

Registers of Scotland
Executive Agency

Race Equality Scheme

November 2005



REGISTERS OF SCOTLAND RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

Foreword by Keeper

The Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, places a general duty on public authorities to promote race equality. As one of the authorities listed in the Statutory Code of Practice the Agency is bound by this legislation. The general duty of the code is to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups

One of the duties placed upon the Agency by the legislation is to develop and publish a Race Equality Scheme. This demonstrates our underpinning commitment. I consider the promotion of racial equality to be an extremely important part of our service delivery to our customers and in the employment of our staff.

The publication of our initial scheme in November 2002 represented a significant step forward for the Agency. Such schemes are subject to formal review every three years; the Agency monitors the scheme and will report annually on outcomes. We welcome any comments on the development of this scheme.

As Keeper and Chief Executive I will be doing all in my power to ensure that the Registers of Scotland demonstrates the practice of race equality as a service provider, as a policy maker and as an employer. I am very pleased to endorse the updated Registers of Scotland Race Equality Scheme.

James Meldrum
Keeper of Registers of Scotland and Chief Executive
November 2005

Introduction

The Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, places a general duty on public authorities to promote race equality. As one of the authorities listed in the Statutory Code of Practice the Agency is bound by this legislation. The general duty of the code is to: -

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups

Agency Functions — our public functions that are relevant to the duty

The Agency's main purpose is to compile and maintain public registers and to provide information from these registers. The main business function of the Agency is the registration of interests in land in Scotland. The Agency administers a total of 15 different registers.

As far as the registration/recording of deeds to the above registers is concerned all documents lodged are sent in by Solicitors. Solicitors act as agents for their clients, so the customer base for our main business is the legal profession. All legal documents submitted for registration in our registers must be supported by the appropriate fee being paid. The Agency is self-financing and charges fees for the majority of its services.

Registers of Scotland is committed to the principles of the Charter Mark Standard. Our standards and performance against the standards is monitored and published.

The Agency has identified the functions and policies that are relevant to meeting the general duty. The main business function of the Agency is the registration of interests in land in Scotland. Individuals wishing to register their interest in land do so via their Solicitor, but members of the public do contact the Agency in order to obtain information relating to land in Scotland. Consequently the main focus for our Race Equality Scheme is in the provision of services and information to solicitors, members of the public who are customers and in the employment of staff. As part of the Agency's vision we are committed to providing better information for the benefit of the Scottish public. In addition, we want to encourage all staff to work together as a team, to value and respect our customers, to value and respect one another whatever our role, to foster trust and integrity, to encourage acceptance of responsibility and to acknowledge work done well. The Agency will ensure that all staff understand the Agency vision and values and ensure that they are upheld.

Agency Function — our public functions that are relevant to the duty cont.

Equality Values and Principles

The Agency considers it important to focus on issues surrounding equality of opportunity and diversity. The Agency intends to maintain a place of work free from discrimination and where equality of opportunity is transparent and monitored.

Race Equality Strategic Aims

The Agency aims to increase the level of awareness of our functions amongst the black and ethnic minority communities in Scotland.

Race Equality Targets

As of November 2005 the current self-declaration by staff records 1.9% of our staff as belonging to black and ethnic minority groups. This is against the target of 1.7% that was set when the Race Equality Scheme was first published in November 2002. We aim to increase the levels of black and ethnic minority staff at all levels of the Agency structure.

Complaints Procedure

The Agency has an internal complaints procedure for staff as well as a procedure for our customers.

Consulting our Stakeholders

The Agency consults internally for views and opinions of staff as well as consulting our customers through our Market Research Programme, which includes focus groups, surveys and questionnaires.

Publicising the Race Equality Scheme

The scheme is published on the Agency's website and Intranet. The Agency reports 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 can access information from our main registers if they have subscribed to our 'Registers Direct' service. Any customers using our Customer Service Centres who are not confident in the use of spoken English can have access to an interpreter to assist with their enquiry. Requests for this service (which is normally provided at no additional cost) can be made via the Customer Service Centres. In addition, staff educated in the use of British Sign Language are available to assist members of the deaf community.

Customer Relations

The Agency publishes an extensive range of literature on the services it provides. The Registers of Scotland Information leaflet is published in Gaelic. Our other general products and services leaflets are available from our Customer Services Centres, main libraries and Citizens' Advice Bureaux. All our literature can be supplied in other languages upon request. This service is free of charge. The Agency is pleased to assist our customers in any enquiry concerning our products or services. In addition to the leaflets and brochures we can also provide information on a CDROM, or in Braille.

International Consultancy

The Agency has a team working on International Consultancy. Work to date has involved projects in Cambodia, Croatia, Macedonia, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic, the Republic of Georgia and the Kyrgyz Republic, Russia and Thailand. In addition we have supplied training services and/or have hosted visits from Albania, Armenia, Cambodia, China, Croatia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Panama, Russia, Slovenia and the Ukraine. Our staff working in the International Consultancy team familiarise themselves with the relevant culture and protocol of our International customers.

Feedback from Customers

The Agency has a questionnaire that the public are encouraged to complete when they visit the Customer Service Centres. This helps the Agency in the development of products and services. We also carry out Focus Groups, Surveys and Mystery Shopping as part of our market research programme. Action plans are drawn up to address negative feedback.

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 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 and the composition of the board. Statistics are also kept on: -

- number of applications received
- number invited to interview
- number not invited to interview
- number declining interview
- number not turning up for interview
- number of successful
- number of unsuccessful
- number who did not take up post
- age profile

Monitoring is carried out in terms of ethnicity, gender, disability and age.

Retention

The Agency contributes to the retention of staff by ensuring that its policies and procedures are equality-proofed. The Agency keeps abreast of good practice developments, and consults staff and/or their representatives in relation to policies and procedures affecting work/life balance.

Customer Relations

The Agency aims to provide information on the work that we do and the services and information available to the public. We wish to promote the work of the Agency to the ethnic communities and hold regular roadshows and exhibitions. This will also help to raise the profile of the Civil Service in general and may encourage members of ethnic communities to consider joining the Civil Service as a possible career option.

Race Equality Scheme Action Plan

Action Plan A shows what the Agency is doing as an employer under the terms of our duty to meet the requirements of the legislation to:

- to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups

Action Plan B shows the information we collect and report on in terms of the recruitment and development opportunities of our staff.

Action Plan C shows what the Agency is doing to provide access to its services and information.



Action Plan A: Duty as an Employer

Function or policy	Impact	Action	When
Filling posts	High	To continue to attract members of the black and ethnic minority communities at all levels of the organisation who have the necessary skills.	Ongoing
	High	Ensure all job advertisements contain only the necessary skills and abilities required for the vacancy, to ensure equality of opportunity.	Ongoing
	High	To continue in our efforts to encourage all staff and job applicants to complete an ethnic-monitoring questionnaire. This will provide us with more robust data upon which to make analysis.	Ongoing
	Medium	Ensure any new members of interview panels and all personnel involved in recruitment and selection process are properly trained in diversity issues, and ensure that these skills are kept up to date.	Ongoing



Action Plan A: Duty as an Employer cont.			
Function or policy	Impact	Action	When
Developing People	High	To identify a more efficient way of recording and evaluating the development requests of all staff and to identify specifically black and ethnic minority staff and their subsequent involvement in learning opportunities.	To have the process in place for 1 April 2006
	High	Our Management Board, managers, specialist HR staff and our contact officers have, as part of their continuing professional development, been trained in diversity issues such as racial discrimination and race equality. All new staff during their induction programme are introduced to Equal Opportunities and Diversity issues. The opportunity exists for all staff to undertake additional training surrounding these topics. HR will ensure that additional training in this area requested by staff is made available. Customer facing staff in our Customer Service Centres have all received specific training. Agency managers have also had employment law training.	The Management Board has completed the programme, which is still ongoing and due to be completed in 2006. Training Section will evaluate the Diversity programme to see if it meets the needs of the staff and the Agency. HR will ensure that training and development needs are actioned.
	Low	The information on Diversity and Equal Opportunities available to staff on the Intranet will be updated when the next update to the DDA is enacted. This will allow us to re-launch/refresh and generate interest in equality and diversity issues.	Planned



Action Plan A: Duty as an Employer cont.			
Function or policy	Impact	Action	When
Developing People (cont'd)	Low	Review content and relevance of material on Diversity and Equal Opportunities available in ROLZ. (The Agency's learning and development resource centre)	Ongoing
Managing Performance	High	Part of the Agency's Performance and Development System is our Competency Framework, it specifically mentions trusting and respecting colleagues and complying with equality and diversity issues, this ensures that staff are aware of what is expected from them. These are also narrated in our Vision and Values. These commitments are brought to the attention of all staff when they join the Agency. The Agency's Competency Framework was updated in 2005 with input from staff; the language was updated to make it clearer and behavioral statements in the Framework were also aligned more closely with the Agency's Values. Managers evaluate the outcomes from the PDS review year 2005/2006 to ensure that staff are working within the framework and evidence of good practice will be highlighted and areas where performance needs to be improved will be actioned. The contents of the Competency Framework will be evaluated against performance evidence to ensure staff fully understand the behavioral statements. Any additional guidance required will be published to staff.	April/May
	High	To ensure that the data collected in terms of performance ratings are monitored and reported on.	Annually
	High	To ensure that Equal Opportunity and Diversity issues are appropriately managed in line with the Agency's policies and procedures.	Ongoing



Action Plan A: Duty as an Employer cont.			
Function or policy	Impact	Action	When
Monitoring staff	Medium	To set employment monitoring practices to improve the quality and use of data.	Ongoing
	Medium	The Diversity Working Group considers diversity activities, to monitor progress with targets/equality proofing and to promote diversity amongst staff.	Ongoing
Reviewing and Implementing People Policies	High	Ensure that race equality and other diversity issues are an integral part of any review of policies and procedures.	As required
	Medium	To equality-proof policies in terms of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2002, where appropriate, to consult externally on proposed changes to policy.	As required



Action Plan B: Employment Monitoring Scheme		
Process	Action	When
Monitoring the ethnic origin of staff	HR to record the ethnic data for all staff, and continue to record for monitoring purposes the ethnicity of individuals applying to join the Agency. To analyse, report and publish this data. The Agency's ethnicity target is 2.15% by November 2008. This target is takes account of the latest Scottish Census figures.	To report on an annual basis.
	Report to our Management Board on our progress towards our diversity targets.	Ongoing
	Report our progress on diversity initiatives to Cabinet Office every six months.	Ongoing
Publishing staff monitoring figures	Publish ethnic minority equality outcomes in the Annual review of the RES and in the Agency's Annual Report.	Annual review of RES by 31 August
Analysing our workforce figures, interpreting the figures in relation to race equality, and identifying future action	HR to identify any specific areas of under-representation and develop positive programme to address under-representation. The programme will be developed in association with the Agency's Diversity Working Group.	Ongoing



Action Plan C: Provision of Services and Information

Function or policy	Impact	Action	When
Compiling and maintaining public registers & Providing information from public registers	Medium	To welcome requests from community groups and organisations so they can gain an insight into the work of the Agency and the information we are able to provide. In 2006 we published a multi-language leaflet explaining what we do and how to contact us. The leaflet was published in English, Gaelic, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Punjabi and Urdu. We continue to offer translation services for other Agency publications and when assisting customers in our Customer Service Centres.	Ongoing
	Medium	Continue to participate in events attended by members of the general public to demonstrate the information and services available. Annually we attend Ideal Home Show Scotland, Gardening Scotland, the Royal Highland Show, the Home Building and Renovating Show and the Ayr Flower Show as well as running promotions in shopping centres, particularly in the west of Scotland.	Ongoing
	Medium	We have developed links with a local school in Edinburgh to provide an opportunity for pupils to prepare for work and to gain an insight into the work of the Agency; this included individuals from black and ethnic minority communities. Having agreed to participate in the Scottish Executive's initiative 'Determined to Succeed' we intend to increase our involvement with schools in Edinburgh and Glasgow. This Scottish Executive initiative aims to help Scotland's young people develop self-confidence, self-reliance and ambition to achieve their goals - in work and in life. The initiative encourages commitment between schools and local businesses to work together to achieve this aim. This will benefit all members of the community.	Ongoing
	Medium	The Customer Service Centre questionnaire will be updated to collect data on the ethnicity of our customers.	Early 2006