also had a home energy advice visit, she said that they top up their gas and electricity keys so many times and that she wanted to learn how she can save and reduce their energy consumption. Salwan was given an extended energy advice on how to control her usage, the energy monitor was a great tool in showing Salwan what the ‘dangerous’ appliances are which consume lots of electricity, she was shocked to see how the monitor rose when we switched the shower on. Also, the energy game engaged the children and made it a learning experience for them in a fun way. Salwan said that they’ve become obsessed about switching the un-needed bulbs off and make less fuss when the shower time is over as the game made them aware of the high consumption of the shower. This case showed an example of the positive impact that ELREC’s Communities For conservation makes on the communities. It showed how community gardening encouraged social cohesion and solidarity when most needed to a very vulnerable family. Also, it proved the importance of the home visit service on raising awareness about the small changes that can be made at home to save energy and money. Most importantly, the positive influence and awareness it had on the young children, which means helping in building a brighter greener future for the coming generations. ”

The Drumbrae community garden led by George started again mid-June and now meets every Friday with regular participants. The group planted potatoes, carrots, peas, runner beans, sweet corn, spinach, parsnips, squash and cabbage

Jean-Matthieu Gaunand
Communities for Conservation Coordinator
jgaunand@elrec.org.uk

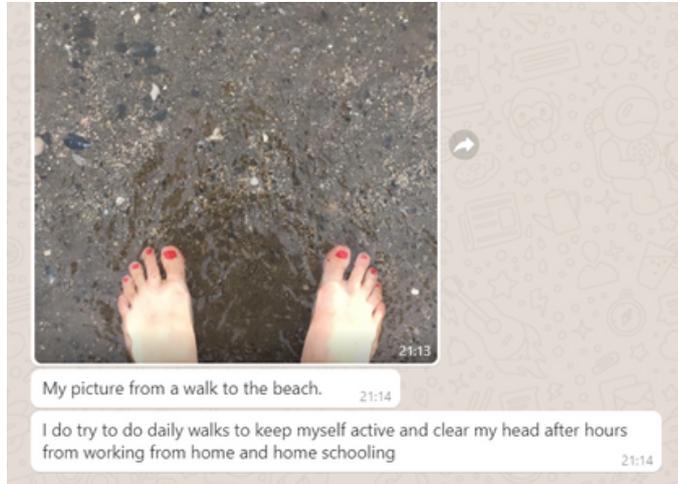
Open Arms



We had a summer of online activities for our clients at Open Arms. We have been delivering weekly sessions of Body Maintenance Exercise, Yoga, Skin Care classes and arts and crafts tutorials. In partnership with Feniks, we offered our clients interactive sessions of Multi-Cultural Food Exchange workshops, as well as Stress Management course with Health in Mind and Arts workshops with Room for Art. In order to recognise barriers for participation and inclusion, we ran a survey and identified a need for electronic devices amongst our service users in order to stay connected with our service. We managed to overcome this barrier by successfully securing funds via Scottish Refugee Council and purchased and allocated 8 new laptops and Ipads.



Moreover, with help from People Knowhow and Edinburgh Remakery, we allocated 11 refurbished laptops to our Open Arms family members. As the result of this, everyone can participate in the activities now 😊 Probably the most attractive and engaging activity has been Challenge & Reward. It takes place on the WhatsApp group platform where Open Arms ladies are member of and participate regularly. Everyday they take part in a challenge motivating them to take up physical a physical activity and share a photo in the group and receive a point for their participation. After collecting 10 points they receive a reward. We started the scheme in June, and we have delivered 3 rounds of reward allocations so far. The rewards have been secured through various sources including, cash donation by an individual to purchase shopping vouchers and subsidised items from In Kind Direct, donation of goodies' hampers by ASDA Leith and donation of new and tagged items by Granton Goes Greener. We are very grateful to our generous donors.



We had 2 lovely students, Courtney Craig and Hollie Smith, who helped us with running Coffee and Chats activities as well as assisting with evaluation of the project.

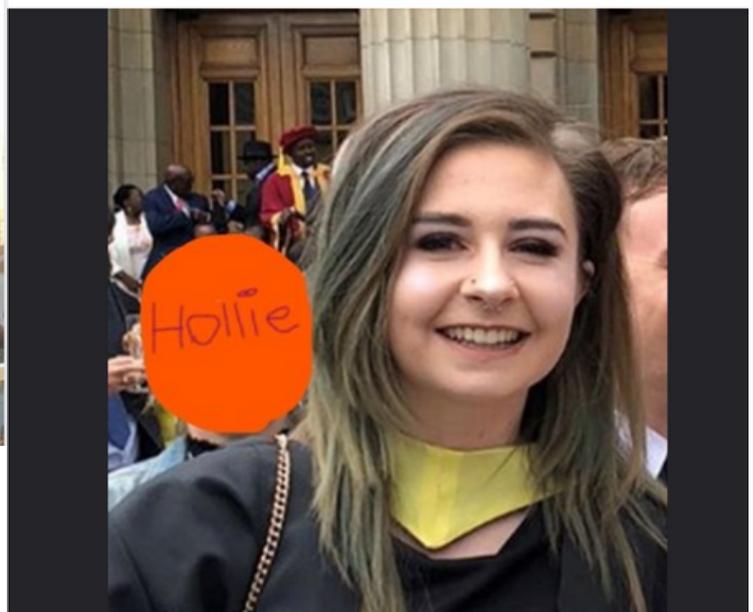
★Meet Open Arms Work Placement Students★

Hello! My name is Courtney Craig. I am a MSc student at Napier University in the Forensic Psychology and Applied Criminology program. I am a born and bred Canadian with a dual British citizenship, so for the past year I have been enjoying life in Edinburgh as well as the luxury of being able to travel around Europe with ease. I am very excited to have been completing my work placement with Open Arms for the past few months now. As someone who is deeply passionate about helping and improving the lives of others, I have felt truly honoured to take part in the project as well as co-create the Coffee and Chats program where I have met some remarkable ladies!
[Elrec ScotlandEdinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council \(ELREC\)](#)



🌸Meet Open Arms Work Placement Students🌸

Hello! My name is Hollie and I am studying a master's in applied criminology and forensic psychology at Edinburgh Napier University. I hope to be able to improve my leadership and organisational skills on the Open Arms Project, by leading sessions, organising events and carrying out administrative work. I also hope to enhance my experience in potentially challenging situations whilst working with possibly vulnerable people. Before carrying out my placement with Open Arms, I volunteered for Women's Aid and Police Scotland. After university I would love to assist vulnerable people in society and improve their quality of life. Working for a charity or organisation that does this would be the perfect profession for me!
[Elrec ScotlandEdinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council \(ELREC\)](#)



From September, we update our activity calendar every month. We have at least one activity every day! Please see our September calendar below:



Open Arms – ELREC

Online Activities' Calendar

Mondays	10:00- 10:30AM	30-minutes Body Maintenance for All Abilities
Mondays	11:30- 12:30	Arts and Crafts
Mondays	16:30- 17:00 PM	30-minutes Calorie Burner Cardio Exercise
Tuesdays	10:00 - 10:30AM	30-minutes Calorie Burner Cardio Exercise
Wednesdays	11:00- 12:00 AM	Yoga with Terezka
Wednesdays	16:30- 17:00 PM	30-minutes Calorie Burner Cardio Exercise
Thursdays	10:00- 10:30 AM	30-minutes Calorie Burner Cardio Exercise with
Fridays	10:30- 11:15 AM	Face Yoga and DIY Face Massage

- All physical activities are for female participants only.
- All the take place on ZOOM.
- It is possible to join the class without audio and/or video.
- To participate please email Mitra at mrostami@elrec.org.uk



Mitra Rostami
Open Arms Coordinator
mrostami@elrec.org.uk

Equality Engagement

Equality Engagement project has continued working with the users, public life scheme members remotely. It has been quite unusual period supporting our service users who are facing with multiple issues and needs arisen by impact of pandemic.

equalities
engagement

We have been disseminating information, updates, instructions and guidelines among the BAME communities regularly over this pandemic as things changed frequently. Information and supports were given to the families as schools are opens.

News, events and updates:

Online Police Recruitment

Aimed at our increasingly diverse BME population

Police Scotland is acutely aware that the diversity of our communities is increasing all the time. We recognise the importance of our communities being able to relate to our police officers and we are therefore actively reaching out to our BME communities and encouraging you to consider a career in policing in Scotland.

During the 90 minute online recruitment event, users will learn about the recruitment process, the training, the role of a police officer and the endless opportunities which are available to you once you embark on this exciting career path.

The date of the event is:

**Thursday 24th September 2020
6.30pm - 8pm**

In order to participate in the event,
Microsoft Teams will be required.



For more information and to
reserve a space please email:-

recruitmentpositiveactionteam@scotland.pnn.police.uk

providing your name, contact number and what event you would like to attend.

Please also send a request to join our
closed Facebook page at:
'Police Scotland Positive Action'



Are you interested to join the Board of Borders College ?

No prior board membership experience is required. Training and mentoring is available and an induction programme is provided to new members. In addition, the Board is especially keen to hear from a diverse range of people who are currently under represented on Boards of Scottish public bodies.

These roles are not remunerated.

Closing date for applications is midday on Tuesday 29 September 2020

For more info, contact Ingrid Earp, email: iearp@borderscollege.ac.uk, tel: 07771349106.

**WELCOME TO YOUR VOTE****DON'T LOSE IT**

Are you a **foreign citizen** living in Scotland?

The law in Scotland has changed you can now **register to vote**

 **To find out more, or to register to vote,**
go to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Remember:

-  as a foreign citizen aged **16** or over, by **registering to vote** you can now take part in Scottish elections.

Register now at: www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Annual Household Canvass 2020 has changed !



The Annual Household Canvass Has Changed - What's New?

- A data matching step has been introduced to match electors' names and addresses with various data sets (e.g. DWP records and Local Authority records). This will establish which 'route' of canvass each property will go down.
- The ERO can use a variety of communication methods including emails, paper forms, phone calls or house visits.
- All foreign nationals over the age of 14 with leave to remain are now eligible to register to vote and should be included in any response.

How Do You Respond?

- The easiest way to provide or confirm the information is by going to www.elecreg.co.uk/lothian-vjb and entering the security codes provided.
- No action is necessary if you receive the Canvass Communication A form and no changes need to be made.

New Names Added During Canvass

Any person added during canvass:-

- Will need to complete a registration application.
- Can register online at gov.uk/register-to-vote.
- Will receive an Invitation to Register form if they do not register online.

Directorate of Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights within the Government

Post: Director for Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights

Ref: IRC84428

Type: Permanent

Salary: Circa £95k. Existing civil servants appointed on level transfer will retain their existing salary

Location: Edinburgh

Hours: Around 37hrs/week

Closing date: 18 September 2020 at midnight

To apply for this position: <https://bit.ly/35gSOcf>

A decision has been taken by Scottish Government to establish a new Directorate of Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights within the Government.

This new Directorate will bring together our Equality and Human Rights Division and the Connected Communities Division. It's focus will be to ensure that as an organisation we are embedding human rights and equality in all we do. This will help the organisation to meet the collective aim of achieving a well-being economy and the outcomes of our National Performance Framework.

Since this announcement, the Government has focused all efforts on supporting our response to the Coronavirus pandemic. With the gradual easing of some of this immediate work, I am pleased to confirm that the Scottish Government's Executive Team has agreed that as a first step, the recruitment for the new role of Director of Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights should proceed.

Lisa Bird, Deputy Director - Equality, Human Rights & Third Sector, Scottish Government has requested to share this information amongst relevant networks and contact who might interested on this.





Living with Diabetes: Q&A Event (for Urdu and Punjabi speakers)

Date: 28 October 2020, 7pm

Guests; Dr Kashif Ali & Dr Naz Ghouri

Anyone wishing to register should email scotland@diabetes.org.uk. People can also submit any questions ahead of the event to this email address.

Post: Board Members - NHS Lothian

Reference:2795

Remuneration: £8,842 per annum

Location: Edinburgh

Closing date:25 September 2020 at midnight

To apply (online): <https://bit.ly/2GwGPwD>

If you experience any difficulties accessing our website, or in the event that you require a word version of the application form, please contact the Public Appointments Team on (Freephone) 0300 244 1898, by email at PA_Applications_Mailbox@gov.scot, or by writing to the Public Appointments Team, Scottish Government, Area 3F North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ.

To see regular update, information and advertisement please keep an eye over our social media pages; www.facebook.com/diversityinpubliclife.

For more information and support, please contact Mizan Rahman, Project coordinator, Diversity in Public Life E-mail: mrahman@elrec.org.uk, Tel: 01315560441 / 07930183352

Mizan Rahmani
Equality Engagement Coordinator
mrahman@elrec.org.uk

WHAT'S ON AT ELREC

No hate



ELREC - Third Party Reporting

Covid-19 Community Response

Virtual Reporting

Our office may be closed but we are still open to taking hate reports so please tell us.

Drop an email at Report-hate@elrec.org.uk



UK IMMIGRATION ADVICE

Do you need *immigration* advice?
Latta & Co can grant legal aid over the phone during the quarantine.

Drop and email at tm@lattalaw.co.uk or feel free to call on 07728628008.




 **Have any clothes needing repaired?**
We can fix it. Better than new!

Drop in Mon-Friday 9am to 5pm
at ELREC, 14 Forth St, EH1 3LH

 **Clothing repair & alterations**
Custom tailoring 

Personal remaking and tailoring clothes to your individual requirements.
Special orders (dress making, pillows and cushions, chair cover).

Suggested Donation

Phone: 0131 556 0441
Email: cfc@elrec.org.uk




Quality service. Quality Finish.





Saturday Cycling classes

Beginners: 10 to 11am
Intermediate: 11:30 to 1pm

All welcome Fun family time
Health and well being Get new skills
Relaxed learning environment Socialising

NKS, 7 Gillespie st, Edinburgh, EH3 9NH

Book your space now:
E-mail: cfc@elrec.org.uk
Phone: 0131 556 0441
Or register your interest with Al-Furqan

Bikes and helmet provided

Al-Furqan in partnership with ELREC








WHAT'S ON AT ELREC

AFTER COVID FROM GREED TO GREEN?



A talk with Environmental Scientist James Curran MBE

Tuesday, 22nd September
5:30pm - 6:30pm on Zoom
Ticket: £4.50

<https://greed2green.eventbrite.co.uk>

"Scientists predicted a global pandemic. It appeared on global risk registers. But we weren't ready."

Scientists predict a climate and nature emergency. It appears on risk registers. This time we must prepare."



ELREC FOOD SUPPORT

We are providing food support to BME families that are unable to access food as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic in Edinburgh.

Please contact us on **Tuesday** between **12:30pm to 5pm** each week at 0131 556 0441 or at covidleithsupport@elrec.org.uk to request food support.



Saturday 10th October
12PM - 4PM

Big Swap Event

MASK REQUIRED



St Peters Church
Lutton Place
EH8 9PE

COME TO OUR FREE EVENT

All items will be FREE. You will be able to find:

Women's, Men's and children's clothes

Toys

Books, CDs and DVDs

Kitchen utensils

Come and help the planet!

Please bring your own bags.

ALL WELCOME!

EMAIL CFC@ELREC.ORG.UK
PHONE 0131 556 0441



Bring stuff to donate from Monday 28th Sept to Wednesday 7th October to ELREC, 14 Forth Street, EH1 3LH



FREE ENGLISH CLASSES

Study General English for free
Beginners Level
Full attendance preferable

18:30 - 20:00 on
Tuesday evenings via Zoom

To register contact: franciele@elrec.org.uk



Where Next? SCCAN General Assembly
2 - 5pm Sunday 13 September 2020

VOLUNTEER WITH ELREC

As a volunteer you can give your time and skills and get something back in return, whether it is learning new skills, helping to build confidence, having the chance to meet new people, or gaining the satisfaction of helping a cause you believe in.

WHATEVER YOUR REASON IS, WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!



Big Thank You
to all volunteers that
contributed to
ELREC in the last
months.
Your involvement in
ELREC's is very
much appreciated.
We are very proud
and grateful to have
you in our
organisation.



Room Hire @ ELREC

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 ELREC office for

additional information or to make

a booking.

For more info, contact us:
admin@elrec.org.uk

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR WORK

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 £50-£150 depending on the size and placement of the advertisement.

To find out more, please contact the Administrator on: admin@elrec.org.uk
Our newsletter is published every quarter in March, June, September and December of each year.

Calling for new members at ELREC!

ELREC strives to embody the principles of transparency; integrity; equity; mutual cooperation; and participatory democracy. ELREC welcomes all individuals and organisations who share our aims, visions, and values to join us as members. As a member you will have the opportunity to shape ELREC policy direction; participate in ELREC's annual Management Board election; and attend ELREC events and lectures. Our members also act as links to various communities.

We welcome membership from individuals

from diverse groups as this results in the better representation of all protected characteristics. We would be much obliged if you would consider joining us, as well as helping us by encouraging individuals and organisations known to you to join ELREC.

Please contact our office: <http://www.elrec.org.uk/join-elrec-member/>



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elrec.org.uk/