

**FALKIRK COUNCIL CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND ANNUAL REPORTING STATEMENT
2012/13**

Organisation Name	Central Scotland Regional Equality Council
Project	Central Scotland Regional Equality Council
Agreement Dates	1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013
Name of Lead Officer	Celia Sweeney

A OVERALL ORGANISATION AIMS

Summary of Key Aims & Objectives

- To promote equality of opportunities for all through various projects and outreach work
- To support victims of discrimination and harassment by the provision of advocacy, representation, information and advice.
- To encourage community cohesion and good relations through community development and projects designed to promote active, participative citizenship among diverse communities, thus enabling them to contribute fully to community planning and other consultations.
- To acquaint organisations and employers of any discrimination experienced by any group in any field, but especially in social welfare, housing, employment, education and health care.
- To provide programmes of public education and information, through seminars, forums and other means.
- To maintain a local library service for school pupils, students, teachers, voluntary organisations and other agencies, providing a comprehensive source of information for the purposes of anti-discrimination and harassment education.
- To achieve the objectives set out in appendix 1 of this schedule and to demonstrate performance of these objectives. These will be revised on a half yearly basis as part of the review process.

List of Agreed Outcomes

- Provide a complainant aid service to the public. This includes:-
 - Preparing statements from complainants and witnesses
 - Obtaining information from organisations alleged to have discriminated and working with them to resolve issues.
 - Signposting to appropriate representation where necessary.
- Keep accurate records of all complaints dealt with and their outcomes and publish statistics on an annual basis. This will include establishing and implementing case study reviews.
- Refer to, and work closely with, other relevant agencies such as MAHRS partners providing statistical reports as appropriate.
- Provide the 3 Local Authorities with support in relation to consultation and engagement across all protected characteristics, in the context of the Public Sector Equality Duties.

- Support partners in developing and reviewing equality policies and practices within the demographic areas of the three specified Councils. This could include:
 - Attending relevant focus groups
 - Providing advice in relation to policy development and implementation of procedures
 - Providing support in ensuring compliance with Equality Act 2010
 - Assisting in consultation exercises on equality issues
 - Responding to equality related service delivery enquiries.
- Where appropriate, participate in the three specified Councils’ strategic community planning.
- Provide equality organisations and Local Authorities with information and advice on CSREC work and local equality issues, funding and training opportunities by mailing/newsletters/public meetings.
- Link with the three nominated officers within local authorities to identify and contribute to education activities.

Why Service/Project is Funded Externally Rather than by the Council

SCREC is a very long standing voluntary organisation initially supported by the Equality & Human Rights Commission and which is now evolving from a Race Equality Council (providing a regarded complainant aid service to individuals experiencing prejudice / discrimination) to a Regional Equality Council with a wider focus across the whole equality spectrum. This change is at yet unproven.

The role and function of SCREC does not come within the statutory service remit of the Council however the Council is expected to demonstrate how it meets the general equality duty which includes evidence of work to: eliminate discrimination; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. In this capacity the funding support to SCREC would act as evidence in this regard. In addition as an external voluntary organisation it is able to draw down funds (Voluntary Action Fund; Awards for All) which the Council /s would not be able to tap into. The total amount of funding approved up to 2015 is in the region of £159k which will result in the creation of jobs as well as activity to address e.g. sectarianism.

B ACTUAL PERFORMANCE vs. OBJECTIVES / AGREED OUTCOMES

Summary of Key Achievements

Assisting the funding Councils (Falkirk; Stirling & Clackmannanshire) to consult with the community on equality outcomes development.
 Successful application for external funding from Scottish Government funds on anti-sectarian work and climate change (£100k – over the next 2 years). Council funding will have contributed to these successful applications.

Summary of Key Issues/ Challenges Facing Organisation

SCREC unable to demonstrate a great deal of activity in partner Councils of Stirling and Clackmannanshire
 The CSREC Board has experienced a number of changes this year in Chairperson position resulting in an impact on leadership and governance

How has Organisation Contributed to Council/ Service Priorities

The focus of the two engagement events was to enable the public sector service providers (Council; Police; NHS; College) to check that they were on “track” with the development of equality outcomes.

Acts as a central repository for collating statistics on racial incidents.

Contributes to Scottish Government consultation on race and ethnicity issues

Organised and delivered an Anti-Racist workshop to a Youth Group in Slamannan, Falkirk following a series of racial abuse attacks on a family in the area.

List any Areas where there has been Shortfall in Performance

Complainant aid service – 50% of contacts were signposted to other organisations as no complainant aid experience exists now in SCREC.

Lower than expected number of contacts made with the organisation in terms of complaints; issues and seeking advice etc. 28 recorded over the year.

How often are Review Meetings held with Lead Officer

I have recently taken over this role and going forward these will take place on a monthly basis.

C FINANCIAL / RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEWTotal Support Provided (Financial & In- Kind Contributions)

Clackmannanshire Council contribution	-	£ 7,258.32
Falkirk Council contribution	-	£15,200
Stirling Council contribution	-	£ 9,306.00
TOTAL	-	£ 31,764.32

In addition to the above, accommodation is also provided by Falkirk Council at no additional cost, with an estimated value of £10,000.

Last Period of Submitted Audited Accounts

2011 – 12

The accounts for 2012 – 2013 will be signed off by the auditor in time for the AGM – November 2013.

Future Risks (Financial, Operational or Structural) Faced by Organisation

The organisation has experienced Board and Staffing issues over this last year resulting in some leadership and governance issues. These are now being addressed by the interim Chairperson in that:

- There is a level of financial risk with regard to the current amount of funding in reserve. This fund was depleted following a staff compromise agreement. SCREC charges a % administration fee taken from each successful funding bid (successful bids in this year are in the region of £100k) which will help to increase the level of reserves.
- Significant tightening and clarity of performance expectation has resulted in the production of a joint working agreement for 2013 / 14
- Council contacts are providing more hands on support e.g. providing support in staff interviews; regular contact with the Chairperson; attendance at Board Meetings

Overall Risk Rating (Low/Medium/High)

Medium – (this is based on the fact that SCREC have been successful in attracting external funding)

D CONCLUSIONS

Summary/ Opinion of Organisations Overall Progress During Year

In terms of core business SCREC still has some work to do to develop the organisation. External funding success provides some assurance of SCREC's capacity to be developmental and demonstrate a keenness for the organisation to grow.

Assistance was provided to the funding Councils and other public sector partners in relation to community engagement around the development of Equality Outcomes.

E COMPLETED BY

<u>Name</u>	Celia Sweeney
<u>Designation</u>	Corporate Policy Officer - Equalities
<u>Date</u>	13/08/2013