

MORAY JOINT EQUALITY OUTCOMES
PROGRESS REPORT 2017 – 2021
NEW OUTCOMES 2021 – 2025

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Chief Executive's foreword

Moray Council is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity. We recognise our responsibilities as a community leader, service provider and employer to encourage the fair treatment of all individuals and to tackle social inclusion. Moray is a diverse community where people have different needs depending on a range of factors such as where they live, how old they are, or their employment and family circumstances.

The council provides a range of services, often to the most vulnerable members of the community. In addition to delivering these, we have made a commitment to addressing particular areas of inequality that have been identified in Moray. These are our 'equality outcomes'.

The council is required to publish these equality outcomes every four years. The last report was published in April 2015. This report gives the outcomes for the full reporting cycle. It is proposed that future reports on equality outcomes will be collated as part of Moray Council's mainstream performance reporting.

Roddy Burns
Chief Executive

Introduction

This is the third Equality Outcomes report for Moray Council, Moray Council Education Authority and Moray Licensing Board. The report will give an overview of main issues for Moray as identified by the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP 2016-2026).

The report will then report on progress against the outcomes from the second Equality Outcomes report before moving on to the outcomes for 2021-2025. The report will end with some recommendations about mainstreaming Moray's equality outcomes over the next 4 years.

Legal Framework

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a general public sector equality duty. The duty is, in everything that a public authority does, to have due regard to the need to

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act
- Promote equality of opportunity, even if this means treating some groups more favourably than others
- Foster good relations between groups that share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

The Scottish Government has the authority to set regulations that can support or complement the Equality Act. Under this authority it passed the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. These specific duties include a duty to set equality outcomes every 4 years and to report on progress every 2 years. These outcomes should

- Enable public authorities to better perform the general duty
- If the outcomes don't seek to further the needs of every protected characteristic, public authorities must publish reasons for this
- Follow reasonable steps to involve people from equality groups
- Be based on consideration of relevant evidence.

Having the duty to publish equality outcomes should encourage public authorities to consider and tackle the significant inequalities within its jurisdiction. Moray Council should publish a set of equality outcomes for each of the three authorities:

- Outcomes for Moray Council
- Outcomes for Moray Council as an education authority
- Outcomes for Moray Licensing Board

With the last two sets of equality outcomes, themes were shared across the three authorities. For example: bullying is a theme that can affect the workforce across the three authorities, it can affect vulnerable adults and it can affect school children. However, in practice this led to difficulties in terms of reporting, ownership of the

outcomes as well as identifying to which authority particular outcomes can be attributed.

It is therefore proposed that the new sets of outcomes for 2021 – 2025 are disaggregated per local authority and that lead officers will be identified who will have responsibility for reporting on outcomes. It is also recommended that these outcomes, once approved, will be included in performance reporting cycles.

LOIP Data

Moray's Local Outcome Improvement Plan for 2016-2026 identifies the following issues for Moray:

- above average percentages of older people, particularly in the more rural and coastal areas which creates challenges in relation to service delivery and access and social isolation
- low wage economy and reliance on a small number of industries impacting on our economic diversity
- influence of the MOD on population dynamics and reliance upon it for jobs increasing our reliance on this industry for our economic sustainability
- an outward migration of young people leaving school for higher education and a poor rate of return in later years
- variation in outcome for young people in relation to attainment and post-school destination impacting on their choices for their future
- variation in outcome for smaller communities within Moray – particularly prominent in Elgin but also evident in other areas and a town/rural divide seems to emerge
- our geography / rurality and subsequent access issues such as delivery of and access to services and social isolation
- the impact of Public Sector financial constraints

Many of these issues are more relevant to the Fairer Scotland Duty but an important consequence of the Moray's economic context is that it has one of the highest gender pay gaps in Scotland.

Moray has a below Scottish average proportion of minority ethnic groups. As a result, the protected characteristic of race has been somewhat overlooked in Moray.

It has, however, been recognised that this could result in unknown and unintended negative consequences on the grounds of race and therefore promoting racial equality will be incorporated in the outcomes for 2021 – 2025.

Equality Outcomes 2017

There were 5 themes to [Moray's equality outcomes for 2017](#). The outcomes run across the various services and departments. Although it made sense to have an integrated approach toward making it difficult to report separately on the outcomes for Moray Council, Moray Council Education and Moray Licensing Board.

The 5 themes are:

1. Bullying
2. Domestic Violence
3. Access to Streets
4. Gender pay gap
5. Support Syrian refugees in Moray with their process of integration in Moray

1. Bullying

Bullying has been addressed within Moray in various forms. In previous reports we have outlined the approach taken by Adult protection and Moray Community Safety Hub.

Within Education a Survey was held in 2015 which established a baseline, guidance on dealing with bullying incidents was drafted and a health and wellbeing survey was undertaken.

Survey findings indicated that incident reporting using the Equality Incident Monitoring Forms (EIMF) captured only a small part of the total number of incidents.

What was significant was that following the 2015 survey and discussions with head teachers and depute heads about the survey, the number of reported incidents doubled and remained consistently higher than previous years. Guidance for building better relationships in the schools has been drafted and is set to be implemented by the autumn of 2021. Using this guidance, schools will revise their own policies and bring these in line with the UNCRC Promise and the Rights of the Child. At the moment 29 primary schools in Moray have a Rights Respecting Schools Award: 16 at Bronze, 8 at Silver and 5 at Gold. All 8 secondary schools have a Rights Respecting Schools Award: 5 Bronze and 3 Silver.

Within Moray Council, tackling bullying is a major focus of the Workforce Culture working group. The Workforce Culture working group is made up of councillors, officers and trade union representatives. Together they produce and implement a work plan to create a positive workforce culture where morale is good, people are proud to work for the Council and would recommend it to others.

To help achieve this, the group has set eight outcomes:

1. All employees and councillors are aware of the standards of behaviour required
2. Positive behaviour is demonstrated from the top of the organisation
3. There is an environment of mutual respect across all services and levels
4. Employees are listened to and believe they are being heard and that action will be taken
5. There is trust between employees, managers, trade unions and councillors
6. Reduced bullying and harassment and more positive working environment
7. Workloads are manageable. No employee faces undue pressure because of an unreasonable workload
8. Managers are enabled and encouraged to manage workforce positively

The group reports back to councillors on a regular basis with updates on how the action plan is progressing, and how the outcomes are being measured. The latest update can be found at the [Policy and Resources Committee](#). During 2020 it was agreed that the workplace culture and engagement work was now recognised as mainstream work / business as usual. The Culture Working Group now only meet twice a year and will continue to have oversight of the workforce culture action plan and progress against this plan.

A range of documents to assist workers and managers with creating a positive working environment have been published on the Council's Interchange.

The employee survey 2019 showed a reduction in the number of employees subject to bullying and harassment.

A key focus for previous years has been the number of employees subject to unacceptable behaviour/bullying in the workplace, this has positively decreased from 16% to 14%. Employees reporting being subject to harassment has also decreased from 11% to 10%. (2019 Employee Survey Headlines)

2. Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is reported to committee through the Community Safety & Antisocial Behaviour Strategy Performance reports

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	%diff 2012/13 – 2020/21
Domestic Abuse Incidents	636	657	746	721	747	710	783	819	913*	44%

* Unofficial result

Incidents of domestic violence shows an upward trend, most significantly in the recent pandemic lockdown periods in 2020.

A new community safety strategy is currently being developed, mainstreaming this issue within Moray. A Violence Against Women partnership has been developed and work by the Police and partner agencies continues to support victims. The partnership held a conference in November 2020 VAW Conference. The theme of the day was coercive control and the implications of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018. Speakers included Anne Marie Hicks, the National Procurator Fiscal for Domestic Abuse, and Joanna McLaughlin, the National Coordinator for Violence against Women and Girls. Ryan Hart also gave a harrowing account of his own experience – his mother and sister were killed by his controlling father in 2016. Moray Licensing Board has been promoting social responsibility among its licensees. This culminated in an event in February 2020 which raised awareness about dealing with incidents, including sexual harassment.

3. Access to Streets

Following community engagement activities around 2017 it was anticipated that the information gathered in the community street audits could be used to develop an online tool that could assist street users finding their way around Moray more easily by identifying obstacles. Lack of funding and technical issues, however, have meant that this can no longer be pursued. There has, however, been a growing awareness of disability issues among Moray Council's traffic engineers, resulting in better engagement and consultation as part of the decision making process, for example in the [Elgin Transport Strategy](#).

During the financial year 2019/20, there were 36 dropped kerbs installed and 52 in 2018/19 to improve access.

Accessible toilets play an important role in improving access to streets for elderly, women and disabled people. Over the years, closure of public toilets featured regularly in savings proposals for Moray Council. Such considerations have resulted in preventing closure of a number of facilities as well as a range of mitigating actions to alleviate the impact. The Council has supported a number of Community Asset Transfers which led to community groups successfully continuing and indeed improving the facilities.

Another initiative is the Comfort Scheme which was started in 2016 by the Elgin Business Improvement District (BID). Delivered in partnership with local businesses who provide visitors access to clean toilet facilities in convenient locations, during normal opening hours, with no purchase required. Many of the premises offer disabled access and baby change facilities. Working in conjunction with the national 'Use our Loos' Scheme, which is sponsored by bleach makers, Domestos and the British Toilet Association, the Comfort Scheme is now available at more locations throughout Moray, with facilities in Aberlour, Burghead, Buckie, Cullen, Fochabers, Forres, Garmouth, Keith and Lossiemouth. Further information on the facilities can be accessed via the [Use Our Loos](#) link.

4. Gender pay gap

The gender pay gap has been identified as one of the major issues facing Moray. For this reason, tackling the gender pay gap has been incorporated into various projects proposed under the [Moray Growth Deal Heads of Terms Agreement](#).

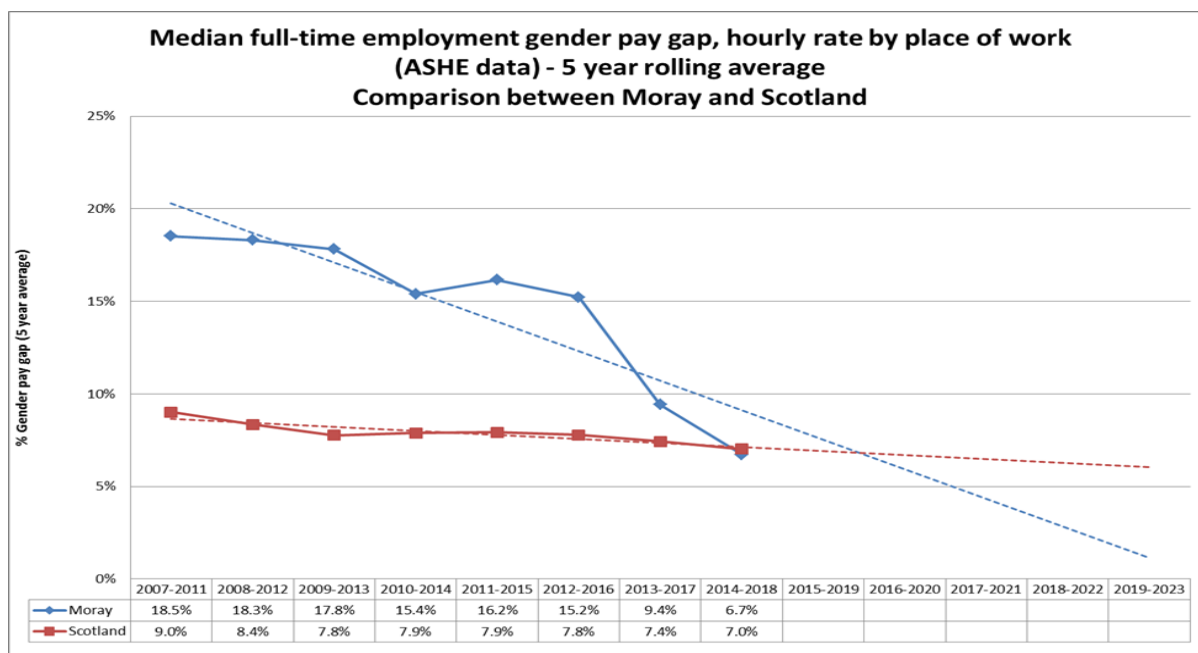
Moray Community Planning Partnership has employment as a priority and in particular to increase participation, skill and pay levels with reduced gender inequality through targeted approaches to those furthest from the job market, pathways to higher skilled employment, choices for the young workforce and apprenticeships at all levels, progress highlights include -

- Employability Consortium collaboration with New Elgin Locality Planning Group to identify locality actions to address barriers to work and in-work poverty
- Moray Pathways website launched in April 2019 and employability and training hub launched at the Inkwell
- Employability and Skills Group established to deliver the Skills Investment Plan
- Scottish Apprenticeship week event held in March 2019
- Early Learning and Childcare on track to deliver increased provision of 1140 hours in all setting by August 2021
- Nineteen employers noting interest in Moray Employer Recruitment Incentive (MERI) Scheme resulting in 11 employers taking participants attracting £72k of grant funding
- Kickstart Scheme launched

Figure 1 shows how the gender pay gap has changed in Moray between 2002 and 2019. It shows that it fluctuates sharply from year on year. There is a downward trend if looked at as 5-year rolling average but this is significantly influenced by the drop in 2014.



Figure 1: Moray Full-time median gender pay gap 2002 - 2019



Because of the fluctuations it is prudent to keep reducing the gender pay gap as an outcome for Moray Council for the period of 2021-2025, especially in the light of the projects that will be implemented under the Moray Growth Deal such as promoting the uptake and career progression of women in STEM subjects as well as one of the overall aims of the Moray Growth Deal to address the low wage economy in Moray.

5. Support Syrian refugees in Moray with their process of integration in Moray

Upon the families' arrival in Moray there was a support package involving a range of service providers including Moray Council, NHS Grampian, Police Scotland, Scottish fire and Rescue Service, Moray Third Sector Interface and Jobcentre Plus.

A welcome pack was put together with information from all the involved services and a series of training sessions to give important information about living in the UK. ESOL services were involved in supporting the families in learning to speak English. This has now been taken up by Moray College.

The outcome was to support the families to achieve British citizenship by the end of their 5-year period. This was understood to secure their right to remain in this country. However, this process can be started a year after they have been granted indefinite leave to remain. At the time of writing this report, it has become clear that the families have been successful in applying for indefinite leave to remain with support from Moray Council's Education and Social Care. It is therefore not necessary to carry this outcome forward to the next 4 years.

Mainstreaming the Equality Outcomes

The equality outcomes cut across services within Moray Council, making it a challenge to collect and disseminate data centrally. The Equal Opportunity Officer will liaise with the Research and Information Officers to ensure that the outcomes are captured within the cyclical performance reporting mechanisms. This means that from 2021 on, progress on the equality outcomes will be captured every 6 months.

Leadership Forum 14 September 2021

The draft Equality Outcomes were discussed with all the Council's senior managers at an online forum on 14 September 2021. The aim of the forum was to ensure that there was ownership of the equality outcomes across all of the Council's services and to start putting reporting mechanisms in place.

The discussions showed that there was a willingness to embrace the proposed equality outcomes. It was clear that the COVID-19 pandemic had increased awareness among staff across all the services about underlying inequalities in Moray.

As a result, some new themes and outcomes were proposed. These new proposals will be discussed within the Equality and Diversity Corporate Advisory Forum – the Council's internal equality group – from the end of 2021 onwards. The forum will have a wide representation of council services and will monitor progress towards the outcomes and propose new outcomes when appropriate.

A summary of the draft equality outcomes and the proposed outcomes/actions that came out of the Leadership Forum can be found in appendix 2.