

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2020-25

Foreword by the Keeper

As I have made clear on a number of occasions, developing RoS' status as an inclusive employer is very important to me. The equality, diversity and inclusion agenda is one close to my heart personally and professionally.

It is vital that we use every possible opportunity to ensure that we remain valued by, and relevant to, Scottish society. Two key components of achieving this are continuing to diversify our workforce in order to better understand and relate to the changing Scottish society; and to continue to provide our services in ways that meet the needs and expectations of all communities, innovating to deliver further improvements.

Workforce demographics are constantly changing, and the available talent is now overwhelmingly represented by people from a vast array of backgrounds and life experiences. Therefore, workforce diversity – and crucially, inclusion - is an essential business concern – the greatest asset we have is our colleagues. Therefore, we want to attract the very best by embracing diversity across all its dimensions. To this end, we will go beyond the protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act (see Annex A), seeking to attract employees with a wide array of skills, backgrounds and life experiences.

I am proud to say that RoS is already an inclusive employer which values and respects diversity, and we provide innovative customer services that are accessible to all. However, there is always more that can be done to deliver on the agenda set out here in this, our first specific Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. I can also say that I am confident that we will achieve them. One thing is clear: delivery and ensuring success will be achieved through action by every one of us within RoS. We will develop our strategy and the practical actions necessary to underpin it in an agile, dynamic way, as the world and our business context continue to evolve. I, and the rest of the EMT, will be here to support you every step of the way.

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out a clear statement of purpose around equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and why taking action on this is essential for RoS. It articulates our policy and what we want to achieve as we develop this agenda over time.

Equality and human rights are at the core.

Diversity is anything that evokes a perception of difference. Its dimensions include with race, marriage and civil partnership, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion or belief (or none), pregnancy and maternity, age and sex. It also includes social and educational background, organisational tenure, thinking styles, talent and identities.

Inclusion is about integrating diversity in what we do, enabling everyone to bring their authentic self to their work, and be respected and successful in the workplace. It means being treated fairly and with respect, feeling both valued for uniqueness and also having a sense of belonging, as well as having a voice in decision-making ¹.

EDI is relevant to all of us, and is central to being a sustainable organisation. When EDI improvement work is undertaken with authenticity and commitment, it gives strength to an organisation, supporting performance and innovation, particularly as the world changes – as highlighted by the response to Covid19 and the rapid pivot to widespread remote working, bringing both opportunities and challenges. Diversity of talents results in a diversity of ideas. Diverse teams with fully included, engaged colleagues are more innovative, understand customer needs better, and drive financial results.

Work to ensure the full inclusion of all our colleagues underpins diversity improvement, which underpins performance improvement. As such, EDI is an essential plank of RoS strategy to deliver to our corporate challenges, for example, around improving productivity and customer satisfaction. It also resonates closely with the RoS brand and values around integrity, inclusiveness, decency, and transparency.

RoS is ambitious here and wants to effect organisation-wide change that everyone will see, hear and experience. However, EDI is ‘a movement not a moment’ and commitment is critical to long-term sustainable success. Delivering on EDI is very much about a journey and we will need to constantly challenge ourselves to look further to what we can do, to be the organisation we want and need to be.

OUR EDI VISION

The purpose of RoS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy and strategy is to support the delivery of our purpose, vision, values and strategic objectives as outlined in our Corporate Plan ² and People Strategy ³. Not only is equality, diversity and inclusion an important agenda for RoS in and of itself for moral and legal reasons but it is integral to everything we are trying to achieve as an organisation going forward.

RoS’ purpose is to support the Scottish economy for the benefit of the people of Scotland. In order to achieve this, we need to ensure that we are providing our business services to all of our customers in an inclusive manner, including those with protected characteristics.

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/equality-outcomes-mainstreaming-report-2019/pages/5/>

² Add URL

³ This contains a theme to “articulate and develop leadership and colleague behaviours that support our values and promote a diverse, inclusive and growth culture.”

RoS' vision is to be a digital registration and information business trusted for our integrity. One of the ways we can demonstrate our integrity is through our commitment to and support of diverse communities of customers externally, and diverse colleagues internally.

Our values	Our EDI commitments
Impartial – we act without bias in our dealings with our customers, stakeholders and each other, keeping information secure and presenting accurately	We respect all our diverse customers, stakeholders and colleagues equally and value their different perspectives, without discrimination or unconscious bias in our dealings with them
Customer focussed – we strive to understand what our customers need and why, so that we can design our products and services for them	We engage with all our diverse customers, using the Equality Impact Assessment process in order to ensure our products and services meet the needs of all of our diverse customers
Forward thinking – we must always add value for the public of Scotland, finding better ways to deliver what they and the Scottish economy need, whilst developing skills and opportunities for our people	We engage with all of our diverse customers to understand what they need, and how best to develop our colleagues with new skills and opportunities
Professional – we recognise that customers need us to be skilled, efficient and to work with pace, passion and pride	We ensure that all colleagues are valued, respected and supported regardless of their protected characteristics

Our vision is for:

1. An inclusive working environment where everyone feels equally valued and respected, everyone can communicate effectively, and everyone can work to the best of their ability
2. An engaged and high performing diverse workforce that reflects modern Scottish society
3. High quality delivery on the needs and expectations of our diverse customer base, for all.

POLICY TO DELIVER OUR VISION

We mainstream equality in everything we do: service accessibility and standards, recruitment and workforce development, and our external relationships with suppliers and partners.

We are committed to providing a workplace free from unfair discrimination, and to ensuring the fair treatment of our staff and people who work with us.

We treat everyone – staff, colleagues from other organisations or members of the public – fairly and with respect, irrespective of sex, marital status, age, race, ethnic origin, sexual

orientation, disability, religion or belief, working pattern, gender identity, caring responsibility or trade union membership.

We believe that our workforce should reflect the society that we serve in all of its diversity, if it is to truly deliver high public value in delivering to customers. Our customer base spans all of the communities which make up Scotland, including those with protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act, though we will take our thinking and engagement beyond this where we see needs.

We employ people on the basis of their merit, not their characteristics or background. For example, we are committed to the Disability Confident Employer Scheme and guarantee interviews to all disabled candidates who meet the minimum criteria for a post. All Lead Panel Members must undertake mandatory training to ensure that applicants and candidates are assessed fairly and without bias.

We work to continue to build further our understanding of our workforce diversity. To do this, we engage with diverse groups of colleagues (including PCS representatives), listen to, value and incorporate their views as far as possible to ensure that everyone feels valued respected and included.

We promote an inclusive and diverse workforce where all colleagues feel valued and are supported to thrive, and with a growth mindset. To become a truly inclusive organisation that reaps the benefits of diversity, we must challenge ourselves in our ways of working and thinking to be more receptive to new ideas, creativity and innovation.

We maintain and develop a framework of support to provide RoS staff with the knowledge and tools to identify and overcome barriers to better build a diverse and inclusive workforce. We aim to build our reputation as an employer of choice and develop creative approaches to secure and retain the best talent.

We collect data reflecting indicators of equality, diversity and inclusion, ensuring we can monitor progress and share results transparently via our annual Equality Mainstreaming reporting and other means.

RoS invests in understanding as fully as possible the needs of all of our diverse customers through regular and broad-ranging engagement, as well as through tools such as the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process, acting on results from this to deliver on these needs.

We recognise that there is always more that can be done, hence the need now for an up-to-date strategy for RoS for the coming years to guide delivery activities that will achieve our goals.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

We will ...

- engage with our colleagues (including PCS representatives), customers and partners to develop forward direction and actions on a collaborative basis
- develop our EDI strategy and delivery plans in an agile, dynamic way, as the world and our business context continue to evolve, identifying meaningful actions to deliver and then build upon.

- ensure our delivery plan, to be developed each year, contains SMART actions
- continuously review progress and needs, horizon-scanning so we are ready for future challenges and proactive in addressing them
- continuously challenge ourselves as we build engagement in this important agenda and its momentum
- equip and develop our leadership at all levels to really embed inclusivity values and behaviours across the whole organisation, and reflect these in business planning and operational management.
- ensure robust monitoring and evaluation, developing our data to baseline our performance and set ambitions, and sharing this as part of our wider commitment to transparency. An outcomes framework will describe the success indicators and measures by which we will assess progress towards delivery on these goals
- Ensure rigorous governance and accountability, engaging regularly with EMT and the Board on progress and learning.

STRATEGIC THEMES

In order to achieve our vision, we will focus on a number of key components of our strategy, as a framework for practical action:

- **Legal Compliance**

We will continue to meet our legal obligations as a public sector organisation(see Annex A), with regard to monitoring, providing equality of opportunity, and ensuring that Equality Impact Assessments are carried out for all new business initiatives, internally and externally.

- **Workforce Equality and Diversity**

We will continue to work towards improving the diversity of our workforce, including exploring options to support all colleagues with protected characteristics, from all social and educational backgrounds and also neuro-divergent staff and those with caring responsibilities.

The RoS People & Change business area will:

- Develop policy and practice around workforce recruitment and development to promote equality and diversity
- report regularly to the EMT and the Board on workforce diversity
- continue to prepare and publish mainstreaming reports setting out how well RoS is doing in meeting its equality, diversity and inclusion objectives, including progress made to provide services to diverse communities.
- Provide cohesive and pragmatic practical support to colleagues across RoS on equality, diversity and inclusion, providing policy advice, training and sharing of best practice (e.g., around Reasonable Adjustments, management support for colleagues

with mental health issues, etc.), and working closely with Communications colleagues.

- **Colleague Engagement**

We will build grass roots engagement within our workforce, with our EDI strategy and delivery plans, ensuring a strong foundation of awareness and understanding of diversity and our inclusion agenda.

We will support colleagues to engage fully with our diverse customer base, and with appropriate representative organisations as partners, with regard to the provision of services to the public.

All of our colleagues will:

- Actively demonstrate RoS Values, supporting a culture of respect by valuing difference and encouraging inclusion of people from all backgrounds.
- Continue to engage meaningfully with diverse communities, expanding the reach where gaps might exist
- Contribute (on a voluntary basis) to data-gathering to support the development of our strategy, such as the personal diversity monitoring information on MyHR, as well as the Civil Service People Survey and other RoS surveys.

- **Partnerships**

Whatever RoS does, it will not do it alone. Working in partnership - with both existing and potential new future partners - will be key to making the best use of our assets. Working with our partners to explore the organisational and service development options, and developing those opportunities that will add the greatest value, will be a key thread that runs throughout the next five years.

We will engage with internal partners, including PCS representatives, new employee diversity & inclusion forum, networks for particular protected characteristics and other dimensions of diversity.

We will engage with external partners spanning interests in relation to

- Customers – continue to develop understanding of diverse needs
- Suppliers (e.g., supported-business procurement, and ensuring that our tenders and contracts have a clause about fair wages?)
- EDI advocacy organisations, potentially identifying accreditations RoS aspires to learn through our policy and practice
- other Scottish public sector organisations, to share best practice and develop dialogue around mutual improvement

- **Leadership**

Our leadership, at all levels, will

- Demonstrate a consistent and high-profile commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, leading by example using appropriate workplace behaviours to embed a culture that values equality, diversity and inclusion
- Engage with colleagues, including PCS representatives, around equality, diversity and inclusion issues and ensure that colleagues have access to the appropriate training, information and support provided by HR.
- Demonstrate a strategic commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the business planning process.
- Celebrate and share success, building momentum for further progress.

DELIVERY PLANNING

This strategy identifies the ambitions for 2021/2- 2025/6 (the period spanned by our current Corporate Plan) whilst recognising that the EDI agenda is a long-term one and regular review and updating will be needed in light of what progress we achieve.

For an agenda as broad as EDI, clearly it is important to break the work required into components, delivering well and then building upon these. Distinct phases can be identified:

- Awareness-raising and developing collective understanding
- Buy-in and engagement
- Enabling: Upskilling and empowering
- Implementation: developing the support infrastructure (groups, resources, recruitment processes and talent development etc); internal and external-facing improvement actions
- Growth, to enable sustainable delivery on goals and performance improvement
- [on-going, from baselining at the out-set] Monitoring and evaluation

A series of SMART delivery plans will include a range of activities, such as:

- establishing a Diversity Forum to oversee the implementation of the strategy
- raising awareness of the protected characteristics, particularly through sharing lived experiences of staff and customers to build understanding and empathy
- establishing diversity staff networks where these would be valued, and support them
- Ensure our recruitment practices attract people from diverse backgrounds.

Updates on progress and developments will be communicated regularly via the RoS intranet EDI pages, and our external website.

ENDS

ANNEX A - Our Legal Responsibilities

General Duty

Under the Equality Act 2010 we will meet the public sector General Duty.

The General Duty has three aims:

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- To advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups.
- To foster good relations between people from different groups.

The General Duty applies to both colleagues and customers. The 'groups' referred to are those with protected characteristics. There are nine in total – age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. With regard to marriage and civil partnership, only the first aim of the General Duty applies.

Specific Duties

Under the Equality Act 2010, we will also fulfil the following Specific Duties to help us achieve the General Duty:

- Report progress on mainstreaming the equality duty
- Publish Equality outcomes and report progress
- Assess and review policies and practice
- Gather and use employee information
- Publish gender pay gap information
- Publish statements on equal pay
- Consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement
- Publish in an accessible manner
- Duty to consider other matters.