

Scottish Government Update for COSLA - Scottish Strategic Co-ordination Group

Race, Religion and Refugee Integration Fund

£5.5m funding has been made available from 1 July 2008 to 31 March 2011 for a range of projects working in the race and faith equality and refugee integration field. The funding stream is designed to improve the lives of minority ethnic and faith communities in Scotland, including refugees and asylum seekers as well as migrant workers and Gypsies/Travellers.

A full list of the projects together with the total amount they will receive over the 3 year funding period can be found at

<http://www.scotlandagainstracism.com/onescotland/366.html>

Race Equality Policy

We are committed to driving forward work on race equality and to tackling racism. We will be outlining our priorities, plans and further funding decisions for race equality, refugee integration and religion/faith within the next two months. This has been delayed over the summer months owing to unexpected pressures of work in other areas.

Ethnicity classification

Scotland's ethnic groups will be better understood and supported by a new way of recording ethnicity in Scottish official statistics and the census.

Scotland's Chief Statistician and the Registrar General for Scotland published a report on the findings and conclusions of Scotland's new official ethnicity classification on Wednesday 30 July 2008. This is available at www.scotland.gov.uk/newethnicityclassification.

The Equality Unit is currently working with organisations and communities across Scotland to promote the new ethnicity classification (and the national identity question), so that the Census, and other surveys, achieve the best possible response rate. This is important because ethnicity statistics are used to monitor discrimination, deliver services and allocate funding to communities.

Draft (Partial) Immigration and Citizenship Bill

The Scottish Government welcomes changes which will simplify and reform immigration law and officials are working closely with officials in the Home Office and the Scotland Office to ensure that the Bill contains sufficient flexibility to reflect regional variations with regard to Scotland.

Fresh Talent

The Scottish Government's purpose as set out in the Government Economic Strategy, is to focus the Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth. Of particular relevance is the aim of stimulating population growth, and the target to match average European (*EU-15*) population growth over the period from 2007 to 2017, supported by increased healthy life expectancy in Scotland over this period.

- On 6 August we met with local authorities and other organisations to discuss the impacts of migration in the Tayside region. A wide range of issues were discussed, including housing, health, crime and data. In September Cabinet will consider proposals to support and deliver the population target and is expecting to see some practical suggestions and solutions to both the issue of attracting migrant workers and of managing the impact of migration, the outcomes from the Tayside meeting will help inform this Cabinet discussion.
- Issues around interpretation of legislation relating to migrants access to services and benefits have been raised by COSLA, and was also raised during the Tayside discussions. Scottish Government have agreed to work with COSLA and will shortly be seeking a meeting with relevant officials.
- Further challenge funding of £230,000 has been announced, supporting 16 projects within Scottish Universities and Colleges to promote employability of international graduates.

Scottish Government
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