

## **Moray Equalities Forum - Diversity Day - 15<sup>th</sup> December 2009**

### **Background**

Representatives from 8 local equalities groups gave presentations to an audience which included elected members and Community Planning Partners at the Moray Equalities Forum Diversity Day. Each presentation lasted approximately ten minutes, with the speakers providing information on the issues faced by their particular equalities group in Moray.

### **Presentations**

The following individuals gave presentations:

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | Debbie Ruppenthal                                  | Moray Youth Self Advocacy Group                               |
| 2. | Irena Paterson &<br>Jazz McDougall                 | Moray Disability Forum & Moray<br>Patient Participation Forum |
| 3. | David Dick &<br>Iain Stephens                      | Moray Access Panel  |
| 4. | John McConnachie                                   | Grampian Society for the Blind                                |
| 5. | Judith Ranklin                                     | Moray Women's Aid   |
| 6. | Alan Parker  | Terrence Higgins Trust  |
| 7. | Ewan McNeil  | Moray Polish-Scottish Association                             |
| 8. | Lucyna Elliot<br>(on behalf of Andrzej Balczynski) | Polish Philanthropic Association                              |

### **Elected Member and Partner Attendees Included**

Councillor McGillivray

Councillor Young

Councillor Jarvis

John Ferguson Moray Council

Amanda Walker Moray Council

Fiona Simpson Moray Council

Jacqueline Larkin Grampian Police

Rae Cameron & Grampian Fire and Rescue

Joan Robertson

John Ellwood Moray College

Eileen Bush MVSO

Representatives from RAF

Representatives from Careers Scotland

Ann Griffin Community Health & Social Care Partnership

### **Issues**

It became apparent throughout the afternoon that certain common issues were of relevance across the different equalities groups. These key issues can be summarised as follows:

1. Access  
Access covers a range of issues which impact upon an individual's ability to carry out their daily activities. The following points will highlight this further –

- Streets require adequate lighting.
- Streets/buildings/facilities need adequate signage
- Layout of streets/buildings/facilities should provide space eg for someone in a wheelchair or with limited or no sight to manoeuvre around.
- Drop kerbs need to be in suitable places for crossing a road.
- Pavements should be kept clear, particularly in winter conditions

## 2. Communication

The main issues identified here include the need for individuals' communication needs to be met, in a respectful manner, with a minimal use of jargon.

There is a need for written information to be available in different formats and languages. It was noted that the statements informing people of this availability are not always accessible to all eg they are written, in English, often in small print, thereby making it difficult for those with limited or no sight, literacy issues or whose first language is not English.

There also needs to be consideration of issues surrounding face-to-face communication. One example provided to highlight this issue was the situation where a patient's name is called out in a doctor/hospital waiting room – if the patient is deaf this is not an appropriate method of communication.

## 3. Transport

Transport is a significant issue, not least due to the rural nature of Moray. Issues here include –

- Adequate coverage of the local area by public transport.
- Physical access onto buses; while ramps are provided these take time to set up.
- Moray Assisted Taxi vouchers, providing free taxi travel for holders, are available. However, these are limited to 4 per month; 2 return journeys.

## 4. Employment

The benefits of being in employment include -

- Income
- Self-confidence
- Skills
- Social networking
- Ability to contribute to society
- Independence

However, it was identified that members of equalities groups do not always have the opportunity to be employed or to participate in work experience that they would like.

5. Emotional Support

Individuals may experience low self-esteem, stress and depression or be the victims of bullying, which may result in alcohol or substance misuse, self-harm or suicide attempts.

6. Other Issues

Individuals tend to face a variety of issues which may span across the various equalities groups – eg - Elderly individuals may have problems with mobility, eyesight and hearing in addition to the likes of Alzheimer's. They may also experience social isolation and issues surrounding low income.

As discussed above in the 'Emotional Support' section, individuals may also experience mental health issues as a result of their low self-esteem and lack of independence.

**Moray Equalities Forum**

The Moray Equalities Forum provides an opportunity for the different equalities groups to work together on those issues which they have in common. This could include providing support to each other and sharing resources not only in terms of their client groups and but when also when raising equalities issues with external agencies.