

## Diversity and Equality Steering Group

Minute of Meeting  
held at Western Isles Hospital on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2009 at 14.00pm.

### Present

Norma Morrison	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Chairperson)
Iain MacKenzie	Voluntary Action Lewis
TK Shadakshari	NHS Western Isles
Gordon Thomas	Lewis Access Panel
Ludmila Macleod	Migrant Worker Project
Roddy MacKay	Northern Constabulary
Lena Morrison	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Carmen Morrison	Scottish Health Council
Jane Macleod	NHS Western Isles
Denise Symington	NHS Western Isles
Mandy Macleod	Crossreach

### Apologies

Helen Froud	Improvement Forum
Isobel MacKenzie	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Lucy Macdonald	Harris Access Panel
Alan Ross	Harris Access Panel
Donnie White	Lewis Access Panel
Martin Malcolm	NHS Western Isles
Calum Russell	NHS Western Isles
Karen France	NHS Western Isles

### Minutes

The Minutes of Meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> August 2009 were approved.

### Matters Arising

Roddy Mackay advised that he was waiting to hear from Lisa Buchanan regarding the costs of expanding the 'Hate Free Highlands' website which was discussed at the previous meeting to allow the Western Isles to also access and operate this service. Norma Morrison advised that she has spoken to Harry Miller (Head of Health and Consumer Services, CnES) regarding the availability of budgets. He agreed to look at this and depending on the views of the Community Safety Partnership take this forward as it makes sense to work together on this. Roddy Mackay agreed to raise it at the next Community Safety meeting.

## **Update from the Disability Equality Working Group**

The group was informed of the DEWG hadn't met for some time. NHS Western Isles had established a Property Strategy Group which had representatives from the Access Panels on it and positive progress had been made however it was acknowledged that this group did not cover the requirements for all agencies statutory requirements. Another DEWG meeting would be arranged in early course.

## **Update from the Race Equality Working Group**

The group was informed that the REWG met last Wednesday (21 October 2009) but there were no members from ethnic minority groups present. Graeme Miller (Learning Shop, CnES) attending the meeting and gave a background to the work undertaken and advised that he felt at this stage individuals from ethnic minority groups did not have the confidence to attend a working group at this stage. It was suggested to start the engagement process it would be better for officers to attend workshops held with a view to building a relationship and a means to identify issues that way. Graeme will discuss this with the ESOL worker and identify suitable groups of people to meet with to start the engagement process.

Derek Mackay (Democratic Services Manager, CnES) attended the meeting with a view to use the REWG to identify any problems with ethnic minority groups becoming involved the election process and ensuring that they were aware of the registration process and their right to vote. A discussion took place regarding the various aids and support that could be put in place to ensure their right to vote was enabled. Mr. Mackay is happy to attend further meeting and meet with other groups to discuss any potential problems with getting involved with the election process. The Access Panel could become involved in a review of the polling stations to be used.

**Action:** Lena to send Gordon Thomas a list of the polling stations used at the last election with a view to an Access Audit being complete. Mr Thomas advised that this could also form part of their Access Guide.

Norma advised the group that she had been visited by Audit Scotland this week (following a series of questionnaire and follow up meetings regarding the Race Equality Scheme). Work that has been completed to date has been shared with Councillors and Senior Officers. Audit Scotland are generally happy with the progress made but are looking for more actions to be completed to progress to be made faster. Also equality impact assessments are now in place and no reports/policies will go through to committee without the impact assessment process being completed.

## **Community Engagement**

A group discussion took place regarding Community Engagement and how to make it meaningful and so that all the agencies weren't doing it individually to capture the same information. It is difficult to get right but there are some good examples of complete work although it is always a challenge.

## **Disability Involvement**

This item was deferred as Calum Russell was unable to attend the meeting

## **Transgender Group**

Gordon Thomas advised that he and Helen Froud had a discussion regarding setting up a group as they had both made useful contacts and contacts with other agencies about work which had been undertaken with other organisations. A discussion took place regarding which equality strand this would work with as Transgender is currently part of LGBT and would there be enough involvement locally if the group was only for Transgender.

It was agreed to add this to the Action Plan and Gordon confirmed that he and Helen would be happy to take this group forward and provide more information at the next meeting. A useful contact for the group would be Isabel Steele within Health Promotion, NHS Western Isles.

## **Community Engagement**

A discussion took place regarding setting up a further group next year to meet another equality strand. The feeling was that within the Western isles there is already a small population to engage with. The individuals involved must feel that it's worthwhile and identify what they can gain from it. There needs to be information to offer them and which will be of benefit to them. It should not be engagement for engagements sake; people will only want to engage if they think something is going to happen.

Community Engagement within Community Planning is not operational at present, the post hasn't been replaced and there is no 'ring-fenced funding' to support community engagement. There is a comparably small population to engage with on a number of different issues – can quickly reach saturation point. The subject and associated documents need to be meaningful to local people and they can believe that things can be changed as a result of the engagement (e.g. employment, economic development, etc).

It was suggested that the steering group use existing strategies through community engagement, look at how it works and how we can use it. Need to focus on existing structures rather than adding to them. It was also noted that it was not healthy to single out minority groups, they are part of the existing community and by doing this we are not helping them integrate into the community. It was agreed that more use should be made of Community Councils, Public Partnership forums, etc, to engage meaningfully and it was noted that these groups are usually very welcoming to visitors attending their meetings.

It was also noted that we need to make use of and tap into information and resources that are available to us through employee surveys. Norma discussed using the Community Planning Information Group (CPIG) as a source to identify what information we hold, we don't hold, we need and information is hidden.

**Action:-** Jane Macleod to ask Martin Malcolm what is happening with CPIG.

## **Action Plan**

The Action plan was discussed and reviewed. Establishment of LGBT and Age working groups to be added to the action plan.

The group agreed to try to produce a quarterly news letter. All partners to contribute along articles provided by the community, this would be another opportunity to identify issues. It should also cover any training the partners have attended which would be beneficial. Short interesting snippets or links to useful websites.

## **Action – first news letter produced by Christmas**

### **AOCB**

The group was advised that the Access Panels have can apply for up to £2000 funding. If the application is successful the Lewis Access Panel plan to use the funds to update their website and work on an access guide based on Oban's access guide. The news letters can also be added to the website

The group was informed of a new law which came into force with effect from 1 October 2009 regarding Disabled parking. The essence of the law is about making all Disabled Parking Places enforceable, not just on highways but those on private land including supermarket car parks, church car parks. Etc. These disabled parking places will be subject to legal enforcement with a fixed penalty notice. There have been discussions about it as there are statutory implications.

**Action:** Lena to obtain more information from Sheekha Saha and Kenny MacIannan

### **Date of Next Meeting**

NHS Western Isles Hospital (Lecture Room)

2 December 2009

14.00pm.