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5 February 2021

Chief Executives

I am writing to you following the publication of the Equalities and Human Rights Committee report – [Race Equality, Employment and Skills: Making Progress?](#) in November last year. This follows the Committee's inquiry into race equality, employment and skills in which a number of public authorities gave evidence and you will by now have received this from the Committee.

I would like to thank you for your work to support your minority ethnic staff, particularly with the anxieties, many of them have had as a result of COVID-19. Your efforts and the work you have been taking forward to date are greatly appreciated and I recognise that this is an area that we all take very seriously.

In their report, the Committee made a number of recommendations for public authorities to address race inequality in their organisations. As part of The Scottish Government's response I committed to write to Chief Executives of public authorities to establish an understanding across the public sector of how each organisation is intending taking forward the Committee's recommendations and how the Scottish Government can best support with this, as well as hold a Public Leadership Summit on Race Equality in Employment in March. The responses received will help inform the agenda and discussions at, and the actions to be agreed following, the public sector leadership summit. The summit will provide the opportunity for Scottish Public Sector leaders to bring the experience of your organisation, achievements and challenges to the summit, with a view to agreeing and issuing a joint statement committing to taking forward actions to deliver on the committee's recommendations.

I would be very grateful if you could provide me with information on how you intend your organisation to take the committee recommendations forward and in particular, the following:

- The Committee recommends those in public authority leadership positions *undertake an assessment of their organisation's understanding of racism and the structural barriers that may exist within their organisations*. Public authorities should integrate their ambitions into their next strategic plan. Their strategic goal should be

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underpinned by specific outcomes and supported by timely monitoring. *Public authorities should be transparent about their targets and their progress in delivering their outcomes.*

- The Committee welcomes the Scottish Government's recruitment toolkit designed to support employers to better recruit more people from minority ethnic backgrounds and asks the Scottish Government when this will be available and how this will be publicised to public authorities. *The Committee recommends public authorities should review their recruitment procedures and practice against the Scottish Government's toolkit and make the necessary changes.*
- The Committee recommends that *all public authorities subject to the Scottish specific Public Sector Equality Duty should, as a minimum, voluntarily record and publish their ethnicity pay gap and produce an action plan to deliver identified outcomes.* This piece of work will help organisations to understand the reasons behind the gap and to take targeted action. By not doing so, the Committee believes not only is there a greater risk of reputational damage to the public authority but also the potential for loss of talent to other more progressive workplaces.
- The Committee intends to send this report to every public authority it initially wrote to. The Committee asks *each public authority to provide a commitment to the Committee to take a minimum of three new actions to address their organisation's specific issues along with associated timescales and reasons for those timescales.* Public authorities must show strong leadership and demonstrate a dedication to addressing decades of damage. As Inclusion Scotland said, it is about "employer-ability", not "employ-ability".

As part of the Scottish Government's response, I provided information on the publication of the [Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit](#) and how it has been promoted to our stakeholders and I am very interested to understand how this toolkit will be used within your organisation.

The Scottish Government's vision is clear. Our Race Equality Framework 2016 – 2030 states that our "*Minority ethnic people have equal, fair and proportionate access to employment and representation at all levels, grades and occupation types in Scotland's workforce and experience fewer labour market, workplace and income inequalities.*" As such, I am absolutely committed to supporting public sector organisations to progress their race equality policies. We are keen to have discussions on how recommendations within the report will be taken forward by public authorities.

With this in mind, as noted above, I and my Ministerial colleagues intend to hold a Public Sector Leadership Summit on **race equality in employment** in March and I will send further information on this in due course. This summit, along with ongoing engagement with the public sector will inform our future programme of actions to ensure Scotland is truly a fair work nation.

We want to work with you to effectively address the recommendations made by the Committee and demonstrate leadership right across the public sector on this matter. I would welcome a response to this letter outlining your initial thoughts, plans you intend to take and any challenges that you foresee in committing to and taking forward these recommendations. The summit will also be an opportunity to plan further how these recommendations will be addressed.

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In this current climate where inequalities that exist within our society have not only been highlighted but also exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, I am determined, as we recover and navigate our way through this ever changing situation, that we are clear and focussed on what needs to be done to dismantle the systems that hinder race equality in the workplace and improve outcomes for our minority ethnic communities in moving into, staying and progressing in employment that reflects their skills, qualifications and experience.

I thank you in anticipation of your response which I would be grateful to receive **by Monday 1st March**. All responses should be submitted to raceemployment@gov.scot

If you or your colleagues wish to discuss these issues further in advance of your response, please contact the Race Employment Team at the above email address.

I hope this letter is helpful and I look forward to meeting some of you at the Summit to share good practice and learning, across the public sector, to inform our work going forward.



JAMIE HEPBURN

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