

POVERTY  
AND  
EDUCATION

## CONVENER'S STATEMENT

Equality of opportunity is one of the most important cornerstones of EIS policy and practice. Concerns and anxieties of teachers about the disproportionate impact financial cutbacks and 'free market' policies were having on education, with particular reference to poverty, led the EIS to establish a working group to look at socio economic issues and education. This paper is the result of its deliberations.

The paper does not take a narrow perspective. Using current work from a number of organisations and individuals, with specialist interest in this field, it reflects, and quotes throughout, not only our views but also those of researchers and practitioners in the field of education and poverty. It draws its conclusions from evidence presented to and examined by the working group.

The EIS believes that education must promote principles of social justice and equality. It is difficult to accept, therefore, that for many it may have perpetuated injustice and inequality. Systems put in place allegedly to promote choice have served to increase inequalities in our society. The widening gap between rich and poor and the increased number of children living in poverty are a question of human rights. Poverty denies people choices and it denies them access to fundamentals of health, housing and education.

Throughout a difficult period of change in attitudes towards employment, welfare, private and public provision, many individuals and organisations worked hard to keep these issues to the fore and to alert people to the dangers of increasing levels of poverty and the impact on the public good. These were not the voices of vested interests trapped in some bygone era as some would have it. These were the voices of communities, schools, parents, teachers and other concerned individuals representing legitimate concerns.

Poverty, like race, gender and disability is subject to stereotyping. This can lead to blame being placed on the individual, and prevent solutions which need to recognise the role government and society have played in creating systems which have increased poverty and the role they must play in dismantling those systems. This paper hopes to challenge some of the more damaging of these views which gained currency over the past twenty years. It also challenges the increasingly strident view, in some quarters, that comprehensive education is failing children.

On the eve of a Scottish Parliament it is proper to reflect on the system of education that has served the people of Scotland well.

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## INTRODUCTION

The EIS has been a major contributor to the debate on the development of comprehensive education in Scotland and in particular the aim of equality of opportunity, access and outcome for all young people. In recent years the EIS has been at the forefront of the defence of Scottish education at a time when the principles which underpinned the comprehensive system were under attack from a government in Westminster. The election of a new government, together with the setting up of a parliament in Edinburgh presents new challenges for all who wish to take forward the debate as to how comprehensive education can grow and develop.

This paper summarises the progress made by comprehensive school education to eliminating inequalities in education. However, socio-economic factors still present barriers to many in Scotland which prevent them from gaining full access to educational opportunities. The EIS is committed to ensuring that these barriers are reduced for the benefit of all. The paper summarises some of the available evidence and makes proposals for the reduction of these barriers. We have no doubt that others will wish to develop this debate and promote a more just society.

## Section 1 Comprehensive Education

"The aim of providing a comprehensive education has a long history in Scotland. . . Such an aim was the focus of legislation as far back as 1696 . . . I am determined to stand squarely in this Scottish tradition of extending and improving educational provision for the benefit of every single child in the country."  
*Brian Wilson, MP, Scottish Minister of State for Education, speech to EIS conference "Education -the Equal Opportunities Agenda for the Millennium" May 1997.*

"Children's access to education should, as a matter of legal right, be independent of their social circumstances so far as is practically possible . . ." *L Paterson paper prepared for "Education, Local Government and the Scottish Parliament", 18 February 1998.*

"The Pool of ability concept (i.e. the notion that ability was in permanent short supply and that only a minority was capable of benefiting from a full secondary course) has been exposed as a dangerous myth" *SEJ 1965*

"Great concern is expressed about the declining availability and quality of resources. Parents are conscious of the effects of inadequate resources upon the standard of education experienced by their children at present. A direct link is made to cuts in the funding of education in Scotland."  
*System3 Scotland/EIS 1997 Education in 1996, Scots speak out.*

"Parents reject the process of selection used in the past because of the stigma attached to certain schools, and the rigidity which

The EIS is committed to a comprehensive system of education on the grounds that this is the best means of ensuring equality of worth for all learners, promoting social justice and allowing the needs of individual learners to be recognised and addressed effectively.

The very different social and economic circumstances of the present day do not alter the principles of equality of access and outcome which underpinned the major education reform of the post war era.

The vision of a publicly funded comprehensive system of education which was responsive, life long and professional was justifiable at the time and remains so. It represented a consensus of opinion that social class should not act as a barrier to education and, therefore, advancement.

The lad o' pairts, that is a young man of talent from wherever or whatever background, gaining access to university and breaking the mould in any numbers is accepted as myth by all involved in education. Even with the aspirations of the immediate post war years the education system was not egalitarian and failed large numbers of children. Equality of access to a selective system did not address deep rooted structural inequalities.

The importance of the comprehensive system was that it challenged myths of equality of access and, therefore, the supposed benefits of selective schooling. It was a break from an elitist past. The scale of the change was remarkable and is often forgotten. Improvements were dramatic particularly where schools had been formerly designated as junior secondary. Equally impressive were the new schools which served the large post war housing estates.

The development of the comprehensive system in Scotland has been accompanied by a steady increase in the numbers of young people staying on at school. This has resulted in higher levels of attainment of school leavers and a narrowing gap in attainment between young people from disadvantaged and advantaged backgrounds. There has also been an increase in the number of girls achieving success in examinations and one of the highest levels of first degree attainment within the European Union. Standards set for school certification have not fallen during this period.

Public satisfaction with the system is high evidenced by the failure of certain policies introducing the free market into education and designed to undermine it. A survey in 1996 of public and parental opinion conducted by System 3 (Scotland) and the EIS confirmed satisfaction with the comprehensive system. Any criticism about perceived falling standards was levelled at government for underfunding and under-resourcing. Scottish Young People's Surveys also point to satisfaction with the educational experience.

Those who benefited from the initial reform and who are now parents and teachers themselves played a significant part in defending comprehensive education from the worst excesses of the free market

meant it was impossible to achieve more than was deemed possible . . .

."

*IBID*

". . . overall income inequality was greater in the mid-1990s than at any time in the forty years from the late 1940s. . . . The degree of inequality is remarkable. In the mid-90s the richest tenth had 27% of total incomes after housing costs, whereas the poorest tenth had 2.2%."

*Labour Research Department based on "Income and Wealth, the latest evidence" John Hills.*

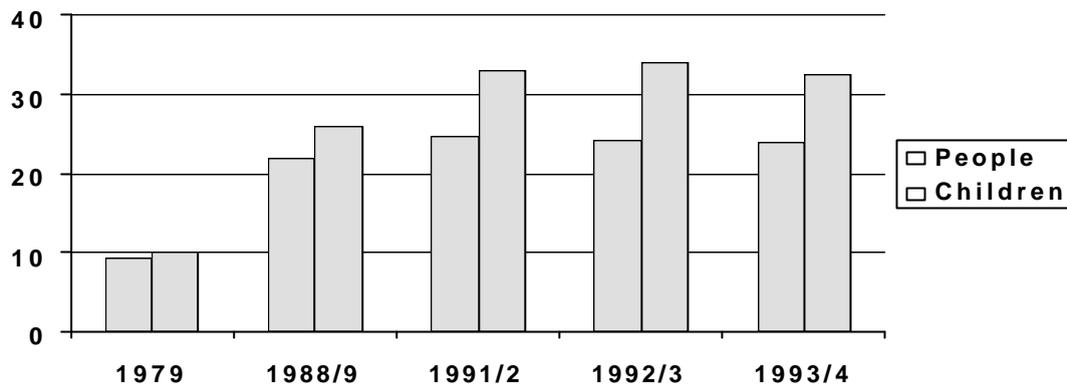
philosophy of the 1980's. There is genuine concern that there should be no return to the selective schooling of the past.

The system is not without its flaws and there have been contradictions and tensions throughout its development. There remains gender segregation along subject lines; a significant number of pupils, especially boys, are disaffected by their school experience; there remains an unacceptably wide gap between advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds, especially in access to higher education.

The greatest tensions have arisen when resources and finance do not match the requirements of provision or the complex needs of learners. These tensions have increased as a result of successive and savage cuts in public funding.

The policies of the 80's left a legacy difficult to address. Apart from its effects on the ability of local government to address economic disadvantage it left many children, young people, and adults too cold, too hungry, too disaffected or simply too tired to take advantage of education.

The Growth of poverty 1979 - 1993/4 UK (percentage)  
HOUSEHOLDS BELOW AVERAGE INCOME 1979 - 1993/4  
HMSO



## Section 2 Poverty

"People live in poverty when they are denied an income sufficient for their material needs and when these circumstances exclude them from taking part in activities which are an accepted part of daily life." *Child and Family Poverty in Scotland 2nd Edition. Glasgow Caledonian University and Save the Children.*

"Social Exclusion is defined as 'the failure of one or more of the following four systems:

- the democratic and legal system, which promotes civic integration
- the labour market, which promotes economic integration
- the welfare system, promoting what may be called social integration
- the family and community system which promotes interpersonal integration'."

(*Jos Berghman, EU Poverty 3 Programme*)

"There has been an increase in poverty for all economic groups, with people who are unemployed, work part-time or are self-employed increasingly vulnerable to poverty. Additionally the risk of poverty for

There is no one definition of poverty in Britain. Absolute poverty, meaning the inability to satisfy minimum biological needs of food and clothing, and which informed early welfare reformers, has fallen into disuse.

Relative poverty considers social and cultural factors and the standard of living of a society. It is a more meaningful concept as it allows consideration of wider needs. Poverty is a major component in multiple deprivation where factors combine and reinforce disadvantage.

The term *social exclusion* is now used regularly. The recently established "Social Exclusion Unit" views it as the means of excluding large numbers of people from participating in society. It is not solely about poverty or multiple deprivation.

In 1993, the Commission of the European Council used the term *social exclusion* to describe the situation where people were excluded from the normal 'exchanges, practices and rights of modern society.'

If *social exclusion* as defined by EU Poverty 3 programme is accepted, a fifth system, education, may be added, exclusion from which makes it difficult to get access to any other system. The education people receive and the support received in early childhood plays a significant part in later development and life chances.

Evidence suggests that particular groups of people are more vulnerable to poverty and may find it more difficult to break out of poverty. Elderly people, lone parents, disabled people, people with children fall into this category.

Increased incidence of short-term, zero hour contracts and other insecure terms of employment adds to this number.

those families where only one partner works or where both are engaged in part time work has more than doubled..." *Scottish Poverty Information Unit 1997*

"... in the 1980s changes in income distributions became, for the first time, sufficiently rigid and substantial for researchers to be able to identify their social effects." *Unfair Shares. The effect of widening income differences in the young. Richard Wilkinson - Barnardo's 1994.*

"Economically more active households have moved in and been replaced by more vulnerable and less stable groups with even greater difficulties in accessing city-wide opportunities. Initial barriers of low skill, poor transport and weak labour market linkages have been reinforced by poor health, low morale and achievement, inefficient matching of residents to available opportunities, lack of aftercare and stigmatisation by employers and policy makers." *Closing the Gap. The Craigmillar Strategy. Capital City Partnership. Creating sustainable regeneration in Edinburgh.*

"... the strategy involves identifying the factors which cause poverty and are within the council's control. Causes are not as easily targeted as symptoms, because their more fundamental nature often takes them outside a single council's control." *West Dumbartonshire Council Anti-Poverty Strategy*

"Disadvantage isolates communities and sets them apart. In that sense, contexts of disadvantage are 'different worlds': they are worlds defined and bounded by their own disadvantage. Those who are located in such worlds gain their sense of identity and community, in part at

There are many theories about the causes of poverty from structural to psychological which apportion blame to the individual. Such theories have provided the basis for government policy and provision.

The 'trickle down' theory of wealth creation, now discredited, has left an unfortunate and often tragic legacy. The number of people living on incomes below half the average income increased. The gap between rich and poor became the widest in Europe and a higher number of children live in poverty in Britain than elsewhere in Europe. It is estimated that one in three children in Scotland live in households dependent on income support.

The 'underclass' or 'undeserving poor' allegedly exists because of the welfare system. There is no evidence to support the concept of an 'underclass' or of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor.

Applied to education the 'trickle down' theory led to policies of opting out, assisted places, parental choice. Equality in education became the enemy of quality, allowing mediocrity to flourish.

Applied at a time of cuts to education and other public sector budgets, and hostility towards local government as anything other than an enabling force, it created enormous problems.

In the absence of national plans to combat disadvantage created by economic policy, local authorities were left in extremely difficult circumstances to adopt their own models to address disadvantage and poverty. Many of these were imaginative, caring and met with some success.

Despite the fact that the "trickle down" theory is now discredited many structures remain in place which do not sit well with ideas of equity. Even with some tampering at the edges this remains the case.

For the purposes of this report each council was asked to provide its Anti-Poverty Strategy. All councils expressed a commitment to tackling disadvantage where they had the power to do so. Some solutions are beyond their power.

Many believe a multi-agency/inter-departmental approach is the most effective way of combating disadvantage. However, the overall level of funding and how funds are distributed within councils leads to problems. Often departments charged with the responsibility of alleviating disadvantage find themselves having to compete for scarce resources.

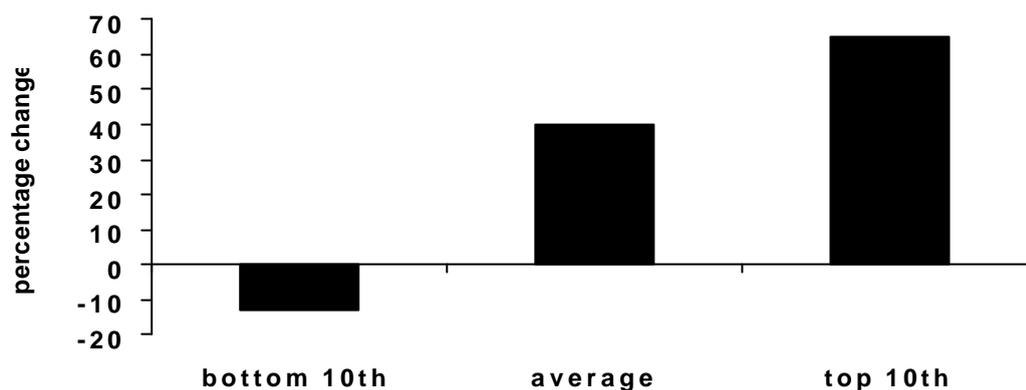
Important as it is to arrive at an understanding of the causes of poverty and to distinguish this from its symptoms, there are few words which can convey the sense of disempowerment that often accompanies it.

This is particularly the case where, regardless of personal and family resources or neighbourhood and community resources, the political

least, through the experience of alienation and difference."  
*Confronting 'Failure': towards a pedagogy of recognition:* J Nixon, J Martin, P McKeown, S Ranson

and economic forces are overwhelming. In these circumstances, schools on their own cannot address deep-rooted social and economic problems.

### Change in real income, 1979 - 1993/94, UK income groups



Changes in the structure of the Scottish workforce by gender 1981-1995		
	FULL TIME	PART TIME
FEMALE		
1981	528,000	332,000
1985	551,300	460,400
% CHANGE	+4.4	+38.7
MALE		
1981	1,046,800	57,900
1985	900,200	86,500
% CHANGE	-14.0	+49.4
Source: Census of Employment 1981 and 1985, Office of National Statistics		

## Section 3 Poverty and education

"Social Class is contentious in Scotland also for deeper cultural and historical reasons. The myth o' the lad o' pairts asserts the irrelevance of class to personal educational achievement. To confront the myth with evidence that this is manifestly not so is, therefore, to challenge a central belief of the society: and there is now a large volume of research which does this." *L Paterson "Social Class in Scottish Education". Paper contained in "Class, Race and Gender in Schools" 1992.*

"... mothers of school age children from all socio-economic backgrounds, and living in different parts of the country, continually referred to the additional financial pressures which school now brings to the family budget" *Family Fortunes - Middleton S, Ashworth K, Walker R.*

"One in twenty mothers in Britain particularly the mothers on income support go without food to meet the needs of their child." *Middleton S, Ashworth K Braithwaite I, 'Small Fortunes' Joseph Rowantree Foundation 1997*

"..Devolution (budgetary) is becoming increasingly fashionable .... However, our research suggests that countries may face a trade-off in terms of devolution (e.g. greater accountability and flexibility) and equity objectives" *Cooper & Lybrand, NUT & EIS*

"In some areas the ability of different households to make financial contributions to the shortfall in funding highlighted economic inequalities between children in small schools" *Schucksmith et al, Aberdeen University.*

Poverty in itself is not a barrier to educational attainment but what surrounds it may be. This is a complex and frequently uncomfortable field. There are no simple solutions and certainly no cheap solutions.

Areas of cities where there is predominantly low income and economic disadvantage have similar experiences. There are likely to be low levels of attainment and behavioural and emotional difficulties. There are also likely to be high levels of truancy, exclusion and lower staying on rates.

Material factors such as clothing, housing, nutrition and transport, individually and collectively, not only affect access to education but determine the capacity to learn. This is well documented in a number of studies into each of these issues and their relationship to education.

Having children at school is a costly business. Basic items such as uniforms are expensive. Paying for school trips and other extras increases the cost. Many parents expect this and budget for it, others are unable to do so.

Evidence from groups working with children and families who are disadvantaged or live in disadvantaged areas suggests that costs go beyond added extras. Choices are made between food and clothing so that children do not miss out. This added pressure can increase the differential experience.

The capacity of a school to fund raise to buy what is not provided by the local authority; the capacity of parents to enhance education through trips to museums outwith school hours, even how the school itself is funded may add to inequalities.

Recent studies have shown that devolved budgets to schools lead to greater inequalities between schools.

Many local authorities now find themselves in the position of passing certain costs, e.g. instrumental tuition, on to parents for parts of the curriculum. This affects all families not just those experiencing severe disadvantage. Whilst there are real attempts to ensure that the most disadvantaged children do not miss out, even a minimum addition to the cost of education can have a serious effect on a limited family budget.

The importance of schools developing self esteem, which contributes to higher attainment and to breaking patterns of under-achievement, is well documented. However, this is only part of the equation.

In recognising the importance of education in combating disadvantage, some local authorities did understand the importance of widening definitions of achievement. The sum total of a school's achievement should not be measured by a narrow focus on examination results. Many schools, teachers, parents and carers committed to young people achieve success in circumstances of overwhelming odds.

"The neighbourhood effect, irrespective of school attended or family background, was enough to substantially raise or depress attainment". Garner, 'Does deprivation Damage' 1989 cited in "Early intervention in literacy" ADES presentation 1997

"Yet it remains the case, from the evidence presented to this report, that the social composition of higher education in the UK continues to reflect the advantages which accrue to people from higher socio-economic groups by reason of wealth, culture and prior educational success."

*Dearing Report 6 "Widening participation in higher education for students from lower socio-economic groups and students with disabilities."*

Economic disadvantage can be overcome and compensated by social advantage e.g. parental aspirations and education; the value placed on education by family, peer group, neighbourhood and community. These are powerful influences in forming attitudes towards education.

The length of time in poverty and the ability to move in and out of poverty are important factors in educational attainment.

Poverty can have different effects at different times in a person's life. The ability to add to the early learning experiences of a child affects later attitudes towards learning. In the 16-18 year age group the social divide is most marked particularly in identifying and gaining access to further and higher education or employment opportunities.

Amongst lower socio economic groups life-long learning tends to be vocational, or employment related. The majority of adult returners to further education are women.

Life long learning opportunities are more likely to be taken up not by those on low incomes but on higher income levels or who have benefited from education throughout their lives.

The role of the community in providing support, networks and opportunities is important.

Very often the physical energy required to overcome disadvantage in the face of everything else that is going on can act as a barrier to educational opportunities.

Living with the effects of poverty and lack of employment opportunities may lead to suspicion of or hostility towards education.

People should not be condemned for being poor. Many people struggle to overcome difficulty and campaign for better provision particularly for children. Lone parents are one such vulnerable group.

Communities which campaigned to save local schools from closure did so because they recognised that something of value was being lost.

The circumstances from which people come is important but so too are the reactions to these circumstances of different groups of people.

## Housing and education

Shelter, in collaboration with the Institute for the study of Education and Society at the University of Edinburgh, is currently investigating the impact which stressed housing conditions have on children's education.

"... more than one in four households are highly dependent on benefits..." *Scottish House Condition Survey 1996*

"Households renting from either the public or private sectors, single parent families, large families and households on lower incomes experience a substantially higher incidence of dampness and/or condensation than other groups." *Scottish House Condition Survey 1996*

It will track how well children perform at school as they move through different types of housing situations.

The benefits of good housing are well documented. In 'No Place to Learn', Shelter examined the effects of homelessness on young people. It has also examined the importance of warm, well insulated housing with sufficient privacy to learn, study and do homework.

Over the past twenty years the changes in attitudes towards housing provision has had a disproportionate effect on people with lower incomes. According to Shelter, Scotland has the worst housing conditions in northern Europe.

The Scottish House Condition Survey (1996) showed that 367,000 children live in houses that are affected by dampness and condensation.

This survey states the most common reason for occupied stock falling Below the Tolerable Standard is rising or penetrating damp. The next most common reasons are inadequate natural and artificial light, ventilation and heating. It indicates that whether renting from public or private sectors, people on lower incomes experience a substantially higher incidence of dampness and/or condensation than other groups.

Every year around 20,000 children in families are accepted as homeless by local authorities. This represents approximately 80 every working day. As a result, at any one time, there can be up to 5,000 children living in temporary accommodations like bed and breakfast or hostels. Families can be moved a number of times before secure housing is found.

Families who contact Shelter Aid Centres are in no doubt about the effect that living in bed and breakfast accommodation has on their children and are especially worried about the long term impact of even a short term disruption to their education.

"Access to affordable housing is extremely difficult for people on low income. It is also clear that poor people are much more likely to live in sub-standard housing." *Child and Family Poverty in Scotland 1996*

Whether it is overcrowding making studying difficult, dampness causing ill health and absence from school or temporary accommodation disrupting education at critical times a large number of children are affected by housing circumstances.

## Rural poverty

Whilst urban poverty tends to be concentrated in specific areas, rural poverty tends to be dispersed. At an individual level there may be different responses to low income, culture and community.

In Scotland there is a wide diversity in rural areas e.g. remote, scattered communities and rural communities with access to good road and transport networks. Also many of these communities contain people who are there by choice and who may commute to larger towns or who seek the isolation of a small community.

The COSLA paper 'Local Strategies to tackle rural disadvantage' shows the wide differences in Scotland between rural areas. Some had very high incidences of deprivation and poverty amongst families and others high incidences of poverty affecting elderly people. In some areas poverty is concentrated near towns in sizeable pockets.

*“this construct of the rural idyll is deeply ingrained in our national conscience; so much so that often the real messages from the countryside can be overpowered, by our notion of rural ‘good’ and ‘urban bad’”*  
*National Rural Enterprise Centre*  
*1996 Rural Briefing*

Very often people who live in rural areas do not consider themselves to be disadvantaged because of lack of income, seeing the quality of life as more than compensating for lack of material wealth. However, there are myths attached to rural living. For many there is no such thing as a 'rural idyll'. The closure of a local industry and the subsequent loss of employment can have a devastating effect on a small community.

The few studies there are of rural areas suggest that people who live in them believe there to be a complete misunderstanding of rural areas. This includes not only responses to poverty but issues such as transport which is essential to the quality of life in rural areas. The absence of public or private transport affects access to a number of services. It is a major concern that lack of an integrated transport system affects access to further education. The assumption that every one has access to private transport is to misunderstand the additional and higher cost of this form of transport in rural areas.

*“In rural areas a good education was still referred to as the key to success, even though such success generally equated with leaving a rural area”.*  
*Schucksmith et al, Aberdeen*  
*University*

These studies also show a high degree of satisfaction with the education system in rural areas. There is a recognition that access to education may provide the means for young people leaving a rural community with very little employment prospects to attract them back

Despite this, rural schools show a high level of success by any measure of achievement. Examination results even in schools situated in the most deprived areas are very high. This may indicate the importance of community and parental attitudes in influencing levels of achievement.

'Disadvantage in rural Scotland - How is it experienced and how can it be tackled?' studied a number of areas in Scotland and is an important contribution towards understanding the needs of rural areas. In one area studied, so poor as to be eligible for objective one funding, the local secondary school was particularly successful.

However, the lad o'pairts is an enduring myth and very often the evident success of schools

in rural areas masks real problems. This is also the case in areas that tend to be viewed as affluent.

There is a very important role for the primary school in rural areas. It may provide the means to offset disadvantage. Often it is the heart of the community providing not only education for children but a focus for all community activity.

There may be similarities between urban and rural experiences of poverty. However, different approaches need to be taken to respond to the specific needs of rural areas.

## Urban areas

*"A substantial proportion of the disadvantaged live in Britain's cities, and in many localities the size and concentration of the disadvantaged population represents a contemporary urban crisis." M Pacione  
The geography of the new underclass*

A number of studies have shown that areas of large towns and cities which share similar characteristics of disadvantage point to under-achievement as a major problem. These areas are either old, industrial inner city areas or peripheral housing estates. Their problems are many and increased over the past twenty years. It is also recognised that many families in relatively affluent parts of cities suffer directly from the effects of poverty.

The studies also suggest that the legacy of successive cuts in local government funding and the introduction of market principles into education have exacerbated problems.

The operation of parental choice has had a disproportionate effect in schools serving such areas. This creates strains on these schools and the concept of comprehensive education. Several councils receive pupils from neighbouring councils to the detriment of the deprived authorities.

Studies of the effects of parental choice suggest that social segregation has increased in urban areas.

*"There are communities, but there are 'communities-in-the-making', they do not come ready made. Schools are central, we would argue, to the making of 'community'". J Nixon, J Martin, P McKeown, S Ranson, Confronting 'failure', towards a pedagogy of recognition.*

Other studies suggest that despite the many problems facing people who live in deprived communities they are loyal to them. They work hard to develop resources for the community and build a sense of community. The presence of schools in the area plays a major part in this. To reinforce these problems by constant reference to failure is part of the stigmatisation of the school and the area.

One study of Glasgow by Professor M Pacione, University of Strathclyde, demonstrates the link between environment and educational attainment.

In making the links Professor Pacione also makes the point that where you live still has a bearing on educational attainment. His conclusion is that policy should be directed to ensure that such social injustice does not persist.

Following is his summary of his paper, made anonymous, with one of the tables contained in it. Also, there is a flow chart describing the effects of multiple deprivation, of which poverty is a major component.

## Appendix: Summary descriptions of cluster characteristics

“The direct positive relationship between levels of educational attainment and quality of the educational environment is supported by empirical evidence of the geography of educational disadvantage within cities.”

### *Cluster I*

Schools have a below-average percentage of pupils in receipt of clothing grants and free meals, and a correspondingly above-average proportion of households with heads in social classes 1 and 2. Absenteeism is below the city average, with figures for both authorised and unauthorised absences lowest of all clusters. Catchment characteristics are reflected in examination performances, which are above the city average for both Standard Grade (Credit and Credit-General levels) and Higher Grade A-C, with the latter over twice as high as the city mean. The cluster is representative of an educational environment conducive to above-average levels of attainment.

### *Cluster II*

The 11 members of this cluster are characterised by a high proportion of pupils living in households with heads in social classes 1 and 2 (39%), relatively low take-up of clothing grants (42%) and of free school meals (28%), and absentee rates below the city average. Examination performance is consistently above average, being second only to schools in Cluster I across both Standard and Higher grades. Lower than average running costs per pupil (£2509) are indicative of a location in established well-populated areas of the city. The quality of educational opportunity is mirrored in the fact that six of the schools are under pressure from parental placing requests.

### *Cluster III*

Represents the average benchmark profile with measures on all variables closest to the city mean of all clusters. Significantly, the indicators of examination performance are well below the national norm.

“Despite the central importance of education, opportunities for a decent education are not distributed evenly within Britain’s cities.”

### *Cluster IV*

Absenteeism and uptake of clothing grants and free school meals are above average although not extreme, while the proportion of household heads in social classes 1 and 2 is slightly below average. Examination performance is below average, with the deviation from the norm increasing as pupils progress from Standard Grade to Higher Grade. The above-average running costs per pupil reflect the higher costs of operating within a below-average educational environment.

“The differential quality of the educational environment has a marked impact on the life chances of those born into and brought up in disadvantaged areas.”

### *Cluster V*

Schools in this cluster are similar to those in Cluster IV but the disadvantages of the educational environment are more pronounced. Levels of clothing grants (68%), free meals (49%), authorised

absences (77%), unauthorised absenteeism (5%) and running costs per pupil (£3327) are all well above average. Correspondingly, the three examination performance indicators all record attainment levels well below the city average.

#### *Cluster VI*

The three schools in this cluster record the lowest levels of examination performance (with, for example, a norm of 5.7 at Higher Grade A-C level compared to a city mean of 46.0, which is itself well below the national average of 100). Equally low levels of achievement were recorded at Standard Grade. Levels of absenteeism are well above average, with figures for unauthorised absence over twice the city mean. School running costs are 30% above average. The socio-cultural geography of catchments is characterised by a high proportion of pupils receiving free school meals (52%) and clothing grants (68%), and the lowest proportion of households headed by a member of social classes 1 and 2.

#### *Cluster VII*

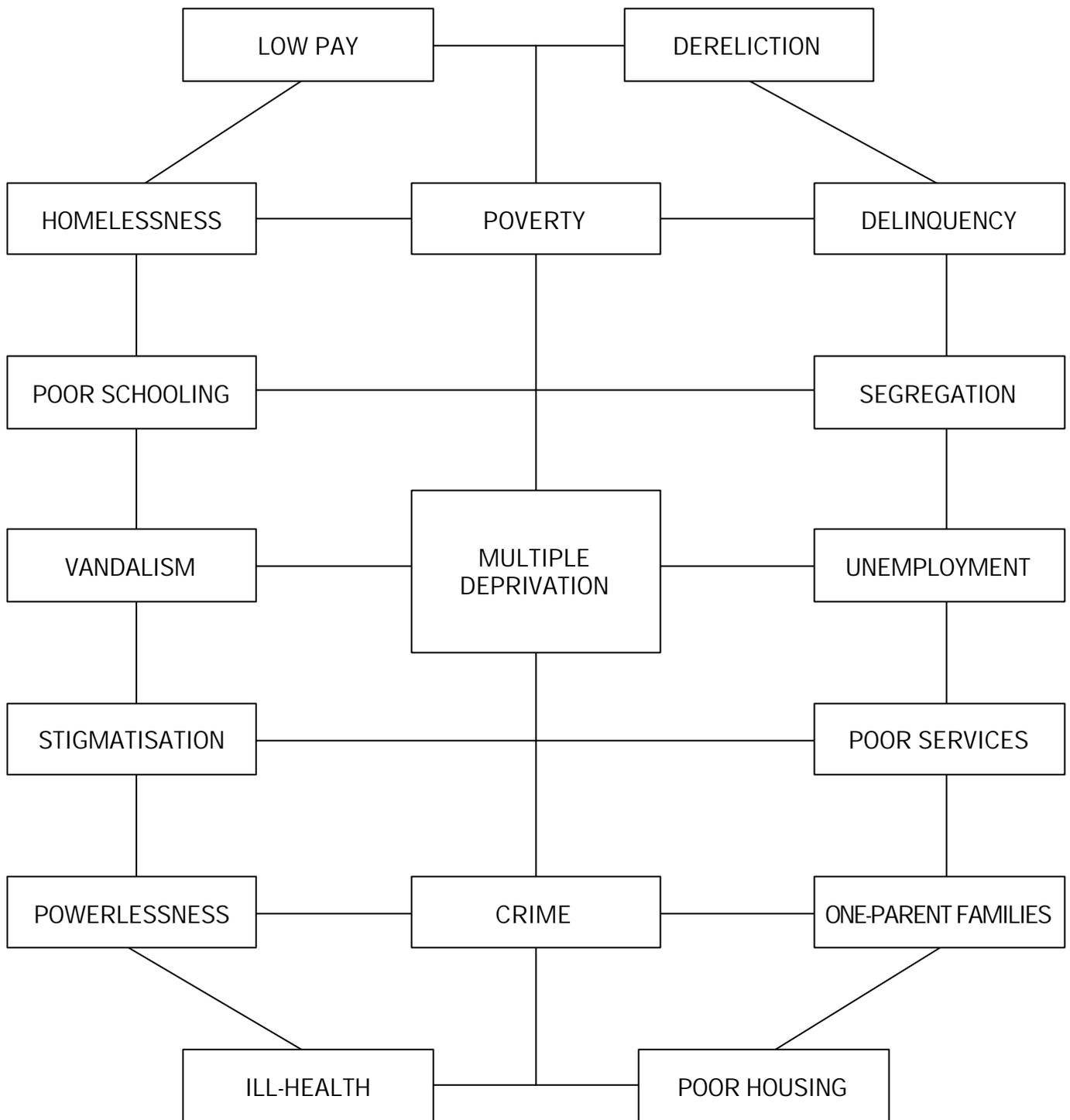
The catchment of the single member of this cluster is characterised by the lowest proportion of households with heads in social classes 1 and 2, and the highest proportions of pupils in receipt of clothing grants (72%) and free school meals (54%). Levels of educational attainment are among the lowest of all clusters. At £4260, the cost per pupil of running the school is the highest in the city. This reflects the age of the structure, high vacancy rate and its location in an inner-city area of transition.

"The market model of education provision is geographically naïve and socially regressive. A more interventionist approach is required which recognises the effects of the quality of the educational environment on future quality of life."

VARIABLE	CLUSTERS							City Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
% pupils in receipt of clothing grant	31.7	41.5	61.3	65.9	68.0	68.3	71.6	56.6
% pupils in receipt of free school meals	20.3	27.6	43.4	48.8	49.3	52.2	53.9	40.5
% household heads in social classes 1 and 2	39.2	39.1	21.0	21.4	20.1	17.7	12.2	26.6
Standard Grade norm at Credit-General level	102.0	91.0	70.0	62.4	54.8	52.7	54.0	72.5
Standard Grade norm at Credit level	94.3	82.4	43.1	37.7	26.0	14.7	18.0	51.1
Higher Grade A-C norm	102.0	78.8	36.9	27.9	24.2	5.7	10.00	46.0
Average number of half-days per pupil authorized absence	53.7	55.9	68.8	73.8	77.4	75.0	92.0	67.6
Average number of half-days per pupil unauthorized absence	2.3	3.1	5.0	4.8	5.2	10.0	3.0	4.6
Running costs per pupil	2208	2509	2769	3025	3327	3761	4260	2895

Source: The Geography of Educational Disadvantage in Glasgow, Professor M. Pacione 1997

Careful examination of the results indicate that there exists a level of multiple deprivation beyond which schools are no longer able to compensate.



Multiple deprivation is the combination of a number of factors, poverty being the major one, which reinforce and perpetuate disadvantage. Poor schooling can be the result of the many complex and interrelated factors of multiple deprivation. Ill-health, for example, sometimes a result of poor housing conditions, may lead to periodic or lengthy absences from school. Problems associated with mental health can lead to emotional and behavioural problems and to negative reactions towards education. A negative reaction may be also a result of parental or peer group attitudes towards education. Where there has been a long history of unemployment it may be difficult to be persuaded of the benefits of education. In areas where there is a high incidence of multiple deprivation there may be higher truancy rates and lower staying on rates.

## SUMMARY

1. The Comprehensive system of education has worked well. Despite the difficulties created by the unnecessary introduction of market forces into education, the comprehensive system has proved to be resilient. This is primarily because of the overwhelming support of the people of Scotland and the fact that the basic principles on which it was founded are sound.
2. Education has been under strain and has suffered in a climate of hostility. However, there is a difference between reviewing how the model works within specific circumstances and abandoning it. It is important to build on its considerable successes. It is possible to put into place systems which may end up destroying it.
3. Many factors influence educational achievement. The consequences of poverty i.e. lack of clothing, adequate housing, reliable transport and nutrition, individually and collectively, affect access to education. Where there is predominantly low income and symptoms of multiple deprivation there are similar patterns of behaviour, truancy and attitudes towards education. Problems in these areas increased over the past twenty years. Schools alone cannot address deep rooted social and economic problems of society.
4. The levels of poverty in Scotland in both rural and urban areas increased during the period of the last government as did the gap between the richest and poorest. This is now the widest in Europe. Income and social class determine access to health, housing and education. The availability of choice did not increase the ability to choose. For many, choice became restricted. The consequences of a view that education is a private right rather than a public good are still being felt by the most vulnerable in our society.

## CONCLUSION

Equality of opportunity owes much to the struggle by women, black/minority ethnic groups and disabled rights campaigners. From initially looking at the actions of individuals or schools and challenging personal prejudices and stereotypes it moved its attention to deep-rooted structural barriers: the glass ceiling, institutional racism and attitudes towards disabled people are considered to be major obstacles to equality. The debate developed from equality of opportunity to equality of access and outcome.

It is recognised that individual action is important but not on its own. Institutional and structural barriers must also be challenged.

The same is true for social class and socio economic status. This barrier to equality has long been neglected.

The structures in place in education from the provision of the curriculum to how to measure achievement in schools must not discriminate overtly or covertly.

- It is essential to close the poverty gap.
- Education is a major factor in closing the poverty gap but on its own is not solely responsible.
- There must be changes to the way in which councils are funded.
- Local authorities must have a clear strategic role with powers and duties.
- Poverty and its effects are not caused by individuals nor can blame be laid there.
- It is essential not to reinforce a perceived cycle of failure by using crude measurements of attainment but ignoring achievement.
- Social exclusion and multiple deprivation must not be confused.
- Comprehensive education must be inclusive, valuing the achievement of every individual.

Who you are and where you live still affects your access to education. This is simply unjust.

# APPENDIX

## Responses from Councils

Each council was asked to provide a copy of its anti-poverty strategy for the purposes of this report.

Twenty four of the thirty two councils responded to the request.

Twelve provided anti-poverty strategies, seven of these were in draft form so up to date details were not always available. Some councils sent the draft policy.

Two councils indicated they had no overall strategy with no plan to develop one. These councils did have policy initiatives to combat individual disadvantage.

Seven councils indicated they are currently developing anti-poverty strategies.

Three councils indicated they did not have a strategy to combat disadvantage or poverty.

Of the twelve councils which provided detailed strategies, three also provided detailed strategy for education.

Where strategies were provided, councils saw education as an essential part of a multi-agency/interdepartmental approach to combat disadvantage and under-achievement. Each department was required to provide a service plan based around the core values of the council.

A number of council strategies provided political, economic, philosophical and historical reasons for the strategy. This helped set them in context.

Most indicated a clear understanding of the importance of education. The development of an excellent education service is viewed as the means of combating disadvantage and enabling people to fulfil their maximum potential.

There was considerable emphasis placed on breaking down departmental barriers. This was particularly evident in councils which had formed part of larger authorities prior to local government reform.

Some councils provided details of urban regeneration programmes involving a considerable input from the education service.

All councils expressed a commitment to tackling disadvantage where they had to power to do so, recognising that some solutions were beyond their power e.g. national economic performance and some national policies outwith their remit.

There was also a clear shift of language and most referred to social exclusion and how to achieve social inclusion across the services offered by the council.

Evident also was the disproportionate distribution of economic disadvantage with some councils trying to provide services against seemingly insurmountable odds.

Where councils covered rural areas the specific problems relating to rural living were recognised.



POVERTY  
AND  
EDUCATION  
SEMINAR REPORT

## Acknowledgements

The EIS would wish to acknowledge the invaluable assistance it received in organising this seminar from the following who gave generously of their time, sharing their work and expertise to ensure the success of this venture.

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Alan Munro  
Julian Smith

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Aileen McCheyne, Domestic  
Moirra McCrossan, Ex-President EIS  
Gillian McGuire, Training and Care Assistant  
Tricia McLaren, Co-ordinator  
Susie Murphy, Tutor  
Pamela Munro, EBD Auxillary/Youth Worker  
Frances O'Boyle, Parent Support Worker  
Irene Paterson, LS - Senior Teacher  
John Patton, President EIS  
Christine Pollock, Depute Director of Education  
Sandra Ramsay, Parent  
Christina Scott  
Samir Sharma, Parent  
Mark Watson, Young Director, Castlemilk Youth Complex

## Poverty and Education: Breaking down the Barriers Report of Seminar held on 23 April 1999

### 1. BACKGROUND

After the publication of the EIS report "Poverty and Education: Breaking Down the Barriers", 1998, discussion took place in the EIS Equal Opportunities Committee on how best to pursue issues arising from the report. There was a reluctance, because of the subject matter of the report, to organise a 'traditional' conference in the first instance. It was agreed to enlist the assistance of Damian Killeen, Director of The Poverty Alliance, who was guest speaker at the Equal Opportunities fringe meeting at which the report was launched, (Annual General Meeting, 1998). He had suggested that the EIS consider a different approach. His proposal for a seminar involving people directly affected by poverty and its impact on children's ability to benefit from education was approved by the EIS Equal Opportunities Committee. It was also agreed that Pamela Munn, Professor of Curriculum Research, Edinburgh University, should be invited to participate in the development of the initiative. Pamela Munn is well known for her work in the area of poverty and education and is a member of The Poverty Alliance Steering Group for a National Anti-Poverty Strategy

A number of meetings took place involving Margaret Nicol, Convener of EIS/EOC Veronica Rankin, EIS, Equality Officer, Damian Killeen and Pamela Munn to determine the scale and nature of a follow-up event. It was decided to try to base any event on the principles underlying social inclusion by inviting people who could bring direct experience to the discussion but who would not normally be asked for their views. A seminar of between 20-30 people was viewed as the most appropriate way of doing this and starting a wider debate on the issues of poverty and education raised in the report. The seminar would be the beginning of a process of debate and dialogue not the end. As far as practicable, those involved in this seminar would continue to be involved in the process.

It was agreed that the participants should reflect geographical, urban, rural, gender and ethnic distribution of Scotland. Also, the participants should be key workers in education or people who directly experience the effects of poverty through their work. They would be invited in a personal capacity not representing any organisation. It was agreed that lead facilitators for the seminar would be Damian Killeen and Pamela Munn with members of the Equal Opportunities Committee, with specific training by Damian Killeen, acting as group facilitators. After passing through the appropriate channels of the EIS it was decided to proceed. Damian Killeen also offered to allocate resources from The Poverty Alliance to assist in the development of this initiative.

Administration for the event was provided by the EIS through the Equality Officer and members of the EIS Equal Opportunities Department, the venue for the seminar was EIS headquarters in Edinburgh.

Identifying participants under broad headings proved difficult for a number of reasons. A direct approach to members of organisations, e.g. parents' groups, lone parents' groups, community groups met with requests for a written invitation. People became anxious that the invitation be formalised through the organisational structures of their particular agency. Some people working in the education system required permission for time off work. Some found it difficult to get time off work unless it was agreed as part of trade union duties.

Eventually a combination of formal approaches and informal contacts within and outwith the EIS, educational management and the trade union movement produced the desired number of people.

## 2. THE SEMINAR

### Purpose of the Seminar

- to identify those aspects of the experience of poverty which affect the ability of children to benefit from education.
- to use the outcomes from the seminar as the basis of a wider debate in the education field in Scotland about the contribution which education services can make to tackling poverty and social exclusion.

### Definitions

It was decided to avoid imposing definitions of poverty as the intention was to focus the discussion on perceptions and attitudes. (These can be compared with the definitions of poverty and social exclusion which are driving current government policy.)

Similarly, a broad approach was adopted towards the definition of education. The whole range of experiences offered by schools and not just the formal curriculum were considered. This included activities initiated by or undertaken in schools, such as extra curricular sports and arts as well as compensatory activities such as breakfast and homework clubs.

## Participants

Twenty five people participated in the seminar. All, including facilitators, were front-line workers in education representing nursery, primary, secondary and special schools, education management, community youth group and parents' group whose role contributed directly to assisting young people to learn. This included secretaries, janitors, classroom assistants, nursery nurses, dining room workers, homework and breakfast club workers, support workers, social worker, directorate, teachers, head teacher and youth workers.

Participants reflected urban and rural areas of Scotland but there were no participants representing the Highlands and Islands.

The aim of providing a balance of gender and ethnic minority representation proved difficult to achieve. The majority of participants were women. Only one member of the black/ethnic minority community was represented and only one young person.

As participants were not invited as representatives of particular institutions they were not expected to adhere to particular policies of authority, school or union. There was no requirement to report back to a delegating organisation. Participants were invited to share their experiences of front line work and the views of poverty and its impact they have derived from this work. It was important, therefore, to ensure confidentiality. All comments were made on the basis of this assurance.

It was important also to ensure there were no barriers to the discussion. Formal introductions were not used and no one knew who anyone was or what anyone did until the second workshop (unless there had been informal chats over coffee). This was intended to overcome perceptions, if any, of the different jobs, knowledge and/or status of participants and to demonstrate that everyone's views and experiences were equally valid and valued. The method used to stimulate discussion is explained throughout the report under the relevant section headings.

It is not possible to capture in this report the detail or liveliness of the discussion. As expected, describing the key issues was much easier than defining reasons for lack of progress or proposing possible solutions.

This was an important event for a number of reasons not least because it operated on the principles underlying social inclusion. It brought together people from diverse backgrounds who would not, in the normal course of events, have the opportunity to share their views and experiences of poverty and how it affects access to education. In this respect it was a truly unusual and very special experience for all participants.

### 3. THE SEMINAR

1000 - 1030

#### WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND CODE OF CONDUCT

#### WELCOME

by EIS Education Convener, George McBride

A welcoming speech to all participants outlined the importance of this event to pursuing an issue which lies at the heart of the EIS commitment to comprehensive education.

## INTRODUCTION and CODE OF CONDUCT

by Damian Killeen, Director of The Poverty Alliance and Pamela Munn, Professor of Curriculum Research, Edinburgh University.

A short introduction was made about the purpose and aims of the seminar.

*The numbers have been kept deliberately small as this is the beginning of a process of raising the debate about poverty. A major disappointment since the election of the government is the failure to properly engage with those directly affected about the impact of poverty and how changes in policy can help or hinder.*

A 'code of conduct' was outlined explaining how the seminar would work.

Participants were reminded that they were at the seminar not representing any organisation but as individuals expressing their views on poverty based on their experience working in the education sectors. There was an expectation that confidentiality would be respected. This would allow people to express their views freely and openly in the seminar. They were also charged to listen carefully to what each other was saying, and when in disagreement or doubt pose questions or challenge views. Participants were encouraged not to feel inhibited as all ideas were valid and it was acceptable to change opinion or views in the light of discussion.

### The Process

The method to be used was outlined:-

- individuals write ideas/views on a 'post it', one per 'post it'
- each 'post it' is stuck on flip chart sheets
- similar ideas are clustered together and evaluated as cause, consequences, opposites
- discussion takes place on issues
- there will be three discussion groups
- each group will be divided into 'hosts' and 'visitors'
- 'visitors' will go to other groups
- the 'hosts' will remain and present their ideas to the 'visitors'
- 'visitors' will ask the 'hosts' questions about their presentation
- each group will have the opportunity to discuss each others views

Sample questions were written on flip chart paper to illustrate how the seminar would develop. If someone writes on a 'post it' e.g. drug taking ask -

How does poverty cause this?

What contribution does education make?

Can 'we' do anything about this?

By the end of the seminar participants will have determined together key issues, key barriers, key actions and who should do what.

1030 - 1100

### SESSION 1

#### PLENARY MAPPING EXERCISE

In order to help everyone understand how the seminar would work the first exercise involved the whole group which was asked the question -

What do you think of when you hear the word poverty?

Ideas were posted onto flip chart paper. After discussion they were clustered into similar themes which were then summarised by the facilitator. (*Appendix 1*)

Within the 30 minutes allocated for this task a wide range of ideas emerged; ideas which showed that lack of money, low self-esteem, low expectations, lack of choice and power were self-perpetuating. Experiences of poor housing, homelessness, debt, poor physical and mental health led to feelings of powerlessness, isolation and disenfranchisement.

## BREAK

1115 - 1200

## WORKING GROUPS

### RESPONSES TO QUESTION

Participants broke into their pre-arranged working groups. These were arranged to provide a cross section of those present.

To prompt discussion group facilitators asked -

'How does poverty affect children's ability to benefit from education?'

individuals put their ideas on 'post its', one for each idea and placed them on the flip chart paper each group prepared a presentation of its views for the 'visitors' each group chose who was to 'host' and who was to 'visit' group statements/presentations were prepared and ideas reduced to one or two sheets of flip chart paper.

There was similarity between the groups in response to this question. A depressingly long list was produced easily by each group. (*Appendix 2*) As in the first exercise there emerged a consensus about what the problems were and that the problems were self-perpetuating. Lack of resources, a negative environment, health, tiredness, lack of money, truancy, limited expectations, peer group pressure and hostility/indifference towards education featured in each list.

1200 - 1300 LUNCH

1300 - 1400 MARKET PLACE

This exercise was time limited. Twenty minutes for 'hosts' and 'visitors' and twenty minutes to review statement/presentation at the end of discussions.

- the 'hosts' stay with their own statement/presentation
- the 'visitors' visit another group in rotation i.e. 1 visits 2, 2 visits 3, 3 visits 1 and so on until back in their original group
- 'hosts' and 'visitors' exchange roles so that everyone becomes involved in discussions of different ideas of different groups
- this rotation continues
- each group made their presentation to the 'visitors' and answered questions
- the groups reconvened in their original groups to make any changes to the presentation in the light of the questions and discussions

So many ideas were put forward that it was difficult for 'hosts' to summarise and present their views to 'visitors'. There was a great deal of intense discussion about effects of poverty at the end of which each group looked again at their summary to make any changes in the light of these discussions. (*Appendix 2*) Common to each group was the belief that the school system can discriminate in a number of ways against people who are poor. The cost of school outings and other activities or a change in council policy about buses can have a disproportionate effect on poorer families. Even more worrying was the belief that this discrimination can take the form of lower expectations of achievement. This was not only by peer group and educators but also young people who experience poverty and their parents. Their sense of self-worth and aspirations can be low. Abilities are not always recognised. Associated problems such as truancy, for whatever reason, make it more difficult to break out of a cycle where school/education was seen to be largely irrelevant or unattainable. Also emerging from each group discussion was the scale of the difficulties facing young people and families, however constituted, who experience poverty. All recognised that the interaction of cause and effect made it difficult to come to hard and fast conclusions about what should be done or who should do what.

1400 -1415 BREAK

## 1415 -1445 PLENARY GROUP STATEMENTS

Groups decided, on the basis of the previous discussions, headings under four key areas:-

### KEY ISSUES/KEY ACTIONS/KEY BARRIERS/WHO SHOULD DO WHAT?

Once this was done the groups re-assembled as one to discuss the findings and vote as a group. The findings of each group were displayed around the room on flip chart paper in the form below:-

Group X

Key Issues	Key Actions	Key Barriers	Who should do what?
Rights of child	fair treatment (consistent) Praise Support Legislation More time	Lack of parenting skills lack of sensitivity and knowledge (in various agencies) Lack of flexibility Lack of trust poor co-ordination Conditions of Service	Adult education (all current providers) + more home-school links In service training <i>parliament</i> Appropriate curriculum Recognition of achievement

Group Y

Key Issues	Key Actions	Key Barriers	Who should do what?
System  Home  Community	Pressure groups lobbying training/ awareness raising  Resources amenities housing partnership  empowerment ownership responsibility removal of alienation research	Powerful interest groups Lack of funding Apathy Complacency Ignorance Lack of Imagination Lack of Communication Fear Rivalry	1. Local/National Government 2. Government Outside Agencies Educators Parents/Carers Church Social Workers 3. Local Politicians Teachers Community Workers Social Workers Voluntary Organisations

## Group Z

Key Issues	Key Actions	Key Barriers	Who should do What?
1. Stifled ambition 2. Lack of confidence and low expectations 3. stigmatisation from peers and educators 4. Access to resources in the whole 5. health/housing issues	1. Funding 2. Community Action/ involvement 3. Social skills from day 1 in education 4. Awareness in government	Political will self awareness (ignorance)  Existing curriculum  Inflexibility of education structure	The New Scottish Parliament  Community to take active part  Trade Unions

1445 -1500

### 5 .VOTING

Each participant was given 6 red stickers. They were advised that they could use as many or as few as they liked e.g. if they thought government was the most important put six stickers next to government; or they could spread the stickers around in any number they chose e.g. 3 for government, 2 for trade unions, 1 for community.

They were asked to vote on what/who could most effectively do something in order that the effects of poverty on children's ability to benefit from education are to be reduced.

The results of the voting

Community to take active part	26
local/national government	24
The new Scottish Parliament	17
Adult Education	14
Appropriate curriculum	14
Recognition of achievement	7
Trade Unions	5
Educators	4
Community Workers	4
Teachers	4
In-service Training	2
Outside agencies	2
Parents/Carers	2
Social Workers	2
Church	1

It is significant that the highest numbers of votes were given to the community and local/national government. From the discussion throughout the day it was clear that the definition of community was very broad including those who live and/or work in the community. It is also significant from the voting that no one viewed the responsibility for ending poverty as that of individuals or groups of individuals. It was a collective responsibility but, and it was a big but, those in a position of power, who can make decisions to effect change, must listen to the voices of the community, to those who have direct experience of the effects of poverty on children's education; top down solutions do not work.

1500-1515

## 6 FINAL SESSION

### WHO SHOULD DO WHAT?

#### Priorities

##### Scottish Parliament

- free up (allow flexibility) the curriculum to be more responsive to the individual needs of children
- prioritise the views of communities
- involve people directly affected by poverty in the development of a national anti-poverty strategy

##### Community

- increase parental participation/partnership in schools.
- celebrate success (all kinds)
- own initiation of ideas of improvement/change

##### Adult Education

- involve/support parents in the process of children's education at all stages.
- Community Schools- How will they benefit the Community?

### WIDENING THE DEBATE

#### HOW?

- Get information to media about our debate (publicise report of this meeting)
- keep it wider than the teaching profession
- hold local forums (including people affected by poverty and young people)
- learn from local authority 'pathfinder' about consultation
- talk to young people about values
- involve parents
- street/neighbourhood meetings facilitated by key workers

1515-1530

### COMMENTS ON SEMINAR

The comments on the seminar were very positive with everyone finding it a worthwhile experience. (*Appendix 3*) There was an initial hesitancy about the method. This timidity was quickly dispelled, however, and heated discussion developed. By the end of the day participants realised how much had been discussed and how many people had managed to contribute their ideas to the discussions. Most importantly, everyone took part on equal terms.

*"I have been here before and this is nothing new. These things have been said over and over again".* This comment was recognised by most participants as perhaps reflecting the reality of trying to break the cycle and the frustration of moving from worthy conferences, seminars, discussions and promises.

*"You may be right but we haven't been here before and in these new circumstances, together, we must move beyond these rooms to close the gap between knowing and doing."*

## Appendix 1

10.30 - 11.00 a.m.

### PLENARY MAPPING EXERCISE

What do you think of when you hear the word poverty?

Views and Ideas posted

Theme A: Lack of Money

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Isolation - Transport costs</li><li>• Can't afford to travel - no car</li><li>• Can't go out and socialise</li><li>• Struggling to exist on basics</li><li>• Lack of warm clothes</li><li>• Lack of access to technology</li><li>• No holiday - no escape</li><li>• Inability to match peers in material factors</li><li>• Material things</li><li>• Poor quality of life</li><li>• Down side of wealth!</li><li>• Living on benefits</li><li>• No money</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low/Poor wages</li><li>• Debt</li><li>• Constant anxiety about paying, debt and money lenders</li><li>• Bereavements</li><li>• Not having money to live on</li><li>• Buying property without adequate funding</li><li>• Borrowing money</li><li>• Having no idea how to handle money</li><li>• Easy access to debt</li><li>• No student bursaries</li><li>• Confusing benefits system</li><li>• No benefits for 16-18 years</li></ul>
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Theme B: Society/Structures

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of facilities</li><li>• unequal distribution of resources</li><li>• Low wage economy</li><li>• High rent &amp; council tax</li><li>• Not enough sense of community</li><li>• Nature of capitalist society</li><li>• Capitalist wealth focused drive economy</li><li>• Greed</li><li>• Poor opportunities for generations - cyclical nature of poverty</li><li>• Poverty should not be tolerated in a civilised society</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An acceptance of the existence of poverty</li><li>• World economic forces</li><li>• Ideology</li><li>• Profit motive</li><li>• Economic policy</li><li>• Politics</li><li>• 18 years of Tory rule</li><li>• Politics</li><li>• Government policies/ strategies</li><li>• Government philosophy - selfishness</li><li>• Lack of response in public sector</li></ul>
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Theme C: Exclusion from learning

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Access to information</li><li>• General Knowledge</li><li>• Lack of access to knowledge</li><li>• History of poor opportunity for education, employment, health</li><li>• Growing exclusion from some school activities which are dependant on family funding</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Having to pay travelling expenses to school from benefits</li><li>• Restriction of cultural and informative experiences</li><li>• Education is not for you</li><li>• No books in house</li></ul>
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#### Theme D: Lack of choice

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of choice and opportunity</li><li>• Low intelligence</li><li>• Disadvantage</li><li>• Lack of support</li><li>• No recognition</li><li>• Culture</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Divisive</li><li>• Chaotic routines</li><li>• Living for the moment</li><li>• You live day to day - no future plans</li><li>• No choices in life</li><li>• Exclusion</li><li>• Absence of choice</li></ul>
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#### Theme E: Work

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unemployment</li><li>• Loss of job</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No jobs</li><li>• Low pay/casual work rates</li></ul>
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#### Theme F: Housing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Locality</li><li>• Bad/ Poor housing</li><li>• Homelessness</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cold</li><li>• Sub standard housing</li><li>• Poverty dictates where you live. You have no choice</li></ul>
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#### Theme G: Family

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poverty is arriving home to an empty house</li><li>• Broken marriages</li><li>• Single parents</li><li>• Former home life</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poverty is parents or adult not listening to and talking to young people</li><li>• Birth inheritance</li><li>• Some parents to blame</li></ul>
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#### Theme H: Lack of self esteem

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fear</li><li>• Victimisation by rest of society</li><li>• Feeling of being 'trapped'</li><li>• Helplessness</li><li>• Inhibition</li><li>• Feeling that people look down on you</li><li>• No thriving economy, lack of good feel, depression</li><li>• Own fault</li><li>• Low aspirations</li><li>• Bullying</li><li>• Inferiority complex</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of expectation</li><li>• Born into a disadvantaged culture</li><li>• Poverty means discrimination against those who are caught in the trap</li><li>• Culture of blame</li><li>• 'That person must be lazy'</li><li>• Peers</li><li>• Humiliation</li><li>• Inadequate clothing for cold/wet weather</li><li>• Not in latest clothes</li><li>• Shabby clothes</li><li>• Monday morning queues at the post office before 0900</li></ul>
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Theme I: Health

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drugs</li> <li>• Ritalin</li> <li>• Shorter life expectancy</li> <li>• Lack of food</li> <li>• Not enough of a healthy diet</li> <li>• Poor health/ Ill health/ Illness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient or unhealthy diet</li> <li>• Hunger</li> <li>• Starvation</li> <li>• Hygiene</li> <li>• Smell</li> </ul>
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SUMMARY OF VIEWS AND IDEAS AFTER DISCUSSION

- Personal effects
- lack of self esteem
- lack of expectations
- lack of power - disenfranchisement
- - lack of respect from authorities
- lack of order
- lack of motivation
  
- Experiences poor housing, debt, homelessness, poor physical and mental health,
- -lack of choice lack of access/technology
- knowledge
  
- lack of money
- unemployment
- lack of education

Appendix 2

11.15- 1200

'How does poverty affect children's ability to benefit from education?'

GROUP X

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Unable to make informed choices</li> <li>• Singled out - Leading to bullying</li> <li>• Lead to a bad career</li> <li>• Parents lose interest which then affects the child</li> <li>• Can't participate in expensive extra - curriculum activities</li> <li>• Widening experiences?</li> <li>• Little support from home - resources, encouragement, value of education</li> <li>• Negative environment!!</li> <li>• Personal development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priorities put on home environment</li> <li>• No room at home to study in</li> <li>• Reluctance to attend school when clothing not appropriate</li> <li>• No PE kit or cooking money tech can lead to truancy (firstly selective truancy) leading to general no attendance</li> <li>• Don't attend school</li> <li>• Greater truancy</li> <li>• No desire to attend school</li> <li>• Lack of early stimulation</li> <li>• Peer group pressure. Not cool to succeed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low expectation</li> <li>• Play video games all spare times</li> <li>• Lack of stickability</li> <li>• No books in home</li> <li>• Left to own devices</li> <li>• Involved in crime</li> <li>• Lack of money = poor clothing = Lack of enthusiasm to take part in activities such as school trips etc.</li> <li>• Doing milk rounds, papers = tired</li> <li>• No breakfast = Low stamina = low concentration</li> <li>• Badly fed</li> </ul>
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## GROUP X SUMMARY

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. attendance-</li> <li>2. negative environment-home, school 'society'</li> <li>3. physical effects</li> <li>4. choice making</li> </ol> | <p>greater truancy, lower attendance due to exclusion, illness<br/>school system discriminates on grounds of poverty</p> |
|---|--|

## GROUP Y

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vote wisely on May 6</li> <li>• Community "nurturing" in small groups</li> <li>• Structural changes</li> <li>• More community involvement in local issues</li> <li>• Low expectation of the system because it has been seen to fail other members of the family.</li> <li>• Low self esteem</li> <li>• Lack of confidence</li> <li>• A decent home for all</li> <li>• Basics</li> <li>• Poor housing</li> <li>• As in all ranges of capabilities, same - attracts - same</li> <li>• Lack of opportunity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limiting outlook</li> <li>• Strict school uniform code</li> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Resources at various schools</li> <li>• Homework awareness classes</li> <li>• Confidence building classes for 2nd year pupils</li> <li>• Attitudes from peers</li> <li>• Peer pressure in locality</li> <li>• Parental involvement</li> <li>• Family stigmatised and this applies to siblings coming into the system</li> <li>• More parent &amp; teacher involvement</li> <li>• Lack of interest from parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of parental motivation in education</li> <li>• Unable to take on stimulation</li> <li>• Don't fit in (but like others)</li> <li>• Low self esteem</li> <li>• Confidence building with groups</li> <li>• Bursaries</li> <li>• More funding</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Funding to provide access for all</li> <li>• No money</li> <li>• Lack of money</li> <li>• A class denied through lack of money to many socialisation activities which rely for funding on parental support</li> </ul>
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## GROUP Y summary

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stifled ambition</li> <li>• lack of confidence and low expectations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stigmatisation from peers/educators</li> <li>• access to resources in the whole</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

## GROUP Z

Health	Material	Parenting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bad health due to poor food</li> <li>• Health problems not addressed</li> <li>• Concentration</li> <li>• Poor health</li> </ul> <p><b>Child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Esteem</li> <li>• Cruelty</li> <li>• Time</li> <li>• Bullying</li> <li>• Stigma</li> <li>• Attendance</li> <li>• Job outside school</li> </ul> <p><b>System</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers ignorance of and attitudes of children from poor areas.</li> <li>• Free dinners</li> <li>• Having to pay travel expenses of benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uniform</li> <li>• Cuts in clothing grants</li> <li>• Peers</li> <li>• Clothes</li> <li>• Equipment</li> <li>• PE</li> <li>• HE and technical subjects</li> <li>• Bad housing</li> <li>• Lack of money for books, trips, extras, uniform</li> <li>• General knowledge</li> </ul> <p><b>Home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child-care problems of single parents leading to chaotic routines</li> <li>• Quiet areas to work in</li> <li>• Lack of food</li> <li>• Lack of routine in home, i.e. No proper bed time</li> <li>• Lack of sleep because of difficult housing conditions. (fights, drug dealer in your building)</li> <li>• Sleep</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ignorance</li> <li>• Experiences</li> <li>• Worries about family problems get in the way of learning</li> <li>• Resources</li> <li>• Lack of access to help and information</li> <li>• Education is not seen as a priority in the home</li> <li>• Lack of space and comfort in the home</li> <li>• Heredity</li> <li>• Study</li> <li>• Occasional spell in care</li> <li>• Lack of parental confidence to confront authority figures</li> </ul>

## GROUP Z SUMMARY

1 Health  
2 Child  
3 system

4 Hope  
5 Material  
6 Parenting

## Appendix 3

### COMMENTS ON SEMINAR

- Good experience
- Good to get everyone's views
- Make sure report is written exactly as we said it
- There should have been more young people
- Unusual approach
- Not keen at first
- Felt frustrated about not getting my views across
- Seemed like that at first but you had more opportunities throughout the day
- Got to know what everyone thought
- Liked the movement and talk.



ANTI-RACISM  
AND  
EDUCATION

## CONVENERS' STATEMENT

It is a sad reflection of our society that racism and racist behaviour continues to blight the lives of so many people. Discrimination persists despite over twenty years of legislation to counteract it. Evidence from bodies set up by the legislation, and from others established to fight discrimination, testifies to the pernicious effects of racist behaviour in our society.

Concerns and anxieties of members, expressed through the Black Members' Conference, led the EIS national anti-racist sub committee to look at racism, education and to develop further our own anti-racist policy documents. This paper is the result of its deliberations. The involvement of black members in compiling this document is particularly important.

Using current work from a number of organisations and individuals it reflects, and quotes throughout, not only our views but a range of views of researchers, practitioners as well as pupils and parents. It draws conclusions from evidence presented to and examined by the anti-racist sub committee.

The EIS believes that education must promote principles of social justice. Racism and racist behaviour, overt or hidden, still present barriers to black/ethnic minority communities living in Scotland. The EIS is committed to ensuring these barriers are reduced for the benefit of all.

Institutional racism exists within education. It must be recognised as a powerful force in perpetuating inequality and discrimination. There is no place for stereotypical attitudes, based in ignorance, which limit and demean learners. All involved in education have a personal and professional responsibility to examine critically practices and structures.

This paper reaffirms the EIS commitment to anti-racist principles and also to challenge institutional racism. In the first year of the new Scottish Parliament it hopes to join with those who have a vision of a multicultural, diverse community in which each citizen can live, work and learn in safety, security and free from racist abuse or attack.

The election of a new parliament in Scotland presents challenges for all committed to social justice to build a society free from the damaging effects of racism, discrimination and racial hatred.

*"Our goal should be a society in which we appreciate and value our differences, one where everyone can learn, work and live free from racial prejudice, discrimination, harassment and violence."  
Sir Herman Ousley, CRE, foreword Roots of the Future.*

MARGARET NICOL  
Convener  
Equal Opportunities Committee

ROWENA ARSHAD  
Convener  
Anti Racist sub-committee

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

*"Racism and race discrimination have no place in education. Anti-racist education recognises that this is a diverse society in which all citizens have a right to participate and be valued."* EIS Anti-racist policy 1998

*"In order to eradicate racism notions of educational neutrality have to be set aside and anti-racist strategies have consciously to be introduced into both the structure and content of Scottish Education."* EIS Policy Paper on multicultural and anti-racist education, 1986.

*"Urgent action is needed if it is not to become an endemic, ineradicable disease threatening the very survival of our society ... racial disadvantage and it's nasty associate racial discrimination, have not yet been eliminated, they poison minds and attitudes."* Scarman Report, 1981

*"There is a natural reluctance among the white population to recognise the extent to which racism exists in society."* The response to racial attacks and harassment: Guidance to Statutory Agencies, Home Office, 1989.

*"In personal terms, the teacher-researchers felt a greater commitment to MCARE and a deeper awareness of their own prejudices. As one of them said, 'Some of them (my prejudices) at one time I would have considered constituted a sense of national pride (there's no problem here syndrome) but that I now consider racist.'" "No problem here"* The account of an action research project against racism in a mainly white area conducted by three primary school teachers, University of Stirling and Central Regional Council.

*"...Despite the many initiatives taking place in Scotland, there is evidence that unconscious and conscious discrimination still exists, both at individual and institutional levels."* SCCC Equal Opportunities 'A statement of position' 1991.

Overt racism is on the increase. Despite all the attention over the years to equal opportunities issues this is the case and it is not acceptable.

The EIS is committed to a comprehensive system of education as the best means of ensuring equality of worth for all learners, promoting social justice and allowing the needs of individual learners to be recognised and addressed effectively. Racism has no place in such a system. There are no excuses.

The EIS has recognised racism as a serious issue in Scotland and within the education system for many years. The report published in 1986 was an important step in the development of anti-racist policy. Other voices also challenged assumptions about "race"<sup>1</sup> and racism, their meaning, origins and practice. The role of education in both fostering and challenging beliefs and value systems was viewed as pivotal. However, Scotland as a whole was slow to recognise racism as a problem.

Reports such as Scarman, 1981 and Swann, 1985 highlighted the problem and added weight to the actions of local authorities and others involved in promoting anti-racism and in educational provision and development. Existing ideas of equality of opportunity and how effective they were in combating racism and promoting social justice were questioned.

This was not easily done and there remained in some quarters a climate of indifference, complacency or worse hostility towards this issue. Some local authorities placed considerable effort into providing detailed advice and training which was well received. Much of this good work was lost during restructuring of local government as issues of equality were not considered a priority.

Initiatives by teachers, lecturers, individual educational establishments, supported, or otherwise, were often successful. Where people were prepared, and indeed allowed, to deal seriously with the issues change did take place. There was and remains a considerable amount of unrecorded good practice. The EIS within the education sector, other trade unions and anti-racist groups generally played an important and influential role in anti-racist policy development.

Anti-racism and the practices emerging from anti-racist policies were addressed seriously by a significant number of committed people within education anxious to provide the best possible educational experience for pupils and students.

The issue was not universally and equally addressed throughout Scotland leading to a wholesale, radical change in thinking. In many cases good work was not followed through. Often action remained at individual or establishment level even where there was support. Anti-racism was regarded in some quarters, along with other equality issues, as "too political", "too difficult" or "too contentious".

<sup>1</sup> There are no distinct biological "races". It is used in this document in the context of the struggle against racism

*"Racial incidents do not only occur in areas where there is a large minority ethnic population ... members of the ethnic minorities living in predominantly white areas may be particularly at risk."* Home Office 1989.

*"Scottish research has been small scale: carried out by committed and enthusiastic individuals with minimal resources; pragmatic, problem based and focused on local issues with the researchers' theoretical assumptions remaining implicit."* Education of Minority Ethnic Groups in Scotland: a review of research commissioned by SOEID. (1998)

*"Stephen Lawrence's murder was simply and solely and unequivocally motivated by racism. It was the deepest tragedy for his family. It was an affront to society, and especially to the local black community in Greenwich."* The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. Report of an inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, 1999.

*"It is as if Scots are judged to be egalitarian by dint of racial characteristics, of deep social values which apply at the level of the individual in an undifferentiated manner. Man (or Scots - man) is judged to be primordially equal..."* D. McGone, F. Bechhofer and S Kendrick. 'Egalitarianism and Social Inequality in Scotland' paper at Annual Conference of British Sociological Association quoted in Scottish Culture and Scottish Education 1800-1980 ed by Walter Humes and Hamish M Paterson.

*"Scottish culture has never been static or unchanging and Scotland has always been the base for many*

The need to challenge racism is still viewed as something that can be dealt with through policy statements. There is a tendency to believe that racism is proportionate to the number of black/ethnic minority people in a school or community, that their presence is what should cause the issue to be addressed. It is important to address anti-racism in areas which are predominantly white. People leave school, move home and school, get work outwith the immediate community.

There remain many problems even where there is a commitment to anti-racism. To what extent is there a clear understanding of what institutional racism means? To what extent is there an understanding of the complexity of racism or the existence of multiple discrimination which leaves some people severely disadvantaged. How does it affect freedom of choice about what people do with their lives; where to live, work, take their leisure, or how to gain access to education, training and services?

There was no serious research in Scotland until the late 1980's although there were a few examples of action research or PhD research from committed individuals. There are important areas where research is lacking; bilingualism, access to services, employment, rural issues. There is no large scale government funding of research. There are few black/ethnic minority researchers working specifically with the Scottish context.

Despite advances, and there have been many, it is no longer acceptable to leave this issue solely to the efforts of a few committed organisations or individuals. This does not allow for sustained progress. The depth of individual human tragedy brought about by mindless racism does not permit this.

## 2. RACISM: THE SCOTTISH EXPERIENCE

Anti-racism is often regarded as contentious. The strength of feeling arising from this debate can sometimes produce antagonistic or defensive positions. There is a strong feeling that racism cannot be present in a society widely believed to be egalitarian, where we are 'all Jock Tamsons' bairns.', all treated alike regardless of background. This is an enduring myth about Scottish education and culture. It fails to recognise the complex nature of racism and the many ways it is manifested.

It is difficult to determine how this myth developed. Certainly, there is a pride in being Scottish based in part on the belief that Scotland is a more egalitarian and enlightened society than the rest of Britain. It is a problem for England but not here because we have a small black/ethnic minority population compared to south of the border is a common belief. This is, no doubt, a very comforting view not least because it means you do not have to do anything.

To what extent this view is widely held is debatable. It is certainly not held by those involved politically in anti-racism nor those who have been subjected to racist behaviour or harassment. An examination of

*different cultures and distinct ways of life.*" Runnymede Trust, Paper from Equality Conference, December 1998

*"It is not sufficient to depend on UK wide research since this may obscure differences between sub-groups of minority ethnic populations including those living in Scotland. In contrast there is a danger of over generalising from small scale studies."* Education of Minority Ethnic groups in Scotland, SCRE.

*"Contrary to popular belief many ethnic minority families live outwith urban areas, often in quite remote rural communities. They are as entitled to access to vital services but very often these are denied to them because it is assumed small numbers mean there isn't a problem."* George Higgs, lecturer, Borders College

*"The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour,*

the experiences of different peoples and cultures which came to Scotland does not bear it out. Stereotyping, discrimination, violence, isolation were experienced by all regardless of when and for what reason they came to live here; the experience of Irish immigrants and travellers being a case in point. Scotland is as subject to the influences of, and was a major contributor to, colonialism and the beliefs and ideologies it generated. Perhaps a measure of how egalitarian we are as a society is how easy it is to whip up hatred.

We cannot treat people as a homogenous group by assuming all experiences are the same or that the experiences of black/ethnic minority people in England or elsewhere, the source of many research studies on race equality issues, can be readily transferred to Scotland. There is a need for properly funded research which looks at the experience of black/ethnic minority people in Scotland.

The little research of the experience of black/ethnic minority Scots has meant reliable data is hard to obtain. Where there was research it was done again by committed individuals often without funding or by students completing degree work. To provide a picture of the Scottish experience with any certainty is not possible. There will be significant variables in this experience not least social class.

Official estimates, very much disputed by race equality academics, activists and organisations, suggest that in Scotland 1.3% of the population is from an ethnic minority group compared with 5% in England. This is considered to be an underestimation. Everyone in Scotland is from an ethnic background. There is a long history of movement and migration into and around Scotland. The experiences of groups or individuals who have chosen to or are forced to migrate show a similar pattern: isolation, hostility, lack of support.

The little research which has been carried out in rural areas of Scotland points to both similarities and differences with the urban experience. As in towns and cities there is a remarkable diversity of language and culture. There is also the same dearth of information, lack of statistics and lack of research.

Low numbers often leads to low investment; why put resources into something which does not exist? However, 0.4% of a small local community may be as many as 118 people who work, pay taxes, contribute to the community and are entitled to access services.

An egalitarian Scotland may not be a reality for many but the opportunity is here now to ensure it does become a reality. The continuation of racism, discrimination and violence towards individuals and sections of the community, contrary to the UN Convention of Human Rights, is an affront to the communities of Scotland and is not tolerable.

The work of the consultative steering group for the Scottish parliament, the commitments of most political parties, the policy and position papers coming from the government give a direction to achieving this reality. It is an opportunity not to be missed; an

*culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people"* The Lawrence Inquiry, Macpherson Report, 1999.

*"If I walk into a room and I am the only black person there, I do not bring racism with me. If I experience it, it is because it is there already."* Rowena Arshad, speech to SHEFC Conference, 1998.

*"Some people still think we don't have any of 'them' and therefore it is not a problem for us...that is the kind of culture that allows racism to exist."* Ken Goodwin, Headteacher, Shawlands Academy, 1999.

*"Racist name calling, for example, not only insults individual victims but also their family, their community, their culture - everything with which they identify"* David Gilborn SCRE/ EIS Conference 1992.

*"To compartmentalise personal racism as the behaviour of a few extremists and to claim that 'we don't have that sort of thing here' is to marginalise the issue and to fail to recognise the subtlety of racism."* EIS 1987 anti-racist policy.

opportunity to develop a real sense of pride in our multicultural, multilingual, diverse society.

Racism has been demonstrated to be institutional. As a society we must look seriously at the issue of racism, understand the role each person has to play and the role institutions have to play in challenging discrimination. Education plays a major part in this.

### 3. RACISM AND EDUCATION

People are not born with racist assumptions. They are gathered from a variety of experiences and influences. Schools, colleges, universities have a vital role to play as they form a large part of that experience. Neither are they isolated. They are part of a wider community which informs and is informed by them. They are responsible to and guided by education authorities, the Scottish Office and its agencies and to the newly established Scottish Parliament.

The widely held belief in the comprehensive system as it developed in Scotland is justified. There is an understanding of the importance of learning within a democratic society. Treating young people differently or providing them with less of a chance according to their background is regarded as unacceptable and unjust.

However, this can manifest itself as 'I treat everyone the same', 'I am not racist' or 'We do not have a problem here' It is useful to remember that educational establishments reflect the society they serve and that racism does not always necessarily imply intent. This is little comfort to those experiencing it.

Teachers and lecturers are rightly mindful of their professionalism. They want to do the right thing for their pupils and students. However, they can be defensive partly due to a fear that they will not be addressing the needs of their pupils or that they are worried about saying or doing something which may cause offence. Openness helps. Institutional racism cannot be explored and challenged in an atmosphere of fear.

It is correct that everyone involved in providing education should examine their practice and many, but not enough, do. The antagonism sometimes engendered by the issue of racism and education can be explained partly by this belief that racism is only the actions of a minority of extremists behaving violently.

Nevertheless, people who would never think of treating someone unjustly or perpetrating violence against another person may not recognise the damage done by pejorative statements nor the isolation which can be felt by young people in a system which does not reflect their cultural background or beliefs. Nor how difficult it is to deal with someone making assumptions about who you are, your intelligence and what you believe in because of your colour, religion, nationality, ethnic background, dress or language.

*"The process of creating an anti-racist policy based on an understanding of structural prejudice of any kind was itself an educational process to win support in the staffroom for the idea. "It took three to four years to get it on paper and agreed by all staff, she says. "It was more important as a process than a piece of writing." Extract from article in SEJ by Douglas Fraser, December 1998 on Drummond Community High School.*

*"National and local documents are not systematically informed by the linguistic diversity in Scotland. This results in issues related to bilingualism not becoming integral to Scottish educational policy formulation and practice e.g. within baseline assessment, school reviews and target setting." CERES, Document on Bilingualism, Community languages and Scottish Education; a challenge to Policy Makers and Practitioners within a Devolved Scotland, April 1999.*

*"In what ways.. are your programmes going to close gaps, reduce inequalities, remove discriminations, in particular, discriminations which are covertly, indeed visibly institutionalised?.." "The Age of Aquarius" Robin Richardson.*

*"Hopefully my kids will not come back from school telling us they have been the brunt of a racist incident... and we hope if that occurs, the school will deal with it..." Hakim Din, parent and Assistant Head Teacher, Shawlands Academy, 1999 .*

Educational establishments and the society they reflect are more than the sum total of individuals. There are structures, institutions, cultural and value systems. Anti-racism is about examining these and understanding how they can support or oppress. Anti-racist education is about challenging orthodoxy. It is, above all, about teaching and learning.

It has been long established that gaining access to education and the curriculum is more complex than simply turning up at class. There is an improved understanding of how people learn, and what makes people feel excluded from the learning process. What is taught is selected. It reflects beliefs, knowledge and value systems. It is possible therefore to change this.

The school curriculum does not adequately reflect the multicultural, multiracial, multilingual nature of Scottish society. Ignorance of different cultures or stereotypical expectations about the abilities of different ethnic groups leads to unintentional racism. Also there may be unwitting use of racist images or language and failure to promote positive role models. There does come a time, however, when 'unintentional' or 'unwitting' is no longer pardonable.

More than sixty languages are used on a daily basis in Scotland. Yet bilingualism is often seen as a problem. Research world-wide shows that helping a learner maintain their home language as well as learning a second language leads to better language skills. This in turn means broader achievement for the bilingual learner as well as other benefits. Bilingualism is a positive asset.

The failure to attract black/ethnic minority graduates into teaching at any level is a serious problem. Failing to address and act upon it will deprive all young people of positive role models.

It is also important to examine the structures within education and the hidden curriculum to determine what messages are being given to learners about their place in the world. This requires questions about how the curriculum is delivered; who determines it; language used and language development; questions about the knowledge and preparedness of teachers, lecturers and parents.

It also requires questions about how victims of racism and racist behaviour are supported and how such incidents are dealt with. Providers of education must go beyond a culture of compliance. Seeking to ensure procedures meet minimum or legal requirements does not tackle racism.

A major problem occurs if senior management in spite of clear commitments expressed in policy statements do not give the matter due attention. There is an assumption that an 'awareness raising' training day will meet the needs of the individual or establishment; that a policy in itself is enough. There must be a cyclical revisiting of anti-racism. It should be a feature of staff development in every school, every year. It should be a feature of initial teacher training.

Where education and the curriculum is over prescribed, over monitored and regulated and where teachers are tied into that there is little possibility for debate. Yet every past initiative shows that where teachers were allowed to, and given the space and time, to contribute to structural and curricular change, confidence grows and positive results follow. There is evidence to show that where a climate of respect exists it is easier to introduce issues which are challenging to people.

In educational establishments where the issue has been addressed successfully it has been in partnership, with all involved in education, in an atmosphere where people are not afraid to openly discuss issues and where their own concerns can be aired. Anti-racism is part of a process and not simply a policy statement developed to satisfy a list of externally imposed criteria.

*"... but we now know that if you want to change the world, you have to start where the world is now."* Sally Brown interviewed for December 1998 SEJ.

Anti-racist education must not be an additional extra, something for one or two subjects or a slot in PSD. It must form an integral part of the educational system at all levels. It is everybody's business, it is in every classroom. It is about teaching and learning.

## SUMMARY

Racism in Scotland is a reality and on the increase. For many black/ethnic minority people racist abuse and harassment are a daily occurrence. This can range from name calling to physical attacks. Words cannot properly convey the depth of individual human tragedy brought about by mindless racism.

Racism and racist behaviour, overt or hidden, affect access to education and educational attainment. Messages given about the value of culture, nationality, ethnicity and language all have an impact on the learning process.

There exists a belief that racism is not a problem where there are no or few black/ethnic minority people.

Racism is extremely complex. Factors such as age, gender, social class and belief systems also affect how racism works.

There have been many advances in the development of anti-racist policies and practice. There has developed an understanding that these must go beyond policy statements to be effective.

There is little research into the experience of black/ethnic minority people in Scotland. That which does exist has been underfunded or is the work of committed individuals and organisations.

Institutional racism presents barriers to equality which seem to be denied, ignored or unquestioned. Institutional racism is a concept not understood and of which people are fearful.

Staff development and training in anti-racist policies and practices are essential.

The role of education in fighting racism is pivotal.

## CONCLUSION

Education within and about a democracy has to recognise that tensions exist and be confident enough to deal with them. An acceptance of a multicultural society, that educational establishments are cultural meeting places, that each person has a right to education and that cultures and religious beliefs are valid must be an acceptance by everyone.

- Institutional racism must be tackled at all levels.
- The structures in place in education - the provision of the curriculum, how to measure achievement, access to further and higher education, exclusions from school must not discriminate overtly or covertly.
- There is a strategic role to be played by the Scottish Parliament, local authorities and other employers in education in moving beyond policy statements.
- Resources must be given to education to develop anti-racist policies and professional competence in equality issues.
- Anti-racism should be inherent in the structure of all educational establishments. There should be equality, anti-racist indicators as part of inspections.
- There must be zero tolerance of racist abuse and harassment.
- There should be properly funded research into the experiences of black/ethnic minority community in Scotland.
- Recording of racist incidents should be required and encouraged. They should be dealt with sensitively to ensure there is no repetition.
- Education plays a major part in challenging racism but not on its own. Education must be inclusive, valuing the achievement of every individual. It does not operate in isolation.
- Schools, communities, local authorities, employers, government must work together to tackle racism.

It is everybody's business. It is about breaking down the barriers.

## Appendix 1

### Scottish Context: 1991 Census - Minority Ethnic Communities

Region	Total Population	Minority ethnic % of population	Minority ethnic population
Scotland	4,998,567	1.25	62,634
Angus	136,875	0.49	666
Highland	204,004	0.54	1,020
North Ayrshire	94,480	0.49	466
Western Isles	29,600	0.4	118

The only available statistics on numbers of black/ethnic minority people living in Scotland are based on the 1991 population census. They are considered unreliable by researchers in the field. The statistics above relating to four areas of Scotland are based on a specific research project conducted in these areas.

## Appendix 2

### Accounts from teachers.

EIS members who identified themselves as black/ethnic minority through the EIS monitoring form were asked if they had experienced racism in education and to provide a description of what happened. There were 18 responses from all sectors of education in urban and rural areas, areas with a large black/ethnic minority population and areas with a small black/ethnic minority population.

The most common response referred to persistent racist remarks and name calling which are difficult to tackle. Some referred to the difficulty many of their white colleagues had in accepting the existence of racism, its pervasive nature or that they may be insensitive to the issue. There was reference to the strategies teachers were forced to adopt personally to cope with what was described as 'low level' racism but which clearly was deeply felt. Another cause for concern was an assumption about black/ethnic minority teachers having knowledge of anti-racist issues simply because of their colour or ethnic origin.

The following accounts are selected from these responses.

#### Teacher, working in a large school in a rural area where there is a small black/ethnic minority.

"I am a black teacher with two university degrees. I am qualified to teach in both primary and secondary sectors, with experience of both. I am the only black teacher. There are few non-white pupils in the school...

In my opinion staff and pupil awareness of multiculturalism and race issues is poor. Multicultural education means that whatever the ethnic and cultural mix of the school, the curriculum should reflect the multicultural diversity of society.

As I see it the biggest barrier preventing the promotion of MCARE and Race Awareness Training is the mistaken perception that there is no problem here. This engenders a spirit of complacency and self congratulation which I find deeply worrying. By 'problem', I know from experience that the majority of white teachers and school managers would assume 'large numbers of non-white pupils = the problem' since such a school population would, statistically, be bound to give rise to a greater number of racist incidents...

The fact is that the severity of the problem is in inverse rather than direct proportion to its visibility. With little attempt made to raise awareness of racial issues at an educational level, and a widespread assumption that 'no blacks = no problem', the wrong message is delivered to staff and pupils alike.

My experience of (name of school) deals effectively and supportively with overt and blatantly offensive racism. Low-level harassment - jokes, mimicry, monkey noises - typically has to be dealt with by the exercise of one's own personal coping strategies. This is confirmed by pupils I have spoken to. More worrying are the innate racial assumptions I personally experience from my professional colleagues.

These manifest themselves in a number of ways, including avoidance, uncertainty, and embarrassment about 'saying the wrong thing'. It has been remarked that I am 'not very black', indicating to me a subconscious acceptance of a melanocratic hierarchy. The euphemism 'coloured' is commonly used by staff when referring to myself or to pupils revealing a basic lack of understanding of the inherently offensive nature of this term. I have been asked where I 'really come from', how long I have 'been in this country', and one member of management asked me if I 'had any idea what it was like to be English in this school'. I was born and educated in England. My command

of English has occasioned congratulatory comment: 'she speaks good English'. I do not speak any other language. These statements are made by kind, well-intentioned professional people who sincerely believe that they are not racist, and who would solidly maintain that there is not a racial problem in school, or in Scottish society at large...

Such attitudes will be familiar to all black professional people, and are not confined to the workplace. Outside of school I have had my professional status questioned, and I have received an anonymous note through my letter box saying that 'all teachers should be properly trained', clearly inferring that I was not.

The 'institutional racism' which exists..., therefore, does not manifest itself as overt abuse, but rather as a prevailing, benign ignorance. There are no procedures in place to address this problem adequately, because it is not accepted that a problem exists. Nonetheless, schools exist to prepare pupils for the world outside, and we are failing our pupils, if, as role models, we are passing on attitudes which are out-dated and unacceptable, and do not reflect the reality of a multicultural society. Tackling instances of overt abuse helps to maintain the appearance of 'dealing with racism' while the root causes remain."

#### Teacher with five years experience until recently employed on a succession of temporary contracts in rural and urban areas.

"At teacher training college, no training was given on how to deal with racist incidents especially if they were aimed at you personally. I was only told how to tackle them via teacher friends. That is what helped me through the few experiences I have had - treat it like other discipline matters and whatever the circumstances don't take it personally.

My enthusiasm and commitment to teaching have always helped me in 'winning' over classes when on supply. However, as soon as I mentioned my father's corner shop to one class that I had taught for several months they were horrified. They couldn't quite make the connection that a teacher's father owned a 'Paki' shop.

Day to day supply is difficult when you are moving from one school to another. Pupils know you are only there for a wee while so will obviously play up on that. Any discipline problems have occurred more so because I am young and a woman rather than a black teacher.

In one school, as usual, I familiarised myself with the school's "Equal Opportunities" policy and realised there was no policy/procedure for dealing with racist incidents or any mention about ethnic minority pupils/staff. The school did have ethnic minority pupils and now me! I informed the depute head and volunteered to change it - well add a few sentences so that ethnic minorities were spoken for. It seemed at the time not a problem and the changes were made. Since then I noticed the Head wasn't as nice as he usually was towards me, cold really. I found out, after leaving the school having worked there for one and a half years that he wasn't 'pleased' with the way I had 'criticised' the policy!

First day at another school I was told by the person who was going to show me the ropes that the staff had bets on how I would last as due to being 'young, female, small and black' there was no way I could handle the type of boys at this school. The boys had social, emotional and behavioural problems. I worked there a long time.

On a lighter note, staff think I have my nose pierced for cultural reasons but most pupils know me better and know I got it done to be trendy!

Classic staff question after a few days settling into another temporary contract "I'm not trying to be ignorant but will you get an arranged marriage?"

#### Teacher in a non-traditional subject, rural area.

"I have had more problems because I am a woman in a man's world, and English, rather than black. However, even the toughest pupil has softened when I helped them solve a difficult problem.

However, at college after a lecture where positive discrimination was spoken of the lecturer pointed out that it was more likely that I, being black and female, would be the first person to obtain a job. One of my colleagues complained bitterly about how unfair it was and accused me of having an unfair advantage by the two things I have no control over - my colour and my sex. He was really in my face.

Many times I am told I am an adopted Scot so my being born in England is acceptable."

#### Lecturer in college in rural area.

"The comments I have about my own personal experience are relatively mild.

Being used as the "Token Black", anything to do with minorities are always passed my way and assumed that I am an expert in the field or being asked to help a 'Black Student' to settle in at college.

The biggest problem was when we took students to France for one month for work experience. After going out a few weeks before to check everything out, where we would work, stay, one establishment was politely frosty to me. Nothing was said and I put it down to differences in language and culture, being Scottish.... Anyway, after we arrived in France with the students, it became apparent the owner of this establishment did not like me and had made comments to our twin college in France. The French college explained to me that he was basically a racist, and if I wished, we could remove the students to a new placement or they would support me in whatever decision I took. My own college however, asked me to return home so that the students would not be disadvantaged... The French college refused to allow me to come home and they even stated they would cause a scene if I was sent home. I did stay and enjoyed myself even when the establishment owner who I had to visit every second day, was still politely frosty to me."

#### Teacher in urban primary school.

"Name calling by pupils. Being told by a colleague I got my job because I was black. Always being asked to deal with black pupils, issues, race related problems. Isolation and low-level racial harassment. This is constant from the odd stare to outright insulting remarks. White colleagues find it difficult to accept they can collude with racism."

#### Teacher in large urban secondary.

"No, but I have heard and witnessed racism happening to other black members. Many black teachers that I have spoken to have stated many instances e.g. verbal abuse by other staff and pupils; written racial abuse by other staff and pupils; unknown notes and letters posted/sent to black teachers."

## Appendix 3

### Response from councils to EIS request for information

All councils were asked by the EIS if they had:

1. Policies which refer to recruitment and support of black/ethnic minority teachers
2. Policies which specifically referred to support for black/ethnic minority pupils
3. Monitoring policies

Twenty seven councils responded.

All councils stated they had an Equal Opportunities policy or were in the process of reviewing the policy. They varied in complexity ranging from two sentences to detailed statements and strategies. Some of these policies were about general employment matters and did not address educational and curricular issues. Some indicated that each department of the council would be expected to develop the policy within its own specialist area as part of the council's core principles.

- 9 councils indicated they had a specific recruitment strategy.
- 12 councils had ethnic monitoring policies.
- 6 councils had specific policies relating to harassment as a workplace issue.
- 2 councils indicated that 'Raising Achievement' will be the process for tackling discrimination and inequality.
- 6 councils indicated they were developing specific anti-bullying policies for pupils including racial harassment.
- 3 councils indicated they conducted pupil destination surveys.

## Appendix 4

### Outside of the Norm: equality and management in educational institutions.

Summary of a report prepared for South Bank University by Janet Powney (SCRE) and Gaby Weiner, (South Bank University).

This project was concerned with factors, people and institutional strategies that had affected the careers of leading educationalists in Scotland and England who were male and female senior managers from black and minority ethnic groups and white female managers.

Findings related to black and minority ethnic groups:

Most people who are black or from an ethnic minority are inevitably enmeshed in equal opportunities issues.

#### POSITIVE FACTORS

- A supportive framework: e.g. parents, church, mentoring, informal networks
- Good academic qualifications
- Ethos of hard work: *As a black woman, there is more to the job than the title. All levels of staff expect a demonstration of your ability and justification of your appointment.*
- Development of self confidence: *As a black person you have to be very strong, have conviction and belief in oneself which is very difficult given the nature of discrimination.*

#### OBSTACLES

- Racism and sexism: Those brought up in black and/or minority ethnic communities saw racism as endemic and unstoppable.  
*Racism is like an octopus. It is so subtle. You cut off one arm and it grows another.*
- Examples of discriminatory experiences: being 'set up' for a job where there was an implicit colour bar; job applications that went missing; being given by an LEA adviser misleading criteria for secondment for further study; inordinate number of applications for promotion, e.g. black male deputy applied for 120 headships before being interviewed for 3 at once, all of which offered; blocked by line managers.
- Colleagues reaction: Invisibility, stereotyping, harassment, hostility (informant who was rejected for a teaching practice placement because he was black saw this as a personal test of Martin Luther King's statement that there is more racism where there are fewer black people), patronising colleagues.  
*Their expectations are so low that when you outstrip their expectations, they turn around and become almost a fan.*
- Other problems: isolation of senior black managers, exploitation (e.g. a headteacher attempted to restrict a well qualified Asian woman to general supply teaching tasks rather than teaching only her specialisms, mathematics and science), lack of awareness of potential discriminatory practices:  
*Their self-image as fair minded people has proved a real problem to get over in the universities. You are working against the grain of people who feel they have been fair all their lives and couldn't possibly... they don't have the understanding of things like indirect discrimination. It's*

*just not a concept they acknowledge.*

double discrimination

*...black women tend to be classified first and foremost as black with only a secondary consideration to their identities as women*

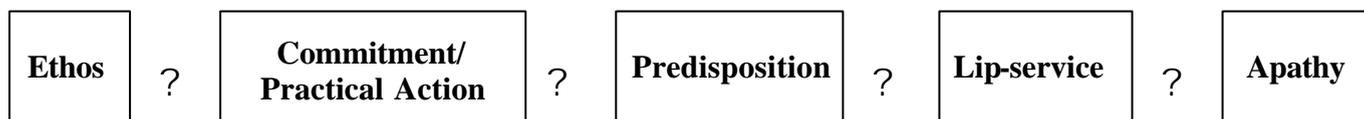
## Reactions to obstacles

Successful managers fought back but black women have had to challenge both racism and sexism. Need to have the confidence to reject exploitative positions and apply for senior posts - which sets a good example to other black colleagues. However several informants commented on tokenism, being in great demand as a 'good black' and/or being expected to be a key informant on all EO issues.

## ISSUE

How can institutional policies and practices support staff and staff development?

A continuum of the institutional adoption of, or involvement with, equal opportunities - primarily in relation to staff opportunities but with some reference to students:



- i) **Ethos** - Equal opportunities is a significant part of the ethos of the institution i.e. reflected in power structures, e.g. *The stated ethos of the organisation is to create a supportive, comfortable, non-hostile place where black people could meet, organise and talk openly . . . There is a large percentage of black staff in the college, in excess of 30-40% . . . Black staff are represented at those [top tier] levels . . . there are more black women than black men . . . There is a systematic staff monitoring process in the college which is explicit, public and open . . . The recruitment and selection process is systematically adhered to with black staff members sitting on the panel.*
- ii) **Commitment/Practical Action** - Genuine commitment towards good equal opportunities practice, e.g. - *The school prospectus has a very loud commitment to equal opportunities and P says that she never loses an opportunity to reinforce this in curriculum materials, displays and uses her own skill . . . as a networker to encourage dissemination of good practice. [She] has some departments which are better than others which means that pupils get an uneven experience. However the pupils are very aware and take on dissemination themselves, challenging teachers who are sexist or racist.*
- iii) **Predisposition** - Institution is in the process of working towards equal opportunities. *The polytechnic has a formal equal opportunities policy. So far, it has been implemented by removing barriers rather than looking for positive actions. D has made some positive action suggestions which have so far been ignored but she remarked that this could be a function of timing. She hopes that the introduction of an appraisal system will lead to the monitoring of race and gender. She has made the suggestion that every interview panel should contain at least one woman. Appraisal training is being conducted at present, by a consultancy, and has not overtly featured equal opportunities as a focus.*
- iv) **Lip-service** - There is some superficial consideration of equality issues. *S is not aware of any particular [promotion] strategies in her university. A Staff Development Officer has been appointed but without any obvious supporting budget. The staff appraisal system is assumed to lead on to staff development. Promotion procedure includes an attempt to make the criteria more explicit - though not necessarily clearer . . . As far as S can gather,*

*appointments and promotions committees are entirely male and no-one is particularly concerned about that fact . . . There are very few staff or home students from ethnic minorities . . . [However] . . . There is explicit equal opportunities policy in the university covering staff of all kinds, and students, in the areas of harassment and appointments.*

- v) Apathy - There is little evidence of awareness of, or adherence to, equal opportunities issues. *Having worked in two universities she suggests that there is something peculiar to university departments' culture which limits the potential of equal opportunities and how staff are allowed to develop their full potential. University management structures are highly middle class, white and male dominated which fosters a culture that supports the old public school boy network . . . As a black woman she has come to terms not only with the 'expected' oppression from white males but also the lack of support and at times deliberate undermining that comes from white women colleagues so she has had to develop strategies to insulate herself and challenge racism and sexism.*

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LESBIAN  
AND GAY  
EQUALITY

## BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS STATEMENT BY CONVENER OF LESBIAN AND GAY COMMITTEE

The issuing of this document has great significance for all of us in Scotland. It comes at a time when we are re-examining our attitudes to lesbian and gay people and discarding the outdated prejudices, which marred the past.

For the EIS, this builds on the impressive work of the Institute promoting equal opportunity and challenging discrimination. Surely there can be nothing more essential for us as educationalists and teachers than to pursue the right of everyone to access education equally. All of us within the system, teachers and pupils have the right to be treated with equal respect, free from prejudice. The EIS is committed to this view and is explaining why in this series.

For lesbian and gay teachers this displays further how we are slowly but surely defeating the misconceptions, which have devalued the tremendous input lesbian and gay people have given to this profession.

The lesbian and gay teachers who have readily given of their time and energy to the production of this edition of Breaking Down the Barriers share the Institute's commitment to eradicating prejudice. We deplore the waste of talent, which is so often a feature of discrimination.

For Scottish society as a whole this signals a further modernisation. The outdated views, which were sadly all too vocal during the debate around the repeal of Section 2A are being quietly replaced by informed opinion, which understands that sexuality, can never be used legitimately to divide people. The Scottish Executive and the UK Government are enacting measures, such as the repeal of the infamous section, which are enabling our society to move on from division, wasted talent and deep resentments and bitterness towards a better future where an individual's contributions to society will be judged on merit and not on extraneous considerations such as sexuality, race or gender.

This booklet skilfully examines the issues, sets out an agenda for change and thus represents a further step in creating a just and equitable Scotland.

JM Whannel  
Autumn 2001

## BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS

This is an account by a teacher who, until the debate on the repeal of section 2A (clause 28), had not disclosed that he was gay and the reaction of his colleagues to his coming out at the EIS Annual General Meeting, 2000.

### Out and Proud

*June 8, 2000, Dundee AGM.*

My first speech at conference. I came out as a gay teacher supporting the repeal of Section 2A (Clause 28).

*June 12, 2000, EIS Branch Meeting.*

I reported back on the AGM. I informed the membership that I was gay and had spoken in support of the repeal of Section 2A.

A brief stunned silence followed, which I interrupted by reporting back on the rest of the conference. Some discussion and a lot of warm congratulations followed.

*June 13, 2000*

Received a card headed "Out and Proud" from a colleague.

*June 14, 2000*

"It'll be a five day wonder."

It was less than five days.

*June 15, 2000*

Two teachers approached me separately about EIS matters. Business as usual.

*August 30, 2000*

Re-elected as EIS representative.

Coming out as a gay teacher has been a very positive experience. Relationships with staff are even warmer than before. Looking forward to trip to Italy in June with students and staff.

### Statement by Convener of Equal Opportunities Committee

Many people have strongly held views about homosexuality which are based on ignorance. There are myths and assumptions about lifestyles, mannerisms and behaviour all of which lead to discrimination and a lack of equality. They also lead to violent and threatening behaviour against gay men and lesbians. This is a real and constant threat. Such attitudes and beliefs have strong historical and cultural roots. They are reinforced by the media, family and friends, upbringing, and education.

One of the strengths of the EIS is the diversity of its membership and so we are committed to the promotion of social justice, to campaigning for equality of opportunity for all members and learners and to challenging discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping. Equality of opportunity and fair treatment cannot and must not be restricted only to certain groups and/or individuals. It is the right of everyone.

Pam Viney  
Autumn 2001

*It is a measure of the prejudice against homosexuals that, in an age when the concept of universally applicable human rights is widely accepted that our Parliament and legal establishment has such difficulty in recognising that these rights apply no less to gays than to others."* from Parliament and the Law, Nigel Warner an essay in Prejudice and Pride Discrimination against gay people in modern Britain 1983 edited by Bruce Galloway publisher Routledge and Kegan Paul

*"let us be clear that people are entitled to think that homosexuality is wrong, but they are not entitled to use the criminal law to enforce that upon others.."* Prime Minister, Tony Blair, then Shadow Home Secretary, age of consent debate, February, 1994.

*"In countries all over the world, individuals are being targeted for imprisonment, torture and even murder, simply on the grounds of their sexual orientation..governments are themselves the perpetrators of abuses; unfair trials, imprisonment, ill-treatment (including false 'medical cures') torture and execution"* Amnesty International, "Breaking the Silence"

*"Ron Strank and his partner Roger Fisher have been together for 40 years. Both now in their sixties, the couple are angry that when one of them dies, the surviving partner will be denied access to the other's pension entitlement. Having paid in to the NHS pension scheme all their working lives, Ron points out that were he in a heterosexual relationship, and his partner died, he would be able to continue receiving money from the pension fund. Yet because his partner is a man, the rules of the pension fund do not allow a similar transfer of entitlement."* TUC report "Straight up! Why the law should protect lesbian and gay workers" 2000

*"Homophobic name calling should be challenged in the same way that racist or sexist behaviour is.... The most important thing teachers can do is to strive to create a positive, open tolerant ethos in which matters of concern to young people are discussed calmly. If the response to homophobic bullying is purely reactive and short term this may only serve to marginalise victims."* Scottish anti bullying network - Information for schools about homophobic bullying, 2000

*" Schools in which bullies go unchecked can transmit the message to pupils that teachers don't care or that bullying behaviour is acceptable. Schools can become unhappy, stressful places...No school would want to condone bullying..."* Scottish Council for Research in Education Supporting Schools Against

## INTRODUCTION

The prevailing attitude of those in power towards same sex relationships informs legislation. This can mean legislation which does not acknowledge employment rights and benefits, lifelong partners, or rights to pensions. At its worst, legislation involves criminalisation punishable by imprisonment. At one time in this country male homosexuality was a capital offence. This was not the case for female homosexuality which was not acknowledged to exist.

As trade unionists, it is important that we understand the history, nature and dynamics of prejudice and discrimination. Throughout history same gender relationships have provoked intense feelings in many societies and cultures. Fear of homosexuality has led to persecution, criminalisation and execution of innocent people. Commonly held stereotypes of gay men and lesbians have no foundation in reality. They tell us nothing about the people from all walks of life, in all occupations, in different family arrangements, from different religious, social and ethnic backgrounds who are gay or lesbian.

An Amnesty International Report, "Breaking the Silence", published in 1997 detailed the persecution that gay men and lesbians face in over 60 countries. In a significant number of these countries homosexuality is still illegal.

Fears and stereotypes are used, however, to scapegoat people; to justify and perpetuate unacceptable behaviour, unfair and unequal treatment. In relation to employment, gay men and lesbians often meet discrimination when seeking work or access to training and promotion, are ineligible for some pay related benefits and they may experience bullying and harassment.

The assumption that gay men and lesbians are a threat to children and young people is offensive and inaccurate. Moreover, such scapegoating fails to address real threats to children. Gay men and lesbians are fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, aunts, uncles, brothers and sisters. They are part of families.

## Education

It is widely accepted that learning takes place most effectively in an emotionally and physically safe and secure environment. However, the school experience of many gay and lesbian pupils can be particularly unhappy and stressful. Surveys conducted by Stonewall consistently find that young people who identify themselves as gay or lesbian face homophobic bullying.

Homophobia works in exactly the same way as other forms of discrimination. It can be personal prejudice, cultural or institutional. At a personal level there is a belief that gay/lesbian people are sinful, immoral or incomplete; social norms are hostile to homosexuality; government, employers, and other institutions or organisations discriminate against gay and lesbian people.

Homophobia also manifests itself as name calling, physical violence, mental abuse, bullying and harassment by a group or an individual. It is based in fear of what is unknown and seems different. It demonstrates a desire for social conformity. Homophobic bullying is experienced by many young people, including primary age children, as a form of general abuse. It is used when boys and girls do not behave within the stereotypes society has constructed for them. This says as much about attitudes towards the roles and expectations of men and women, girls and boys as it does about attitudes towards homosexuality.

*"Teachers are rarely accused of such overt actions but, by the careless use of words such as 'sissy' or by simply failing to challenge homophobic name calling, they can be perceived as giving tacit approval. One mother described what happened to her 9 year old son: 'He is a sensitive wee boy who doesn't enjoy sport. On a cold wet windy day he was standing shivering on the rugby field when the PE teacher came over to him and said, "If you're just going to stand there shivering why don't you do what you do best - go play with the girls." Scottish Anti Bullying Network, Information for schools about homophobic bullying, 2000*

*"...the handling of potentially sensitive issues ultimately has to rely on the professional judgement of individual teachers. We readily acknowledge that the teaching profession has exercised sound judgement with the result that schools currently enjoy the confidence of the overwhelming majority of parents in teaching sex education." Report of the Working Group on Sex Education in Scottish Schools (McCabe Report) June 2000*

*"Schools are expected to:*

*make sure that sex education takes account of each child's age, understanding and stage of development*

- *work in partnership with parents*
- *have simple, direct procedures in place for parents to raise concerns*
- *have a method of consulting pupils*
- *respect the different cultural, ethnic and religious environment of the home*
- *respect the different home circumstances and needs of all young people."*

*Sex education in Scottish Schools - A guide for Parents and Carers, 2001*

*"All groups of prisoners in the concentration camps had to wear special markings which were sewn on their clothing, namely a number and triangle of certain colour..red for political prisoners, green for criminals, violet for*

The most effective means of tackling homophobic bullying is through creating a positive and constructive ethos in the school. This will involve changing not only some pupil/student attitudes but also some staff attitudes. It should be understood and dealt with as other forms of bullying such as racism and sexism. A recognition that homophobia exists is an important step. It is just as pervasive, demeaning and dangerous as other forms of discrimination.

There is no legal bar preventing teachers from explicitly condemning homophobic bullying or from discussing sexual orientation with pupils. The duty of care to provide a safe and secure environment is enshrined in education and child protection legislation as well as employment legislation. It could be viewed as a failure of this duty of care if homophobic bullying and harassment is ignored. Without support young people who are homosexual may internalise the negative messages they receive. These messages lead to low self-esteem, poor mental health, despair and suicide.

Homophobic bullying is a problem in schools which cannot be ignored as part of 'growing up'. It must be dealt with in the same way as other forms of bullying and verbal abuse, sensitively, constructively, and with a commitment to changing the attitudes that lie behind such behaviour.

## Family arrangements

In schools there are a wide variety of family arrangements; both birth parents live at home in a married relationship; adoptive parents; single parenthood; extended family arrangements; new families through remarriage; gay or lesbian parents. Schools are sensitive about families and would not wish deliberately to disadvantage children because of their family background.

Sensitivities and prejudices about homosexuality exist. The professional judgement of individual teachers in handling this issue is important. Without an inclusive and non-discriminatory approach young people may feel their family arrangement is perceived to be 'second best'.

## Curriculum

Most schools make use of health education packs in personal and social development programmes. These deal with sexual orientation and are designed to take account of age and stage of development. Sex and health education for young people must be dealt with in a

*Jehovah's witnesses....In the case of homosexuals, the colour pink was, of course, meant to signal weakness and effeminacy, in accordance with the Nazi perception of their character...there was also at least one attempt to alter this character "scientifically" by the administration of chemically distilled "maleness"....." extracted from Swastika, Pink Triangle, and Yellow Star essay in "Hidden from History", Duberman, Vicinus and Chauncey Jr.*

*"In what ways ... are your programmes going to close gaps, reduce inequalities, remove discriminations, in particular discriminations which are covertly, indeed visibly institutionalised?" Robin Richardson, The Age of Aquarius, 1992*

non-discriminatory, non-judgmental way, within a context of social and personal relationships and which takes into consideration the diverse family arrangements of children, the wishes of parents/carers and the needs of children.

Other areas of the curriculum of schools, colleges and universities may involve discussion of sexual orientation. It would be difficult to teach certain aspects of the curriculum without reference to it. Also, the subject of sexual orientation is likely to be raised by pupils and students themselves as part of a discussion on a specific topic. Examples of this would be the Nazi persecution of homosexuals; the influence of a literary figure's sexuality on his/her work; issues relating to discrimination in society, employment and the justice system.

Mainstreaming equality means more than producing equal opportunities policies which clutter up filing cabinets. An inclusive system of education requires thinking about systems, structures, what we say and how we behave. A basic principle of education is that each child is valued.

## Conclusion

The EIS is committed to the promotion of social justice and equality for all its members and learners. The diversity of its membership is one of its strengths. As trade unionists we understand the history, nature and dynamics of prejudice which lead to discrimination, hostility and violence towards people who are perceived to be 'different'.

Prejudice and discrimination against homosexuals has no place in an education system which claims to value all children and to prepare them for life beyond compulsory schooling.

Many gay and lesbian people report their school years as unhappy and stressful. If they were open about their sexual orientation they were subjected to homophobic bullying. If they were not open they witnessed the bullying of other children or staff who have been labelled gay or lesbian by their peers or teachers. This gave clear messages to them about how society viewed homosexuality with damaging consequences for their self esteem and future lives.

The creation of a positive, sensitive ethos in schools is essential to provide young people with self confidence and awareness about themselves and their participation as citizens in a democratic and socially just society.

Negative and hostile attitudes towards homosexuality can have devastating effects on young people. It is essential to change such attitudes. Education plays a major part in challenging myths and stereotypes.

A positive, sensitive and inclusive ethos in schools is necessary in order that the whole school community develop confidence and self awareness. Knowing and believing in our own and others unique worth enables us all to participate as citizens in the creation of a democratic and socially just society.

# Personal Accounts

The following are extracts from personal accounts provided by EIS members for the purposes of this document. Members asked that these accounts be kept anonymous as some are not 'out' in their school.

## About being "invisible"

"Since I was about 11, I had latched onto any mention of gay or lesbian that I'd come across through the media and tried to talk about it with people, from a non personal point of course, but this information was few and far between. For me, I feel as though I just wasted a lot of time this way, tried to be straight, went out with a bloke as was made clear I should, got engaged etc., etc. I might have been able to come to a more comfortable conclusion earlier. I think it is a wasted opportunity. There was an approach which said, well if you do that we can't stop you, but we're not going to give you any support or assistance. That kind of acceptance, while better than blatant homophobia, is in some ways more unhelpful, as it just makes it completely invisible."

## Just another day at school

"Although what my partner and I chose to do is still relatively uncommon amongst same sex couples there are several people I know of who have chosen to have a baby by donor insemination. My partner and I have two children, both of the children have the same biological father and there is no secret about who he is but, and this is a big but, he is not the children's dad nor will he ever be. That isn't what he wants and it isn't what my partner and I want. Of course this causes some problems and we are learning about the issues as we travel through parenthood.

One of the most difficult times for our eldest child is when all of the other children in the class are making cards for their dad for Father's day. (Yes, I know it's unusual but all the children in Angus's class live with their Mum and Dad so that just adds to the pressure on Angus.) Anyway, as I was saying, Father's day is a difficult one. You see, everyone knows that Angus's biological father is called Andrew and lives elsewhere in the world. It's out in the open - we have nothing to hide. However, although we firmly believe its best not to have secrets and allow Angus (and his younger brother, Douglas) to come to terms with the reality of his life in his own time, we still have to live and participate in the real world. And the real world is not necessarily as supportive as it might be for children like Angus and Douglas who really do have an alternative family. We want both of the boys to have the time and space to explore what it means to live and grow up with two mums and a biological father who doesn't send birthday cards or ring to say 'Merry Christmas' or 'Congratulations on passing your first grade at piano'. And whilst they are growing and maturing, support from teachers is really important to both the children and us.

Angus doesn't want to send a Father's day card to someone with whom he has no meaningful relationship. But there are lots of other people who he would like to make a card for. He has a Granddad whom he loves, a little brother he adores and some friends who are very special adults in his life. Ask him who he would like to make a card for and he'll tell you. It won't be a problem to him in class. And when he comes home from school we'll talk with him about who he made a card for and how he feels about having two mums and no one to call dad.

And maybe, just maybe, Angus or Douglas might like to make two cards for Mother's day."

## Children matter

"I live with my partner and her two children. We have lived together for almost 5 years. The kids are 9 and 12. The kids are continually faced with homophobia at school. This is mainly due to the fact that there is an assumption made that all children's parents are heterosexual. For example, our

eldest was asked to do a family tree for his history homework. The example that the teacher gave him was to look at both his mother's and father's family tree. He was torn as to who to include within his family as he wanted to include me but felt that this would not be acceptable to the school.

Many children do not have both or either of their birth parents caring for them, this includes children in care, adopted children, lone parent families, step parent families and also lesbian or gay families. The above families make up for a huge percentage of the population so why do schools persist on assuming that all children live with their heterosexual birth mother and father?

These types of assumptions are made all the time.

Clearly teachers could make life much easier not only for children with lesbian and/or gay parents but also for kids from lone parent families, step parent families etc. Schools and teachers must recognise the diversity of the family settings that kids come from and put their own prejudices aside to ensure that our kids do not face discrimination, hurt and upset over something that is outwith their control.

This is only one small example. This occurs on a daily basis. Surely what is important is that children are brought up in a home with people who love, care and look after them."

### The power of conformity

"I am returning to teaching. My daughter is just starting school. I have had plenty of part-time temporary work - perhaps at your school. You'll know about my daughter and you'll hear about her dad. They are part of my every day practicalities; child-care; chickenpox; the problems of train journeys to another city at the weekend. The questions I'm asked are friendly and I don't feel I have to hide from you that I'm not married. I know there are single mothers, unmarried couples, divorcees, and step parents amongst most folk's friends and family. I also know that there are gay men and lesbians, but we are so often invisible.

There are many reasons why I am invisible here. I don't like the label - I'm lots of other things too. I don't have a partner - so I cannot slip her name into conversation. I don't want to talk to strangers about my sex life - I am Scottish! My hair is long, I don't wear dungarees and only my ears are pierced. So you don't know.

It bothers me that the smallest children in our school use 'girl' and 'boy' as terms of abuse, as powerful a means of intimidation as "paki" or "spaz". They are learning that it is safest to stay within stereotypical roles. Soon enough "lessie" and "poof" will be the taunts that encourage them all to conform.

I want to work with you to change that. We learn young that to step out of line is to risk ridicule and rejection. I still often feel fearful of stepping "out"."

### On "coming out"

"I am a middle aged teacher in a school in a fairly prosperous urban area. I also happen to be married with children. Lots of gay men of my generation are. After many years of steadily growing discomfort with the deception of my life I decided to come out and be open about who I really was. I explained the position to my wife and to one or two relatives, and at length I approached the head teacher of our school. He could not have been more supportive, although he warned me that if I came out, not everybody would be sympathetic. On the last day of that term, I told a fair number of my colleagues and experienced no overt hostility to my revelation. I thought everything was going all right next term, when the head teacher asked me to come into the office. He told me that my employing authority had been approached by a newspaper, which had been making enquiries about me. I was left with the clear impression that a colleague had made some kind of approach to the newspaper, though I have no way of knowing who it could have been.

Worse was to follow. When I went home, my wife told me that reporters had been on the phone to her, asking her questions about me, without explaining what their particular reason was. As we were talking about this, we saw a car stop outside the front door, and two men got out, one of them carrying a camera. They rang the door bell. We were petrified, and did not know whether to answer the door or not. It was clear they would not go away unless we answered the door. We eventually opened the door and made it clear to them that there was no story for them.

When I went back to school the next day, I learned that the same reporters had stopped boys from the school in the street, asking them about me, and if I had made approaches to any of them. This resulted in the inevitable unpleasant remarks and on occasion pretty overt verbal abuse from pupils. Sadly, although what was happening was known to all the staff, as I afterwards found out, only one member of staff was supportive in any way (apart from the SMT).

After a while, things quietened down and I just went on teaching as if nothing had happened and made sure I gave no one any excuse to complain about me.

Much later, I met one of the pupils who had taunted me, in a gay bar!"

### A hidden discrimination

"On starting in a new school is anyone's priority discussing their sexuality? It's a busy time of adjustment and sorting cupboards! So, before I'd realised, when I'd never quite jumped in and come out at the appropriate moment, it was generally assumed I was heterosexual and the longer this state continued, the harder it became to correct these assumptions.

By not speaking up I'd been complicit in making myself invisible. Challenging racist and sexist remarks - but staring fixedly at the table at homophobic ones.

Section 28 made me feel I couldn't rely on legal backing even if I was willing to withstand personal verbal attack. For me, the hatred unleashed towards lesbians and gay men during the Keep the Clause campaign was the final straw especially as homosexuality was now a topic that came up in the staffroom more frequently and negative attitudes were being challenged, not just by me either.

So, from being out to a couple of close colleagues, I came out to all the teaching staff. No negative reactions, some silence.

There's still a road to travel.

The Lesbian and Gay Equality advice and guidelines are prominently displayed but no-one mentions them. I will . . . tomorrow!

Then there's next steps - one day the "gossip" will spread and I can't pretend other than that the panicky butterflies felt at coming out to colleagues is nothing compared to the full flight of stress at the realisation that one day it will be parents and children. I'll get through it, but it's a stress that L&G teachers deal with all the time, the what ifs . . . the actuality.

We need the strength of the law behind us and I feel empowered by the strong, positive backing of the EIS and the links within the Lesbian and Gay Network.

I just want to go to work, work I really enjoy. I want to feel free to deliver a balanced, unbiased curriculum celebrating the diversity of family life, challenging inequalities and stereotypes in line with local and national guidelines without being suspected of having ulterior motives or hidden agendas.

Though Section 28/Clause 2A has been scrapped, people's attitudes haven't."

## Respecting families

"My youngest son Sam, (one of seven children) in his first year at primary school was making a calendar with drawings of his family members on it. When he came home with the calendar he had made he was upset. It was a mess because the teacher had made him score out one of the people and it was a big black blob where once there was a person. The calendar had a picture of Mummy, Sam and 3 of his 5 brothers and one blacked out person. I asked him why the teacher had made him scribble out that one. He said it was Mary and she was not allowed on his family calendar. Mary was my girlfriend and the teacher was fully aware we were in a gay relationship. The teacher had written each name under each person and then requested Sam to black out the one he called Mary - I was disgusted then and am still now at such biased attitudes."

## Boys are just being boys

"I have been working in my current school for about 18 years. Over the years I have formed very good relationships with my colleagues and my pupils. My gay sexuality is known to most of my colleagues. The senior management is aware of this also. In the main they are supportive of me. My sexuality is a matter of discussion with pupils in the school. I do not feel I am able to be as open as I would like to be. I am unsure what their reaction would be and I am unsure of how parents would react to an out gay teacher. The fallout from Keep the Clause campaign brought this into sharp focus and it made me feel quite vulnerable.

Over the years I have been aware of young men and women in school who have struggled with their sexuality. I have not been surprised to meet quite a few of them in later life on the gay scene. They told that their experience at school was very hard. They certainly knew about me but were understandably reticent to approach the teacher everyone calls a poof.

I have lost count of the number of times I have had poof, bender or gayboy mumbled at me in the corridor or shouted at me across the playground. Recently I attended a performance in the local theatre accompanied by a gay friend. On approaching the theatre I could see a group of pupils in the shadows. Once they recognised me I heard my name being mentioned and then poof, bender shouted at top of their voices. It was distressing.

On another occasion I was walking with a group of colleagues to the local Tesco's. I was singled out for abusive treatment. My name alone was constantly repeated and gay bastard and other abusive terms shouted at me. The group created so much noise, that members of the public turned around to see what the commotion was about. It was a particularly humiliating experience especially since I was singled out. I was unable to identify the pupils as they were hiding behind bushes. I reported the matter to the Headteacher.

I am confident in who I am and confident in being a gay man but incidents like these do knock me. I deal with homophobic language on a daily basis when pupils speak to or about each other. Homophobic language is the most commonly used form of abuse now. Pupils are aware that they cannot use it in terms of race or disability but it is open season against gays and lesbians. Most of the hassle is caused by male pupils and is indicative of the macho culture of my work place. This culture sadly pervades the classrooms of a lot of my male colleagues. Several times over the last few years I have had to deal with instances where teachers have called boys poofs or gayboy (a local favourite here) in front of the class when they were unable to complete a task. One such incident led to a boy having homophobic graffiti written on his jotter. It took some time to convince the Depute Head teacher that this way of speaking was completely unacceptable and was not a case of boys just being boys."

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