Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body
Equalities Annual Report
2008/09
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Foreword

I am delighted to present the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body’s (SPCB’s) latest annual equalities report.

This report highlights the breadth of work on equalities carried out by the Scottish Parliamentary Service staff organisation during the period January 2008 to March 2009 and reflects our continuing commitment to delivering effective parliamentary services in which equality is at the heart.

A great deal has been achieved by the Scottish Parliamentary Service in promoting equality, and some of that work is highlighted in this report. Progress on equality has been made across each of our strategic priorities, contributing to the success of our organisation and demonstrating a significant improvement to the delivery of our services.

Although I am pleased with the progress made, there will always be more to do. We will therefore continue to work towards achieving exemplary policies and practices and maintaining an organisational culture that positively promotes equality and respect.

Alex Fergusson MSP
Presiding Officer and Chair of
The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body
The Business Case for Equality

The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body’s (SPCB’s) main function is to provide the Scottish Parliament with the property, staff and services required for the Parliament's purposes. One of the important aspects of meeting this main function is the SPCB’s strong commitment to equality in enabling the Scottish Parliamentary Service to provide an appropriate, accessible and inclusive service to the Parliament, its Members and the public.

Equality has always been regarded as a corporate issue for the whole organisation and is crucial to the development and delivery of our business. One of the Parliament’s key founding principles is the promotion of equal opportunities for all. The SPCB’s new strategic plan also reflects a strong commitment to equality which is underpinned by our core values of integrity, impartiality, professionalism and equality. These values are a fundamental part of our identity as an organisation and help us to develop a culture where equality is vital to our business and to the continuous improvement of our services and functions.

Staff are our greatest asset and so every effort is made to enable everyone to carry out their duties to the best of their ability, in supporting the work of the Parliament. Having equality built throughout our employment practices will help us to recruit the best talent available, taking account of the ability and skills of people without prejudice or bias.

Part of the SPCB’s main function is also to provide suitable accommodation for the Parliament’s purposes. We are committed to providing a building that is accessible for all and fit for purpose which addresses the needs of all people visiting and using the building.

In providing services to the Parliament as a whole we must ensure that equalities is featured prominently and that we accommodate the needs and aspirations of our diverse communities. Including equalities in our day to day work will enable us to provide a range of inclusive services which are open to everyone.

Whilst we strongly recognise the business benefits of equality, we also are aware of the ethical and social reasons for equality and the contribution we as a prominent organisation can make. In many respects, we are leading the way and therefore wish to share this with other public sector bodies and organisations wherever possible. We also recognise the wider impact our work can have on societal changes.
Evolution of equality in the Scottish Parliament

As we approach the end of our first decade, our strategy for equality has worked well for the organisation creating a robust infrastructure for its implementation and ensuring significant progress has been made in achieving its goals for equality. Our aim was to develop a culture which promotes fairness and respect enabling everyone to have the same opportunities to participate in and contribute to the activities of the Parliament.

The development of the equalities framework provided the SPCB with a long term strategy to promote equality and effectively monitor the progress being made. It provided Scottish Parliamentary Service staff with a structured approach to training, as well as guidance and advice on their roles and responsibilities in the Scottish Parliament. The framework also set out the organisation’s equalities policies and provided a source of guidance for Members.

An Equalities Team, which forms part of the Strategy & Development Office, was established to implement these policies and provide advice and guidance to the organisation. Locating equalities in this office was a deliberate step to signify it as a corporate issue and to enable direct equalities input into meeting strategic objectives. It also allows the Equalities Team to take a more strategic and aligned approach to equalities within the Parliament.

Over the years this framework has been augmented by our three equality schemes on Race, Disability and Gender. These Schemes were developed to meet the legal equality duties on the SPCB, which encouraged a more practical approach to equalities. Action plans were developed for each Scheme to build equality into the organisation’s high level aims and objectives as well as its day to day core work. Some of the highlights achieved by the organisation during 2008 in relation to these schemes can be found later in this report.

Now that the initial work of developing a strong equality infrastructure has been achieved a fresh and evolving approach to equalities is being developed which has three main objectives and is closely aligned with the SPCB’s strategic priorities. These are:

- to minimise bureaucracy;
- deliver equalities in practice; and
- streamline our approach to equalities.

The first step taken in minimising bureaucracy has been to remove the existing layers of reporting which was previously carried out through the directorate annual equality reporting process. This will be replaced with one single report that will cover the equalities work undertaken during the year and will incorporate the work of the schemes.

Moving towards a single equality scheme in 2010, as well as a new approach to equality impact assessments, will also help us to streamline our approach to equality even further and to fully demonstrate the impact of mainstreaming across the
organisation. This should hopefully encourage staff to focus more on the delivery of equalities in their actual work and to mainstream equality into their everyday practice.

Developing a single equality scheme, will be one of our challenges for next year. We will take the opportunity of the development of a single equality scheme to reflect the additional five equality strands set out in the Equality Bill. They are: age; gender reassignment; religion or belief; sexual orientation; and pregnancy and maternity.

To better meet the statutory requirement of equality impact assessments, our new approach will help staff to deliver equality throughout their day to day work. The tool will be built into the organisation’s current processes with a view to creating a more systematic approach to mainstreaming. This will mean that it is everyone’s responsibility to deliver equality. Equality should underpin everything that we do, and by embedding it into all organisational and decision making processes will ensure that any adverse impact in relation to equality is minimised.

Part of this will mean that the ongoing leadership of the Clerk/Chief Executive and Assistant Clerk/Chief Executives, in their roles as equality champions, will be vital in order for us to meet our new equality objectives. Encouraging others in the organisation to be proactive and to promote a positive culture will be vital in leading the organisation forward.
Highlights of the Period

The following section highlights some of the organisation’s main equality achievements during the period January 2008 to March 2009. It is closely aligned with our strategic plan and the main priority business areas which are:

- Parliamentary Business
- Engagement
- Supporting Members
- Organisational Health

Parliamentary Business

Review of equal opportunities in the work of committees

On 30 March 2009, the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments (SPPA) Committee published a report titled ‘Review of equal opportunities in the work of committees’. The Committee recommended a rule change to the Standing Orders to require committees to include within their annual reports information on how equal opportunities have been taken into account in their work. The Parliament will consider the SPPA Committee’s report in due course.

The SPPA also suggested that guidance should be developed for committees on what information on equalities could be included in committee annual reports and this mainstreaming guidance has already been taken forward by the Equal Opportunities Committee (see below).

Guidance for committees on mainstreaming equality

This document, produced by the Equal Opportunities Committee, consolidates guidance for committees on equal opportunities. It encourages committees to consider and take responsibility for equal opportunities in their work in recognition of the fact that equalities can exist in all policy areas. By adopting these guidelines committees will improve the way in which they take account of equality when carrying out their business, whether in their role in scrutinising legislation, conducting inquiries, gathering evidence and holding the Scottish Government to account. Furthermore, it will help to take forward the Parliament’s recognised position on the need to challenge discrimination and its commitment to promoting equality and the need to proactively remove barriers to inclusion and access.

Time for Reflection

Time for Reflection continues to offer an opportunity for people from a wide range of religions, faiths and beliefs to make a short speech to MSPs on a topic of their choice.

In inviting contributors for Time for Reflection, the Presiding Officer attempts to achieve a balance which reflects the faiths and religions in Scotland. It is also recognised that there is a proportion of the population which does not adhere to any
particular faith, although any contributors in this category usually have a humanitarian connection. Factors such as gender and geographical location are also born in mind wherever possible when inviting contributors. During the period of the report contributors have included:-

- Canon Andrew Mann, Roman Catholic Church
- Jane Bentley, Scottish Inter Faith Council
- Rev Muriel Pearson, Church of Scotland
- Amanullah De Sondy, Centre for the Study of Islam
- Juliet Wilson, the Humanist Society of Scotland

Public Petitions

The public petitions process is a key part of the Parliament's commitment to participation, openness and accessibility. It allows individuals, community groups and organisations to participate in the policy scrutiny process by raising issues of concern and engaging with the Parliament. Once petitions are submitted, they are considered by the Public Petitions Committee.

Over the reporting period, a variety of equality related petitions have been considered by the Committee. These include

- PE1073: Catholics in Scottish prisons
- PE1135: Review of guidelines to allow gay and bisexual men to donate blood; and
- PE1239: Same sex marriage.

Legislation

During the period covered by this report, the Parliament’s Non Executive Bills Unit (NEBU), along with solicitor colleagues provided support in taking forward the Disabled Persons' Parking Places (Scotland) Bill.

The main objective of this Member's Bill, introduced by Jackie Baillie MSP, was to prevent disabled persons’ parking places being occupied by those that are not entitled to use them by seeking to ensure that enforcement action can be taken.

NEBU and parliamentary solicitors assisted the member in developing her policy, identified for her the approach taken under the Bill and prepared the Bill and all the documents required to accompany it. During the committee scrutiny of the Bill, NEBU worked closely with the Member and prepared briefing material to examine witnesses and gave evidence on her behalf. Assistance was given at the subsequent Parliament debates: speeches were prepared and responses formulated to issues raised. Further help was provided on financial matters including detailed assessments of alternative costing suggestions, leading ultimately to the Bill being passed by Parliament on 26 February 2009.
Debates and Motions

Parliament has discussed and debated a variety of equality issues ranging from a ministerial statement on Equality and Diversity to debates on forced marriages to kinship care. Members have also lodged a diverse range of motions to highlight issues of concern and topics covered included the following: human trafficking, wheelchair users, opportunities for migrants, human rights and campaigns by the RNIB and RNID.

Supporting Members

SPCB Portfolio Responsibilities

Support was provided during the period to Mike Pringle MSP, in his role as the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) member with portfolio responsibility for equalities. The assistance ranged from providing briefings for parliamentary questions to the Corporate Body to support for the Member’s appearance before the Equal Opportunities Committee meeting in May to discuss the Equal Opportunities Annual Report 2007 and SPCB progress on equal opportunities.

Scottish Parliament’s Information Centre (SPICe)

The Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) provides MSPs, their staff and Scottish Parliamentary Service staff with facts, analysis, briefings, research, impartial expertise and news and current affairs information.

Between January 2008 and March 2009, SPICe received and dealt with a large number of enquiries specific to each equality strand. Examples include enquiries about:

- Race, ranging from data to policy issues;
- Gender, including equal pay and domestic abuse;
- Disability, including disabled parking, discrimination in employment, housing adaptations, and accessible transport; and
- Religion/Faith, including issues on sectarianism and denominational schools.

SPICe also provided various briefings on issues under discussion by Parliament’s committees. For example, for the Equal Opportunities Committee, briefings were submitted on the Scots language, female offenders and denominational schools.

Briefings were also submitted to the Public Petitions Committee on all the petitions submitted to it, copies of which are publicly accessible on the Parliament’s website.
Members’ Expenses Scheme

Parliamentary allowances were recently subject to a review, the outcome of which was a new Members Expenses Scheme coming into effect on 1 October 2008. Part of the revisions included updated sections on disability to make clearer the rules on allowances that Members can claim in this area.

Section six of the Scheme provides for disabled Members and any additional resources they may need to enable them to carry out their parliamentary duties as well as enabling a Member to make reasonable adjustments for employing disabled staff and also to help facilitate the access to Members and their offices by disabled members of the public.

Section seven of the Scheme also provides allowances for Members to engage language interpreters, including sign language, arrange translation of correspondence and provide any other services to ensure equal access to members of the public.

During the reporting period the scheme has allowed for numerous adjustments, ranging from a dedicated text phone line to the purchase of an induction loop, and from office alterations to allow wheelchair access to translations into Braille highlighting the continuing need for reasonable adjustments to be made.

Engagement

Engagement Strategy

During 2008 the Education and Outreach Review’s recommendations were developed into an implementation plan. The changes involved the establishment of a new team, Education & Community Partnerships. The team’s aims are to raise awareness in Scotland about the Parliament and its role; develop understanding about how to engage; and build confidence so that people can engage if they choose to do so.

Part of this work has been to take an innovative approach in engaging external groups in the parliamentary process. Three core target audiences, who were under represented in engaging with the Parliament, were identified by the review. These were ethnic minority communities, disabled people and difficult to reach young people. The aim of the project is to work in partnership with organisations within these groups to help them have their voice heard more effectively in the Parliament. The project currently has three partners:-

- Action for Children
- Haggeye
- Multi Ethnic Aberdeen Limited (MEAL)

The team completed the research phase of the project to identify possible partner organisations during the year. This involved meeting with a range of groups to find out what is currently available, what works well and what could be improved as well as exploring some of the barriers to participation. The project will be in place
between autumn 2008 and spring 2010 with several different phases including information sessions and workshops which took place between October 2008 and January 2009. This was followed by sessions to identify topics each of the three partners would like to actively address with the Parliament and staff will then support the groups in that engagement. The project will be evaluated during 2009/10 with a conference on the outcomes held at the end of the project in spring 2010.

**Improving Access to the Main Hall**

During the first few months of 2008 work was undertaken to make improvements to the Main Hall. This work included a review of the lighting levels in the area and a refresh of the exhibition.

Work was undertaken to look at ways in which lighting levels could be improved. The lighting levels were increased in March making it easier for all to see the Parliament exhibition and also to make the whole space more accessible.

During this time work was also undertaken to refresh the Parliament’s exhibition. This work is the first step in a fuller refresh which will be included in the future review of visitor services. The interim improvements made to the exhibition have provided a more tactile and accessible exhibition with more touchable resources including pieces of granite, steel, wood and carpet. The top of the exhibition has been adjusted to make it more readable and a new touch screen feature is proving to be popular with visitors.

**Events & Exhibitions in the Parliament**

During the year many events have been held in the Parliament. These events have varied in subject matter and size from our own Festival of Politics to events such as the Co-operative Insurance Cup Semi-final draw, the Dewar Debate, Scotland’s Futures Forum events and events for various Cross Party Group such as Diabetes, Oil and Gas, Mental Health, Drugs and Alcohol, Race Equality in Scotland and Visual Impairment.

There have also been a number of specific equality related events. These have covered a wide range of equality topics including:-

- International Women’s Day 2008;
- A launch for Ramadan;
- A reception for LGBT History Month;
- A launch of the “I Exist” report for the National Autistic Society;
- The Young Scottish Minority Ethnic Awards;
- An event for Guide Dogs for the Blind;
- An event for Show Racism the Red Card;
- Scotland Churches Parliamentary Office event; and
- An event for Amina – Muslim Women’s Resource Centre.

When organising events our staff are always looking to provide an inclusive service by providing services that meet the needs of the participants, ranging from communication support including BSL interpreters and speech to text reporters, the use of the Parliament’s contemplation room and when catering is provided ensuring
it reflects the dietary requirements of the. The team has continued to encourage hosts to make their events as inclusive and accessible as possible.

The Events and Exhibitions team has worked hard during the period not only to ensure such events run smoothly for all but also to look at ways of achieving their equality responsibilities. With that in mind they have developed, with the assistance of the Equalities Team, improved monitoring procedures to enable the collection of equality related information to help further develop the service. Over time this information will help the organisation gather information on those engaging with the Parliament though attendance at events. The first set of monitoring statistics can be found in the monitoring section of this report.

**Language policy**

During 2008 a review of our Language policy was undertaken to ensure the policy reflected the SPCB’s responsibilities under current legislation and to take account of the changing landscape of Scotland’s communities and the linguistic diversity that exists within them. The Language Policy supports the Parliament’s founding principles of openness and accessibility and enables all of Scotland’s communities to have an equal opportunity to participate in and engage with the parliamentary process.

During the review both Gaelic and British Sign Language (BSL) were included for the first time as part of the policy. The inclusion of both of languages enabled the SPCB to meet their legal duties under both The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005.

The inclusion of Gaelic enables the SPCB to meet the principle of giving Gaelic and English equal respect and also recognises the fact that BSL is a language in its own right and as such should be included in the language policy. Bringing BSL into the policy allows the SPCB to continue its practice of providing BSL services as a reasonable adjustment for those Deaf BSL users who are engaging with the Parliament.

During the review a number of external individuals and organisations were involved in assisting with the work to determine the future focus of the policy. This included attending focus groups where individuals were invited to discuss any issues or barriers they faced in engaging with the Parliament which could be addressed by the policy. Attendees included a diverse range of communities living in Scotland.

**Producing Publications about the Parliament**

The Parliament continues to work towards its objective of improving its engagement with the public through greater openness and increased access. In this regard, an accessible edition of How the Scottish Parliament Works was published in March 2008 to help increase the public’s knowledge of the Parliament and develop its understanding of the important role it plays across society in our day to day lives.
This was followed by the publication of an Accessibility Guide on services in August 2008. This guide provides details on the services and facilities available in the Parliament to make it more accessible to all. The guide includes information such as how to get to the Parliament, how to navigate around the building once you are here and on available facilities such as the crèche, the Changing Places toilet, the café, tours and various support available to visitors.

Work is underway to make our engagement leaflet and public petitions information available in accessible formats during 2009.

Organisational Health

Equality Training

During 2008 we continued to run mandatory Equality and Diversity and Dignity at Work training courses for new members of staff. These courses were refreshed during the year to take account of new legislation as well as our new approach to equality.

A new “Equalities in Practice” course was introduced for all staff who attended their initial equality training three or more years ago. This training was considered to be a natural progression from the initial equalities training by those attending the sessions. The main aim of the course was to encourage staff to promote equality in their day to practice using the process for equality impact assessment. They were also advised on how this could be applied to the equality competency within the organisation’s performance management system. The training sessions were held between June and October on a variety of dates to accommodate staff needs wherever possible.

Good feedback was received from across the organisation demonstrating the success of the training programme. The SPCB has agreed that staff will attend refresher training on a three yearly basis.

Maternity Mentoring Scheme

At the end of the last annual reporting period it was agreed that a pilot of a Maternity Mentoring Scheme for SPCB staff would be undertaken. The need for such a scheme was identified through work carried out under the Gender Equality Scheme. This pilot has been run throughout this reporting period and has proved very successful both in terms of supporting staff and as a benefit to the organisation.

Mentors volunteered and were trained for the role from various offices across the organisation. Mentees were offered the scheme on announcing their pregnancy or requesting adoption or extended paternity leave. The scheme has proved very successful with 68% of eligible staff taking up the opportunity of mentoring over the period of the pilot. Throughout the pilot period evaluation of the outcomes of the
scheme and feedback from those taking part was sought. This has enabled us to evaluate the experiences of both mentors and mentees, the benefits of having such a scheme to mentees and in the longer term the benefits to the organisation in providing such a scheme. Some of the comments made by those involved can be found in this report. Feedback and evaluation results from the pilot have highlighted a positive effect on those involved with an increase in skill, assertiveness and confidence levels in the majority of mentors and mentees.

Developing a Maternity Staff Network was the second aim of the project. The network first met at the beginning of 2008 with meetings held every 6 to 8 weeks between then and the end of the pilot. The meeting topics have varied with attendees being given the opportunity to suggest issues they would like to discuss or guest speakers they would like to hear from. Some examples of this were:

- Contributing to HR related reviews from a parental point of view such as the review of special leave. The feedback from the network formed part of the HR Reference Group’s considerations and was reflected in the new Policy.
- Guest speakers, such as Angela Constance MSP, have come along and talked to the network about being a working mother and balancing her work as an MSP and her home life.

**HR Change programme**

During the year work has continued on the HR Change programme. The aim of this programme is to ensure that our policies and practices are progressive and follow best practice, that our decisions affecting staff are realigned, wherever possible, and taken within the line management structure following our good governance agenda and to review the functions and structure of the Human Resources Office. A vital part of this process has been to ensure that the principles of equality are fully embedded into the HR Change Programme.

For example, HR invited the Equalities Manager to be involved in the HR realignment reference groups for each of the policies being reviewed. These groups reviewed the SPCB’s policies on Grievance, Discipline, Dismissal and Special Leave during the period. Separately, the equalities team was consulted throughout different stages of the review. All three policies have now been re-launched as part of the realignment part of the programme.

As part of the review of the functions and structure of the HR Office, a more structured dedicated support to Members and their staff will be provided. This has included an enhanced Learning and Capability Development function which will work with other business areas to identify, source and meet SPS staff training needs as well as to facilitate training to Members in areas such as employment law and equalities.

**Domestic Abuse Policy Statement and Guidance**

A new policy statement and guidance in relation to domestic abuse was launched during January 2009. The SPCB aims to provide a safe and secure working environment for its staff. By developing a policy statement and guidance on
domestic abuse we have recognised that this is a serious social problem which can have severe and damaging consequences on all aspects of the lives of its victims, including their working lives.

Our policy statement details our commitment to raising awareness of the issue of domestic abuse and its impact and provides information on how staff can raise such an issue with their line manager. Guidance was also developed to help line managers identify when a colleague may be experiencing domestic abuse and to enable them to provide practical support including exploring what action can be taken to help a colleague stay safe in the workplace. We have published the statement, guidance and a list of relevant support agencies and resources for staff to access on our intranet site.

Domestic abuse as a cause and consequence of gender inequality has also been noted in our Gender Equality Scheme during its review at the beginning of 2009.

**Procurement**

During the year the Equalities team has worked closely with Procurement Services to take forward the equality actions set out in the SPCB’s Responsible Purchasing Strategy. This has included updating materials to take account of new legislation and reviewing our procedures to enable a more pro-active approach in promoting equality with the suppliers from which we procure services and goods.

One aspect of this was to investigate and develop our procedures so that we are able to influence suppliers to promote equality. This has been achieved by building in more equality related questions in tender documentation and our procurement strategies as appropriate.

Throughout the period the Equalities Team have also been consulted in relation to specific equality related contract opportunities such as the provision of audio guides, the provision of accessible information and the production of an accessibility guide.

**Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)**

One of the strategic pieces of work to be undertaken during the year has been the development of our new approach to Equality Impact Assessment. We started the process by introducing the concept of equality impact assessment within the equality in practice training sessions during 2008.

Once staff became aware of the principles underpinning this process, we formed a working group to develop a toolkit that could be applied across the organisation and be easily built into day to day practice. The aim is to equip staff across the organisation with the appropriate tools to assess the impact of equality when making day to day decisions such as organising a group or office planning day to larger organisational projects and policies.

A paper version of the tool has been developed. Business Information Technology colleagues are in the process of developing an electronic version for launch in autumn 2009. Guidance on the process will be made available to staff prior to the launch.
Next Year’s Challenges

Whilst some of the work we have highlighted this year will continue into next year, such as work on the Equality Impact Assessment toolkit and embedding it throughout the organisation, there will also be new and exciting challenges for us to face. Some of the main challenges in 2009/10 are detailed below.

Members Needs

During summer 2008 a survey of Members and their staff was conducted to ascertain their views on current services and how they were delivered. The report from this survey identified several short and long term actions which are currently being taken forward across the organisation. As part of these actions it was agreed that work would be undertaken to update and review current guidance for Members and also look at training provision for Members and their staff.

Equalities fact sheets for Members have previously been issued in relation to Disability; however, these now require reviewing and updating in line with the above action point. This work supports our strategic priority of Supporting Members and will commence during the summer of 2009 along with work to develop further guidance on the other equality strands and to raise awareness of the specific pieces of legislation and best practice. This will include practical information on the various rights and responsibilities under the legislation including their responsibilities as employers and service providers to their constituents.

In early 2010, will be exploring ways in which we can offer training and support to members in their role as employers and service providers.

Single Equality Bill and a Single Equality Scheme

The main purpose of the UK Parliament’s Equality Bill, which was introduced in April 2009, is to “harmonise discrimination law, and to strengthen the law to support progress on equality”. The Bill aims to simplify into one Act the many pieces of equalities legislation, which have been introduced over the last 40 years, making it easier for individuals and employers to understand the rights and responsibilities. This will mean a number of changes and actions for us as an organisation to take on enactment of the legislation. Work will be needed to ensure that all policies are updated to take account of any provisions.

One main task will be for us to meet the updated public sector duties and develop a Single Equality Scheme. This Scheme will incorporate our current Race, Gender and Disability Equality schemes into one along with actions on the other equality strands of age, sexual orientation and religion & belief and potentially class. Work on developing a single scheme will commence in 2009/10. As with our previous Schemes we will look to establish a working group of both internal and external members who are representative of all strands. This work will involve input from across the organisation to identify the areas requiring further work followed by implementation of the actions which we identify over the next three years.
Review of our Equality Framework and Strategy

Our current Equality Framework has been a useful tool in embedding the principles of equality in the work of the Parliament and in providing SPS staff, Members and Members’ staff with guidance on their rights and responsibilities. It is now time to review the framework and bring it into line with new equalities legislation, including the future Equality Bill. As our organisation has developed and evolved so must our Equalities Framework and Strategy. During 2009/10 we will be working on our future equalities strategy which will encompass our new approach to equalities as previously mentioned in this report. The new strategy will help the organisation progress equalities throughout all its functions.

Engaging with Communities

Over the last few years much work has been done in relation to our public sector duties and in improving our involvement with groups, individuals and communities from the various equality strands. To date the majority of this work has focused on gender and disability in relation to the development and progress of our equality schemes in these areas. We now feel that, whilst this work will continue, we will expand our engagement with others to reflect the diversity of all the equality strands.

One of the main projects for such involvement will be the development of our Single Equalities Scheme where there will be opportunity for groups, individuals and organisations to get involved from across all equality strands. Work will also continue on our innovative Engagement Strategy and the work already started with the groups identified as being underrepresented will continue throughout the year.

We will also be looking at other opportunities and ways to increase involvement from those equality groups not yet fully involved in the work of the Parliament and help us to fulfil our strategic objective of encouraging and developing public awareness of and engagement with the parliamentary process.

Conclusion

This annual report marks an important milestone in the evolution of our equalities strategy and reflects an ongoing commitment to promoting equality in relation to our business. It is closely aligned to the SPCB’s strategic priorities and focuses on the practical aspects of delivering equalities. We have outlined the significant progress that has been made and highlighted some of the main achievements across the organisation. We now look forward towards achieving our future actions for another successful year of continuous improvement to equalities in the Parliament.
Monitoring progress

As with previous reports we have included monitoring information gathered during the year. As you will see below the information varies in relation to how different Groups/Offices monitor information and also the period of reporting. The reason for this is the change to a new reporting timeframe. In previous reports we have monitored information from January to December. We are now moving to reporting on a financial year basis. This will mean that monitoring information gathered this year and next will be a combination of yearly figures and figures for a 15 month period.

Employment

During 2009 we looked at ways to improve the information we currently monitor in terms of employment in the organisation. You will see from the information below that our monitoring has improved over the year. More work will be undertaken during they next year to continue to seek ways to move forward and provide more information.

Organisational Staff Profile

The information in relation to staff profile has been reported on a January to December 2008 basis. Information in the next report will cover the period January 09 to March 2010.

Staff Profile by Gender and Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
<th>Grade 6</th>
<th>Grade 7</th>
<th>Grade 8</th>
<th>Chief Exec</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>

The above figures show a good gender balance in the organisation of with 49% of staff female and 51% of staff male.
Disabled Staff Profile by Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
<th>Grade 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Disabled staff</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above figures show that overall 8% of our staff have advised HR that they considered themselves disabled under the Disability Discrimination Act. Of those disabled staff 41% are Grade 2, 16% are Grade 3 & Grade 4, 20% are Grade 5 and 7% are Grade 6. No staff advised HR of a disability from Grade 7 and 8.

Staff Profile by Gender and Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>20-24</th>
<th>25-29</th>
<th>30-34</th>
<th>35-39</th>
<th>40-44</th>
<th>45-49</th>
<th>50-54</th>
<th>55-59</th>
<th>60-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above figures highlight that over half of our staff (64.5%) fall within the ages of 30 – 49. Only 0.4% of staff are aged 20 – 24 and 1.3% aged 65+. We currently have no staff under the age of 20.

Ethnicity

The staff profile highlights that 90.4% of staff identified themselves as white, 1.6% identified as black and minority ethnic and 8.5% of staff’s ethnicity is recorded as unknown.
Use of the Special Leave policy by Gender and Age

The figures show that 22.6% of female staff and 23.4% of male staff have made use of our special leave arrangements during the year. Over half of those making use of the arrangements, 67.2%, fall within the age bracket of 30 – 49.

External Recruitment

The information below relates to our externally advertised recruitment opportunities between 1 January 2008 and 31 March 2009. The figures have been reported in relation to Disability, Gender and Ethnic Group.

Disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Passed Interview</th>
<th>Appointed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total applications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Disabled (%)</td>
<td>3921 (97.2)</td>
<td>242 (96.8)</td>
<td>141 (96.7)</td>
<td>58 (96.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled (%)</td>
<td>113 (2.8)</td>
<td>8 (3.2)</td>
<td>5 (3.9)</td>
<td>2 (3.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success rate (%)</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above information shows the figures in relation to both disabled and non-disabled applicants. During 2008/09 2.8% of all applications were from disabled people, overall 7.1% of disabled people applying were interviewed and 1.8% of those who passed the interview were appointed. All of these figures show a higher success rate than non-disabled applicants during the period which has helped us to address the under representation of disabled staff in the organisation.
The chart above provides a comparison of the success rate of both disabled and non-disabled applicants at the interview and appointment stages between 2004 and 2008/09.

**Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total applications</th>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Passed Interview</th>
<th>Appointed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female (%)</td>
<td>Male (%)</td>
<td>Female (%)</td>
<td>Male (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3862</td>
<td>2349 (60.8)</td>
<td>1513 (39.2)</td>
<td>125 (57.3)</td>
<td>93 (42.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80 (64.5)</td>
<td>44 (35.5)</td>
<td>34 (69.4)</td>
<td>15 (30.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above information shows the figures in relation to male and female applicants. The figures highlight a higher success rate of males in being selected for interview but a higher success rate of passing interview and being appointed by female applicants.
During July 2008 we applied a Genuine Occupational Requirement to one externally advertised post, Access and Control Officers. The above figures do not include this recruitment process which was advertised as a female only recruitment.

The above chart details the success rate for being invited to interview and being appointed for both male and female between 2004 and 2008/09.

**Ethnic Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Applications</th>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White (%)</td>
<td>Asian (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4024</td>
<td>3792 (94)</td>
<td>89 (2.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Success Rate**

- Interview Female: 6.3%
- Interview Male: 6.7%
- Appt Female: 5.3%
- Appt Male: 4.5%
The above information shows the figures in relation to applicants by Ethnic Group as described in the 2001 Census (Scotland). The figures highlight that the success rate for applicants identifying themselves as Black is consistent at 5.3% throughout the process from interview to appointment. The rate for applicants who identify themselves as Asian varies with a high percentage (6.7%) being successful at getting interviews but a lower percentage being successful in passing the interview (2.2%) and being appointed (1.1%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140 (95.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 (93.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These graphs highlight the success rates for interview and appointment by Ethnic Group between 2004 and 2008/09.
Training

During the period 1 January to 31 December 2008 there were a total of 1824 attendees at the various training courses held. These courses covered topics such as IT, Management skills, SP Snippets awareness sessions as well as various language training courses. Out of the 1824 attendees 55.8% were female and 44.2% were male. The breakdown of attendees in relation to ethnicity was 92.7% white, 1.3% black and minority ethnic with 6% recorded as unknown. 6.5% of attendees described themselves as disabled.

Casework

Probation, grievance, disciplinary and poor attendance

Information in relation to the number of probation, grievance, disciplinary and poor attendance cases dealt with by HR between January and December 2008 were monitored by race, disability and gender. Due to the small number of cases this information cannot be disclosed. There were no equality concerns identified.

Dignity at Work

There were two formal Dignity at Work cases dealt with by HR between January and December 2008. There were also 7 informal complaints dealt with during the period by office/group heads. All complaints were concluded.

Services

The following monitoring information has been gathered across the organisation in relation to some of the services we provide. Work has again been taken forward during the year to improve the monitoring in some areas and this work will continue during 2009/10 to further enhance the information available on services such as Events.

Translations

Between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2009, Public Information and Visitor Services received a total of 19 written enquiries either wholly or partly in languages other than English or Gaelic. The languages in question are detailed in the graph below.
Enquiries about visiting the Parliament formed the largest category of those received in languages other than English and Gaelic (seven enquiries), and these comprised requests for general information about visits as well as bookings for tours and Chamber tickets.

Of the 19 enquiries, only six required the services of external translators and on only two occasions were external contractors required to provide translations of both the enquiry and the response. In the other cases, enquiries were dealt with by drawing on the language skills of staff in Public Information and Visitor Services or by the use of standard template translations.

In addition to the translation of enquiries and their responses, the text of the easy read version of *How the Scottish Parliament works* was translated into Polish in September 2008 in response to a request by a member of the public. In December 2008, the text of *How the Scottish Parliament works* was translated into Simplified Chinese, following a series of requests to Visitor Services from members of the public. Both translated versions have been posted on the Parliament’s website in order to make them more widely available.

Translations have also been arranged to assist with parliamentary business. The text of a motion in Chinese was translated into English in February 2009, and material provided by the German Bundestag and the Bavarian Landtag was translated from German into English in autumn 2008 to assist SPICe with research work they were undertaking.

The Equal Opportunities Committee’s report entitled *Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities: Review of Recommendations* was produced in British Sign Language (BSL) in June 2008. This BSL version has been posted, along with other formats of the report, on the Parliament website.

**Publications**

The take-up rates for Public Information publications are monitored closely. Usage has been steady and followed the same trends over the last four years. Consistently there has been most demand for leaflets in German, French and Spanish with over 20,000 copies of three different publications distributed in these languages last year.
A second group of languages – Chinese, Gaelic, Russian and Italian – is identifiable by their similar take-up rates. Over 14,000 copies of leaflets in the languages of this second grouping were distributed last year. Finally, running at a level of just over 3,000 copies distributed per year are Arabic, Bengali, Punjabi and Urdu – again covering three different publications in total. These groupings and patterns have been consistent over the last four years although there have been some changes within the groupings: Chinese has moved to the top of the second grouping and is currently the most in demand of the Scottish community languages.

Following the revision of the language policy, we now produce two leaflets in Polish. Early indications are showing this language fitting within the second grouping of medium level demand.

Tours

In addition to the standard public tours in English, between April 2008 and March 2009, Visitor Services were asked to arrange for guides to conduct a total of 11 tours in French, Gaelic, German and Spanish.

The Gaelic tours were organised as part of the events for the Gaelic open day in November 2008 to launch the Parliament’s Gaelic Language Plan. One of the Spanish tours was arranged at the request of an MSP and the others were booked by external individuals or organisations. It is believed that most, if not all, of the French, German and Spanish tours were for overseas visitors, but bookings are sometimes made by a third party and it is unclear exactly where those actually going on the tour come from. (The country of origin of those taking a tour is not currently requested by Visitor Services staff at the time of booking.)

Interpreting

Between April 08 and March 09, interpreters have been engaged on only two occasions to enable a language other than English to be used in parliamentary business in the Debating Chamber. On both occasions the language in question was Gaelic:

- on 20 November 2008 during a debate on Gaelic language development

BSL interpreters were used on four occasions to assist members of the public to engage with parliamentary business:

- on 5 March 2008 to allow a member of the public to follow proceedings at a meeting of Parliament in the Debating Chamber
- on 4 June 2008 to enable a witness to give evidence to a meeting of the Health and Sport Committee during its consideration of mental health services for deaf and deaf-blind people
- on 9 October 2008 to allow a member of the public to follow proceedings at a meeting of Parliament in the Debating Chamber
- on 26 November 2008 at an informal roundtable discussion session that was organised by the Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee with a group of voluntary sector representatives as part of the Stage 1 consideration of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Bill.
During the same period, interpreters were required in order to assist a group learn about the Scottish Parliament and how to engage with it. The group of refugees and asylum seekers, which comprised 38 adults, visited in May 2008 and was provided with the services of interpreters in Arabic, Farsi, French, Russian and Urdu.

**Events and Exhibitions**

The Events & Exhibitions team have only recently started their new monitoring practices and therefore there is no significant data to report this year. Earlier in the report some examples of equality related events held in the Parliament were given and below you will find some monitoring information relating to the Parliament’s Festival of Politics which the team aims to build on in future years.

**Festival of Politics 2008**

The information gathered to date in relation to the Festival of Politics relates to attendees and in particular their ethnicity and disability. We will be looking to report on other equality related information in the coming year.

Audience questionnaires for the 2007 Festival indicated that 98% of respondents identified themselves as White, with only 2% of respondents identifying themselves as being from an Asian, Black, Chinese or other ethnic background. The 2008 audience survey showed 5% of respondents identifying themselves as being from an Asian, Mixed-Race or other ethnic background showing an increase of 3% in the diversity of the audience.

Similarly, whereas the 2006 Festival audience survey results indicated that 2% of respondents identified themselves as having a disability, the number of disabled respondents to the 2008 audience survey increased significantly to 11%.

These increases appear to indicate that the Festival of Politics is appealing to a more diverse audience.

**Ethnic Background of Audience**

- **White**: 95%
- **Asian**: 2%
- **Mixed Race**: 2%
- **Other**: 1%
- **Chinese**: 0%
Future Monitoring

As we have previously mentioned above we are continuing to work on ways to improve our monitoring practices across the organisation both in terms of employment and services. Work will continue on this during 2009/10 with the aim of more information being gathered and reported on during the period of the next report.

Our new approach to equalities and equalities reporting will mean a further changed reporting process for next year. Our aim it to use the information from our full Equality Impact Assessments as a major part of our annual report information. To enable us to report annual on the assessments we will closely monitor progress on the action plans agreed for each assessment and the impact the action has made on taking forward the specific projects and policies.

We will continue to review our Equality schemes on a regular basis with annual reviews produced until such time as we have an agreed single equality scheme at which time we will commence reporting on that scheme in the same manner and use this annual equalities report to highlight some of the main achievements throughout the year with full updates on all actions and the annual reviews published and available on our website.

Full progress reports on all three of our equality schemes are available on the Parliament's website at: 

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/corporate/spcb/equality/index.htm