

REGISTERS OF SCOTLAND
Executive Agency



Information about Scotland's land & property

Registers of Scotland Executive Agency

Race Equality Scheme

November 2002

REGISTERS OF SCOTLAND RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

Foreword by Chief Executive

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 the underpinning commitments by the Management Board and the expectation that all staff adhere to them and support the aims of the Scheme. I consider the practical application of equality an important part of our service delivery to our customers and in the employment of our staff.

The publication of the scheme represents a significant step forward for the Agency. It is a living document, and will be subject to formal review every three years. 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 put my name to this, the first, Registers of Scotland Race Equality Scheme.



Alan W Ramage
Keeper of Registers of Scotland and Chief Executive
November 2002

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 Function — 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 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 Service First Charter Mark Programme. 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 interest 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 information to our customers and 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 the equality of opportunity and diversity issues to be an important focus for the Agency to develop and 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.

We also aim to increase the levels of black and ethnic minority staff at all levels of the Agency Structure.

Race Equality Targets

The Race Equality target for the employment of staff for the Agency will be realigned when the results of the Census become available in March 2003, until that time the overall target will be 1.7%.

Complaints Procedure

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

Consulting our Stakeholders

The Agency will consult internally for views and opinions of staff as well as consulting with our customers through Focus Groups and customer feedback questionnaires.

Publicising the Race Equality Scheme

The scheme will be publicised on the Agency website and staff will be informed by an internal Agency 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 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" leaflet (which gives details of the work of the Agency) is available in Gaelic and Urdu and the "Sources of Land Ownership Information in Scotland" leaflet is available in Gaelic. These and our general information leaflets can also 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 disk.

International Consultancy

The Agency has a team working on International Consultancy. Work to date has involved projects in Croatia, Macedonia, Poland, the Slovak Republic, the Republic of Georgia and the Kyrgyz Republic. In addition we have supplied training services and/or have hosted visits from Armenia, China, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Panama, Russia 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 an on-line customer questionnaire available for our customers to complete and send feedback to us. This helps the Agency in the development of products and services. There is also a questionnaire that the public are encouraged to complete when they visit the Customer Service Centres. As our current questionnaires do not ask for any ethnic monitoring information, we cannot provide details of our customers by ethnic group. We plan to include this information in future.

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

These statistics are available by 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 propose to hold roadshows and exhibition sessions. 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 currently and what we intend to do 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 will 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	Increase the proportion of applications at all levels from members of the black and ethnic minority communities, who have the essential skills, so we achieve diversity targets that reflect the latest Scottish Census numbers. We will review our targets when the latest figures from the Scottish Census 2001 are released (due March 2003).	Ongoing
	High	Ensure all job advertisements contain only the necessary skills and abilities required for the vacancy, to ensure equality of opportunity.	Ongoing
	High	Encourage all staff and job applicants to complete an ethnic monitoring questionnaire. Specify on the form the reasons why the completion of the questionnaire is important.	Ongoing
	Medium	Improve training of interview panels to ensure all staff involved in recruitment and selection are properly trained in diversity issues, including The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2002, and to ensure that skills are kept up to date.	Ongoing



Action Plan A: Duty as an Employer cont.			
Function or policy	Impact	Action	When
Developing People	Medium	Implement monitoring of internal training to evaluate minority ethnic staff's involvement in learning opportunities.	From 1 April 2003
	High High High Medium	HR to deliver diversity awareness courses to our staff, where issues such as racial discrimination and race equality are considered. Senior managers and specialist HR staff have already received diversity training. HR will ensure that this training event will engage;- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All managers • All Customer Service Centre staff; and • Make it available to all other staff 	Ongoing
	Low	Develop current information on Diversity and Equal Opportunities on the Intranet.	Ongoing
	Low	Ensure appropriate material on Diversity and Equal Opportunities is available in ROLZ. (The Agency's learning and development resource centre)	Planned for 1 April 2003
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.	Ongoing
	High	To ensure that the data collected in terms of performance ratings are monitored and reported on.	Ongoing
	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	A Diversity Working Group was established in June 2002 to consider diversity activities, to monitor progress with targets/equality proofing and to promote diversity amongst staff. It will report on 1 April 2003.(see our Employment Monitoring Scheme – Action Plan B)	Ongoing with reporting on 1 April 2003
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.	Ongoing
	Medium	To equality-proof policies in terms of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2002. Where appropriate, to consult externally on proposed changes to policy.	Planned

Action Plan B: Employment Monitoring Scheme				
Process	What we already do	How we measure race equality outcomes	Improvements/changes planned	Timing
Monitoring the ethnic origin of staff	Disseminate existing race equality monitoring categories, data and analysis to provide context for a Collective Employment Monitoring Scheme.	HR system to be set up to capture all required information. Ensure data fields are set up to capture information.	Improve the analysis of collected data through the Collective Employment Monitoring Scheme in line with the statutory requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and consider best means to publish data.	Report to Management Board monitoring data and analysis along the revised collective monitoring categories by April 2003 and ongoing. The report will preserve the anonymity of individuals.
Monitoring the ethnic origin of staff	Report our progress towards our diversity targets to Management Board on an annual basis.	Monitoring data and analysis of staff are reported by grade.	Once reported on identify criteria for measuring race diversity for future use and decide which areas should be measured, prioritised and reported upon.	From May 2003 and ongoing.
Monitoring the ethnic origin of staff	Report our progress towards diversity targets to Cabinet Office every six months.	We have an overall diversity target of 1.7% ethnic minority staff matching the most up to date Census figures for Scotland.	Review our target of 1.7% ethnic minority staff when Census 2001 figures are published in March 2003.	Publish new target in June 2003

Action Plan B: Employment Monitoring Scheme cont.				
Process	What we already do	How we measure race equality outcomes	Improvements/changes planned	Timing
Publishing staff monitoring figures	Publish ethnic minority equality targets and our progress towards them for staff and feed into Scottish Executive data collection exercise.	Compare year on year progress.	Consider the best means to publish the improved data and analysis gathered through the Collective Employment Monitoring Scheme. Publish information in the Agency's annual report.	By April 2003 and ongoing. Published in Agency Annual Report (October)
Analysing our workforce figures, interpreting the figures in relation to race equality, and identifying future action	Diversity statistics and targets are monitored by HR.	HR to identify specific areas of under-representation and develop positive programme to address under-representation.	Programme to be developed in association with the Agency's Diversity Working Group.	Evaluation framework by July 2003

Action Plan C: Provision of Services and Information			
Function or policy	Impact	Action	When
Compiling and maintaining public registers & Providing information from public registers	High	We will hold open events, internally and externally to provide an opportunity for individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds to gain an insight into the work of the Agency.	Planned
	Medium	Continue to participate in events attended by members of the general public to demonstrate the information and services available.	Ongoing
	Medium	We will develop links with local schools and colleges to provide an opportunity for individuals from black and ethnic minority backgrounds to gain an insight into the work of the Agency.	Planned
	High	The customer questionnaire in our Customer Service Centres will be updated to collect data on the ethnicity of our customers to inform whether any direct action is required for specific groups.	Planned
	Medium	Following the results of the 2000 census we will consider translating our standard information leaflets into any additional languages.	Planned
	High	To include specific mention on the Agency's website of the language service and translation service that can be provided.	Planned
	Medium	To target black and ethnic minority groups through the use of specialist language newspapers and community group newsletters.	Planned