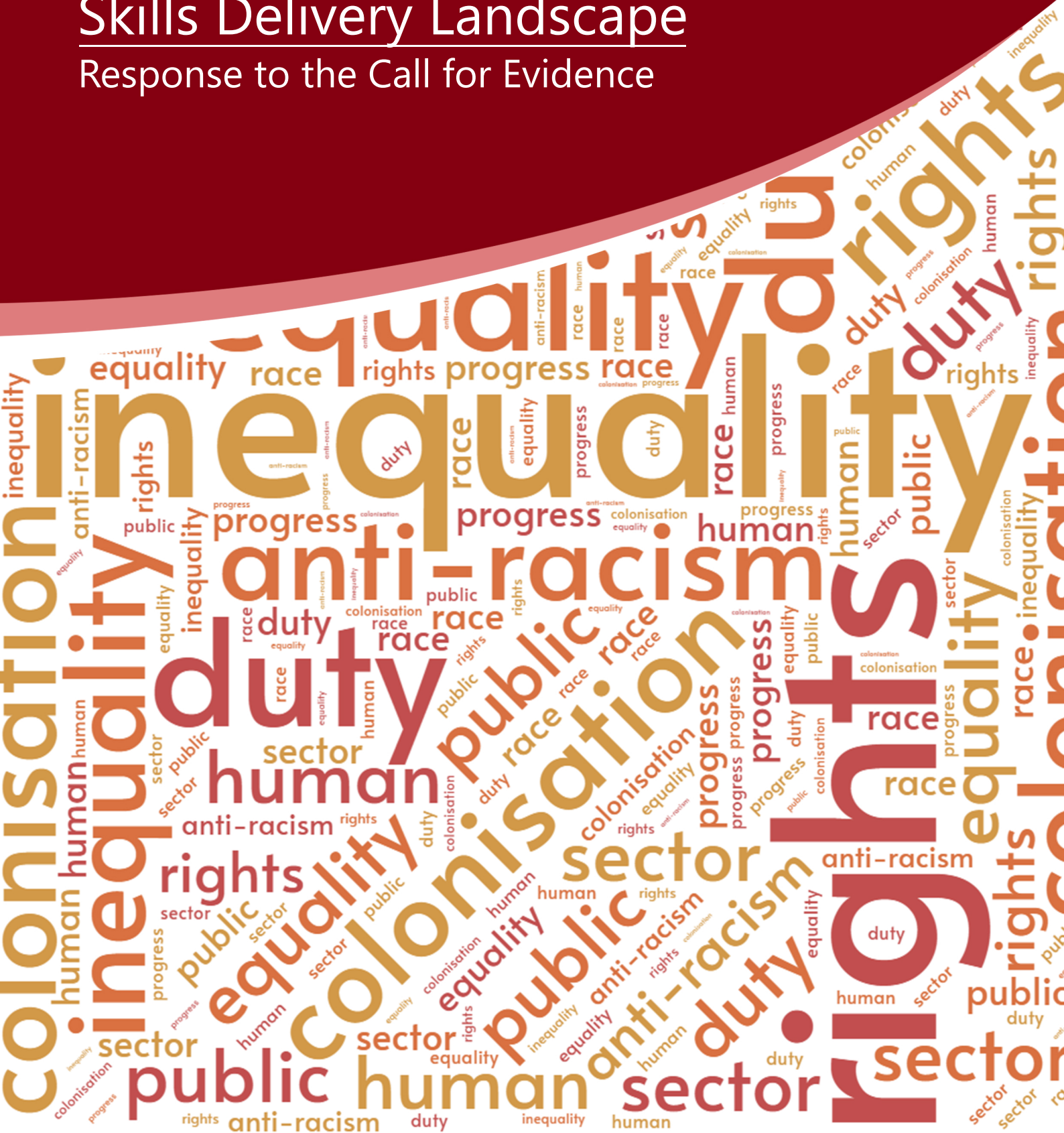


Skills Delivery Landscape

Response to the Call for Evidence



SKILLS DELIVERY LANDSCAPE: CALL FOR EVIDENCE

How do we build a skills landscape that is fit for
the future and can unlock the potential that lies
in us all?



23 December 2022

CEMVO Scotland is a national intermediary organisation and strategic partner of the Scottish Government Equality Unit. Our aim is to build the capacity and sustainability of the ethnic minority (EM) voluntary sector and its communities. Since being established in 2003, we have developed a database network of over 600 EM voluntary sector organisations throughout Scotland to which we deliver a wide range of programmes that provide capacity building support to the sector.

As a national organisation, we continually engage with the EM voluntary sector and its communities, which enable us to gather intelligence about the needs and issues affecting the sector. This helps our organisation to deliver tailored support to the sector, and to work strategically with public, statutory, and government agencies to tackle a range of prevalent issues such as race equality, social inclusion, capacity building and civic participation. Our programmes, such as [Young, Confident and Connected](#) (YCC), [Steps in Employment](#) and [Capacity Building](#) are designed to empower and understand the needs of ethnic minorities who are seeking employment and improving their skills to develop their career aspirations.

Part of our work as an identified stakeholder in public policy involves contributing to Scottish Government Stakeholder Partnership Groups (SPG) from a race equality and human rights perspective, and regularly provide a lived-experienced response to our strategic consultations. These include, but is not limited to:

- Anti-Racist Education Programme (AREP; formerly known as REAREP)
- Fair Work Action Plan; Anti-Racist Employment Strategy
- Hate Crime Strategic Partnership Group (HCSPG)
- National Care Service (NCS)

We are also a member of the Scottish National Action Plan for Human Rights (SNAP) which is led by the Scottish Human Rights Commission.

The response from CEMVO Scotland is formed through our input and expertise drawn from our overall contributions within the employment and race equality sector in Scotland. Our commitment to working with the Scottish Government in achieving the goals set in the Race Equality Framework 2016-2030 (REF) is a priority despite the slow progress in the race sector. This Skills Delivery Independent Review is welcome as it encompasses the following aspirations of the Scottish Government:

[Race Equality Framework 2016-2030](#) - Vision & Key Goals

Education & Lifelong Learning

Vision: Everyone has the opportunity to learn in an inclusive environment without disadvantage in relation to racial inequality or racism

Key goals:

15. Minority ethnic pupils are provided with careers guidance that helps to improve transition into employment and tackles occupational segregation.
18. Scotland's education workforce better reflects the diversity of its communities.

19. Minority ethnic people experience better outcomes in completing further and higher education, and in transitioning to the labour market after completion.

Employability, Employment & Income

Vision: 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

Key goals:

20. Identify and promote practice that works in reducing employment inequalities, discrimination and barriers for minority ethnic people, including in career paths, recruitment, progression and retention.

21. Ensure robust policy responses that support race equality in relation to income and poverty.

23. Reduce barriers and provide support for minority ethnic people who are new to the labour market, including school leavers and new migrants.

24. Minority ethnic entrepreneurs and business owners have equal access to business and enterprise support.

25. Scotland's public sector workforce is representative of its communities

CEMVO Scotland's remit within the employment sector as an EM-led organisation means that the response to the Skills Delivery Independent Review is limited as the focus of our programmes support employability and employers in increasing their visible ethnic composition in their workforce and leadership. The questions completed are: 1, 2b), 3, 4, 7, 12, 13, 14, 20, 21, 22 and 23.

Part 1 – Skills delivery landscape

Question 1: *If there was one thing you would like to see change in how our skills landscape is structured and delivering, what would it be?*

CEMVO Scotland supports improved engagement with EM communities and for them to be involved at the decision-making table. Involving EM will also provide a unique perspective, based on professional and lived experiences, to help achieve the public sector equality duty (PSED) and lead on inclusive practices that will engage, empower and build trust between public services and EM communities. CEMVO Scotland has built positive relationships and supported mainstream organisations and Scottish Government in their engagement with EM communities, such as the Fair Work consultation and Fair Start Scotland programme. We have also worked extensively with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) as client through our Race for Human Rights programme (R4HR), as a stakeholder in their equality strategy reviews and partnership in [‘Improving EM Workforce Data Collection’](#) workshop organised with the Scottish Government Fair Work Unit.

Question 2: *Thinking about the vision in the Terms of Reference for a system that is simple, people-focused and built on collaboration, how well are we doing against that vision just now? Can you provide specific examples of:*

b) elements that don’t work, are confusing or need to be improved?

CEMVO Scotland would emphasise the need for early intervention in careers and skills development for EM young people,. A theme developed from the needs of clients of the YCC project is that that they were not engaged with throughout their time in high school by school based careers advisors. This is supported through lived experiences of our EM staff who have attended Scottish high schools, where young people are expected to engage with the careers counsellor rather than building a relationship with the young person to help them in their journey of self discovery. An illustrative example from the YCC project derives from supporting EM YP with their UCAS application. Majority of clients were unaware of their career options, influenced by the positive destination routes pursued by siblings or external family. The lack of careers guidance and exposure to different fields limited the awareness and potential of the clients. The work of the YCC project provides an in-depth one-to-one support for EM YP to help with applications throughout employment and career progression. CEMVO Scotland would advocate for this approach to be used in mainstream settings.

Question 3: *Thinking about the different national agencies and partners involved in skills delivery, are there areas where more clarity is required about roles and responsibilities or where you think the balance of responsibilities should be changed?*

CEMVO Scotland believes there needs to be a better accountability process in place for careers advisors when they are engaging with ethnic minorities. The social construct of racism needs to be taken into account when analysing the power imbalance between an adult and young person, alongside white privilege. Careers advisors and pastoral teachers impact and influence the life outcomes during an adolescent’s educational/academic journey ([Why pastoral roles are absolutely critical for schools | Teach First](#)) especially helping individuals

acquire the knowledge, skills and information necessary to identify the right options and their potential. This responsibility is a part of their obligations as employees of public sector organisations, such as SDS and education authorities. Although SDS provide [intense coaching and guidance for pupils](#), based on the answer provided to question 2.b., CEMVO Scotland would encourage research charting the quality of guidance provided to EM young people during their high school years and how this impacts on their career aspirations. This would allow a mapping process to understand where EM young people are remaining at a disadvantage, and establishing if there is any elements of institutionalised or systemic racism within the skills delivery landscape.

Question 4: *Thinking about how our economy and society is changing and the Scottish Government's ambitions for a skilled workforce as set out in NSET, do you have any evidence on where the current skills and education landscape needs to adapt or change and how it could be improved? Please provide evidence to support your answer.*

CEMVO Scotland would advocate for anti-racism practices to be incorporated within the current landscape. Racism within the education and policy sector has been made evident through work that is being carried out within the Anti-Racism in Education Programme (AREP). Alongside research that has been conducted from the Scottish Government's Fair Work Unit ([Anti-Racist Employment Strategy](#)) and the Coalition of Race Equality and Rights ([Anti-racist policy making: Learning from the first 20 years of Scottish devolution Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights](#)) we would like to draw on the experiences derived from our grassroots projects helping ethnic minorities into the workplace.

It has been raised through many clients on the YCC project, that EM young people do not receive the same level of guidance in careers choices (the same amount of energy and time) as their white counterparts. This calls for an investigation of interaction EM young people have with SDS or guidance support (outwith S1 and S2) based on the number of negative experiences that are reported. For example, we have had incidents such as a young person who was told they could not go to university, but through the YCC project, they were offered a place for a marketing degree. Another EM young person was told at school through careers counselling, that she couldn't do optometry and was told to be realistic in her goals which impacted on her mental health.

CEMVO Scotland would like to use the opportunity of this call for evidence to draw attention to serious concerns voiced by EM communities that careers advisors are not making an effort to speak to young people in high schools. Anecdotal evidence highlights that the onus is on the young person to make contact with the careers advisor. This is concerning as those who already feel they are at a disadvantage due to the colour of their skin, face the additional barriers of accessing careers support with someone who (but is not limited to):

- Does not look like/represent them
- Does not understand their culture and its implications on their career choice
- Encourage how their religious extracurricular activities can be used as reference points/transferrable skills

CEMVO Scotland is supportive in the Scottish Government's ambition to increase the diversity of the public sector workforce. The lack of lived experiences within these organisations highlights the lack of diversity within these influential roles. For example, [SDS](#) reported that 91% of employees are White Scottish and [0%](#) in the Scottish Funding Council are from EM backgrounds. This lack of representation impacts on the relationship between an EM pupil and their quality of engagement with career advisors, due to the lack of understanding in cultural nuances and this impact on a EM young persons potential.

Part 2 – Apprenticeships

Question 7: *The Terms of Reference sets out an ambition for apprenticeship programmes to be an embedded part of the wider education system to ensure that there are a range of different pathways available to learners. Do you have any views or evidence on how changes to the operation of apprenticeship programmes could support this ambition?*

CEMVO Scotland calls for specific action and realistic targets to be achieved for EM people to access apprenticeship programmes.

Anecdotal evidence from the YCC programme has shown that EM young people have faced continuous difficulty entering modern apprenticeship programmes. For example, the initial barrier to achieving the National 5 requirements in Maths and English (references to apprenticeships listed in gradcracker and apprenticeship.scot) is rooted in the quality of education they have received in high school. Majority of EM students face institutionalised racism, which affects their potential, confidence, mindset and abilities.

Engagement with colleges and employers through the YCC programme has highlighted that there are not enough placements available. An example provided was the difficulty in getting a placement for trade courses. Because of these limited places, the application process is more competitive favouring those with white privilege.

CEMVO Scotland's advantage of gathering intelligence allows the organisation to share case studies with intimate details which endorses systemic racism in Scotland. For example, in 2015, Skills Development Scotland reached out to EM-led organisations to support the increase of EM applications in the Modern Apprenticeship programmes. It was disclosed from a project delivery partner, that SDS representatives were celebrating the 0.1% increase in applicants due to this intervention. This reaction to a minute increase revealed that the ambition needs to be clear with fixed, real-time targets to achieve, supported by accountability measures.

To genuinely improve the EM diversity of apprentices in programmes, CEMVO Scotland would advocate to implementing a culturally sensitive approach to raising awareness and encouraging applications from this marginalised group. Our learning from the YCC and Steps into Employment programme is that family is a big influencer on an EM education and career progress. For example, young people have reported that they have been reluctant to go to Modern Apprenticeship information sessions if their parents are not involved as well.

Part 4 – Upskilling and Reskilling

Question 12: *Do you have any evidence to demonstrate how the existing delivery arrangements for upskilling and reskilling, including the specific funding programmes, are impacting on intended outcomes for learners and/or industry and sectors?*

Through our employment based programmes, CEMVO Scotland signposts EM clients to specific funding in their desire to upskill/reskill, such as Individual Training Accounts (ITA)'s provide £200 towards a course. Feedback from EM clients would suggest that there is a need to evaluate the impact of these schemes, in comparison to the costs of courses that are needed to make career changes.

CEMVO Scotland believe that organisations like SDS are capable to deliver these services and include EM people. However, due to historic mistrust and lack of confidence in the public services, the barrier to access and engage with EM communities still exist. Anecdotal evidence suggests that people do not feel safe enough to have the holistic environment to pursue their career.

Question 13: *Do you have any evidence about what measures, if any, should be in place to understand the quality of national skills programme delivery funded by public investment through independent training providers?*

To set realistic proactive measures in the quality of a national skills programme delivery, CEMVO Scotland would advice to use a human rights based approach and ensure that EM with lived and professional experiences in this sector be included, alongside those who will be impacted by outcomes of this programme (i.e. EM young people and job seekers).

Our response to the [Review of the Operation of the Public Sector Equality Duty in Scotland](#) highlighted the support from CEMVO Scotland in utilising the powers of regulation in the procurement sector to uphold PSED commitments. In this scenario, CEMVO Scotland would call for independent training providers to be subjected to PSED requirements, with specific targets to achieve and training in anti-racism to implement systemic progress in EM representation across all fields.

CEMVO Scotland would further advocate that all measures implemented should be reflective of the human rights policy landscape that is being established within Scotland.

Question 14: *Thinking about the government's ambition to optimise the existing system for upskilling and reskilling throughout life, do you have any evidence to support how changes to the delivery landscape could help to achieve this ambition?*

Changes to the delivery landscape would ultimately need to address institutionalised racism engrained in the Scottish public sector. CEMVO Scotland continuously advocates and supports the need of reflective representation within the public sector workforce. The impact this will have on the delivery landscape would translate into inclusive learning practices for adults that are culturally sensitive. This would also contribute to addressing barriers faced by individuals who have intersectional needs, by incorporating those with relatable experiences to provide a progressive and holistic environment.

CEMVO Scotland would encourage a review of the existing delivery landscape with an anti-racist lens, to achieve goals, such as 20 and 23 from REF. Our work with public sector organisations through R4HR indicates that there are many mainstream organisations that would benefit from an equalities review to support the Scottish Government's ambition of a Fair Work Nation.

CEMVO Scotland would further support establishing safeguarding measures for EM individuals from negative influences or being subjected to racism when participating in upskilling/reskilling courses. This will provide confidence and build trust with EM led organisations who support people into employment/skills delivery providers.

Part 6 – Careers and Young People

Question 20: *Do you have any evidence to inform how the new Careers by Design Collaborative could be embedded within the wider education and skills system and delivery landscape to enable the recommendations of the Careers Review to be taken forward to ensure people can access the advice, information and guidance that they need?*

CEMVO Scotland has regularly advocated for representation of marginalised communities at policy-making levels. Similarly, EM representation must be integral to the Careers by Design Collaborative, to ensure that the wider education and skills system and delivery landscape are influenced by those who are at affected by it most. CEMVO Scotland would further recommend to include EM-led organisations who have a track record of successful interventions for efficacy in implementing recommendations of the Careers Review.

Question 21: *Alongside Careers information, advice and guidance, do you have any evidence to demonstrate what additional support young people, including those from marginalised groups, might need to develop their skills and experience to prepare them for the world of work? Please include details about who you think should be responsible for providing this support.*

Collating professional, personal and lived experiences, CEMVO Scotland would propose the following:

1. Addressing institutionalised racism by focusing on quantity than quality in providing careers advice, which is what the YCC programme provides; in-depth one-to-one support to help with applications throughout employment and career progression. This would be the responsibility of SDS, careers advisors and pastoral teachers, and can be achieved by:
 - having a continuous point of contact with one person from careers to be able to build that relationship - careers choice starts on the first day of secondary school, not on the last
 - to engage with the YP and make an effort to understand the their aspirations.
2. Positive engagement to widen their awareness of what careers are out there.
 - Characteristically, EM's are limited to typical careers paths, such as medicine, law or business. Making sure that there is a focus on the young persons skills and vision, rather than what the young person is aware of, is the responsibility of the pastoral teacher and careers advisor.
 - Network and exposure is influential in making career decisions. If marginalised people are constantly exposed to low skills in their life, then aspirations are limited. Having that exposure to other avenues and careers opportunities will help to build that inspiration.
3. Feedback and engagement with young people to input on how they can better deliver.
4. Understanding family structures in EM communities;
 - Typically, it is the mother that looks after the young person, and sometimes Dad. Therefore, it is important to help explain the support that is needed, because of a potential generational migrant gap/disconnect.

- Helping parents understand the transferrable skills that is helpful in their child's UCAS form. I.e. going to mosque class is an extra curricular activity, and shouldn't be seen as a negative due to inherent discrimination.

Part 7 – Employer Support and Engagement

Question 22: *Do you have any evidence about how the current arrangements for employer engagement in skills and education are supporting delivery of Scottish Government's ambitions and outcomes?*

CEMVO Scotland is currently working with Fair Start Scotland, through [CEMVO Enterprises CIC](#) to support public and third sector employability organisations in their capacity development with community engagement, focusing on EM clients. In their own capacity to upskill current staff, CEMVO Scotland would like to use this opportunity to highlight that whilst the majority of individuals have been positively receptive in their race equality training, a minority of white people do not acknowledge the historic impact of institutionalised racism. Due to the influential position of these employees, CEMVO Scotland would call for mandatory training in anti-racism for employers to embed within their organisations, to help achieve race equality outcomes.

CEMVO Scotland's flagship mainstreaming programme has supported the delivery of training in race equality and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) for many years. More recently, the R4HR programme has been working with a number of public and third sector employers in their training needs analysis. It is often reported that budget constraints impact on the amount of investment an organisation can allocate toward improving skills and education of its staff in understanding race equality. Through funding from Inspiring Scotland, the R4HR programme supports these organisations in progressing towards embedding anti-racism using human rights as a means to implement reviewed policies (also offered through the programme).

CEMVO Scotland would like to mention that an increase in anti-racism awareness has been a reaction to the surfaced inequalities faced by EM communities in Scotland because of COVID-19 and the BLM movement. It is disappointing to witness this inequality has become a priority as a result of immediate investigations due to the disproportionate impact of deaths within the EM communities, despite the implementation of the Equality Act since 2010 and subsequent PSED placed upon public sector organisations.

Question 23: *Thinking about the different aspects of the system in which employers have an interest, and the existing mechanisms for feeding into policy and delivery, do you have any evidence to support how changes in the delivery landscape could improve the partnership working between Scottish Government, its public bodies and employers?*

CEMVO Scotland would support improving confidence and awareness of employers to the benefits of a diverse workforce and career progression of EM in their organisations. The Scottish Government has become forthcoming with the institutionalised and systemic racism and has endeavored to be a leader through the [Public Sector Leadership Summit](#) which took place in 2021. The joint commitment to take forward the recommendations of the Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee around race equality in employment supports the changes proposed to improve partnership working between stakeholders to overcome the institutional racism highlighted by our response.