



Registers of Scotland Executive Agency

Gender Equality Scheme

June 2007



REGISTERS OF SCOTLAND GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

Foreword by Keeper and Chief Executive

As Keeper and Chief Executive I welcome this legislation as it allows us to focus specifically on gender equality and helps us ensure we are doing all that we can, as a service provider, as a policy maker and as an employer, to promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination. I see the practical application of equality as vital in the employment of our staff and also in our service delivery. I will ensure that as Keeper and Chief Executive that, along with my Management Board, we will do all that we can to meet the Agency's obligations. Our gender equality scheme complements the work we are already doing with our equality schemes on Race and Disability; our Action Plans show what differences we hope we can make in practical terms for our staff and our customers. I will welcome any comments on the development of this scheme.

James Meldrum
Keeper and Chief Executive
29 June 2007



Introduction

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975, as amended by the Equality Act 2006, places a statutory duty on all public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; and
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

This is known as the general duty and came into effect on 6 April 2007.

General Duty

As well as having to have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment and to promoting equality of opportunity between men and women, the general duty includes the need to have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment against transsexual people in the fields of employment and vocational training (including further and higher education).

The general duty covers all public authorities, and applies to all their functions including employment, budget setting and procurement, by setting the framework within which the organisation will deliver its services. Meeting the requirements of the general duty is a statutory obligation.

Specific Duty

To support the Agency in meeting the obligations of the general duty, the specific duty requires us to undertake a range of practical measures including:

- the preparation and publication of a gender equality scheme, showing how we will meet the general and specific duties and setting out our gender equality objectives;
- in formulating our overall objectives, considering the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap;



- gathering and using information on how the Agency's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services;
- consulting stakeholders (i.e. staff, service users and others, including trades unions) and taking account of relevant information in order to determine our gender equality objectives;
- assessing the impact of our current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality and having due regard to the results of those impact assessments;
- implementing the actions set out in our scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so; and
- reporting against the scheme every year and reviewing it at least every three years.

The Agency is covered by both the general and specific duties. Following publication of our gender equality scheme we are also required to publish a statement which outlines our policy on equal pay between men and women, no later than 28 September 2007. We must review this statement and publish a report on our equal pay policy within three years' of its publication, and at least every three years thereafter.

Agency Vision

The Agency's vision is to be recognised as one of the most effective and efficient land registries in the world. Achieving our vision will provide Scotland's citizens and institutions with the social and economic benefits that flow from a publicly guaranteed system of rights in land and property. Our vision is being progressively realised.

In support of this, we have developed Agency values which are to:

- encourage all staff to work together as a team;
- value and respect our customers;
- value and respect one another whatever our role;
- foster trust and integrity;
- encourage acceptance of responsibility; and
- acknowledge work done well.



The Agency seeks to ensure that all staff understand and uphold the Agency's vision and values.

Agency Function

We are the Government Agency in Scotland responsible for compiling and maintaining records relating to property and other legal documents. Our main aim is to protect the rights of the individual while providing public access to important legal information. The Agency administers 15 registers with the bulk of our work being the registration of interest in land in Scotland in the two property registers (the General Register of Sasines and the Land Register).

Individuals wishing to register their interest in land generally do so via their solicitor, therefore our main customer focus and contact is with the legal profession. However, members of the public do contact the Agency through our dedicated customer service centres if they have a query or problem relating to land in Scotland.

Equality Values and Principles

The Agency considers equality of opportunity and diversity issues to be an important focus for us to develop. We aim to maintain a place of work free from discrimination and where equality of opportunity is transparent and monitored.

Publishing the Gender Equality Scheme

This document and subsequent Schemes will be published on the Agency's website and intranet and staff will be informed by internal Agency staff notice. The Agency will report annually on progress.

Provision of Information

All of the information we hold in relation to our registers is open to the public, who can view the registers via our Customer Service Centres in Edinburgh and Glasgow or request information by telephone, letter, fax or e-mail. In addition, solicitors and others can access information from



our main registers via the Internet if they have subscribed to our 'Registers Direct' service. We can, with prior notice, have specialist support available should any customers require specialist assistance. Requests for specific services should be made in advance via the Customer Service Centres.

Customer Relations

The Agency is pleased to assist our customers in any enquiry concerning our products or services. In addition to leaflets and brochures, we can also provide information in large print and on a CD-Rom or disk.

Feedback from Customers

The Agency has an online customer questionnaire available for our customers to complete and send to us. This helps the Agency in the development of products and services. There is also a questionnaire that visitors to our Customer Service Centres are encouraged to complete following their visit. We also regularly seek feedback from customers using various assessment methods.

Agency Policies

The Agency has policies in place to cover both the employment of staff and how we deliver services to our customers.

Recruitment

The Agency's recruitment policy covers the external and internal recruitment processes. To support monitoring and reporting in each recruitment campaign information is recorded on the method of advertising, the selection criteria, disability, age, ethnicity, gender etc. The information collected is reviewed to consider whether there are any disability, ethnicity, gender or age related issues. The Agency keeps abreast of developments in good practice and consults staff and/or their representatives in relation to policies and procedures affecting recruitment and retention.



Our Gender Equality Commitments

In this Gender Equality Scheme we make the following commitments:

- we will continue to monitor pay, internal and external recruitment and equality proof our policies and procedures;
- we will continue to offer flexible working arrangements, which afford staff the opportunity to have more control of when they work and allows staff with caring responsibilities greater flexibility in their work life balance;
- we will continue to make part time and part year working available to staff;
- we will explore the options for agile working (e.g. remote working, home working);
- we will continue to ensure that procedures are in place to support staff who feel they have been subject to discrimination or harassment;
- we will continue to work with the trades union Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) under partnership arrangements in our joint Diversity Working Group;
- we will continue to have contact officers available, whom staff can approach if they would prefer to speak with someone who is independent of their specific work area and line management. The contact officer discusses the options open to the individual and supports them in any decision they make. (This is in addition to our provision of a Welfare Officer and our Employee Assistance Provider);
- we will make sure that we have in place procedures to ensure equality of opportunity between men and women;



- we will ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities as to how they are expected to behave and interact with people by directing them to our Dignity at Work policy and offering diversity training;
- we will ensure that all managers and our customer facing staff undergo diversity training;
- we will publish our policies on our Intranet so that they are accessible to all our staff;
- we will provide a development training programme open to all staff;
- we will promote the Agency's Vision and Values that encourage us to value and respect one another;
- we will ensure that the Performance Management System is gender equality proofed; and
- we will participate in relevant events on gender equality.

Procurement

The Agency recognises that as a major procurer of goods and services we have to ensure that those who are contracted by us do not compromise our duty to promote gender equality when carrying out services to the public on our behalf. We intend to amend our standard set of terms and conditions to include a clause stating that contractors shall not unlawfully discriminate with regard to disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, race or religion. We will also require potential contractors for significant contracts to disclose any adverse judgements or rulings and we have published guidance for suppliers on our procurement website that warns that failure to comply with legislation may result in their being excluded from bidding.



Staff Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to ensure that they make managers and colleagues aware if there is anything that is making it difficult for them to work and engage to their full potential.

How we intend to report and move forward

The Agency will:

- report annually on the implementation of this Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan;
- update the Action Plan as the Scheme progresses to ensure momentum is maintained;
- use the information gained from work on this Scheme to inform the Agency's wider policies and business practices; and
- publish updates to staff on the Intranet, including any feedback we get from staff, customers and the public on the Scheme.

How we will assess the impact of policies and practices or the likely impact of proposed policies and practices on gender equality

The Agency will undertake an Impact Assessment of our policies and practices and we will record the evaluation process and the steps we have taken. We are currently establishing our procedures for undertaking Impact Assessment and we will ensure that the method used will become part of our procedures for the development of new policies and practices. Impact Assessment will also be applied to the work of our Programme and Change Office, who contribute to the development of processes and procedures in the Agency. We will examine ways in which we can validate the Impact Assessment process we adopt.

Publication of the Gender Equality Scheme

The Scheme will be published on the Agency's Intranet and on our website at www.ros.gov.uk.



Concluding comments and recommendations for future action:

We see the publication of the Scheme as a beginning and not an end: we intend to mainstream gender equality into everything that we do. We will record our successes and highlight areas where we can make a difference. We welcome suggestions from staff, the people who use our services and equality professionals on how we can succeed in our goal of eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment and promoting equality of opportunity between men and women. We will be looking for this scheme and our schemes on race and disability to provide examples of positive change.

The steps we propose to take towards fulfilment of the Specific Duty – the Action Plan

Our Action Plan will record:

- the objectives we set;
- the specific activities we intend to carry out;
- the milestones that we intend to reach;
- the Directorate with responsibility for the outcome;
- the timeframe we plan to work to; and
- the progress we intend to make.

Our Action Plan will also state the date the plan was last updated so interested parties can determine the currency of the information.

We will report annually on outcomes and any subsequent actions for the following year.

It is essential that the Agency has robust information to plan for the future. We hope the publication of this Scheme provides staff with more information and makes them aware of what we are doing in relation to gender equality. This helps ensure that we can support them in the best way we can.



Registers of Scotland Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan

June 2007 – June 2008

Date of publication: 29 June 2007

Date last updated: 29 June 2007

Human Resources Directorate

Objective	Milestones	Target Date	Progress
To publish the Agency's Equal Pay policy		28 September 2007	
To have in place a method and guidelines to Impact Assess Agency policies	Establish procedures and guidelines	1 October 2007	
	Mainstream guidelines into the development of new policies	1 October 2007	
	Impact assess our recruitment policy and procedures	31 October 2007	
	Issue guidelines to Agency Project Managers so they can import guidelines into PRINCE Management procedures	31 October 2007	



Objective	Milestones	Target Date	Progress
	Review above procedures	July 2008	
Review outcomes from recruitment activity and report to HR Manager	Record all relevant information for monitoring purposes	April 2008	
Review outcomes from internal promotions and report to HR Manager		April 2008	
Refresh the Equal Opportunities & Diversity Intranet site		December 2007	
Ensure the Agency's Diversity Training contains relevant aspects on gender equality	<p>To agree the gender content of the course</p> <p>To have the new Diversity course available for managers</p> <p>To have the new Diversity course for staff</p>	<p>30 September 2007</p> <p>30 November 2007</p> <p>29 February 2008</p>	
To explore the options of agile working (e.g. home working) on gender equality		31 March 2008	
Develop a "parent pack" for expectant		31 January 2008	



Objective	Milestones	Target Date	Progress
mothers and new fathers			
Review progress of action plan and establish actions for year 2	Review progress Compile & publish Annual Report Identify actions for year 2	June 2008 July 2008 July 2008	
Ensure any objectives in this Scheme that impact on business activities are reflected in the Agency's Business Plan	Engage with Finance and Business Planning Team at the start of the business planning process	September 2007	