

COMMITTEE ON EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Date: Thursday 11 November 1999

Time: 9.30am

Venue: to be confirmed

CHAIR'S REPORT

Audit

Progress on the equality audit being undertaken by officials is continuing and a full report of its findings will be provided in the New Year.

Conduct in the Assembly

As discussed at the last meeting, extracts from the National Assembly Advisory Group report and Standing Orders relating to conduct are being circulated for discussion.

Stephen Lawrence Inquiry/Macpherson Report Recommendations

Following the presentation on the Macpherson Report at our last meeting, I have written to the Secretary for Education and Children to raise with her the recommendations relating to schools. I attach a copy of the letter for information. Officials are preparing an action plan for consultation with a working party or Committee Members in the near future.

Meetings

I am meeting representatives of the Wales TUC to discuss a number of issues following the Committee's meeting on 11 November and the Welsh Refugee Council on 25 November to discuss the implications for Wales of the Immigration and Asylum Bill.

Childcare questionnaire

All Assembly Members and their personal staff were issued with a childcare provision questionnaire which was to be returned by 17 September 1999. As at that date the results were:

Assembly Members

- 34 responses
- 33 do not have a childcare requirement
- Only one Assembly Member did have a childcare requirement but this is currently met through a private arrangement.

Staff of Assembly Members

- 27 responses
- 26 had existing/did not require childcare provision
- Only one member of staff would 'possibly' require childcare facilities but then only on a casual basis if their childminder were on holiday.

No further completed questionnaires from either Assembly Members or their personal staff have been received since the closing date.

The implications of this response are being followed through in relation to comments on future needs.

Other issues

The report on the Committee's legal position regarding ASPBs has been deferred pending discussion with the Assembly Compliance Officer and the Office of the Counsel General.

I am looking into a proposal that Assembly Secretaries and Members involved in interviewing for public appointments should receive equal opportunities training. This could be the starting point for a paper on the Committee's approach to equality and ASPBs.

The Equal Opportunities Commission is to appoint a new Commissioner for Wales from June 2000. It has been agreed with DfEE that this position is to be re-advertised so that candidates

can be more fully assessed on their involvement with and plans for equality matters in Wales.

I have spoken at several conferences which encompass equality issues in the past few weeks:

- Disability Wales Annual Conference
- Vale of Glamorgan MIND Annual General Meeting
- National Schizophrenic Fellowship Annual Conference
- Learning Disability Nursing Conference on promoting accessible, effective and inclusive practices to support those with learning disabilities
- RNIB Fragmented Vision Report Conference
- Dyfed Powys Link Mental Health Fayre and Debate - launch of Mental Health Awareness Week.

I also closed the debate on Health and Social Inclusion in the plenary session on 2 November and attended the Association of Muslim Professionals Dinner.