

# Registers of Scotland

## RoS Board

18 August 2020

### Improving Diversity and Inclusion at RoS

#### Purpose

1. To seek advice from the RoS Board on how we can improve diversity and inclusion at RoS.

#### Recommendation

2. The Board are invited to contribute their views and advice on how RoS can improve diversity and inclusion.

#### Background

3. This discussion paper is supported by several annexes to provide context for the discussion as follows:

- Annex A: draft RoS diversity strategy
- Annex B: current approach to supporting inclusion for customers of our services
- Annex C: current understanding of diversity within RoS
- Annex D: our 2019 equality mainstreaming report
- Annex E: current action underway to support diversity and inclusion in RoS

#### Diversity and Inclusion

4. For any organisation to improve its diversity and inclusion, four key components are required:

1. **Clarity on *why* improvement is needed:** A clear narrative on why RoS wants to become a more diverse and inclusive organisation. For RoS the thinking behind the specific reasons why RoS should aspire to become more diverse and inclusive relate to two key elements – firstly as a public service we believe we can provide better service if we are representative of the population we serve; and secondly as an employer we want to be an employer of choice, attracting and retaining the best and widest possible pool of talent and, by clearly demonstrating we are a diverse and inclusive organisation which keeps pace with the changing demographics in Scotland, we should succeed in encouraging the greatest breadth of people to aspire to work for us and to stay working for us once they join. More detail on the thinking behind why RoS wants to be more diverse and inclusive is captured in our draft diversity strategy at Annex A, and the action we currently take to ensure we support inclusion for the customers of our services is described at Annex B.

**Question 1: the Board are invited to provide any comments and suggestions for improvement on the draft diversity strategy and the RoS approach to inclusion for customers.**

- 2. Clarity on *where* improvement is needed:** A clear understanding of where improvement is needed to become truly diverse and inclusive. This is underpinned by several elements: a clear understanding of how successfully we currently attract diverse applicants for our roles, a clear understanding of how diverse the population of RoS currently is; and a clear understanding of how inclusive the organisation currently feels both to our colleagues and to our customers. Understanding both of these elements will enable clear and targeted areas for improvement to be identified. From the data at Annex C it is clear that not only is RoS clearly under-represented (relative to the population of Scotland) for some aspects (e.g. BAME) but the data is very incomplete, with a significant number of colleagues choosing not to provide their diversity data and others choosing to say 'prefer not to say' for some characteristics. There is very little data to support any meaningful analysis around the extent to which RoS feels like an inclusive environment. The Civil Service People Survey reports generally high levels of people feeling included and supported at work, and the specific questions that relate to discrimination report low levels of discrimination and no consistent picture around the basis on which people feel discriminated against. In addition, due to the low numbers involved, it is not possible to obtain a breakdown of CSPS scores against different demographic characteristics to ascertain if any particular group feels, on average, less included. In terms of how included customers feel, we have addressed issues such as ensuring a sensitive approach to supporting transgender customers; but in the absence of feedback that highlights any areas where customers do not feel included it is hard to judge where further improvement is needed. A different approach to gauging inclusion is therefore needed.

**Question 2: the Board are invited to provide suggestions for how a greater number of colleagues can be motivated/inspired to provide their diversity data such that an accurate picture of the current levels of diversity in RoS can be obtained.**

**Question 3: the Board are invited to provide suggestions for how data around inclusion within RoS can be obtained.**

- 3. Clarity on *how* to deliver improvement.** Where it is apparent that RoS falls short in terms of our diversity, or in terms of how included people who work from RoS feel, an improvement action plan is required. The actions taken to date and resulting improvements at a high level are summarised in our most recent (biannual) equality mainstreaming report at Annex D. The specific detailed actions currently underway to support individual colleagues or groups of colleagues within RoS and foster a greater sense of inclusion are described at Annex E. However, it would be complacent to think that there is not more that needs to be done.

**Question 4: the Board are invited to provide suggestions of actions that could be taken to improve diversity in RoS for under-represented groups (in relation to both attraction and progression).**

**Question 5: the Board are invited to provide suggestions of actions that could be taken to foster a greater culture of inclusion within RoS.**

4. ***An organisation wide commitment to action.*** In addition to the why, where and how components outlined above, it is also necessary for action to improve diversity and inclusion to be something that is underpinned by an organisation-wide commitment to that action. If diversity and inclusion initiatives are seen as something that is delivered only by a part of the organisation (usually HR) and/or seen as something that has no day to day relevance or impact on the majority of people within the organisation (i.e. the initiatives are seen as only relevant to those colleagues whose characteristics are under-represented within the organisation), action on diversity and inclusion will always be seen as peripheral or optional, rather than what it should be - something that requires urgent and sustained action involving everyone. To make it a truly mainstream activity requires a critical mass of colleagues to want to engage and take action and to believe that a more diverse and inclusive organisation benefits everyone.

**Question 6: the Board are invited to provide suggestions of actions that could be taken to create a truly organisation-wide commitment to improving diversity and inclusion in RoS.**

### **Conclusion**

5. The Board are invited to note the content of this paper and provide comments and suggestions for action as requested above.

**Keeper of the Registers of Scotland  
28 July 2020**