

## GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME REPORT: DECEMBER 2008

### Background

Registers of Scotland (RoS) is pleased to report on the activities and outcomes we achieved during the first eighteen months year of our Gender Equality Scheme (GES), 2007-2008. The GES was first published in June 2007 and our annual reports on it are published on our web site and communicated to staff.

In the last few years legislation has been introduced to extend Equality Schemes to include Disability and Race as well as Gender. Given the commonality of what is required for each of the Equality Schemes we have reached the conclusion that it will be easier for our customers, stakeholders and staff to monitor our progress if we produce a single annual report consequently, this report will be the last one relating solely to our Gender Equality Scheme.

### 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.

RoS is covered by both the Regulations' General Duty and Specific Duty.

### 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 RoS 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 RoS'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.

As narrated in our GES our action plan captures how we support the requirements and essence of the General and Specific duties; this report narrates the progress we have made against our action plan with examples of what we have introduced and sets out the work still to be done.

### RoS Function

We are the Government Department in Scotland responsible for compiling and maintaining records relating to property and other legal documents. Our purpose is recording and safeguarding rights while providing public access to important legal information and maintaining accurate records. RoS administers a total of 16 public registers and our main business function is the registration of interest in land in Scotland.

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 us if they have a query or problem relating to land in Scotland. We have two dedicated customer service centres, one each in Edinburgh and Glasgow; these offices are open to the public and they also process email, letter and telephone enquiries. RoS is committed to the

principles of the Charter Mark Programme and our performance is monitored and measured against the Charter Mark standards.

### **Equality Values and Principles**

RoS considers equality of opportunity and diversity issues to be an important focus for our business. We aim to maintain a place of work free from discrimination and where equality of opportunity is transparent and monitored.

### **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' professional users service.

### **Customer Relations**

We are 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**

RoS has an online customer questionnaire available for our customers to complete and send to us. This helps us develop our 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.

### **Recruitment**

RoS's recruitment policy covers both the external and internal recruitment processes. There are procedures in place to ensure that recruitment is open and fair with selection on merit in accordance with the recruitment code set down by The Civil Service Commissioners. This is subject to internal check. To support monitoring and reporting in each recruitment campaign information is recorded on the method of advertising, the selection criteria, disability, age, ethnicity etc. This information is reviewed to consider whether there are any disability, ethnicity, and gender or age legislation implications. In business year 2007–2008 we carried out a combined total of 52 internal and external recruitment campaigns.

### **Our People**

In the business year 2007–2008 our staffing level averaged 1,407. This included 263 part-time staff and amounted to 1,303 full time equivalents. Female staff accounted for 49.1%.

### **Retention**

RoS contributes to the retention of staff by ensuring that its policies and procedures are equality-proofed. RoS keeps abreast of developments in good practice and consults staff and/or their representatives in relation to policies and procedures affecting work/life balance. RoS no longer has a fixed date for age retirement, some staff have taken the opportunity to remain with us rather than to retire at age 60 when their Civil Service pension becomes payable. Currently sixty five members of staff have remained beyond their age retirement and four staff have taken advantage of the partial retirement scheme we introduced this year.

### **Action Plan**

The main focus for our GES is in the employment of staff and the provision of registration and information services to our customers. Our action plan captures how we support the requirements and essence of the General and Specific duties and focuses on work still to be done. Please read on to see what practical steps we are taking to meet our obligations under the General and Specific duties for 2008-2009.

### **Outcomes from Year 1: (June 2007–June 2008)**

Year 1 of our GES focused on establishing processes and procedures as a foundation to our GES. We have completed an extensive Diversity training programme for managers and staff, the training programme was tailored for us and has been well received by managers and staff. The Diversity information on the Intranet has helped highlight to staff the work we are undertaking on Diversity issues in RoS. An area we are still to progress is our work on our Impact Assessment procedures for our policies; this remains an important focus for us in the coming months. The HR Policy Team has responsibility for taking this forward and is developing a procedure based on Scottish Government's Impact Assessment Toolkit. This work will be completed by 31 March 2009

### **Employee Development**

Diversity courses run by The Role Play Company for our managers and for our HR and customer facing staff has ensured that staff in these areas keep their awareness and skills up to date. The training providers filmed a scenario on gender and related language and also featured our Managing Director and members of staff describing what diversity meant to them and this was used on the training course. In addition, the HR team has had an Employment Law Workshop with solicitors from Scottish Government.

**Review of Action Plan**

The following action plan shows our progress during year 1 of the GES, recording whether actions have been completed, if they are ongoing, new or rescheduled to next year. You can access the plan for next year (2008 -2009) [here](#).

**Registers of Scotland Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan**

Date of publication of RoS's Gender Equality Scheme: June 2007

Date last updated: December 2009

**Review of Actions for Year 1**

**Human Resources Directorate**

Year 1 (June 2007–June 2008)

Objective	Milestones	Status	Target Date	Progress
To publish the RoS's Equal Pay policy		Completed	28 September 2007	Completed and published on RoS Intranet and website
To have in place a method and guidelines to Impact Assess RoS's policies	Establish procedures and guidelines	Ongoing	1 October 2007	We selected Scottish Government's Impact Assessment Tool-kit as the methodology we would use.
	Mainstream guidelines into the development of new policies		1 October 2007	RoS formed a dedicated HR Policy team in 2008 who have taken on this task and are reviewing the Impact Assessment procedures. Once we have tested our procedures we will publish them on our Intranet by 31 March 2009
	Impact assess our recruitment policy and procedures		31 October 2007	As above this will be in place by 31 March 2009.
	Issue guidelines		31 October 2007	As above this will be in place by 31

Objective	Milestones	Status	Target Date	Progress
	to RoS Project Managers so they can import guidelines into PRINCE Management procedures			March 2009.
Review outcomes from recruitment activity and report to HR Manager	Record all relevant information for monitoring purposes	Completed	April 2008	Completed and ongoing
Review outcomes from internal promotions and report to HR Manager		Completed	April 2008	Completed and ongoing
Refresh the Equal Opportunities & Diversity Intranet site		Completed	December 2007	Main refresh completed, subject to ongoing review.
Ensure RoS's Diversity Training contains relevant aspects on gender equality	To agree the gender content of the course	Completed	30 September 2007	Completed: This training took place in January and February 2008. Our training provider continues to work with RoS to develop the contents of the training sessions for staff and managers, and as new managers are appointed this training forms part of their development programme.
	To have the new Diversity course available for managers	Completed	November 2007	
	To have the new	Completed	29 February 2008	Completed.

Objective	Milestones	Status	Target Date	Progress
	Diversity course for staff			
To explore the options of agile working (e.g. home working) on gender equality	Project Set up	Ongoing	31 March 2008	The agile working project is under way with Pathfinder workers taking part in a 4 month trial. The pathfinder stage is due to finish in March 2009 and HR Policy Team and RoS's Health & Safety Adviser will liaise with the Project Manager on the outcomes. This will become an action for next year.
Develop a "parent pack" for expectant mothers and new fathers			31 January 2008	This has not yet been completed; however we have updated the information provided to expectant mothers and fathers on the Intranet. The Policy Team will co-ordinate the contents of the pack and this will become an action for next year.
Ensure any objectives in this Scheme that impact on business activities are reflected in RoS's Corporate Plan		Noted	31 May 2007	Completed and ongoing