

Equality of Opportunity Committee

Minutes (EOC(2)-01-07)

Meeting date: 24 January 2007

Meeting time: 09.30am – 12.30pm

Meeting venue: Committee Room 3, Senedd, Cardiff Bay

Assembly Members in Attendance

Assembly Member	Constituency
Gwenda Thomas (Chair)	Neath
Lorraine Barrett	Cardiff South and Penarth
John Griffiths	Newport East
Mark Isherwood	North Wales
Helen Mary Jones	Mid and West Wales
Huw Lewis	Merthyr Tydfil & Rhymney
Jenny Randerson	Cardiff Central
Catherine Thomas	Llanelli
Leanne Wood	South Wales Central

Standing Invitees in Attendance

Will Bee	Disability Rights Commission (DRC)
Chris Myant	Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)
Liz Morgan	Stonewall Cymru
Kate Bennett	Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)
Huw Onllwyn Jones	Welsh Language Board

Others in Attendance

Name	Representing (if applicable)	Agenda item(s)
Neil Wooding	Wales Commissioner, Commission for Equality and Human Rights	3
Ian White	Office for National Statistics	5
Steven Marshall	Statistical Directorate	
Jane Hutt AM	Minister for Assembly Business, Equalities and Children	7
Carol Mooney	Strategy and Equality Division	
Edwina Hart	Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration	7&8
Dr Emyr Roberts	Department for Social Justice and Regeneration	6

Committee Service

Name	Job title
Virginia Hawkins	Committee Clerk
Liz Wilkinson	Deputy Committee Clerk

Item 1: Introduction, Apologies, Substitutions, Quorum and Declarations of Interest

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Laura Anne Jones. There were no declarations of interest.

Item 2: Minutes of the previous meeting, matters arising and report from the Chair Paper: EOC(2)-09-06(min) and EOC(2)-10-06(min)

2.1 The Committee agreed the minutes of the 29 November and 12 December meetings.

2.2 The Chair gave an oral report, which included an update on progress with actions from the previous meeting as well as matters arising since the meeting.

Action points

The Chair agreed to write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (and

copied to the First Minister) outlining the Committee's views on the issue of exemptions to the Goods, Facilities and Services (Sexual Orientation) Regulations. The letter would be circulated to Members for agreement.

The Chair agreed to write congratulating the Welsh Assembly Government on its Welsh Language Scheme, which had been endorsed by the Welsh Language Board.

The Chair agreed to circulate the report on the Equal Pay Conference held in November 2006.

Item 3: Committee's relationship with the Commission for Equality and Human Rights

3.1 The Chair welcomed Neil Wooding, Wales Commissioner, Commission for Equality and Human Rights to the meeting.

3.2 Mr Wooding briefly outlined the progress made to date in taking forward the equality agenda in Wales, which was partly as a result of the integrated approach that had been adopted.

Action point

The Chair agreed to include in the Committee's legacy paper a recommendation that Standing Invitees of the successor Committee should include representatives of all equality strands in addition to that from the Commission for Equality and Human Rights.

Item 4: European Commission 2007 work programme – consideration of Committee's priorities

Paper: EOC(2)-01-07(p.1)

4.1 Due to time constraints the Committee agreed to forward comments on the European Commission 2007 work programme to the Clerk.

Action point

The Committee agreed to forward comments on the European Commission 2007 work programme to the Clerk.

Item 5: Update on proposals for the Census 2011

Paper: EOC(2)-01-07(p.2)

5.1 The Chair welcomed Ian White of the Office for National Statistics and Steve Marshall of the Welsh Assembly Government's Statistical Directorate to the meeting.

5.2 Mr Marshall and Mr White outlined the views of the Office for National Statistics on the content of the Census 2011, which was based on recent research and questing testing results, and user views.

Item 6: Progress with implementation of the Welsh Assembly Government's Childcare Strategy

Papers: EOC(2)-01-07(p.3)

6.1 Due to time constraints the Committee agreed that the item should be postponed until a later date.

Item 7: Committee's report on Service Provision for Gypsies and Travellers in Wales

Paper: EOC(2)-01-07(p.4)

7.1 The Chair welcomed Jane Hutt AM, Minister for Assembly Business, Equalities and Children, and Edwina Hart AM, Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration to the meeting. Jane Hutt AM gave a brief overview of progress made by the Welsh Assembly Government in taking forward recommendations contained in the Committee report on service provision for Gypsies and Travellers. Edwina Hart AM further highlighted progress made on recommendations relating to accommodation needs.

Helen Mary Jones AM, Chair of the Working Group on Gypsies and Travellers provided feedback on issues raised by the Group at its meeting on 22 January 2007.

Action points

The Chair agreed to write to the Minister for Assembly Business, Equalities and Children to request:

- that timescales be attached for implementation of the Committee's recommendations;
- future updates include details of outcomes achieved and monitoring being undertaken to assess progress;
- a reminder be issued to Welsh Assembly Government Departments regarding consistency of the use of 'Gypsies and Travellers', as outlined in Recommendation 1 of the Committee's report.

The Chair agreed to invite the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills and representatives of Save the Children to a future meeting to discuss progress made in taking forward the education related recommendations.

Helen Mary Jones agreed to circulate minutes of the Working Group meeting held on 22 January to the Committee for information.

The Chair agreed to include in the Committee's legacy paper a recommendation that the Working Group on Gypsies and Travellers continue in the Third Assembly.

The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration agreed to:

- consider whether additional resources could be found from the Social Justice and Regeneration budget for the creation of new sites for Gypsies and Travellers.
- raise with the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills the possibility of separate

circulars for Gypsies and Travellers, and Displaced Persons, to replace Circular 52/90 Meeting the Education Needs of Travellers and Displaced Persons.

The Minister for Assembly Business, Equalities and Children agreed to raise with the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills the need for the continuation of the Section 488 Grant to meet the specialised education and support needs for Gypsies and Travellers.

The Committee agreed to hold an additional meeting before the end of the Second Assembly subject to Business Committee approval.

Item 8: Report on Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Paper: EOC(2)-01-07(p.5)

8.1 The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration updated the Committee on work being undertaken regarding Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Wales.

Action points

The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration agreed to provide a note to the Committee on the following:

- the legal position of post 18 after care services;
- the ongoing work on migrant workers' issues; and
- the provision of legal advice on issues relating to Asylum Seekers and Refugees to voluntary organisations.