

To: Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership Oversight Group

On: 20 May 2019

Report by:

Chief Executive, Renfrewshire Council

TITLE:

IS SCOTLAND FAIRER IN 2018? – REPORT BY THE EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This briefing note provides an overview of the “Is Scotland Fairer? 2018” report published by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission. The report provides an assessment of comparative “fairness” between different groups in key areas of life, such as work and health. The Commission has used the report to drive the development of its new strategic plan which was recently subject to consultation and was published in April 2019.
- 1.2 In 2017, the Our Renfrewshire – Community Plan was approved, with specific themes identified to tackle inequality and promote fairness. The publication of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission report provides an opportunity for community planning partners to review its focus and to identify potential additional areas for collective action.
- 1.3 Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership Executive Group considered at its meeting on 25 March 2019 a paper on the Is Scotland Fairer In 2018? report. The Executive Group agreed at this meeting to gather jointly at a local level information about comparative fairness. Community planning partners will then identify any actions additional to those already in the Our Renfrewshire Community Plan that can be taken forward collectively.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Renfrewshire Community Planning Oversight Group:
 - (a) Notes this summary of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission’s “Is Scotland Fairer?” report.
 - (b) Notes the action agreed by Renfrewshire Community Planning Executive Group to identify additional action to be taken forward collectively by community planning partners to tackle inequality and promote fairness.

3. OVERVIEW OF KEY FINDINGS

- 3.1 On 25 October 2018 the Equality and Human Rights Commission published the “Is Scotland Fairer? 2018” report, which is the Scottish supplement to the state of the nation report on equality and human rights covering England, Scotland and Wales – “Is Britain Fairer? 2018”.
- 3.2 The review sets out the direction of travel on equality and human rights issues made since the publication of the last review and covers what is termed as progress/regress against a number of areas including education, work, living standards, health, justice and participation.
- 3.3 In its summary the report indicates that there has been some evidence of progress but that this is slow, and in many cases is not consistent or widespread. It is the overall view of the Commission that:
- “The stark reality of inequality in Scotland today is that too often people are unable to realise their full potential, are excluded from positions of influence, and experience prejudice and discrimination in daily life.”*
- 3.4 The Commission also flags up that there remains a significant lack of equalities data on some critical issues about people who have or who share protected characteristics which limits the ability of the Commission to identify the scale and nature of the inequalities that exist.
- 3.5 In terms of the approach used, the ERHC gathered data and evidence based around six domains. The domains are: education, work, living standards, health, justice and personal security, and participation. Within each of these domains, a set of indicators or topics has been used, to assess progress or regress in “structure”, “process” and “outcome”. The structure relates to the law; the process to government policies; and the outcome to people’s experiences.

Key findings

- In **education**, subject choices continue to be gendered and girls continue to do better than boys. Gypsy Traveller children do worse and are more likely to be excluded from school. Boys, disabled children and children with additional support needs are also more likely to be excluded. Disabled young people are twice as likely to be not in education, employment or training, than non-disabled young people.
- In the world of **work**, disabled people were less likely to be in employment and more likely to be unemployed. Women were less likely than men to be in employment and more likely to be in part-time work. Young women were most likely to be unemployed and many were in insecure jobs. Women continued to experience sexual harassment and discrimination related to pregnancy and maternity in the workplace.

- In terms of **income**, women continued to earn less than men on average, and the gender pay gap changed very little in recent years. Disabled people continued to earn less than non-disabled people, and the disability pay gap widened. Women, young people aged 18-24, disabled people, black people and those in the “Other White” (this tends to be those who don’t identify as British or Scottish) ethnic group were more likely to be in low-paid work. Women continued to be under-represented in senior positions, even where women accounted for the majority of the workforce, such as education and health. Women, people from ethnic minority groups and disabled people remained underrepresented in Modern Apprenticeships. Reflecting the labour market, Modern Apprenticeships continued to show strong gender segregation within sectors.
- The number of adults and children living in **poverty** after housing costs increased. The number of adults and children being referred to a Trussell Trust Foodbank increased. Wealth inequality increased, with single-adult households accounting for the majority of those living in low-wealth households. Fuel poverty decreased, but roughly a third of people still experienced it. A wide range of people were affected by poverty: disabled people, people with mental health conditions and people from ethnic minority groups were more likely to live in poverty. Most children living in poverty were from working households. Women and disabled people were more likely to experience severe material deprivation.
- Experiences of **care** varied considerably. Most people who received formal help and support rated this as good and said they were treated with compassion and understanding. Despite the implementation of Self-Directed Support, many people were not aware of their options, and were not always given choice and control. The overall number of guardianship orders increased. The percentage of new guardianship orders granted on an indefinite basis continued to fall.
- Women, people from ethnic minority groups and disabled people continued to be **under-represented** in all areas of public life, including in the Scottish Parliament. While there was improvement in the proportion of women on public boards, the proportion of disabled people on public boards fell.
- Lack of **access** to affordable transport options negatively affected access to other essential services and employment. Older and disabled people, and those living in a deprived area or living in social housing were risk factors for exclusion from digital services. People living in poverty were less likely to have a bank account and more likely to pay more for essential goods and services. Attendance at cultural events (including attending a cinema, library, museum, theatre or historical place) was much lower for people with a long-term physical or mental health condition, those with no qualifications and those living in the most deprived areas. Disabled people and LGBT people reported that they continued to feel discriminated against while participating in sport or attending sporting events.

- Young people, single people, people from ethnic minority groups and people from urban areas reported lower levels of trust and belonging in their **neighbourhood**. Disabled people were less likely to say most people in their neighbourhood could be trusted. Most people had positive attitudes towards young people. Less than half of young LGBT people said that there were enough places where they could socialise safely and be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity.

4. What is next for the Equalities and Human Rights Commission?

4.1 The data from “Is Scotland Fairer?” has been used to inform the EHRC’s Strategic Plan 2019-22. The draft includes 3 strategic goals, with priority aims sitting below each strategic goal. These are:

1. To advance the conditions for a more equal and rights-respecting Britain

- People are better able to seek redress when they are wronged and people have a fair trial in the criminal justice system.
- Ways to tackle prejudice are better understood and good systems are promoted, particularly through the education system.
- New technologies and digital services promote equality and human rights.

2. To remove the barriers to opportunity, so that people’s life chances are transformed

- Public transport and the built environment are accessible to disabled and older people so as to support their economic and social inclusion.
- Access to essential public services is improved for particularly disadvantaged groups.
- People in Britain have equal access to the labour market and are treated fairly at work.
- The social security system is fair and operates without discrimination.

3. To protect the rights of people in the most vulnerable situations

- Improved rules governing entry into detention and conditions in institutions.
- Public bodies with responsibility for addressing violence against women and girls comply with equality and human rights requirements.

4.2 The Equality and Human Rights Strategic Plan was launched in April 2019 and indicates potential future activities and what success would look like.

5. What's next in terms of promoting greater fairness in Renfrewshire

5.1 In 2017, the Our Renfrewshire – Community Plan was approved, with specific themes identified to tackle inequality and promote fairness. The publication of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission report provides an opportunity for community planning partners to review its focus and to identify potential issues for targeted action.

5.2 Specifically:

Our Priorities:

- Our Renfrewshire is thriving: Maximising economic growth, which is inclusive and sustainable
- Our Renfrewshire is well: Supporting the wellness and resilience of our citizens and communities
- Our Renfrewshire is fair: Addressing the inequalities which limit life chances
- Our Renfrewshire is safe: Protecting vulnerable people, and working together to manage the risk of harm

5.3 In terms of **Renfrewshire is fair**, the following specific priorities are identified in the Community Plan:

Our Priorities

- Ensuring our children get the best possible start in life.
- Addressing the poverty related attainment gap, and young people can achieve success after school
- Identifying people's needs early, by sharing information and working together
- Tackling health inequalities and narrowing the gaps in healthy life expectancy
- Reducing drug and alcohol misuse in our communities
- Ensure that people currently facing disadvantage get access to opportunities to improve their health, skills and income

5.4 In terms of progress against this theme, the Year 1 annual report approved in September 2018 by the Executive Group, noted positive progress in relation to:

- Attainment and the poverty related attainment gap
- The impact of the continued delivery of the Tackling Poverty Programme
- Alcohol and drugs identified as a key area of concern

- Early years expansion programme
- Partnership work in relation to supporting young carers
- Increased levels of volunteering
- Year of Young People programme

5.5 In terms of next steps, it is suggested that similar to the national position, we are not yet able to compare or assess Renfrewshire against the report, its findings and recommendations with limited overall Renfrewshire wide data in terms of the protected characteristics. Partner organisations will collect both internal and external equalities data, and it is suggested that a mapping exercise is undertaken to bring this data together with related key priorities, and to report an overall picture for Renfrewshire. This will assist in terms of identifying priority groups or activities which the Executive Group may wish to progress.

5.6 As members of the group will be aware, an Improving Life Chances Group was established within community planning governance structures in 2018. The group has developed an initial programme of work, however future identified areas for collective focus could be remitted to this group for exploration.

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