

Diversity and Equality Steering Group

Note of DESG meeting
Held in Committee Rm 3
CnES, Sandwick Rd
On 20 January 2012 at 10 am

PRESENT
Karen France NHSWI
Gayle Findlay CnES
Roddy Mackay Northen Constabulary
Darren Hudon CnES
Lena Morrison CnES
Norma Skinner CnES (Chair)
Helen Froud
Isobel Mackenzie CnES
Murdo Macleod NHSWI
Mandy Macleod Crossreach

APOLOGIES
Carmen Morrison
Mary Maclean
Jenny Williams
Denise Symington
Calum Russell
Dave Matheson

Welcome and Introductions
Ms Norma Skinner welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. Those present introduced themselves to the meeting. Ms Norma Skinner advised that it had been over a year since DESG last met, the last meeting being December 2010. In 2011 the Chair of DESG was with NHSWI, Ms Skinner reported that she had contacted Nigel Hobson, Chief Operating Officer NHSWI to arrange a meeting to discuss what was happening to DESG but is awaiting a response.

Community Planning Partnership
Ms Skinner referred back to 2010 when representatives from DESG attended a CCP meeting to provide an update on the new Equality Act 2010, it was agreed that DESG would report to the CPP twice yearly. This has not happened and has been identified in an Audit Scotland report. It is important that DESG is not seen as free floating and has a mechanism to report to the CPP if necessary.

Ms Gayle Findlay provided an update on the CPP. A lot of work has happened within the CPP in the past 18 months. A new Single Outcome Agreement has been written and is in place. DESG stills sits within the CPP structures and it was recognised that there was a need to have somewhere to consult with regarding CPP matters, particularly with regard to the new Equality Act. **It was agreed** that it was essential that the CPP have support and expertise available to them and that DESG should be a resource available to the CPP to access information and resources to better understand our community and to assist with decision making. It was further noted that it would be helpful to have DESG input when completing EQIA's. It was also noted that it would be useful for the authorities to refer to DESG for assistance with the completion of EQIA's. **It was agreed** that a key role for DESG should be to support partners where appropriate regarding Equality matters.

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Membership of DESG	<p>It was noted that the current circulation list of DESG is too large for a group with this purpose. There are a number of people on the list who do not attend meetings. The group discussed who needs to be present at the meetings from a strategic and operational view. Mr Murdo Macleod will discuss with Calum Russell who is required to attend from NHSWI. The group also discussed how to get representation from other groups across the equality strands. It was agreed that it was not necessary to have representation from all strands at the meetings but that the lines of communication need to be opened up and groups need to know where they can report issues/concerns which they have. It should be open to the various groups to decide how they would like to participate. DESG needs to be smarter about how people can contribute to the meetings and representatives from Equality strands need to be confident that their views are being debated. Different models and structures were discussed which would allow DESG to consider both operational and strategic matters, this requires to be explored further when representatives from other groups get involved with DESG. It was noted that Faith groups have not yet been consulted. It was agreed that feedback would be sought from other authorities to establish how faith groups are represented although it was noted that the same issues are unlikely to be present in other areas. Further discussion is required to agree how Faith groups can be represented at DESG.</p>	<p>Murdo Macleod</p>
Remit of DESG	<p>It was noted that historically DESG had been given money from the CPP to complete projects. This has not happened for some time and there is no funding available. The group discussed the remit of DESG and it was agreed that it should be a strong lobbying group for Equality strands. The focus of the group should concentrate on being a voice of equality strands, a source of information for consultations and research, a hub of information where tools and resources can be shared to empower Equality groups. It is acknowledged that all areas will be fighting to keep existing budgets so there will be little funds available to undertake additional projects. It was agreed that the remit of DESG should largely be lobbying and representation for all Equality strands in the authority area.</p>	
DESG Chair	<p>It was noted that Chair of DESG was with NHSWI for 2011 although no meetings took place in that period. Mr Roddy Mackay, Northern Constabulary was nominated to chair meeting for 2012 but respectfully declined. It was agreed that Ms Lena Morrison would chair the meetings for 2012.</p>	<p>Lena Morrison</p>
Frequency of Meetings	<p>The frequency of meeting was discussed, it was agreed that DESG should meet on a quarterly basis. The possibility of having a Facebook page was also discussed, this would be a information source for Equality groups in the authority and a place of individuals to share information, concerns and issues, etc if the were unable to attend meetings. Ms Lena Morrison will circulate proposed dates and book meeting rooms for the 2012 meetings.</p>	<p>Lena Morrison</p>
Member updates	<p>Mr Roddy Mackay advised that the Northern Constabulary were getting ready to launch an 'Autism Alert Card' across the authority areas. It has already been launch in Highland with similar launches taking place in Orkney and Shetland. Murdo Macleod advised that a second 'Gender Based Violence' training course had been undertaken at the NHSWI.</p>	

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AOCB

Ms Norma Skinner advised that an Agenda point regarding Accessible Toilets within town centre had been forwarded and will be considered at the next meeting. Agenda points for the next meeting will be invited in due course.

Date of Next Meeting

To be confirmed.