

AGM Report 2020

Equality Committee

5. Equality Committee

Introduction

- 5.1 The Equality Committee is responsible for the development of the equality policies of the EIS and the promotion of these policies in educational establishments in Scotland. The Committee is also responsible for the formulation of EIS responses to equality initiatives from a wide range of stakeholders including national and local government, third sector organisations, and educational bodies. Further, the Committee oversees and supports the development of the Equality Representatives' Network and oversees EIS participation in a series of STUC Equality Conferences throughout the year.
- 5.2 The Committee is advised and assisted by two sub-committees and two working groups. These are the Gender Issues Working Group, the Anti-Racist Sub Committee, the LGBT Sub Committee and the Poverty Campaign Working Group. These committees and groups are intended to meet regularly throughout the year, with the exception of the Poverty Campaign Working Group, as this serves as a 'virtual working group' with email communications between meetings, as needed.
- 5.3 There have been four meetings of the Equality Committee since the 2019 AGM. In addition to the work outlined above, the processing of AGM resolutions is a large part of the work of the Committee, alongside responding to the many developments that arise in the course of the year. A summary of actions and outcomes arising from AGM 2019 resolutions accompanies this report.

Cross-cutting Issues

- 5.4 The EIS considered its current guidance on Bullying and Harassment and, after consultation between the Equality Committee and the Employment Relations Department, the updated advice was approved by Council.
- 5.5 The Committee expressed its disappointment within Education Scotland's Diversity and Equality Network, in relation to the continuing inadequate provision of pedagogical support in delivering anti-racist education and it was agreed that EIS officials and Office Bearers would continue to raise this in the appropriate quarters.
- 5.6 The EIS sent representatives to an evening reception to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Mental Health Foundation Scotland. This was to support their Make it Count campaign, to ensure that every child in Scotland receives an education with a strong focus on mental health.

- 5.7 The Committee approved the attendance of the General Secretary and President at Education International Holocaust Remembrance Event & Conference to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp.
- 5.8 The Committee received a presentation from two members of the Maryhill Integration Network, Pinar Aksu and Rose Filippi. The project, a storybook telling the story of refugee children (represented as birds) arriving in Scotland and related teaching material, fitted well with the current work of the EIS, namely our recently published Welcome Packs. The Committee agreed to support the project in terms of promotion, related professional learning for teachers in the use of the resource and potentially a financial donation.
- 5.9 The Committee agreed that the topic for the 2020 AGM Equality Fringe Meeting would be the growth of the Far Right and the impact this is having on young people, with various channels for this being looked at, including social media. It is hoped that these plans can be revisited in the future.

STUC Equality Activity

- 5.10 As is customary, the Committee oversaw EIS engagement with the four STUC Equality Committees, which seek to promote equality for Women, Black Workers, LGBT+ Workers and Disabled Workers. The Committee also oversaw EIS lay members' participation in delegations to the three STUC Equality Conferences that were able to be held throughout the year; and received regular reports on STUC equality work from our Committee representatives.

The Committee was informed of a discussion and subsequent decision at the June meeting of Executive Committee to seek to expand EIS delegations to STUC Conferences, including the Equality Conferences. With this in mind, the Committee has succeeded in recruiting larger delegations to all STUC Equality Conferences this (with the exception of the LGBT Workers' Conference, which was cancelled as a result of COVID-19) and in including the Conveners of the two Sub Committees within the EIS delegation to STUC Congress which will take place later in the year, public health advice permitting.

Impact of Poverty on Education

- 5.11 Highlighting the impact of poverty on education continues to be a core part of the work of the EIS. The EIS Poverty Survey was launched at the EIS Equality Fringe at AGM in June. In order to maximise the number of responses, the survey was kept open until 18 October 2020.
- 5.12 The Survey indicated that teachers are seeing increased evidence across a range of indicators of the impact of poverty amongst the children and young people whom they teach. Work was undertaken by the EIS Policy, Research

and Campaigns Co-ordinator to group the findings into key themes, including health and wellbeing, clothing and equipment, participation in instrumental music tuition, parental engagement, funding, interventions and access to support.

- 5.13 The Committee considered draft EIS advice on homework, giving some initial thoughts on the content and suggesting further points for inclusion in the final document. This document is a work in progress and there will be further opportunity for the Committee to contribute to it.
- 5.14 As is customary, the EIS undertook work to mark Challenge Poverty Week 2019. This work included an article in the SEJ; social media activity; a press release highlighting the work of the PACT Project which coincided with the UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty; and an interview with Bill Scott, Chair of the Poverty and Inequality Commission. A short film of the interview was made available on the EIS website and was the subject of an SEJ article. The EIS continues to work closely with the Poverty and Inequality Commission.
- 5.15 Assistant Secretary Bradley met with Lindsay Graham, the Poverty & Inequality Commissioner at Poverty & Inequality Commission Scotland whose expertise is food and nutrition. This meeting focused on the work of the EIS in relation to the Impact of Poverty in Education campaign generally, and more specifically on our campaigning intentions around the provision of free school meals and breakfast clubs, responsibility for which has been remitted to the Committee from Executive. The Assistant Secretary was subsequently invited to join the Commission's Free School Meals Working Group which is in the early stages of its work.

As part of its campaigning in this area, the Committee agreed to Associate Sponsor status at the Children's Right2Food Conference in Dundee, scheduled to take place on the 29th of April, though now postponed until public health advice determines it safe to hold large events. As part of the sponsorship package, the EIS will be included within the list of speakers within the conference programme which will also feature contributions from the Food Ambassador for the Children's Future Food Inquiry, Dame Emma Thompson; Philip Alston, the UN Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur; Dr João Breda from the World Health Organization; and Children and Young People's Commissioner in Scotland, Bruce Adamson.

- 5.16 The EIS PACT project funded by the Scottish Government has made good progress in preparing a programme of professional learning for teachers examining the nature, causes and consequences of poverty, with particular focus on how it impacts on education and how its effects can in some part be mitigated by schools. The pilot phase of the Project is currently on hold as a result of the pandemic though work on the Project continues, including the writing of new content to take account of COVID-19 and planning of alternative models of delivery to take account of social distancing and the blended learning contexts.

Gender Equality Issues

- 5.17 Updated EIS guidance on Violence Against Women, produced in response to a 2019 AGM resolution, was launched to commemorate International Women's Day in March 2020.
- 5.18 The EIS continues to participate in the Circle Meetings for the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls. The Committee noted various briefing materials issued by this group. A meeting took place on the 29th of January to launch the report and recommendations on the group's work from the previous year.
- 5.19 The EIS responded to the Scottish Government's call for views on proposed legislation to tackle Female Genital Mutilation. Assistant Secretary Bradley also gave oral evidence at the Scottish Parliament's Equality and Human Rights Committee in October.
- 5.20 The expanded EIS delegation to the STUC Women's Conference in October was active across many areas of the debate, successfully moving the two motions that the Committee had submitted on Mitigating the Impact of Child Poverty in Education and Child Poverty and Additional Support Needs, as well seconding and supporting numerous others since the key conference theme was child poverty. Assistant Secretary Andrea Bradley was elected to represent the EIS on the STUC Women's Committee for 2019-20.
- 5.21 Assistant Secretary Bradley, as one of the Vice-Chairs, attended the STUC Women's Committee Strategy Day in December. The Committee will continue to engage with the majority of the areas being prioritised within this year's Women's Committee workplan.
- 5.22 For International Women's Day this year a short film was produced focusing on the history of female activists within the EIS. A condensed version was launched at March Council and made available via our social media channels, with the full version intended to have been shown at this year's AGM. This will accompany a larger, written piece of work to be published at a later date.
- 5.23 St Andrew's Day this year saw the "We've got the Empowerment: Leadership Learning to Empower Female Trade Unionists" event held at the Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow. Despite the clash with the St Andrew's Day March (unavoidable due to availability of keynote speakers) the event had a strong turnout of approximately 55 members. Social media engagement was very high throughout the day and feedback from attendees was very positive. The Committee agreed that certain aspects of the day will influence future professional learning events.

Race Equality Issues

- 5.24 An increased EIS delegation of twelve members attended the STUC Black Workers' Conference in October. The EIS successfully moved two motions, one on Countering anti-Muslim Prejudice and the other on BME Women in

the Labour Market, in addition to speaking in debates covering other key areas of EIS policy interest on race equality.

- 5.25 The Committee agreed to mark Black History Month by inviting Professor Geoff Palmer to deliver a talk to members at EIS HQ on the links between the Edinburgh New Town and the slave trade, and on how we can learn from history in developing our anti-racist work for the future. The talk took place on the evening of 30 October 2020 at EIS HQ, Moray Place, and the lecture was filmed and made available on the EIS website. The lecture was well-attended and those in attendance found it a powerful and positive experience.
- 5.26 The EIS held an event at Hillhead High School in Glasgow to launch our suite of Welcome Packs created for migrant and refugee young people who have recently arrived in Scotland into new school communities. The event was chaired by the Convener who opened with a welcome to around 50 attendees from GTCS, ADES, local authorities, EAL staff, EIS local associations, the Glasgow Girls Campaigners, artist Jamie Squire, and EIS staff who had worked on the Welcome Packs. Euan Girvan, former EAL teacher of the Glasgow Girls at Drumchapel High School and career-long EIS member, then treated the audience to a performance of his recently authored 'The Tale O' the Glasgow Girls', a narrative poem written in Scots.

The Equality Department had previously established contacts within all 32 local authorities who agreed to assist the distribution of the Welcome Packs and supplementary materials including books and stationery were provided in the packs. EIS staff then coordinated the mass collation of the packs at EIS HQ before arranging bulk deliveries amounting to 4,000 packs in total for distribution to children and young people across all 32 local authorities.

- 5.27 In addition to providing a translation mechanism on the EIS website for the booklets, the Committee arranged for the Welcome Packs to be translated professionally into 3 main languages spoken by young people who are newly arrived in Scotland (Arabic, French and Polish).
- 5.28 As is customary, the EIS was present at the St Andrew's Day Anti-Racism March and Rally which took place in Glasgow on Saturday 30th November. The theme for this year was 'Disrupt, Dismantle, Defy Racism'. Despite the extremely cold weather and transport disruptions, there was a strong turn out from EIS members, with various LA banners featuring prominently in the media from the day. The lightweight flags we purchased proved a success amongst those attending the march and we will explore the possibility of using these at other events in the future. EIS members from the north east participated in the parallel STUC Anti-Racist March and Rally in Aberdeen.
- 5.29 The EIS participated in the launch event for the Scottish BME Mentoring Network. This was attended by more the 60 BME teachers and lecturers from across Scotland, with a significant representation by Institute members. In order to maximise a strong presence at the event, the EIS covered expenses for those members situated beyond the Central Belt who

were interested in attending. The EIS continues to engage with the Network and is exploring possibilities around further support and joint working.

- 5.30 The SATEAL conference was scheduled to take place on the 21st of March in Edinburgh, and the EIS was asked to deliver a keynote address at this focusing on the Welcome Packs.
- 5.31 The EIS received a request from Show Racism the Red Card for sponsorship of a short film on Challenging Racism in the Workplace. The Committee agreed to sponsor the film with an amount of £1,000. The film featuring contributions from EIS Organiser Suki Sangha was launched on 15 May 2020 was promoted via the EIS Twitter age to maximise engagement and will be used as appropriate at future race equality events.
- 5.32 The EIS surveyed BME members to inform the response to the Equality and Human Rights Commission Call for Views on Race Equality, Employment and Skills, which investigates what is being done for race equality in employment, and what remains to be done, in Scotland.

LGBT Equality Issues

- 5.33 The EIS participated locally in various Pride events which had taken place around the country over the summer period. Concerns with Glasgow Pride were noted and it was agreed to monitor the situation in regard to this in future.
- 5.34 The Committee noted the statement from Cabinet Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville on the Gender Recognition Act, intimating the Scottish Government's intention to publish and consult upon a draft Gender Recognition Bill later this year. This was discussed further at the LGBT Sub Committee and Gender Issues Working Group. The EIS continued to engage with the process, as we did with the initial consultation, most recently submitting a response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the amended Bill.
- 5.35 As is customary, the EIS sent a delegation to the STUC LGBT Workers' Conference in May of last year. EIS delegates spoke on a number of motions, including the Institute's own motions on Early Career Stages and Fair Work. EIS member, Steven Sorley, was elected to the STUC LGBT Workers' Committee.
- 5.36 The Committee continues to be represented on the Scottish Government's LGBTI Inclusive Education Implementation Group by Joan Lennon. This group has created Risk Register which identifies issues which may impact its work adversely, such as anti-trans narratives, the current status of the proposed Gender Recognition Act, school protests and Brexit.
- 5.37 The Committee submitted two motions to the STUC LGBT Workers' Conference that had been scheduled to be held in May 2020, on the themes of the Conference as a Networking and Learning Forum and Support for

LGBT+ Inclusive Education. In line with recent STUC conferences, we had planned to increase the size of our attendance, in this case to 11 members.

- 5.38 The Committee noted that both Boris Pichotka and Dawn Wilson are representing the EIS on the Scottish Government's Working Group on Supporting Transgender Pupils in Schools. Boris and Dawn will alternate attendance at the meetings, with Boris attending the first meeting which took place on the 3rd of December.
- 5.39 The EIS organised the 'Taking Pride in Teaching LGBT+ Young People': LGBT inclusive education event which had taken place at HQ on the 25th of January. There were a number of positives from the event with attendees feeling that in particular the opportunity to have practical discussions and share their views and experiences was very valuable.

Disability Equality Issues

- 5.40 The EIS submitted two motions to the STUC Disabled Workers' Conference on the issues of British Sign Language and Additional Support for Learning. The EIS sent a delegation of 6 members to the Conference, and Assistant Secretary Bradley attended in her capacity as the Servicing Official. The Conference proved to be a useful and engaging event, with the almost all of the EIS delegation speaking on a variety motions.
- 5.41 The Committee noted reports from Julie Ferguson, who represents the EIS on the STUC Disabled Workers' Committee. These contained updates on a range of issues including the menopause, the possible impact of Brexit on supplies of medication and any ensuing reasonable adjustments which may be required and a Twitter campaign on homecare packages and hospital stays. The reports also indicate that consideration is being given to the impact on disabled people of both the temporary and permanent relocation of the STUC over the next year. The Committee extended its congratulations to Julie Ferguson who was appointed as Chair of the STUC Disabled Workers Committee.
- 5.42 In relation to work emanating from the 2019 AGM Resolution pertaining to Education in the BSL Medium, the Committee noted that a number of meetings with partners have taken place and this dialogue is still ongoing, principally around developing awareness-raising professional learning opportunities for EIS members on the issues related to the education of deaf young people.

Equality Representatives

- 5.43 The Committee oversaw the continued development of the Institute's cadre of Equality Representatives. Twelve members completed their Stage 1 training, and two days of Stage 2 training took place on 31 January and 13 March 2020. It should be noted that members who are interested in becoming Equality Reps continue to face challenges in securing release from school in order to attend these courses.

COVID-19 Activity

- 5.44 During the lockdown, the Equality Department developed an online Equality Taster Training module covering the Equality Act and the responsibilities of education providers. This will be trialled with EIS staff before launching with members.
- 5.45 The National Officer, Equality discussed the issue of domestic abuse with colleagues in Scottish Women's Aid for the purposes of an article featured in the online May SEJ. The piece focused on the impact of lockdown on women, children and young people experiencing domestic abuse, and how teachers can spot the signs among children and colleagues. Social media being used to amplify the message about domestic abuse in lockdown, and the issue, has been included in EIS WaH guidance.
- 5.46 At the time of writing, the Equality Department is compiling a response to the Equality and Human Rights Committee's Call for Views on the Equality impact of COVID-19 and lockdown, stressing the importance of specific advice around protection of BME teachers, who are at higher risk during the pandemic. Currently there are also plans to host a webinar exploring the equality impact of COVID-19 in further detail, focusing in particular on the impact on education.
- 5.47 During the COVID-19 Lockdown, the EIS published guidance on supporting LGBT learners at home during lockdown with tips for affirming and inclusive virtual teaching.
- 5.48 In response to the cancellation of Pride celebrations in the summer, the Equality Department has also planned an online Pride Event commemorating the 20 years since the Repeal of Section 28 in Scotland, due to be held in mid-June.

Conclusion

- 5.49 Thanks to the members of the Equality Committee and to the staff of the Equality Department for all their work in the course of the year and especially to those members of the Equality Committee who are standing down at the AGM.
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AGM 2019 Resolutions

Summary of Action Taken/Outcomes

EQUALITY COMMITTEE

<u>Title of Resolution</u>	<u>Action Taken/Outcomes</u>
<p>1. Bullying & Harassment: Advice</p> <p>“That this AGM instruct Council to arrange for a revision of the publication “Bullying and Harassment”, published December 2012, with a view to updating the policies and advice to members and representatives to more closely match current challenges, including but not limited to those arising from changes in management structures and crises in recruitment and retention.”</p>	<p>Recommendation: Equality (lead)/Employment Relations</p> <p>Equality Committee reviewed current advice, identifying omissions, useful content, sections for updating, etc.</p> <p>Anti-Racist Sub-Committee, Gender Issues Working Group, LGBT Sub-Committee and the STUC Disabled Workers’ Conference delegation advised on possible content of new advice.</p> <p>Included preamble on current context in education system.</p> <p>Forwarded advice to Employment Relations dept. for comment.</p> <p>Equality Committee has considered draft advice with powers given to Officials to finalise before submission to Council.</p> <p>New advice approved by Council at its meeting on 24 January 2020.</p>
<p>2. Education in the BSL-medium</p> <p>“That this AGM instruct Council to support Deaf students in schools, further education and higher education by asking EIS to campaign for:</p> <p>(a) education in the BSL-medium to be provided on a wider availability,</p>	<p>Recommendation: Equality (lead)/Education</p> <p>Proposed a motion on BSL education at 2019 STUC Disabled Workers’ Conference.</p> <p>Scoped out organisations working towards Deaf equality/BSL use etc.</p>

<p>(b) including BSL-medium exams and SQA exams in BSL as a subject;</p> <p>(c) training for teachers and lecturers to support the improvement of educational outcomes for Deaf students;</p> <p>(d) maintaining the inclusion of deaf units based in mainstream schools;</p> <p>(e) maintain schools for the Deaf; and</p> <p>(f) recruitment of new teachers and lecturers with BSL knowledge, more in-service training of current teachers and lecturers, and recruitment of Deaf teachers and lecturers."</p>	<p>Convened a meeting to explore all of the issues raised in the resolution with appropriate specialist partner organisations; and develop further campaigning actions or CPD provision as appropriate following those discussions.</p> <p>To be raised as appropriate with DFM in ongoing discussions about ASL provision.</p> <p>Consulted with ASN Network.</p> <p>Being incorporated as appropriate into press statements, consultation responses, SEJ items, etc.</p> <p>Raised with Education Scotland.</p> <p>Raised with SQA, through liaison meetings and through Equality and Inclusion Key Partners Group.</p> <p>For future consultation with FELA and ULA Education and Equality Committees.</p>
<p>3. Violence Against Women</p> <p>"That this AGM instruct Council to update our guidance on violence against women in line with the Scottish Government's "Equally Safe" policy and the 2018 Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill."</p>	<p>Recommendation: Equality</p> <p>Examined scope of Equally Safe policy.</p> <p>Examined scope and content of new Domestic Abuse legislation.</p> <p>Used the information gathered to review and redraft the current EIS guidance.</p> <p>Sought input from Equality Committee and from Gender Issues Working Group, with powers given to Officials to finalise.</p> <p>Sought external advice and support from partner organisations as needed.</p>

	<p>New advice approved by Council at its meeting on 24 January 2020.</p>
<p>4. LGBTI Inclusive Education</p> <p>“That this AGM welcome the publication of Scottish Government guidance on LGBTI inclusive education and resolve to work with the TIE campaign to seek that it is fully implemented in every school in Scotland.”</p>	<p>Recommendation: Equality</p> <p>Continuing to participate in the Scottish Government LGBTI Inclusive Education Implementation Group.</p> <p>Offered courses on issues facing Trans/Non Binary learners through SUL-funded CPD, to build members’ capacity to support inclusive education.</p> <p>Held a professional learning event – ‘Taking Pride in Teaching LGBT+ Young People’ on LGBT inclusive education with a range of partners including Education Scotland, LGBT Youth Scotland, Stonewall and TIE on 25 January 2020 at EIS HQ.</p> <p>Webinar planned for mid-June to coincide with beginning of Pride celebrations and to include a focus on LGBTI inclusive education.</p>
