

Equality outcomes

April 2013

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Summary

Our equality outcomes

Our vision

To be a world-class organisation that improves the use of public money

We will support this vision through our equality outcomes:

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| <p>1. We will recognise the diversity of the Scottish population and raise the profile of equalities by embedding this in all aspects of our audit work on how public money is being used</p> | <p>2. We will have policies and practices that are fair, transparent, meet people's needs and support a culture of diversity</p> | <p>3. We will understand and support diversity within our workforce</p> |
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We will do this by:

- consulting with our stakeholders on how to reflect equality and diversity in our work
- analysing data to help us understand who uses public services and use this to inform our audit work
- reflecting equality and diversity issues in audit work programmes, in a way which is consistent with our audit duties
- publishing information and reports in formats that are accessible to all
- reporting audit findings in a style that reflects the audience
- reporting on diversity and equality issues where appropriate
- supporting other public bodies in their scrutiny of diversity and equality

We will do this by:

- having a culture where people feel valued and where they are treated with equity and fairness
- seeking feedback from staff on how we can support diversity and equality in how we do things
- supporting the wellbeing of our staff
- ensuring our policies are written in plain language, adhere to current legislation and are accessible to all
- ensuring key policies are subject to a rigorous equality impact assessment
- ensuring a flexible approach to working practices
- continuing to monitor against our Equal pay statement and ensure our reward strategies are fair

We will do this by:

- encouraging staff to share personal information with us so that we can improve the extent of our workforce information
- looking at ways to attract those from under-represented groups
- continuing to monitor our recruitment and selection processes and implement improvements in response to feedback

1. Introduction

Background

1. Our vision is to be a world-class audit organisation that improves the use of public money. Embracing an open culture and embedding equality in everything that we do are important steps in making this vision a reality. We are committed to equality of opportunity and to a culture that respects difference. As an employer, we want all our staff to feel valued and to be treated fairly. Through the audit work that we do, we can also highlight where Scottish public bodies can improve their practices and help reduce inequality.
2. The Equality Act 2010 covers nine protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; gender; and sexual orientation. The act introduced a general duty that public bodies should have due regard to the need to:
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other prohibited conduct
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. A number of specific duties underpin the general duty, including the development of equality outcomes. An equality outcome is a high-level, strategic goal that aims to drive an organisation's development as a body that genuinely values equality and diversity. Outcomes should bring about change and challenge an organisation's thinking about how it delivers services and engages with its employees.¹ In the next section of this paper, we outline our equality outcomes and how we plan to deliver these.

Our role

4. Around 200 public bodies in Scotland spend around £40 billion of public money each year. This includes the Scottish Government, councils, NHS boards and a wide variety of other public organisations. The role of the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission is to help make sure that public money is spent properly, efficiently and effectively. The Auditor General is independent, reports to the Scottish Parliament and is the accountable officer for Audit Scotland. The Accounts Commission is independent of local authorities and of government and can make reports and recommendations to Scottish ministers. Audit Scotland provides the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission with the services they need to carry out their duties.

¹ *Equality outcomes and the public sector equality duty: A guide for public authorities (Scotland)*, Equality and Human Rights Commission Scotland, May 2012.

5. Audit Scotland carries out a wide range of work on behalf of the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission. This includes:
 - annual audits in individual public bodies where we examine annual accounts and supporting financial transactions, and provide a professional view on matters such as meeting regulatory and legal rules, performance, and efficient use of resources
 - preparing public reports which highlight significant issues arising from the annual audits
 - audits of Best Value in local authorities which focus on the arrangements in place for ensuring sound governance, good management and public reporting on performance
 - national performance audits which examine whether organisations are providing value for money in the delivery of public services
 - managing the national fraud initiative which brings together auditors and public bodies to identify public sector fraud and error
 - auditing housing benefits services.
6. The role that we have and the work that we do across the Scottish public sector mean that we can encourage and promote equality in public services and organisations, and highlight where improvement is needed in meeting the general duty. This means we need to understand the diversity of the Scottish population; reflect this in our audits of how public money is being used; and highlight where equality may be at risk because of the current financial climate. We are also mindful of our responsibilities to our staff in fulfilling our duties under the Equality Act, and that we embrace and embed a culture of equality in everything that we do. Our equality outcomes set out what we want to achieve in our work and for our staff, and how we aim to get there.
7. You can find more information about the roles of the Auditor General, Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland on our website www.audit-scotland.gov.uk. The website has a range of information about our approach to improving equality including our equality mainstreaming report, equal pay statement and review, and equality impact assessments.

2. Equality outcomes

8. To help us develop our equality outcomes and ensure that they are meaningful to our staff and become embedded in how we work, we carried out a range of activities. This included examining a range of information such as staffing and pay statistics, recruitment and promotion results, and the results of our performance appraisal scheme for staff. Summaries of our staffing profile and staff appraisal results are available in our report on mainstreaming equalities.² The results of our latest equal pay review are on our website.³
9. Over the autumn of 2012, we held a series of 'Re:connect conferences' with all our staff. This followed on from our successful 'Connect conferences' the year before. The Re:connect conferences were an opportunity for everyone to hear about the priorities of our new Auditor General and to take part in discussions about the challenges we face. Staff were open and honest in their feedback on a wide range of topics including our corporate strategy, how our work can make a difference, and the future challenges we face. We used this feedback to help develop our corporate priorities for 2013. We set out the priorities in our refreshed [Corporate plan for 2012-15](#).⁴ We also discussed the values and qualities we want to underpin everything we do in helping us to achieve our vision to be a world-class organisation that improves the use of public money. We agreed that the value and qualities that are most important to us are:
 - our independence
 - valuing people
 - quality
 - cooperation
 - great communication.
10. We see promoting, encouraging and embedding equalities as an intrinsic part of valuing people.
11. During 2012/13, our Diversity and Equality Steering Group (DESG) gave presentations to staff in each of our five business groups to help raise awareness of the Public Sector Equality Duty. These presentations were a great opportunity for staff to give us feedback on how they think we are addressing equalities in our organisation and in the work that we do, and where they think we can do more. Further discussion followed in two staff workshops in November where we involved staff in helping us think about our equality outcomes.⁵ We invited all staff to participate.

² *Mainstreaming equalities*, Audit Scotland, 2013. Available on our website www.audit-scotland.gov.uk

³ *Equal pay review 2011/12*, Audit Scotland, 2012.

⁴ Our Corporate plan is available on our website.

⁵ Eighteen people attended the workshops and we asked them to complete a confidential diversity form: most were female and white; most stated that they did not belong to a particular religion or belief; two-thirds were heterosexual/straight; half were aged 35-49 and a third were aged 50+; and 61% were married or in a civil partnership. We have not reported on any responses below five in number.

12. Our annual staff survey highlights where our staff think we are doing well and where we can do more.⁶ While not explicitly related to equality issues and the protected characteristics, the results point to areas where changes in our culture and the way we do things can have a positive effect on people's experiences at work. This includes responding when staff feel under pressure, having people feel that they are part of an organisation that is run on strong values and principles, people feeling that they are part of a team where people care for each other and people feeling that they receive fair pay for the responsibilities that they have. The survey asks staff for their views on eight main areas of staff engagement:
- my manager
 - leadership
 - my company
 - personal growth
 - my team
 - fair deal
 - giving something back
 - wellbeing.
13. This staff engagement was very helpful in letting us know what is important to the people working in our organisation, what we are already good at and the areas where they think we can do better. We also engaged with equality groups and other regulators and inspectors in the development of our equality outcomes.
14. All of this activity has led to the development of three equality outcomes for Audit Scotland. The rest of this section sets out what these are, why we want to improve in these areas, and how we plan to measure our progress in achieving these outcomes. The outcomes apply to all the protected characteristics.

Equality outcome 1: We will recognise the diversity of the Scottish population and raise the profile of equalities by embedding this in all aspects of our audit work on how public money is being used

Why we agreed this outcome

15. Audit Scotland carries out a wide range of audit activity and our work covers almost every public body in Scotland. Many of these organisations provide services directly to members of the public. This means they should make sure that their services meet the needs of the individuals who make up Scotland's diverse population. Our audits therefore need to ensure that we analyse data about the profile of the Scottish population and the people who make use of public services; gather evidence about how public bodies are delivering services; and examine how public bodies consider the needs of different groups using these services when

⁶ We carried out our last staff survey over October and November 2012. The response rate was 78 per cent (204/261).

planning and organising services. Our recommendations can potentially lead to change in practices in public bodies. We also need to remember that the people who read our reports and take action on our recommendations come from a diverse population.

16. We already have arrangements in place to take equalities into account in our annual audits, Best Value audits and performance audits. But staff told us that we cannot be complacent and that we can be better at examining and reporting on equality issues within public bodies. Equalities groups also see Audit Scotland as a potentially powerful voice in promoting and encouraging equality, and highlighting organisations and services where improvement is needed. Our new corporate project about the expectations of audit is looking at how we can ensure that our audit products are fit for the environment that we will be working in over the next few years. Equalities will be an important aspect of this work.

How we will achieve this and how we will monitor progress

Outcome 1: We will recognise the diversity of the Scottish population and raise the profile of equalities by embedding this in all aspects of our audit work on how public money is being used		
How we will achieve this	Steps to be taken	How we will monitor progress
Consult with our stakeholders on how to reflect equality and diversity in our work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with equality groups on an annual basis about our work programme Consult with relevant equality groups on performance audits which have a focus on equalities issues Seek stakeholders' views on the role of audit as part of our corporate project about the expectations of audit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record of engagement with equality groups about our work programme Record of engagement with equality groups in post-project reviews of performance audits We will seek feedback from relevant equality groups about how well we have addressed the needs of protected groups Consideration of stakeholders' views of equalities as part of the corporate project
Analyse data to help us understand who uses public services and use this to inform our audit work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse data about how different groups are using public services and how public bodies are using public money to reduce inequality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audits which comment on how public money is being used to help reduce inequality
Reflect equality and diversity issues in audit work programmes, in a way which is consistent with our audit duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Area Networks (LANs) will consider whether any equality issues have been identified as part of the annual Shared Risk Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review of the draft council Assurance and Improvement Plans and evidence templates

	<p>(SRA) process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Best Value toolkit on equalities will be applied where considered appropriate 	
Publish information and reports in formats that are accessible to all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to keep up-to-date with developments around sharing information in an accessible way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation with accessibility organisations
Report audit findings in a style that reflects the audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all audit findings before annual audit report is issued as part of current internal quality review processes • Introduce an editor function to ensure audit reports are written in plain language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client feedback on annual audits monitored as part of the quality review process and through annual impact reports • Positive feedback from readers about clarity of audit reports
Report on diversity and equality issues where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BV toolkit on equalities will be applied where considered appropriate • The LAN will consider whether any equality issues have been identified as part of the annual SRA process • Seek views from equality groups when developing performance audits that cover equality issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of the draft council AIPs and evidence templates • Positive feedback from equalities groups about how we have covered equalities issues in performance audits
Support other public bodies in their scrutiny of diversity and equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EHRC Scotland⁷ will be reviewing how councils have responded to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LANs will consider the results of this work as part of the SRA process • Review the results of this work for central government, local government and health bodies and consider whether specific work on equalities should be proposed for the performance audit programme

⁷ Equality and Human Rights Commission Scotland.

Equality outcome 2: We will have policies and practices that are fair, transparent, meet people's needs and support a culture of diversity

Why we agreed this outcome

17. While we took steps to engage staff about equalities issues and received very helpful feedback, we need to widen this engagement and consider how we can encourage more staff with protected characteristics to get involved. This is important to make sure that we are meeting their needs. In addition, the results from our most recent staff survey highlighted that we need to improve our results in the Wellbeing and Fair deal categories. Staff also highlighted that they find the EIA process quite complicated and would welcome more user-friendly guidance and paperwork.

How we will achieve this and how we will monitor progress

Outcome 2: We will have policies and practices that are fair, transparent, meet people's needs and support a culture of diversity		
How we will achieve this	Steps to be taken	How we will monitor progress
Have a culture where people feel valued and where they are treated with equity and fairness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue staff survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in staff survey results on Wellbeing and Fair deal
Seek feedback from staff in how we can support diversity and equality in how we do things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold events with staff to seek their views on equalities issues, eg lunchtime seminars with invited speakers, workshops to discuss equality issues Consider conducting a survey of staff which focuses on equalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports on feedback from events/survey
Support the wellbeing of our staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue staff survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in staff survey results on wellbeing
Ensure our policies are written in plain language, adhere to current legislation and are accessible to all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out EIA⁸ on new or significantly revised policies Ensure training is available for staff on writing in plain language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate a timetable of EIAs Programme of completed EIAs published on website

⁸ Equality Impact Assessment

Ensure key policies are subject to a rigorous EIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update and refresh our guidance for staff on conducting EIAs • Establish a system where all key policies are put forward for an EIA at the point when a new policy is being developed or an existing one is being revised • Gather feedback from staff using the new guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate a timetable of EIAs • Programme of completed EIAs published on website • New EIA guidance produced for staff • New system for prompting an EIA when a key policy is being introduced or reviewed • Positive feedback from staff about the new guidance
Ensure a flexible approach to working practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of uptake and refusal of flexible working arrangements • Continue annual staff survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of flexible working arrangements • Improvement in staff survey results on Wellbeing
Continue to monitor against our Equal pay statement and ensure our reward strategies are fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out and publish equal pay review • Continue staff survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of results of equal pay review • Improvement in staff survey results on Fair deal

Equality outcome 3: We will understand and support diversity within our workforce

Why we agreed this outcome

18. We want to understand the profile of our staff to help identify where our policies and practices may be falling short and at risk of acting in a discriminatory way. As a relatively small organisation (270 staff), we will work hard at this and also recognise that our size limits some actions and some levels of data analysis.
19. While there has been a gradual move in our workforce being more reflective of the Scottish population, there are still some protected characteristics where we have lower representation, eg disability and minority ethnic groups. Two Ticks accreditation has helped us to generate greater awareness about our organisation among people with disabilities through using the disability symbol on adverts and regular appearance in a variety of disability publications and websites. We need to explore other media to see if we can attract a wider audience.
20. There has been an increase in the number of staff sharing information with us about their protected characteristics but it would be helpful to get more comprehensive information.

How we will achieve this and how we will monitor progress

Outcome 3: We will understand and support diversity within our workforce		
How we will achieve this	Steps to be taken	How we will monitor progress
Encourage staff to share personal information with us so that we can improve the extent of our workforce information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to encourage staff to record information about protected characteristics • Analyse and monitor workforce statistics to identify any under-represented groups in our workforce and record in annual progress report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of staff recording information about protected characteristics • More comprehensive information is available about our staff profile • Report reviewed by DESG and conclusions and areas for improvement recorded and monitored by DESG
Look at ways to attract those from under-represented groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve engagement with equalities groups representing all protected characteristics and seek views about how we can attract people from under-represented groups to work with Audit Scotland (particularly people with a disability or from a minority ethnic group) • Examine ways to encourage greater awareness about Audit Scotland among people with protected characteristics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in under-represented groups applying, being shortlisted and getting appointed (particularly people with a disability or from a minority ethnic group)
Continue to monitor our recruitment and selection processes and implement improvements in response to feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to gather and report on statistics relating to applicants, shortlisted candidates and successful candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review report on workforce statistics and highlight areas for investigation • Increase in under-represented groups applying, being shortlisted and getting appointed (particularly people with a disability or from a minority ethnic group)

How we plan to report on our progress

21. Our Diversity and Equality Steering Group will prepare an action plan setting out what needs to be done to help us meet our equality outcomes. It will monitor progress every six months and prepare an annual report for Audit Scotland's Management Team.
22. On an annual basis, the Steering Group will review our outcomes and consider whether they are still fit for purpose. Any proposals for change will be included in the annual progress report to Management Team.

Equality outcomes

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