



Sharing our learning:
**Children in Scotland's Equality and
Diversity Commitment**
Focusing on race equality
2020-2022

March 2023





Introduction

This report will provide you with an insight into how we, as an organisation, worked to address key issues linked to race equality between 2020-2022.

Aligned with the priority in our Strategic Plan to ‘*Lead and develop the children’s sector workforce,*’ and our value of being ‘*Open and fair,*’ we are keen to share our learning with the wider children’s sector in Scotland (and beyond). We hope it will provide some pointers as to how others could also focus on equality, diversity and inclusion issues in their own organisation.

Acknowledging another of our values, that of being ‘*Collaborative,*’ the work was only possible with commitment and enthusiasm from Children in Scotland staff, our Board and Changing our World (our children and young people’s advisory group). But crucially, it was working in partnership with experts across the sector, including **CEMVO Scotland**, **West of Scotland Regional Equality Council (WSREC)** and **Intercultural Youth Scotland**, that enabled us to start making meaningful change.

It is important to note that this report was produced primarily as an internal document and written with that in mind. However, we believe it could be a useful resource for other organisations and are sharing it externally in that spirit. It has a number of sections including:

1. Background to the Equalities & Diversity (Ethnic Minorities) Working Group
2. Our programme of work
3. Key learning
4. Working Group recommendations on next steps.



Background to the Equalities & Diversity (Ethnic Minorities) Working Group

Children in Scotland has ‘*Challenging Inequalities*’ as one of five key priority areas in our Strategic Plan 2017-2023. Over the years we have established several cross-organisational working groups to support organisational development in this area, including the Challenging Inequalities Through Food (CITF) Working Group and LGBT Champions Group.

Following securing the LGBT Charter of Rights accreditation in 2019 and the end of the CITF group in 2020, it was agreed that our next organisational focus should be race inequalities. At that time the Black Lives Matter movement had a high public profile following the death of George Floyd and many organisations were exploring their commitment to race equality and anti-racism. Children in Scotland was also about to embark on our Diversity in Teaching project, through which we would generate considerable organisational learning.

We recognised that a focus on race equality within Children in Scotland was overdue, needed to be meaningful and result in lasting change. A cross-organisational working group was established in July 2020, representing all departments across the organisation and staff in different roles and at different levels.



Between July 2020 and September 2022, the group met 13 times, predominantly online with representatives from all parts of the organisation involved.

Our programme of work

1. Set up phase

We undertook an initial scoping exercise and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis to establish a starting point for our work. A Project Initiation Document was produced. We engaged the support of CEMVO Scotland who met with us and helped us to identify some important building blocks that needed to be in place. These included:

- Strategic buy-in
- Data gathering and analysis
- Prioritising activity.

An action plan was developed, including actions within each team and department.

2. Race Equality Statement

Following CEMVO's advice we developed an organisational **Race Equality Statement** that included five pledges where Children in Scotland was committed to make change. Draft pledges were shared and discussed with Children in Scotland staff and Changing our World members in March 2021. The statement was also reviewed by CEMVO Scotland.

The statement, including the pledges was approved by the Children in Scotland Board in April 2021. Since their formal adoption, these five pledges have formed the basis of our work plan.

Our five organisational pledges:

1. We will review and, where necessary, improve all policies and processes to support continuous good practice in promoting racial equality and inclusion.
2. We will take positive action steps to improve representation from ethnic minority groups on the Board, senior leadership, staff, volunteers, members and service users including children and young people.
3. We will engage with ethnic minority communities to review our work regularly and remove barriers which might prevent access to our projects and services.
4. We will provide suitable race equality training and support to the Board, staff and volunteers to implement our action plan.
5. We will continue to improve race equality through learning and working in partnership / collaboration with experts. In return, we will share our own learning and experiences openly and honestly with others.



We launched our Race Equality statement publicly in September 2021 accompanied by a **blog** outlining our organisational approach.

3. Activity against each pledge



PLEDGE ONE: Policies and procedures

A key focus for our work towards pledge one was reviewing and seeking to improve our **recruitment policies and procedures**.

Led by Central Services, this work included the following activities:

- Reviewing and revising where Children in Scotland staff vacancies are advertised to increase awareness of these vacancies across different populations in Scotland. We have trialled (and continue to do so) advertising vacancies with various ethnic minority organisation networks including BEMIS, SCoJeC, CEMVO's Equal Jobs Board, LGBT Youth Scotland, WSREC, Scottish Refugee Council, Skills Development Scotland, Campaign for Racial Equality and Rights, Positive Action in Housing, Ethnic Minority National Resilience Network.
- Introducing the following diversity statement on the 'work with us' page on our website:

Children in Scotland values the contribution made by all members of staff, whatever their background. Our recruitment decisions are based on fair, open processes, with appointment on merit. We welcome applications from everyone.

Recruitment policies and procedures: next steps

- We will continue to advertise jobs in diverse locations. Over time we anticipate these changes will help to encourage more applicants from ethnic minority communities. We will measure this through yearly analysis of equalities monitoring forms completed by applicants (see pledge 2 below). This action will be owned by **Central Services**.

Alongside work on recruitment policies and procedures, we sought to introduce the use of **Equalities Impact Assessments (EQIA)** into our work. A trial EQIA was undertaken for our Scottish Government *Children, Young People, Families and Adult Learning Third Sector Fund* application, based on the Scottish Parliament's EQIA template.

It was felt that while providing a helpful focus, this was too long, repetitive and bureaucratic for our purposes.

Equalities Impact Assessments: next steps

- We will seek to identify / develop a shorter, more accessible EQIA template to embed within our project management approach. This action will be owned by the Children in Scotland Project Management Group.
- We will complete an EQIA on key organisational documents at the development stage, including strategic plans, organisational policies and procedures. This action will be owned by the member of staff tasked with leading the production of each document.



PLEDGE TWO: Representation

Following CEMVO's advice we implemented a range of measures to gather evidence about representation across our staff team, Board, members, communication activities, Changing our World, our children and young people's advisory group, and wider engagement work with children and young people. This was done to establish a baseline and greater understanding of the nature and extent of representation across different parts of the organisation. We have chosen, up to this point, not to set any specific targets or goals in relation to representation.

Equalities monitoring

Through discussions within the working group, we recognised that there are many approaches to equalities monitoring and there is no definitive approach recommended, as each has its own plus and minus points. After some trialling of different forms, we settled on an **open text self-identifying approach**. While this approach makes analysis more time intensive, it was viewed as the most flexible, inclusive and person-centred method.

We also recognised that administering equalities monitoring forms across all of our work, while potentially helpful for us, could be labour intensive to complete and potentially intrusive for people when we were only having limited engagement with them. We agreed that a **proportionate approach** was best, focusing on staff, board and those volunteers (including children and young people) that we have longer-term relationships with. Some other proxy measures were also identified that could help indicate reach across our wider project and service activity.

Specific equalities monitoring activity included:

- An Equalities Monitoring Survey was distributed to all Children in Scotland **staff** and **Board members** in September 2021.
- Equalities Monitoring forms were distributed to all **individuals applying for jobs** in Children in Scotland.
- An Equalities Monitoring Survey was distributed to all **Changing our World** members in October 2021.
- A proxy measure (% of pupils from an ethnic minority background) was used with the 12 **schools** we worked with between April 2021 and September 2022.
- Two proxy measures (Proportion of children discussed in helpline enquiries where English is an Additional Language / Number of enquirers to telephone helpline who use Language Line translation service) were introduced into the **Enquire** advice service in April 2021.

Equalities Monitoring: next steps

- We will readminister the staff, board and Changing our World Equalities Monitoring Surveys in 2023. This action will be owned by **Central Services (staff and Board) and Policy, Projects & Participation (Changing our World)**.
- We will continue to distribute Equalities Monitoring forms to everyone applying for jobs at Children in Scotland. This action will be owned by **Central Services**.

- We will administer Equalities Monitoring forms to children and young people taking part in longer-term (6+ month) projects and use proxy measures for other projects where appropriate. This action will be owned by **Policy, Projects & Participation**. We will introduce an Equalities Monitoring approach into the Enquire helpline and continue to monitor English as an Additional Language calls. This action will be owned by **Enquire**.
- We will administer an Equalities Monitoring Survey to all Children in Scotland trainers within our events programme. This action will be owned by **Learning & Events**.
- We will consider whether it's appropriate to set targets or goals relating to representation across different parts of the organisation. This action will be owned by the **Leadership Team**.

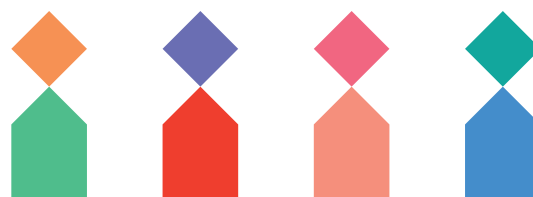
Representation through Membership and Communications

In addition to equalities monitoring surveys, we brought in a range of other representation measures covering our membership and communications activities. These included:

- Analysis of the diversity of Children in Scotland's **membership** undertaken quarterly from April 2022.
- **Enquire** introduced a range of representation measures across its communication service in 2021, including: the number of engagements with ethnic minority groups and partners; number of contributions to our websites and communications outputs by and/or focused on people from ethnic minority backgrounds; proportion of images on Reach and Enquire websites of children and families from ethnic minority backgrounds, and the number of people from ethnic minorities who participate at a strategic level in key projects.
- Communications introduced a range of measures across its outputs in 2021 including: number / proportion of Communications outputs primarily focused on ethnic minority groups or issues; number / proportion of ethnic minority partners and groups Communications is working with, and the proportion of diverse images, photos, illustrations, etc that represent ethnic minority groups in Scotland.

Membership and Communications representation: next steps

- We will continue to monitor Children in Scotland membership for its diversity. This action will be owned by the **Membership Team**.
- We will continue to monitor representation across our communications activities. This action will be owned by the **Communications Team and Enquire Team**.



 **PLEDGE THREE: Reviewing our work and reviewing barriers**

Throughout the lifetime of the working group, we have engaged with a number of ethnic minority organisations (most notably CEMVO and WSREC) that have supported our work and helped us to identify and address barriers.

Our annual Having Your Say staff survey includes questions on diversity (not just relating to race). These have developed and strengthened over time. In the 2022 survey the questions on diversity were as follows:

Diversity in Children in Scotland

Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about diversity at work?

1. Children in Scotland promotes diversity in the work place
2. Children in Scotland celebrates diversity
3. I feel confident that should I wish to, I can speak openly about my experiences and identity in the work place.
 - Agree strongly
 - Agree slightly
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree slightly
 - Disagree strongly
 - Don't know or not applicable

Q: If you have responded “Disagree strongly”, “Disagree slightly” or “neither” please use this box to explain your answer, to help our understanding.

Q: Please suggest areas for improvement relating to diversity at work.

Q: Please share your ideas/thoughts on how diversity can be improved at Children in Scotland.

We understand and accept that recognising and addressing barriers is an ongoing process and as a predominantly white staff team we may not be able ourselves to recognise all the barriers that exist for ethnic minority communities.

Since September 2020, the Policy, Projects & Participation team has been working with Intercultural Youth Scotland (IYS) on a Diversity in Teaching project (funded by the General Teaching Council for Scotland and currently in its third phase). This partnership has provided considerable learning for us organisationally and emphasised the vital importance of working with ethnic minority partners to support the safe delivery of our work with ethnic minority children and young people. Some of this learning was shared in a [podcast episode](#) with IYS launched in July 2021.

Organisationally we have introduced mechanisms for the ongoing scrutiny of our race equalities activity. In Q1 of 2022/23 we introduced a Children In Scotland **evaluation framework**, which is produced quarterly and is a standing agenda item in Children in Scotland Board meetings. The framework includes the race equalities measures outlined in this report and provides the facility to assess change over time and identify any gaps and areas of weakness or strength.

The working group recognised that moving forward with a **new office space**, we should consider accessibility widely and consider cultural accessibility as an important factor in decision-making, for example ensuring that there is a prayer room available.

Reviewing and removing barriers: next steps

- We will continue to monitor our race equality measures on a quarterly basis through the organisation's evaluation framework and annual Having Your Say survey. This action will be owned by the **Leadership Team and Board of Directors**.
- We will consider cultural accessibility in our future working and office plans. This action will be owned by the **Future Working Group**.
- We will consider how we can build in review from ethnic minority organisations. This action will be owned by the **Leadership Team**.



PLEDGE FOUR: Race equality training

Internal training and development

The Equalities and Diversity (Ethnic Minorities) Working Group was committed to working with the wider Children in Scotland staff team across the lifetime of this work. Over the 27 months of the group, five presentations and discussions were held with the staff team as part of our all staff meeting programme, covering the following areas:

- Our race equality pledge
- Communicating our work externally
- Staff equalities monitoring
- Staff training needs
- Cultural awareness (festivals).

Going forward, the working group felt that continuing to keep a focus on race equality and cultural awareness within the all-staff meeting programme was important.

Analysis of discussions within the staff group identified a need for specialist race equality training among the staff group. Following conversations with WSREC, we were able to commission them to deliver two sessions for all staff in November 2021 and January 2022. The sessions covered the following areas:

- Institutional racism and types of discrimination
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Equality outcomes
- Addressing barriers and harassment.

A total of 36 members of staff attended at least one session and the training evaluated extremely positively.

The WSREC training was accompanied by an extensive list of **resources** that are available for the staff team to support their race equalities work. This was complemented by other resources identified by working group members and shared with the wider staff team. We found the Human Rights Consortium Scotland podcast episode 'We are an anti-racist organisation: what does that mean?' particularly helpful.

Internal training and development: next steps

- We recognise that the Children in Scotland staff team has changed somewhat since January 2022 and there will be a need for follow-up refresher training. We should also consider introducing race equality training as part of the Children in Scotland induction programme. We will explore options with WSREC or other external partners for this. This action will be owned by **the Leadership Team**.
- We will continue to identify and share useful learning from external organisations with the wider staff team through our weekly Staff Update and take individual responsibility for continuing to develop our own learning about race equality. This action will be owned by **all Children in Scotland staff**.

External training and learning opportunities

As well as internal training and learning opportunities, we sought to develop a focus on race equality training and learning through our external activity. This included:

- A meeting of the **Cross-Party Group on Children and Young People** in June 2022 with a focus on the needs of ethnic minority children and young people. This included a presentation from the Coalition for Race Equality and Rights (CRER).
- Offering a Creating racially diverse & inclusive settings for children & young people seminar as part of our **Open Learning Programme** in June 2022. Unfortunately, this event was cancelled due to low uptake.
- A meeting of the Supporting the Third Sector Project's **Third Sector Interface Network** in August 2022, with presentations from CRER and the Scottish Refugee Council.

The Learning & Events team has also sought to ensure that key dates for cultural festivals are known and reflected within the learning programme.

External training and learning: next steps

- Our Annual Conference in November 2022 included a keynote presentation from Intercultural Youth Scotland and a workshop from WSREC.
- We are committed to continuing to deliver learning opportunities for our members and the wider sector around race equality. This will be owned by **the Learning & Events team and Policy, Projects & Participation team**.



PLEDGE FIVE: *Continual learning and sharing*

We have been fortunate to develop very positive relationships with a number of organisations over the lifetime of this work, particularly Intercultural Youth Scotland, WSREC and CEMVO. We want to continue to work with them and others to improve our practice and accessibility as an organisation and support them in their organisational priorities where we can.

From the outset of this work, we understood that Children in Scotland was a white dominated organisation and not an expert in the field of race equality. We had (and continue to have) much to learn and we felt it was important that we were honest about this and willing to share our learning (including our mistakes) with others, both internally and externally. This speaks to our organisational value of being brave.

We know that other organisations, including Together, Shelter, Save the Children, NSPCC and Mind have gone on similar journeys to our own. We want to learn from their experiences as well to see what else we can do to keep progressing in this area.

We have taken a fairly cautious approach to external sharing up to this point, not wishing to overstate our achievements. We have shared through the following routes so far:

- Produced a podcast episode with Intercultural Youth Scotland in July 2021.
- Publication of our race equality statement and an accompanying blog on the Children in Scotland website in September 2021.

These outputs were shared with members and the wider sector through our social media channels.

We are now in a position, coming to the end of this phase of activity, where we want to share more of our journey and our learning.

Sharing our Learning: Next Steps

- We will share the findings and draft recommendations from the working group with staff, Board and Changing our World in the first instance to get their input. This action will be owned by the **Equalities and Diversity (Ethnic Minorities) Working Group**.
- We will produce a video, podcast and blog to share the findings and learning from the group to be published early 2023. This action will be owned by the **Equalities and Diversity (Ethnic Minorities) Working Group**.
- We will reach out to other organisations undertaking similar work to share and learn with them. This action will be owned by the **Equalities and Diversity (Ethnic Minorities) Working Group**.





Key learning

We have generated considerable learning through the working group and activities undertaken across the organisation. It is impossible to do this learning justice here, but some key points are as follows:

- From the start, we received fantastic **buy-in** from staff, Leadership Team, Board and Changing our World. The cross-organisation working group had representation from all departments and at all levels in the organisation. There was widespread recognition of the need for action and a willingness to improve our practice and organisational culture. Understanding of the value of previous work to challenge inequalities, such as our work to achieve the silver LGBT Youth Scotland Charter of Rights accreditation, meant that we understood the positives that could come with a specific focus on a protected characteristic. This was important to give us permission to implement changes identified.
- Focusing on improving **staff confidence** has been very important. In early conversations we talked a lot about language, tokenism and worries about 'getting it wrong'. Working with external experts has been absolutely vital in this respect. At the start CEMVO helped us to think about the organisation's priorities and where we should focus our efforts. WSREC provided excellent training that gave staff the understanding of racism, equality, diversity and inclusion we needed. Both were consistently encouraging and practical with their suggestions. A key message throughout has been that this is a long-term journey – we will not always get it right straight away, but we have to make a start and learn and develop as we go.
- While the will and desire for change has been evident, implementing and embedding some changes have been really challenging. We spent a lot of time looking at approaches to equalities monitoring, for example, without finding a solution we are entirely happy with. We have settled on a best fit in the circumstances. Data collection and reporting mechanisms have also been challenging. As an organisation we have many competing demands, including reporting commitments. We recognise the importance of equalities **data** but have not yet got to the stage where we are routinely gathering, recording, reporting and analysing the data to the extent we would like.
- Because of implementation challenges, we needed more **time** than originally thought. Originally, we had planned the working group activity on an 18-month timescale but in the end this was extended to 27 months. In many ways this still don't feel that it has been long enough to make the changes we wanted to in line with our ambitions. However, we recognise that deadlines can help provide focus and momentum and an open-ended group may not have achieved more.
- Some of the approaches developed through the working group are relevant across all equalities groups and protected characteristics (e.g. EQIA, equalities monitoring etc). This is positive for our equalities work going forward. We recognise that by taking a specific focus on race we've provided dedicated time and space to consider one particular protected characteristic but have limited opportunities for consideration of **intersectional issues**. Going forward we feel a more holistic, intersectional approach to equalities work is preferable.
- While the current phase of activity is coming to an end, the working group is absolutely clear that we need to **keep our commitment** to race equality and building on the progress we've made. Our ambition does not end here.



Working group recommendations on next steps

Based on the learning above, the Equalities and Diversity (Ethnic Minorities) Working Group makes the following recommendations for future action to improve race equality in Children in Scotland:

- Children in Scotland should keep going with the activities started through the group. These are all listed as next steps throughout this the report, and include:
 - Routine equalities monitoring across our recruitment, activities, projects and services
 - Undertaking Equalities Impact Assessments of key organisational strategies, policies and procedures
 - Routine all staff training on race equalities
 - Nurturing and extending the relationships with ethnic minority organisations and those promoting race equality, particularly IYS, CEMVO, WSREC, CRER, SRC and BEMIS. This would include seeking to diversity Children in Scotland's membership
 - Routine reporting and analysis of equalities data gathered
 - Sharing our learning internally and externally.
- Children in Scotland should maintain a cross-organisational platform for work on race equalities to ensure that progress is maintained. We believe that a move towards a broader Equalities Working Group would best support this and provide greater opportunities to develop an intersectional approach.
- Children in Scotland should seek funding for an Equalities Officer to support our organisational development. Given the competing demands and limited capacity across the staff team, we believe a dedicated staff role, alongside ongoing cross-organisational work would provide us with the best route to achieving our ambitions.

[Internal report written November 2022]



Feedback from staff on the working group (February 2023)

'It was both humbling and inspiring to see how Children in Scotland staff got on board with the work we've been doing over the past couple of years. While it built on previous equalities work, it wasn't formulaic and was shaped by people's lived experiences and what was happening in society. We developed something that is both meaningful and challenging (in the right way!) for all parts of our organisation to build upon – the job's not done, it's just the start.'

'The creation of the Equality and Diversity Working Group, writing and publishing our Pledges and the support and learning from external partners (eg WSREC) (available to all our staff) have been fantastic for embedding focus and increasing awareness and knowledge across the whole organisation. We are continuing to learn but small changes in our approaches have been happening in all teams. We are looking forward to continuing working with colleagues across the organisation on equality and diversity issues on a structured, ongoing basis. One dream would be to be able to appoint a permanent colleague responsible for co-ordinating, and keeping everyone informed of, all the equality and diversity work that happens across Children in Scotland.'

'From someone who recently joined Children in Scotland/Enquire and having a minority ethnic background, I was astonished at the willingness to set up such a group and seeing that focus on making true meaningful change internally and externally, when it came to diversity and equality. It was refreshing to see that it was not artificial or a tick box exercise. I was glad to be part of the group.'

What I hope for in the long term is that we see a more diverse workforce, more diversity when it comes to decision-making, more engagement with wider communities but most of all removing some of those barriers such as being treated fairly, being listened to and proper access.'