

Fife Centre *for* Equalities



ENQUIRIES, CONCERNS
and ENGAGEMENT REPORT

2022 / 2023

Introduction

Fife Centre for Equalities (FCE) is a local charity, funded by Fife Council, with the charitable aims of raising awareness and understanding amongst all communities and community groups in Fife of equality and diversity.

FCE provides access to appropriate information, assistance and training to communities and community groups in support of fair and inclusive community development.

Our values are to work with honesty, integrity, respect, and transparency, and strive to demonstrate a fully inclusive approach in everything we do. We work with communities and with partners to help make Fife a fairer and more equal place to live, work and study.

Our **strategic outcomes in 2022-2023** were:

1. Individuals feel respected, safe and have the freedom to lead a fulfilling life where they live, work or study.
2. Individuals and groups feel better connected and are able to contribute to public policy and the planning and delivery of local services.
3. Groups, whether already established or just getting started, have the tools they need to engage with their local community in a positive and inclusive way.
4. Third, public and private sector organisations demonstrate best practice in equality, diversity and inclusion.
5. FCE is recognised as a centre of excellence for championing equality, diversity and social justice.

About this report

Under our service level agreement with Fife Council, FCE is committed to ensure individuals belonging to the protected characteristics have the confidence in engaging with council services, and services are meeting their needs and priorities.

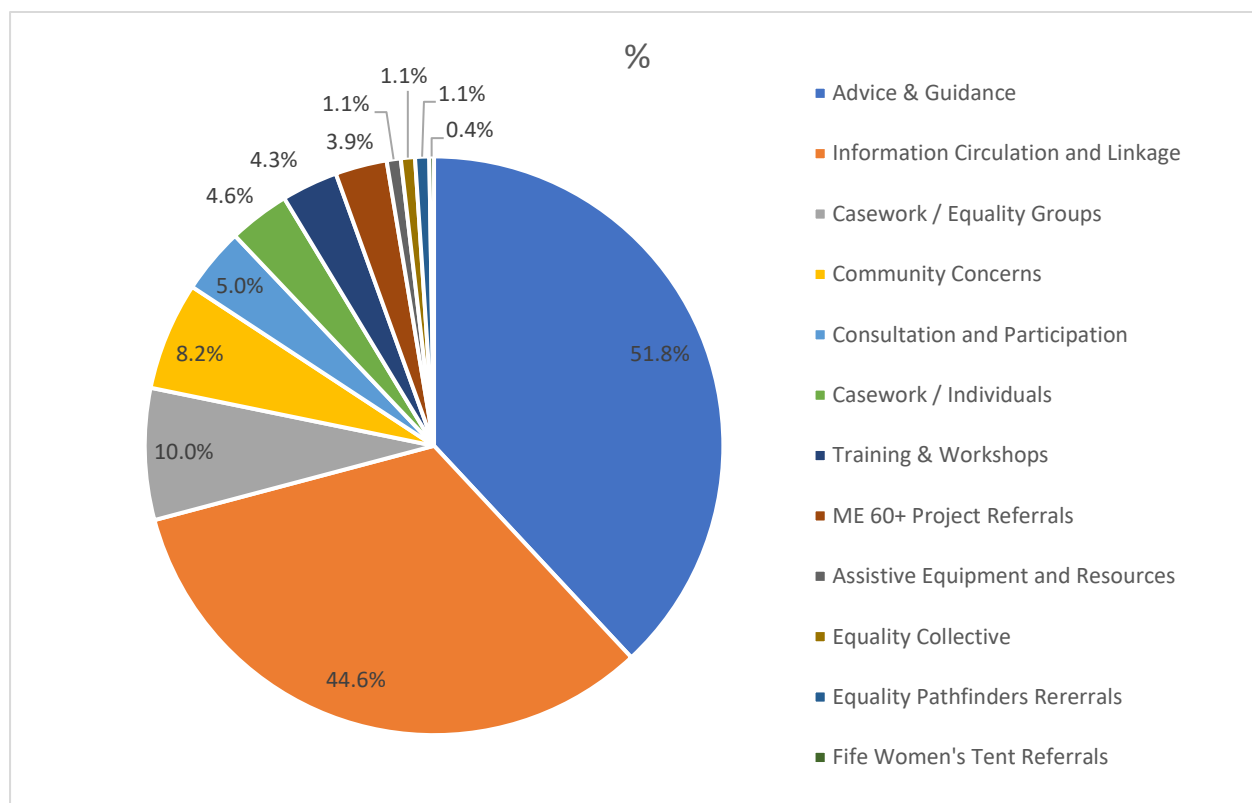
We continued in 2022-2023 to refine our tracking and monitoring system using Airtables for all the enquiries or support given to individuals, communities or organisations. Our aim is to adjust the logging of information so that it gives more insightful information than contact figures.

This report provides details of the types of enquiries FCE has received in relation to services, their location and the protected characteristics concerned. Please note that the figures now relay the initial contact enquiries, but not the number of support episodes / equality casework with individuals and organisations. Those are described in the case studies.

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Enquiries Overview



Advice & Guidance

From 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, Fife Centre for Equalities received **280** new enquiries, the majority of which remains for **Advice & Guidance (51.8%, 145)**. This is a decrease from the previous year (258) due to updating our logging practice to log all following requests and support episodes to the same initial client ticket, unless the enquiries were substantially different (e.g. referral to ME60 project for peer support and a separate Third Party Hate Crime report if requested).

The same approach was applied for organisations requesting policy or practice advice, any subsequent queries would be added to their Equality Pathfinder training needs and actions, and not as additional enquiries to FCE.

This will enable us to generate information and insights about the type and extent of support provided for each new client (e.g. types of advice and barriers addressed) as well as repeat requests from existing service users (e.g. participating Equality Pathfinders, community groups or Fife Council consultation leads).

The most common requests concerned:

- Communication, Interpreting and Translation **(82)**
- Access to equality groups **(45)**
- Not knowing which service to contact **(30)**
- Lack of accessibility or reasonable adjustments **(10)**

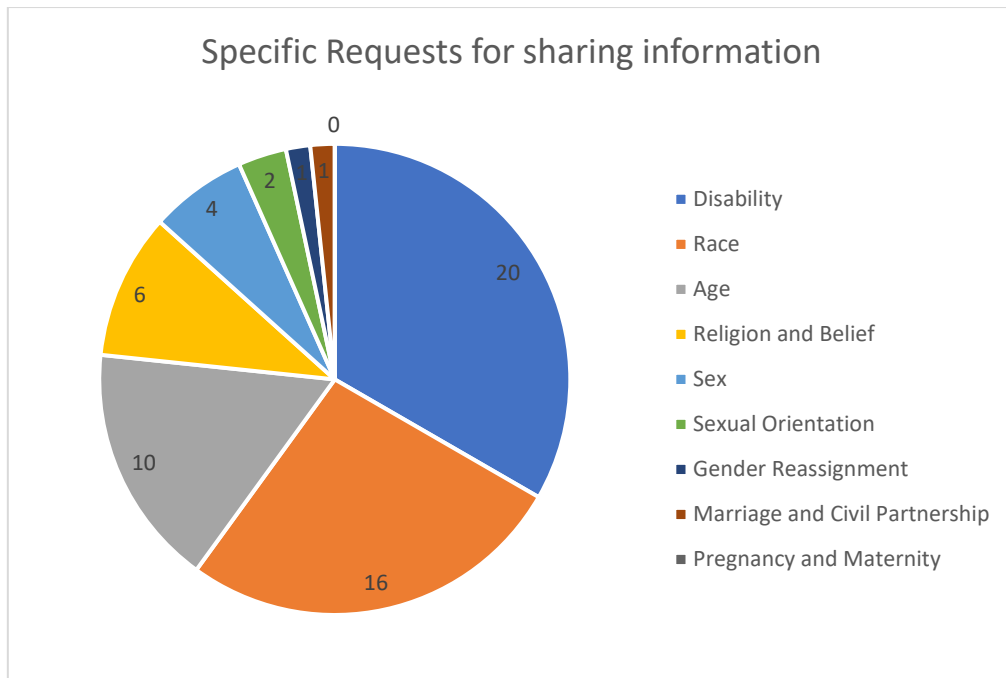
FCE Core Services	%	Number of Initial Enquiries
Advice & Guidance	51.8%	145
Information Circulation and Linkage	44.6%	125
Casework / Equality Groups	10.0%	27
Community Concerns	8.2%	23
Consultation and Participation	5.0%	14
Casework / Individuals	4.6%	13
Training & Workshops	4.3%	12
ME 60+ Project Referrals	3.9%	11
Assistive Equipment and Resources	1.1%	3
Equality Collective	1.1%	3
Equality Pathfinders Referrals	1.1%	3
Fife Women's Tent Referrals	0.4%	1
Total enquiries	100.0%	280

The overall pattern we noticed in 2022-2023 were that requests came from:

- **Isolated individuals** looking for local support groups or links from a specific protected characteristic (particularly relating to Race (language support) and Disability)
- Individuals who were unsure about **who** or **how** to contact local services to help with their current situation (welfare or health)
- People who were contacting FCE as a '**last resort**' type of service as they felt other services were not supporting them

Further breakdown, by protected characteristics

While 46 requests were cross-cutting all protected characteristics (e.g. about the Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998, or advice about universal provision), we also had 99 requests specific to one or more characteristics, with Race (**36**) and Disability (**27**) and Age (**19**) being the most frequent.



Information Circulation and Linkage

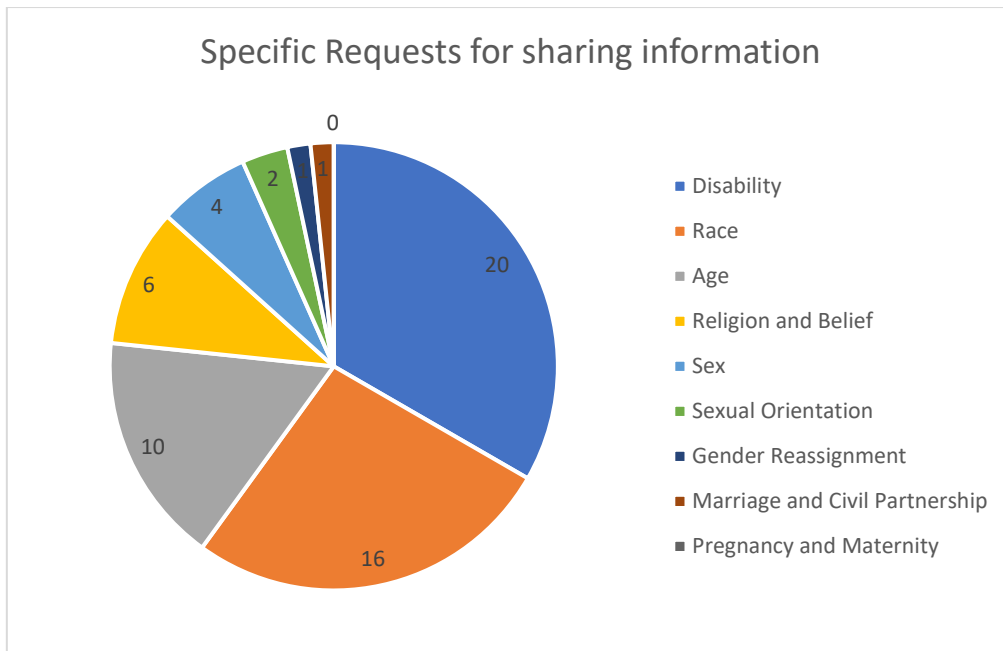
As in previous years, the second most common type of enquiry was request for **Information and Linkage**, with **44.6% (125)**, with a slight decrease in numbers from last year (156) for the same reason as above. Partners can also now submit items to our [Equality Calendar](#) or self-refer to our projects (ME60, Equality Pathfinders, Companion Support and Fife Women's Tent) directly.

The most common requests for communication covered:

- Targeting information (health, welfare / cost of living) towards specific equality groups
- Targeted recruitment for specific demographics (particularly minority ethnic, women)
- Service updates from public and third sector organisations
- Sharing engagement events or participation opportunities

Further breakdown, by protected characteristics

76 requests were cross-cutting all protected characteristics. we also had 60 requests specific to one or more characteristics, with Disability (**20**), Race (**16**) and Age (**10**) being the most frequent.



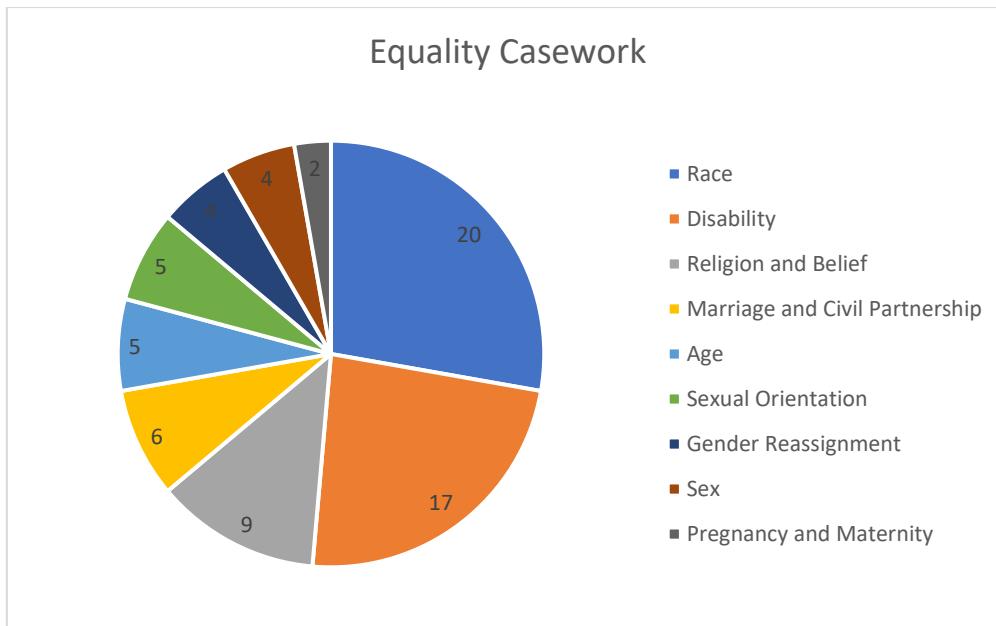
Casework – Individuals and Equality Groups

We provided one to one support to **13** individuals concerning equality casework and to with **27** equality/community groups. Those concerned support requests that could not be primarily delivered by partner organisations through referrals or signposting.

The most common concerns individual shared with us were **experiences of discrimination, hate incidents** or **difficulty in gaining accessible information**, this concerning **Disability (Mental Health/anxiety** was a recurring long-term condition), **Race** and **Poverty/cost of living** concerns.

Further breakdown, by protected characteristics

The most frequent cases concerned the characteristics of Race (20), Disability (17) and Religion and Belief (7) as the main reason for unequal treatment or perceived barriers to access.

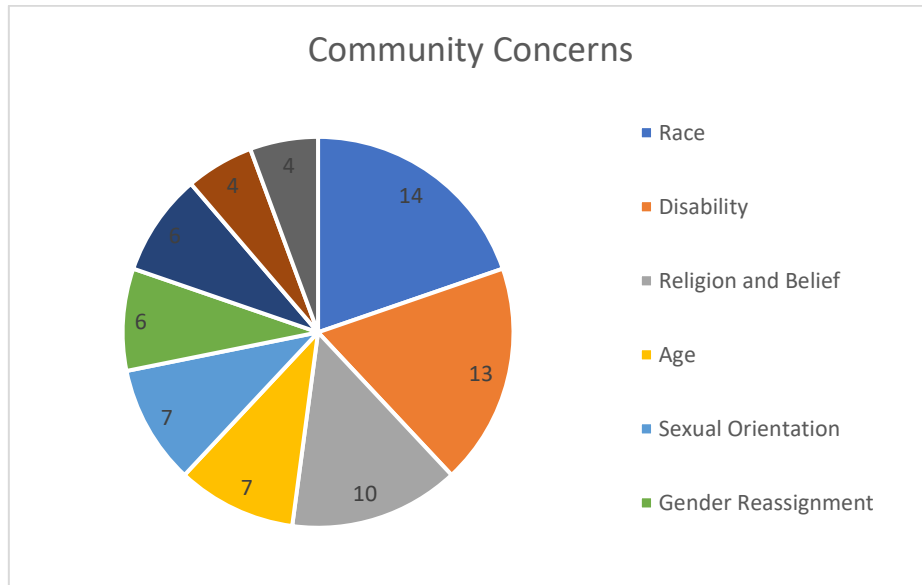


There was also **23** community concerns that were shared either directly with us or using our online forms, the respondents shared this inform either anonymously or did not want further assistance from FCE. **4** were cross cutting (concerns about cost of living, not specific to any characteristic) and **19** concerned combinations of several characteristics.

The core concerns shared covered:

- Discrimination (Race) in Education settings (Pupil: bullying; Parent: unsatisfactory responses or unequal treatment)
- Bullying or antisocial behaviour (Disability) in Housing settings
- Difficulty in accessing reasonable adjustments (Disability) in private housing/private rented sector
- Lack of accessing to relevant information or support (Race/language barriers) with Fife Council services
- Hate incidents (Race, Disability/long term illness, mental health) in Housing setting and Community Safety
- Lack of accessible information on long-term support (Race, Disability - long term illness, mental health, poverty) and benefit assessments
- Discrimination and lack of reasonable adjustments (Disability) in accessing justice/Police services
- Lack of support following suspension from work (Race, Sexual Orientation) and accessing employee rights
- Risk of homelessness (All/cross-cutting and Disability/mental health)
- Financial welfare and wellbeing concerns (All/cross-cutting; Disability/mental health, lone parent, cost of living)

The most frequently mentioned characteristics were Race(14), Disability (13) and Religion and Belief(10):



Types of action taken by FCE:

- Liaise with external organisations on behalf of individuals requiring support in accessing services.
- Establishing whether policies and practices (e.g. access to translation and interpreting services) are
- Verifying eligibility of clients to accessibility support or reasonable adjustments
- Provided information, advice, and support in accessing services
- Provided one to one support to individuals due to limited digital literacy
- Signposted to relevant agencies and procedures for requesting adjustments.
- Reviewed inclusion, equality, and diversity policies.

Consultation and Participation

We received **14** requests to promote consultations or participation opportunities with equality groups, 7 from local services/Fife Council and 7 from national level organisation requesting FCE's participation.

The Fife Council consultations or participation requests we prioritised this year we:

- Local Transport Strategy for Fife
- Local Council Election Equality Hustings
- Fife Council Employment Survey (Outcome 4)

Where appropriate, consultations are promoted to individual service users online (Equalities Weekly, Monthly), on social media (Facebook, Twitter) and also in face-to-face meetings (Equality Collective events). Promotion and raising awareness with equality organisations is firstly carried out by inviting leads to present and discuss the consultation aims and objectives with members of the Fife Equality Forum. More detailed breakdown on this in the Engagement section below.

Training & Workshops

We received **12** new requests for training and workshops, in addition to existing training clients and previous Equality Pathfinders participating organisations. 2 new requests were for Equalities Awareness from Fife Council (Education, CLD), 4 from Health and Social Care, 5 from local community groups and 1 from a national organisation (Migration Policy Scotland).

The core topics and themes most requested as part of workshops were:

- Equality and Diversity awareness (across all protected characteristics)
- Sex, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation
- Unconscious Bias
- Race equality

Existing participating organisations we supported this year were Fife Gingerbread (Making it work), Climate Action Fife Partnership, Greener Kirkcaldy/Cosy Kingdom,

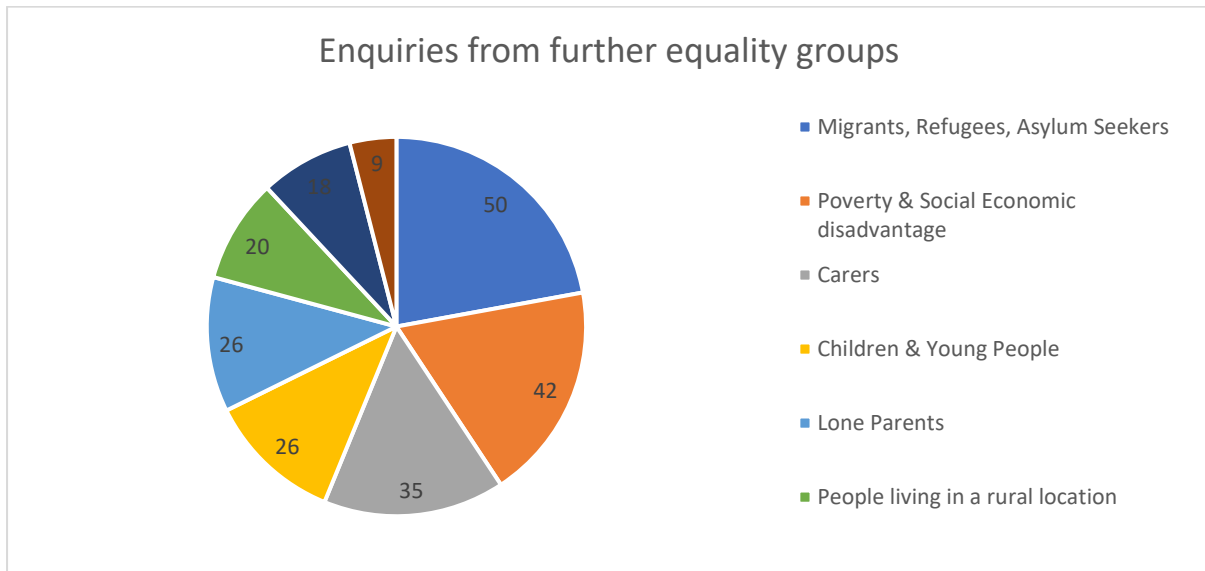
Referrals to projects and assistive equipment.

Since last year, new signups to the ME60+ Project (**18**) are directly handled and registered on the project's homepage and admin, referrals from FCE (**11**) are logged only once. Any subsequent requests for support are counted as part of the project's casework, except if a service access issue is identified. This is then identified and recorded as a Case Study (see Appendix). In 2022-2023, while there has been a slight decrease in the clients for assistive tech hires (3), repeat hires from the same clients are however increasing (3).

Enquiries from other equality groups

We received 226 enquiries which concerned specific equality or disadvantaged groups, in with the protected characteristics was not the primary concern or barrier, but where life situation or circumstance had an impact.

The top 3 equality groups were: Migrants, Refugees, Asylum Seekers (50), people living in poverty or socio-economic disadvantage (42) and carers (35).



Engagement Activities 2021-2025

Website and Accessibility Improvement

From 1 April 2022 to 30 March 2023, the FCE website was viewed 25,785 times by users, with 11,128 unique visitors. 71 blog posts were published throughout the year. The most engaged-with content included:

- Equality Testers
- Diversity Week Fife
- Minority Ethnic 60+ Project
- Fife Refugees Community Resources
- Various blog posts for FCE Events and Activities

Social Media:

Fife Centre for Equalities Currently has **1,392 likes and 1,670 followers** on their Facebook page. Within the main page, FCE hosts the **Equality Collective and Fife Women's Tent groups**, which have **398 and 872 members respectively**.

On the FCE Facebook, we reached **40,826** people with our posts.

The FCE Twitter account currently sits at **695 followers, reaching 12,276 unique visitors**.

Email Newsletters:

The FCE Newsletter currently has 1011 subscribers. In 2022 it was decided that rather than sending out multiple communications a week and overloading subscribers with content, we would create a combined weekly newsletter. The Equality Digest now takes aspect from the old Equalities Weeklies and Equality News Digests, sharing short-term updates from FCE's activities as well as relevant equality news.

Campaigns and Events - FCE Equality Hustings:

On 27 Apr 2023 we hosted a [Virtual Equality Hustings](#) as part of the Fife Council Elections 2022, giving our service users and members of the general public the platform to pose their questions to candidates. On the night we had representatives from 6 parties, as well as an independent candidate. There were 14 attendees, with 184 people viewing the recording of the session once it was uploaded.

[Full recording available here](#).

Campaigns and Events - Black History Month 2022

In celebration of Black History Month 2022, FCE launched a month-long campaign to raise awareness and encourage individuals and groups to take part in the wide range of celebrations, awareness-raising events, workshops, educational sessions and more. These were published via the FCE Website. In total 6 blog posts were published, ranging from local events such as the [Fife Afro-Caribbean Network's Events](#) to the [Fife Cultural Trusts'](#) online exhibition on the history of slavery and colonialism in Scotland. In total these blog posts were accessed **448 times** across our website.

Campaigns and Events - 16 Days of Activism 2022:

Similarly to our Black History Month Campaign, FCE created a series of 4 in-depth blog posts and briefings on topics we had received as queries or where notes of discussion in previous discussion, topics covered:

- [16 Days of Activism – What is it about?](#)
- [Sexual Exploitation and Gender Inequality](#)
- [The role of “that guy” in Gender-Based Violence](#)
- [Children and Young People Experiencing VAWG / Abuse](#)

These blogs were viewed 37 times during the campaign. In conjunction with these, 4 chat sessions were hosted on the Equality Collective Facebook page, where members shared their personal views and experiences, with staff raising awareness of the support available for anyone requiring assistance.

Campaigns and Events - Fife Women’s Tent – Mental Health and Wellbeing Events

Last year the Fife Women’s Tent received funding from the Fife Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund in order to host a range of interactive events and sessions for their members.

The first event was the Fife Women’s Tent South Fife Wellbeing Event, taking place on 10 June 2022 from 17:00 until 20:00 at North Parish Church Hall, Golfdrum Street, Dunfermline, Fife. The second session was the Fife Women’s Tent Central Fife Wellbeing Event, taking place on 25 June 2022 from 12:00 until 15:00 at St Bryce Kirk, St Brycedale Avenue, Kirkcaldy, Fife. The third and final event was the Fife Women’s Tent Conference, which took place on 26 August 2022 from 15:00 until 21:00 at The Strathearn Hotel, Wishart Place, Kirkcaldy. 144 women attended overall (South 47, Central 45, Conference 52). The detailed evaluation is available online: [Click here for the full evaluation](#) . .

The key topics discussed by participants cover:

Topics Discussed	Examples of Suggested Actions
Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Network of information on community activities, action and involvement• Highlight gaps that are there• Focus on ways we can talk openly about feelings / mental health
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inform, Inform, Inform• Support circular economy• Reduce use of vehicles

Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio, noticeboards, online, talking to each other, meeting like this • Approach schools or nurseries with ideas, or parent council • GP surgeries to support by finding places to go and things to do
Cost of Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase general awareness of usage (electric / gas / fuel) • Food we eat / how it is cooked • Build relationships with neighbours and community
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable older single person homes • Have our voices heard: speak up, be part of the change, speak to elected members, attend conferences • Have accessible surveys for the non-digital population. Paper copies in doctors surgeries, bus stops
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government, local government and private transport to invest in public and private transport (taxi) • Run campaigns (safety) to raise awareness of safety issues faced by women in transport • Government to help women (means-tested) with driving lessons because they run so many chores!
Feeling Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve lighting at lower level • More education for the youngsters to respect people of older age, diverse race, or beliefs • People within a community to know each other better and help / support each other

Campaigns and Events - Equality Collective – Let’s Talk Transport in Fife: Success as is hot topic and major barrier for many protected groups

In January 2023, FCE worked alongside the Fife Council Transport Strategy Team to gather the views of service users, practitioners and members of the general public via a consultation event at St. Luke’s in Glenrothes. In total we had 20 attendees on the day, from a range of different protected characteristics that contributed towards the survey – we also shared the consultation via the Equalities Monthly newsletter and our social media pages.

The survey received:

- 1335 total responses, of which
- 180 said they have a disability; and

- 33 said they are from an ethnic minority background.

The participant have remained engaged with FCE and also continuing participation with the Local Development Plan. [The full notes from the session can be found here.](#)

Campaigns and Events - Equality Collective – Get-Togethers (cross –cutting engagement with ME60):

At the start of 2023, FCE worked in partnership with ONFife and Fife Council to launch a new series of Get-Togethers for our ME60+ clients, volunteers as well as members of all our other projects and of FCE’s core service to people who live, work and study in Fife.

As expected during the cost of living crisis, the purpose of these Get-Togethers was to raise awareness of the local warm spaces, community cafes and community-based support available in the different areas of Fife, and how this support can be accessed. FCE staff use the occasion to discuss with participants the Equality Outcomes, upcoming consultations and any support needs.

The ME60+ team also focus on:

- Face to face meetings reducing isolation and helping build personal relationships
- Networking opportunity for colleagues from Equality Pathfinders, FCE volunteers and placement students
- ‘Listening post’ for Equality and Community Concerns, Equality and Testers

The Get-Togethers took place at the following locations:

- **Auchtermuchty Community Centre – 16/2/23**
 - Topics: Fuel crisis / Cosy Kingdom support, warmspaces locations and maps in Fife, accessing EntitledTo. Focus was on meeting new people face to face and using warmspaces as local hub.
 - **11 attended (+3 staff)**
- **Kirkcaldy Galleries – 1/3/23**
 - Topics: warmplaces / locations, cost of living support, Fife cultural places (museum), Fife services (library), participating in local activities (e.g. artists workshops)
 - 23 booked, **22 attended (+2 staff and 1 volunteers)**
- **Dulloch Library – 30/3/23**
 - Promoting Fife services (library), local artists (workshop), meeting new people and networking
 - 15 booked, **12 attended (+2 staff and 2 volunteers)**

Key insights on why the Get Togethers work:

- They enable us to reach out to all our members, only some choose to engage, but members attending mostly defer from one event to another. We have a few regulars. The option to bring a friend was well accepted (requested by members initially and taken on board by the team to accommodate this).
- They create positive environments for participants to build new friendships outwith usual groups.
- The opportunity also helps staff build trustful relationships with community members and a chance for them to share feedback on access to FC services and any existing barriers

Engagement in Equality Outcomes 2021-2025 – feedback and discussions

As part of all our engagement activities (monthly Get Togethers, Equality Collective consultations and awareness campaign events such as International Women’s Day), we ask individuals if they would like to share views about the Fife Council Equality Outcomes 2021-2025.

We carried out 12 interviews during 2022-2023 and noticed individuals were mainly interested invested in a specific topic or outcome (e.g. website accessibility) and did have views across all outcomes. This is informing our programme for 2023-2024 and our engagement with equality and interest groups on specific concerns.

Outcome 1: “Fife’s communities are provided with services and information accessible to them, particularly those who face barriers through disability, language and digital exclusion.”

- 5 participants shared their views on this outcome. 2 explained that digital exclusion was a serious issue and that they missed paper leaflets delivered through the door, on notice boards, key locations like bus stops etc, letting them know of existing initiatives and consultations. The key services this concerned were transport and bin collection days.
- 1 individual particularly was concerned about **digitally excluded disabled people**, especially those that were hard of hearing. A suggested action was to have a postal address provided for communications (as e-mail and phone are inaccessible to them).
- 1 shared that the **language used** in most consultation was “highly complex” and inaccessible by several residents who then avoided taking part in what could concern them directly
- 1 individual explained that as a **refugee** “paperwork requires a lot of strength, nerves and time, everything is so confusing, it is difficult for us to understand

this system.’ The core issue was the lack of support with information on local procedures, security about their housing situation and lack of clarity about routes to employment.

- 1 individual described how sidewalks were inaccessible and unsafe for **disabled persons** (wheelchair / powerchair user) due to lack of dropped kerbs. In particular, it was not clear which sidewalks were navigable when making a journey.

Outcome 2: *“Women and girls live free from all forms of violence and abuse – and the attitudes that help perpetuate it.”*

- 5 participants shared their views on this outcome. 3 shared that that several women don’t feel safe in their communities/ certain parts of where they live, nor do they feel comfortable walking on the streets at dark – both from minority and White Scottish backgrounds.
- 2 have shared they are scared to go out of their house, cook their native food, turn the lights on when at home, because of anti-social behaviours towards them.
- 2 have been and are still experiencing harassment because of their race. Both are in contact with the council and have complained on several occasions. 1 case is moving but slowly and no-time frame has been given, even though the lady has been told she’ll be moved for her safety. In the other case the lady feels her concerns are not taken seriously and she feels she is not supported according to her needs.
- 2 shared that their situation negatively impacts their mental and physical health and has worsen their long-term conditions.
- 2 would like to be independent.
- 1 positive feedback on the work FVAWP is doing and the positive difference it makes.
- 1 trans women explained feeling unsafe using public transport

Outcome 3: *“Fife’s communities (including people from the protected characteristics) have increased confidence to participate in decision making, their human rights respected and have an improved quality of life.”*

- 2 participants shared their views on this outcome and both explained that they became more involved during lock-down and feel empowered to make a difference benefiting their local communities.
- 1 participant feels more welcome is in involved in more participation panels since being in contact

- 1 participant shared they felt the digitally excluded population does not have the same access to participation due to lack of awareness of ongoing campaigns and possibilities to participate (online promotion and submission).

Outcome 4: “The Council understands its workforce better and it reflects the diversity of the local population.”

- Feedback on this outcome to be shared as part of FCE’s Employment Survey report (to be published).

Outcome 5: “*Raising educational achievement and attainment particularly for those in their early years or in early learning and childcare.*”

- No feedback from residents or community members gathered on this outcome by 30 March 2023.

Further Information

More information about the Equality Collective or other FCE's projects, please contact Fife Centre for Equalities by email info@centreforequalities.org.uk, telephone 01592 645 310 or text 07800 005834.

Fife Centre for Equalities aims to build a collective voice to champion equality, diversity, inclusion and social justice across Fife and beyond.

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