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Dear Jatin

Many thanks for your letter dated 9 June, and for all the points within it.

We all have a duty to be clear in our support for anti-racism. This moment in history gives us an opportunity to tackle with renewed fervour many of the underlying issues that we already know affect our minority ethnic communities.

The Scottish Government believes racism should never be tolerated and we have taken concerted action to address racism and discrimination. I encourage everyone else to do the same.

You raise a number of points in your letter.

In the Year 2 Progress report on the Race Equality Action Plan, we committed to publishing in 2020 a Race Recruitment and Retention Plan. The Plan will build on the targets we have already set on the recruitment of minority ethnic people into the Senior Civil Service and will focus on increasing the proportion of minority ethnic people at all levels of our organisation to deliver our ambition to be representative of the communities we serve (in other words: that 5% of our workforce should identify as being from a visible minority ethnic community). It will also place significant emphasis on engaging with and improving the experience of new and existing minority ethnic employees. It will describe our continuing actions to build a culture of inclusion and will set out how we intend to address discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of race, taking an intersectional approach, and to support minority ethnic employees who experience such unacceptable behaviour including increasing reporting.

A final year report of this Plan will be published in 2021, which will include consideration of activity across all relevant portfolios, including particular attention to the issues which have been highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic. To this end, we have established a new Expert Reference Group to look at the impact of Covid-19 on minority ethnic communities.

I understand that you are a member of this Group, which met for the first time on 10 June and will meet again on 25 June to ensure that next steps and actions are established, and acted upon, rapidly and with appropriate expert input. This group will be specifically considering issues around data and how improvements can be made around this.

I am assured by officials that they are working closely with organisations like CRER and others to ensure feedback from experts and people with lived experience are fed directly into what these next steps will be. What we are continuing to learn from the Black Lives Movement and the ongoing pandemic will not be lost.

You raise several points about the role that education plays in combating racism.

While there are no plans to amend the Curriculum for Excellence benchmark guidance, officials from the Government's Learning Directorate are currently in discussion on these issues with Education Scotland. Efforts will be made on how best to support teachers to bring racial equality matters into learning and teaching.

In reference to mandatory recording of racist and prejudice based bullying in schools, in August 2019 we introduced a new national approach to recording and monitoring incidents of bullying in Scottish Schools. This approach was introduced without the need to mandate and was a voluntary agreement between this government and all 32 local authorities.

The bullying and equalities module on SEEMiS, the schools management information system, has been updated to reflect the new approach. And, the list of characteristics that can be reported on within SEEMiS includes bullying based on race and racism including culture.

The introduction of this new national approach to recording and monitoring of bullying incidents is essential and best carried out locally where recurring patterns can be understood and acted upon. This consistent and uniform approach will help identify key measures and actions that can be undertaken to address bullying.

You have asked about the inclusion of analysis and narrative on racial disparities within all progress reporting on the National Performance Framework (NPF) and for disaggregated data by ethnicity. Within the NPF understanding racial disparities and having robust data is key to delivering the best outcomes for Scotland. Within the NPF, breakdowns (including ethnicity) on indicators are reported via the Equality Evidence finder, where available. Or they can be found on the open data platform at statistics.gov.scot.

Breakdowns by ethnicity are reported for 14 out of 81 NPF indicators. For some NPF indicators, providing a disaggregation by ethnicity is not possible due to the nature of the indicator or source of data (e.g. Natural Capital, GDP)

Where the indicator should report breakdowns by ethnicity, but does not, this may be due to low sample sizes or non-statistically significant findings. However, we are continually working with lead analysts to improve the availability of data, where possible, on the Equality Evidence Finder.

On the points of a national museum, it is important that we honour the heritage of our African, Caribbean and Asian communities and highlight stories, experiences and achievements which have – far too often – been ignored. We must also recognise Scotland's role in the atrocities that were committed as part of empire building and the adhorrent slave trade.

Recently, Parliament passed motion (S5M-22004.2) stating that Scotland should establish a slavery museum to address our historic links to the slave trade. Officials will begin looking at ways that we can take this forward in partnership, and I anticipate that CRER and Glasgow City Council will be part of that conversation given the wealth of experience and leadership you have shown in this area.

I thank you for your ongoing efforts to support equality for the people of Scotland, particularly our minority ethnic communities.



NICOLA STURGEON