Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB)

Equal Opportunities Report 2004
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Foreword by George Reid MSP, Presiding Officer

This report covers the calendar year 2004. During this period the Parliament has completed the construction of its new building and all MSPs, their staff and SPCB staff moved into Holyrood during July and August. The move to Holyrood was the start of a new phase for the Parliament.

In the run up to moving into our new home, and now that we are here, we have continued to work hard to make sure that all of our information and services provided to the public are delivered in an inclusive and non-discriminatory way. The new accommodation has helped us in this task.

The Parliament must continue to make sure that everyone in Scotland is able to get involved in the work of the Parliament and that we continue to fulfil our commitment to be an equal opportunities employer.

This report describes what we have achieved this year in relation to improving access to the Parliament and in building equal opportunities into our daily work. It provides an update on what we have achieved against the action points set out for 2004 in last year’s report and on what we aim to achieve during 2005 in relation to equal opportunities.
Section 1: Mainstreaming equalities into all of our work

1.1 Introduction

We continue to believe it is essential that we take proper account of equal opportunities and access issues in all our work. Our continuing aim is to make sure that equal opportunities issues are built (or ‘mainstreamed’) into the culture of our organisation.

Providing all of our staff with equal opportunities training, for example, is an essential part of our mainstreaming strategy. However, there is more to it than that, and as part of our continuing work we made more practical changes in 2004 to ensure that our work takes proper account of the needs of all of our staff and all of the members of the public who wish to interact with the Parliament.

In this section, we describe some examples of the practical steps we have taken in 2004 to continue to mainstream equal opportunities issues into all of the work that is carried out across our organisation.

1.2 Producing annual equality reports for each directorate

In 2004, each of the offices in the Parliament contributed to producing the second annual equality report for their directorates. These reports describe the work relating to equalities and access issues that were carried out within each directorate during the year. They also contain a list of equality-related action points for each directorate for 2005.

The information contained within these individual directorate reports was then brought together to form the basis of this equality report for the whole organisation.

1.3 Consultation with external organisations

As part of our mainstreaming strategy, it has been essential for us to consult external organisations to find out what they think of the services we offer. Many of the practical changes we have described in this report were made in consultation with relevant organisations.

Examples of consultation

- The Parliament’s official opening was held in October 2004. As part of the build up to, and organisation of, this event, the Holyrood Opening team liaised closely with a number of outside organisations, such as the Inverclyde Disability Organisation. Such organisations assisted in devising access strategies to enable guests to fully participate in the “Riding” part of the ceremony. This resulted in guests being given the choice of using golf buggies, electric scooters or mini-buses during this part of the event if they so required.
• The final meeting of the Parliament Building Access Consultation Group was held in 2004 and included a tour of the Holyrood building. Membership of the group included disabled people and representatives from a range of local and national organisations dealing with physical, sensory and learning disability access issues, as well as the needs of older people. This meeting was the final stage in the consultation process on the construction of the new Parliament building.

• The Equal Opportunities Committee clerking team leader is a member of the Equalities Co-ordinating Group which is attended by all of the key equalities stakeholder groups in Scotland and by the Scottish Executive. This provides an opportunity both to brief the group on the work of the committee and to gather information on wider equalities issues.

• The Parliament’s Access and Information Directorate arranged for hundreds of members of the public to participate in a live test of the Chamber in August 2004. Part of this testing involved the Disability, Democracy and Society Group, which was asked to test various aspects of the building in terms of its accessibility. The group provided very helpful and detailed feedback on its findings.

This photograph shows members of the public trying out the Parliament’s public restaurant as part of our “live testing” event in the new Parliament building.

1.4 Staff team meetings

Many offices in the Parliament have built equal opportunities issues into their team meetings as a standing agenda item. From our experience, this has been very helpful in providing staff with an opportunity to raise any concerns that they wish to raise or to make suggestions about equality issues.
Example of building equalities issues into team meetings

- In all of the Parliament’s directorates, equal opportunities is a regular item on team meeting agendas providing the opportunity to discuss access and equality issues. Equality issues are also a standing item on the agendas of each of the directorate’s office heads’ or senior managers’ meetings.

- The Personnel Office has a weekly “talk time” session where issues affecting the office are discussed in an open and informal atmosphere. Equality issues and initiatives are considered in this forum and staff members are encouraged to share and discuss these, with a view to resolving any issues that arise.

1.5 Updating guidance documents

The Parliament produces a wide range of guidance documents to provide its staff with practical advice and guidance in relation to equalities and access issues. In order to mainstream equalities successfully throughout our work, we always ensure that our staff guidance documents take full account of equalities issues.

Example of building equalities issues into staff guidance

- The Parliament’s Official Report team has drawn up guidance for training new reporters. Equal opportunities guidance is included as a mandatory element in that training.

- During 2004, the organisation piloted the use of PEEPs for staff and visitors. The PEEPs ensure that disabled people, and others who may require assistance in evacuating our premises, can exit the building safely and ensures that those working in the complex are aware of what, if any, assistance will be required in the event of an evacuation. The use of PEEPs has now been rolled out to all staff and visitors.

- The Parliament's Access and Information Directorate has developed guidance for its staff on how to produce publications in multiple languages and also produced guidance on how to arrange translations of existing publications or other information into other languages and formats.

- The Access and Information Directorate has also developed a policy and procedures which ensure that events organised by the Parliament and hosted at Holyrood are accessible.
Section 2: Equal opportunities training

2.1 Introduction

In this section of the report, we provide information about some of the most significant equal opportunities training initiatives that we delivered in 2004.

2.2 Core equal opportunities training programme

In 2003, we developed two half-day training courses called “Equality in the Scottish Parliament” and “Managing Diversity”. In 2004, these two training courses continued to be compulsory for new staff starting work for the SPCB, and dates for these courses are now offered to all new entrants within three months of them starting work at the Parliament.

2.3 Dignity at Work training and support programme

In September 2004, we launched our revised Dignity at Work (Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation) Policy. As part of raising the awareness of this policy and the associated complaints policy, and also to help staff understand what is expected of them under the policy, we developed a new half-day core training course which is compulsory for all staff to attend. This training provided staff with the opportunity to discuss the new Dignity at Work Policy and explained how the complaints procedures would work in practice.

In 2004, we also established a new network of Dignity at Work Contacts across the organisation. These Dignity at Work Contacts are members of staff who have volunteered to take on the additional role of providing support and information to other members of staff in relation to discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying issues. Volunteers were sought from staff to become Dignity at Work Contacts and specialist training was provided to those staff who were selected to take up this role. The training, which was devised in consultation with the Parliament and delivered by our equal opportunities training contractor, included:

- Information about the relevant legislation
- Skills-based training (e.g. interview, active listening, etc.); and
- Practical role play (using local actors to play the part of the complainant or alleged harasser/bully)

Advice on how staff could make use of the network of Dignity at Work Contacts was also included in the half-day training course which was rolled out to staff.
Scottish Parliament's Dignity at Work training programme

- So far, 372 members of staff have attended the half-day Dignity at Work training course over 28 sessions. This totalled 186 training days. There are currently 94 staff members who are still to receive this training and training dates are currently being arranged for early 2005 to accommodate these staff members.

In the summer of 2004, we also asked staff to volunteer if they wanted to take on the role of Investigating Officer. Investigating Officers are staff members who may be nominated to carry out an investigation if our organisation receives a formal complaint of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation from a member of staff. Again, individuals who were selected to take on this additional responsibility received specialist training, which was similar to the training given to Dignity at Work Contacts, but adapted so that it was relevant to the skills needed to carry out an effective and fair investigation.

This photo shows some of the Parliament’s Dignity at Work Contacts during their specially designed three-day training course.

2.4 Language training programme

As part of our training strategy, the Parliament invites staff each year to sign up for language training if they would benefit from an understanding of another language in their current post. In 2004, the languages studied by members of staff included French, Spanish, Gaelic and British Sign Language.

Training is typically delivered at four levels: beginner, elementary, intermediate and advanced (apart from Gaelic and British Sign Language which have different course structures). Almost all of the language courses can lead to a recognised qualification and to more advanced training courses.
Example of language training programme: BSL training

- British Sign Language training has been organised for parliament staff and MSPs for the last three years. In 2004, several members of staff completed their Stage 2 British Sign Language training whilst others started Stage 2 of their training.

- Several members of staff also attended a six-week Introduction to British Sign Language course which was piloted during 2004.

2.5 Job-specific training on equal opportunities issues

Most of the equal opportunities training that we delivered in 2004 was aimed at all of our staff. However, as the level of awareness of equalities issues in our organisation has increased, we have also responded to the demand in many offices for equal opportunities training that is tailored specifically to meet their needs.

Examples of job-specific equal opportunities training

- Staff working on the Parliament’s Facilities Management Helpdesk have all been trained to send and receive telephone calls via the RNID Typetalk service.

- Staff in the Parliament’s Clerking and Reporting Directorate have included relevant equal opportunities training and development in their personal development plans, with one member having attended specific deaf awareness training.

- Staff in the Parliament’s Access and Information Directorate attended training on producing publications in Plain English.

- Elements of disability awareness and equalities training have been integrated into our Security Office’s training packages. The packages included the development and delivery of multi-skills training for the migration of security staff to the Holyrood site and a revised Security induction course for new staff.

Our Equalities Manager and Equalities Adviser also provide seminars and workshops for different offices within the Parliament. These provide a valuable opportunity for staff to plan how they will take full account of equalities and access issues in their work.

2.6 Fact-sheets on the Disability Discrimination Act

The Equalities Manager produced a set of seven fact-sheets aimed at MSPs in relation to their responsibilities as both an employer and a service provider under the Disability Discrimination Act. The fact-sheets were published in January 2004 and provided Members with advice on how the Act relates to them and provided guidance on some
issues such as making reasonable adjustments under the Act; how to carry out an access audit of their local office; holding accessible surgeries and making home visits; employing disabled people; producing accessible written material; and enabling deaf people to contact their office by telephone.

2.7 Other written training materials and guidance documents

The Equal Opportunities section on the Parliament’s intranet was updated in 2004. The section now contains more documents, which were put together by the Parliament’s Equalities Manager, to provide MSPs, MSP staff and SPCB staff with guidance on the following issues:

- Ensuring that the design and content of publications are accessible,
- Making services accessible to people who are deaf, deafened, deafblind or hard of hearing,
- The responsibilities of MSPs, as employers and service providers, under equal opportunities legislation,
- How to use the RNID Typetalk service,
- Working with a sign language interpreter, and
- Guidance for MSPs on when and how to use an access auditor or access consultant.

The section now also includes a dedicated page for SPCB staff about the Dignity at Work Policy and providing guidance on how staff can use the new network of Dignity at Work Contacts.

2.8 The Disability Allowance

During 2004 the SPCB continued to provide MSPs with access to a Disability Allowance through the Allowances Scheme. Amongst other things, this allowance exists to:
provide assistance to an MSP who is disabled - to enable them to carry out their work;
make reasonable adjustments to MSP’s local offices to make them more accessible for a disabled staff member or for disabled members of the public;
provide equipment and/or parking spaces outside MSP’s local offices for disabled people;
hiring (on an occasional basis) alternative, more accessible, premises to enable members of the public to meet with their MSPs, and
contracting sign language interpreters for meetings between MSPs and members of the public.

The process for MSPs making Disability Allowance applications was reviewed during 2004 and a new procedure was developed. The new procedure allows for a more streamlined process with the Parliament’s Chief Executive having the delegated authority to approve certain types of application. As a result, only the more complex or unusual applications still have to be considered in detail by the SPCB.

During 2004, several applications were made to the SPCB for funds from the Disability Allowance with a total of £5,736.22 being spent to improve the accessibility of the services and premises of MSPs.

### The Parliament’s Disability Allowance in 2004

Here are some examples of some of the ways in which some Members of the Scottish Parliament used finance which was made available to them through the Parliament’s Disability Allowance in 2004:

- Several Members had access audits carried out on their offices and the costs met from the Disability Allowance.
- One MSP has used the allowance to purchase digital hearing aids to assist them in carrying out their parliamentary duties.
- Three MSPs have improved access into their offices by either installing a permanent ramp or purchasing a portable one.
- Four MSPs have made changes to their door entry systems to ensure that they are accessible for wheelchair users.
- One MSP has purchased a portable loop system to assist in meeting hard of hearing constituents.
- One MSP has installed an accessible toilet for use by constituents and other visitors to their office.
3.1 Introduction

The SPCB has a crucial role to play in providing information to the public to enable everyone in Scotland to find out what is happening in the Parliament and discover how the Parliament works. This section outlines some of the work that we carried out in 2004 to improve the accessibility of the services we offer to the public.

3.2 Review of our main public information leaflets

During 2004, we carried out a major review of our public information publications to make sure that they are as easy to use as possible and contain the information that members of the public want to know about the Parliament and how it works. This review took full account of access and equalities issues. For example, we ensured that the design and layout of the new publications was accessible for people with visual impairments and we used plain and accessible language wherever possible.

Our main publications are now available in a range of different languages and formats. For example, our new leaflet called “Your visit to the Scottish Parliament” has been translated and printed in twelve languages for people living in Scotland and tourists visiting from overseas (English, Gaelic, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Punjabi, Urdu, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish). Braille and audio tape versions have also been produced and it is planned to produce a video in 2005 which will provide the same information in British Sign Language. Anyone who would like to request copies of our publications should contact the Parliament using the contact details shown on the back cover of this report.

This photograph shows the new leaflet entitled “Your visit to the Scottish Parliament”, which is published in a range of different languages and formats.
3.2 Providing BSL interpreters

During 2004, we reviewed our policy on providing sign language interpreters or other forms of communication support.

We remain committed to providing people with a sign language interpreter (or another form of communication support, such as a lipspeaker or palantypist) if they require such a service in order to engage with the Parliament. For example, if someone wishes to come along and watch a debate in the Parliament or watch a committee meeting and they require a sign language interpreter, we will do our best to provide this (although this will be subject to the availability of these services, which is why we ask people to provide as much notice of their requirements as possible).

We are also committed to providing a sign language interpreter or other form of communications support automatically for any debates or committee meetings which deal with deaf issues.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Access for people who are deaf, deafened, deafblind or hard of hearing</th>
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<tr>
<td>• In 2004, the Parliament installed a new public information textphone, with a local rate telephone number (0845 270 0152) to ensure equality of access for deaf or speech impaired people who choose to communicate with us using their own textphone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• During 2004, we also undertook a pilot to provide a British Sign Language Interpreter for First Minister Question time and Question. The pilot sessions ran for a period of four weeks every Thursday. This provided us with the opportunity to look at issues such as the positioning of the audience in relation to the interpreters and receive feedback from those members of the deaf community who attended. As part of our live testing events prior to the Parliament opening its doors to the public in the new Holyrood complex, we invited members of the Deaf community to come and provide us with their views on providing a sign language interpreting service in the new Chamber. During 2005, we will be looking into the options available to us for providing this service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The new Parliament building has permanent and portable induction loops and infra red systems installed at various points throughout the complex. This allowed the Enterprise and Culture Committee to take evidence from a deaf person using the induction loop system in the committee rooms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The Equal Opportunities and Communities Committees offer material in alternative formats as a matter of course when issuing consultations or calls for evidence. The committee clerks in the Equal Opportunities and Communities Committees also have key information on their business cards in Braille.</td>
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3.3 Ensuring that our written information is fully accessible

We continue to make guidance available to staff and MSPs on how to ensure that any written information that the Parliament produces is fully accessible.

A Corporate Publications Board has been set up to consider proposals for new Parliament publications. As a member of this board, the Equalities Manager provides advice about the accessibility of each publication which is brought to the board for its consideration.

Making our written information more accessible

- The launch of the new Parliament website brought with it opportunities to improve its accessibility. The new site has been designed with improved accessibility in mind and a section of the site is dedicated to advice and guidance on accessibility issues. An extensive recruitment section has been added which provides full information about jobs, our recruitment procedures and enables candidates to apply online.

- Our new website also contains much more information in languages other than English and Gaelic than it previously contained, and this information is much more prominent on the site than before.

- Pages on the Parliament’s Internet site that are presented in the new template conform to Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)-A. There are also many accessibility features throughout the site that are in line with, and surpass, the UK Government guidelines on accessibility from the Office of the e-Envoy.
This photograph shows the Parliament's new look website.

3.4 Organising accessible events

The Parliament organises a wide variety of events each year to which we invite members of the public or representatives of other organisations. Increasingly, we are seeking to make sure that the range of people attending these events is as diverse as possible and have developed policies and procedures which ensure that events organised and hosted at Holyrood are fully accessible, for example, to disabled people or people with young children.

Making our events more accessible

Here are some of the steps taken to ensure that the way in which we organise events takes account of equality and diversity issues:

- The Parliament’s Procurement Services office hosts “Meet the Buyer” events, ensuring that any venue chosen is appropriate with regards to accessibility issues. Feedback on this issue is also sought from attendees.

- The Parliament’s Personnel Office asks all interview candidates whether they have any specific requirements in relation to accessing an interview if they are shortlisted.

- The various committees of the Parliament regularly hold meetings outwith the Parliament’s complex. When this occurs, each meeting location is checked in relation to accessibility prior to the booking being made. Several meetings have been held successfully and attended by people with various access requirements.
• Consideration is also given to other requirements such as supplying Gaelic-speaking staff in areas where the language is actively spoken – particularly in the Scottish Highlands and Western Isles. This approach was taken most recently during the visit of the Parliament’s Education Committee to Skye.

• During preparations for the Opening Ceremony of the new Parliament building in 2004, the Holyrood Opening Team took advice on a number of issues before sending out letters and instructions to guests to enable guests with specific access requirements to have full access to the event.

• Arrangements are regularly made, where needed, to meet the requirements of visitors in relation to their faith; for example, a prayer space was provided for Muslim children at a recent Parliament event.

This photograph shows one of the guests involved in the Opening Ceremony meeting Her Majesty the Queen.

3.5 Outreach work

Various offices within the Parliament are responsible for carrying out outreach work. In 2004, attempts were made to ensure that specific groups who have traditionally faced barriers when accessing goods and services were targeted specifically by some of the Parliament’s outreach work.
Examples of targeted outreach work

- In June 2004, the Parliament’s Personnel Office and Equalities Manager attended a Job Fair entitled “Promoting Access and Choice in Employment in Black and Minority Ethnic communities” in Edinburgh to tell people how to find out about job opportunities at the Parliament.

- The Personnel Office ensures that all job adverts are sent to Racial Equality Councils, Job Centres and Disability Service Teams. All jobs are advertised as suitable for job-share.

- Equal Opportunities Committee meetings are attended by people representing organisations across all of the equality strands, including the Disability Rights Commission, Equality Network, Equal Opportunities Commission, Scottish Interfaith Council, Commission for Racial Equality and Age Concern Scotland.

- The External Liaison Unit continues to liaise regularly with the Scottish Interfaith Council for advice on dietary requirements for visitors to the Parliament.

This photograph was taken at the Job Fair held in Edinburgh during 2004. The Parliament took part as one of the exhibitors.

3.6 The work of committees

The Parliament’s Clerking and Reporting Directorate is responsible for supporting the work of the Parliament’s 16 committees. This directorate therefore has a great deal of contact with the public. For example, it makes arrangements for people to give
evidence to committees. It is also responsible for guiding the process for collecting evidence when committees hold inquiries into specific issues.

Revised public petitions guidance was launched in February 2004 and made available in seven different languages, in line with the Parliament’s language policy, and also in Braille and on audio tape. This guidance provides members of the public with advice and guidelines on how to submit a petition to the Parliament and the process that will be followed once the petition has been submitted.

### Examples of the practical steps taken by clerking staff, who support the work of the Parliament’s Committees, to build equality and access issues into their work

- The Communities Committee has ensured that equalities issues are properly taken into account as part of its work e.g. by ensuring that organisations working in the fields of race, disability, faith, and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered) equality were invited to give evidence in relation to the Anti-Social Behaviour (Scotland) Bill.

- The Finance Committee includes equality issues in every budget report it produces and, this year, took evidence on gender proofing the budget.

- The Audit Committee has sought and received an assurance from the Auditor General for Scotland about the extent to which equalities issues are taken into account in those reports which he produces and which are considered by the Committee.

- The Justice 1 Committee has included equalities issues in its inquiry on rehabilitation in prisons, which looked at whether vulnerable and difficult groups of prisoners are receiving adequate rehabilitation and how equalities issues are addressed in the provision of rehabilitation services. The Committee also included equalities issues in its consideration of the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill and of the Civil Partnership Bill.

- The Public Petitions Committee endorsed the Equal Opportunities Committee guidelines on mainstreaming equality in the work of parliamentary committees and has introduced an equal opportunities monitoring form, which all petitioners will be requested to complete when lodging a petition. Equality criteria were also introduced to the feedback questionnaire on the usage of the e-petitions site and in a current evaluation project of the site being carried out by Napier University.

### 3.7 The New Parliament Building at Holyrood

The Parliament moved into its new building at Holyrood in the summer of 2004. The building has been designed with access issues fully in mind from the start and access consultants were involved in the project from the earliest stages. An independent company of access audit consultants was appointed as an integral part of the design team, working closely with the architects to create the fully accessible facility required by the building user brief. Part of the remit of the
access audit consultants was to also carry out a thorough review of the building when it was complete and identify any outstanding “as built” issues. A final report was produced by the consultants in November 2004, the results of which will be considered and taken forward as necessary during 2005.

A Parliament Building Consultation Group was also set up to inform and support the access consultants on all aspects of accessibility. Membership of the group included people from a range of voluntary sector organisations covering physical, sensory and learning disabilities, as well as organisations representing the needs of older people. The final meeting of this group was held on 29 October 2004, and included a tour of the Holyrood building.

The accessibility of the new Parliament building at Holyrood

- The carpets have a short, dense pile to assist wheelchair users.
- Induction loop sound enhancement systems have been installed in all of the working areas of the Parliament to assist hearing aid users, and infra-red systems have also been installed in the Chamber and Committee Rooms.
- The visitor information desk has a lowered section to make it accessible to wheelchairs users.
- Wheelchair and pushchair loans are available on request.
- There are dedicated spaces for wheelchair users in the Chamber and committee room public galleries.
- A crèche is available for the use of people visiting the Parliament.
- Visitor exhibitions in the public foyer include a tactile Chamber model to enable blind people to understand the layout of the Chamber and the seating arrangements of the MSPs.
- Fire-proof lifts from the visitors’ gallery ensure that disabled visitors can be evacuated safely and quickly should the need arise.

More information about the accessibility of the Parliament building can be found on our website (at www.scottish.parliament.uk) or by contacting our Public Information Service (see the back cover of this report for contact details).
This photograph shows the Braille key provided on the tactile model of the Chamber of the Parliament which is located in the Parliament’s main public hall.

This photograph shows the Chamber of the Parliament. Areas in the public gallery are reserved for wheelchair users and induction loop and infra-red systems are installed to assist people who are hard of hearing. We also provide British Sign Language interpretation of proceedings in the Chamber on request.

This photograph shows part of the new crèche which is provided for the use of members of the public visiting the new Parliament building at Holyrood.
Section 4: Recruiting and employing staff

4.1 Introduction

We employ almost 500 members of staff at the Parliament in a wide variety of posts, from visitor’s services staff and information technology specialists to allowances staff and committee clerks.

As an employer, we take our responsibilities under equal opportunities legislation very seriously. We appointed our own Equalities Manager in 2002 and strengthened the equalities team in 2004 with the addition of the role of Equalities Adviser who provides support to the Equalities Manager.

This section outlines some of the changes made during this year which relate to our role as an employer.

4.2 Our recruitment procedures

Many measures were already put in place before 2003 to ensure that our recruitment procedures were fair to all applicants. For example, we already removed the names and addresses of job applicants from the application forms before passing them onto selection panels in order to reduce the risk of irrelevant information (e.g. a candidate’s race or gender) being taken into account during the short listing process. We also make sure that a member of staff from the Personnel Office takes part in each selection panel, which helps us to monitor that these processes are always fair and unbiased.

- The Personnel Office has adapted all of its recruitment material (job information documents, letters and application forms) so that it is more accessible for people with visual impairments. We also have the facility to provide this material in a variety of formats on request. We have trialled a new application form that is shorter, easier to complete and designed to ensure only essential information is provided (for instance we no longer ask for dates of educational attendance, as these could indicate a candidate’s age). This form is now being used for all external adverts.

The review of our recruitment procedures, which was planned for 2004, has had to be deferred and will now be carried out during 2005. This will review the effectiveness of these procedures and examine whether it is possible for us to take any further steps to improve them further.

4.3 Public appointments

As well as being responsible for appointing our own members of staff, we have also supported the process for appointing a number of public appointments. In 2004, the Parliament was responsible for advertising and managing the selection
processes for two public appointments; the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland and the Commissioner for Public Appointments in Scotland. Both of the selection processes took full account of equalities issues (e.g. the applications were standardised and anonymized).

Twenty children and young people from across Scotland were invited to help the Scottish Parliament with the appointment of the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland in January 2004. The children were aged between 10 and 17. Ten of the children and young people were invited from mainstream education and the other 10 were nominated through children’s charities. We sought the help of Children in Scotland, an umbrella children’s charity to seek the nominations from the children’s charities around Scotland.

The children and young people participated in the first part of the selection process, the purpose of which was to obtain their perceptions of the candidate’s skills, knowledge and attributes. They then fed this information back to the selection panel by way of a report.

This photograph shows Kathleen Marshall, the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland, on the day of her appointment by Parliament interacting with some of the young people involved in the selection process.

4.4 Flexible working

We carried out a great deal of work in 2004 to develop a range of policies aimed at enabling staff to have a healthy work-life balance.

Under the Employment Act 2002, some employees (for example, parents of young children) have the right to request a flexible working pattern. In terms of our own employment policies and procedures, we have extended this right to request a flexible working pattern to all of our employees.

We want to ensure that, as an employer, we are able to respond to the changing needs and circumstances of our members of staff and we have outlined our commitment to help our staff achieve a realistic work-life balance in our Human Resources Strategy, which was developed in 2003. A work-life balance policy and the accompanying suite of working arrangements were published in June 2004.
Examples of promoting flexible working patterns

It is one thing to put in place policies promoting flexible working patterns; it is another to ensure that, in practice across our organisation, we are genuinely responding to the changing circumstances of our employees and enabling them to achieve a successful work-life balance. Here are some examples of some of the practical steps taken by different parts of our organisation to achieve this:

- Within the Access and Information Directorate, flexible working patterns to accommodate individual staff members have included shorter working hours, compressed hours, part-time working and release for medical appointments and participation in religious festivals/events.

- A number of flexible working arrangements have been established in the Chief Executive’s Group, including most recently the Clerk/Chief Executive’s Office, to allow staff members to take on caring responsibilities.

- Requests by members of staff in the Clerking and Reporting Directorate to alter working hours have been supported, with some staff changing from part-time to full-time hours and vice-versa. Home working is also permitted as appropriate, with the consent of the line manager.

- Within the working environment of the Directorate of Legal Services, three staff are new parents and others have young children - which has encouraged a more flexible approach to working hours within the Directorate to the benefit of all staff.

- Four members of staff in the Resources and Governance Directorate have changed their working patterns to allow them to work compacted hours. One post has changed to become a job-share post and another member of staff currently works part-time. This flexibility in the working practices has allowed the staff members to meet family commitments and the arrangements are working well.

- Paternity leave was taken by several members of the Technology and Facilities Management Directorate in the early part of 2004. In addition, temporary flexible working arrangements were put in place as necessary, including working from home, to assist staff who experienced unexpected changes in domestic circumstances.

4.5 Making adjustments for staff

Often equalities issues are about making fairly straightforward changes to the way in which we work or to the equipment that we provide to staff. Whilst straightforward, such changes can obviously make a significant difference for the individual members of staff concerned. For example, one of the services we offer
as an employer is to purchase equipment which is required by disabled staff members to enable them to carry out their work.

Examples of making adjustments for staff

Here are some examples of some of the steps taken by different parts of our organisation to make adjustments for members of staff:

- Consultation continues with the Health & Safety Manager and Occupational Health Officer on the health and welfare of staff. Recommendations and suggestions have been taken onboard including the supply of new support furniture for members of staff who have experienced back-pain.

- The Security Office has adopted a new radio system for the Holyrood site and, as with the previous system; the radios used have been adapted for the use of staff who are hard-of-hearing.

- The Parliament’s latest corporate workwear contract has been developed to take account of the clothing requirements of groups such as expectant mothers, ethnic minority or faith groups, etc.

- The Security Office participated in a Capability Scotland “Back to Work” scheme aimed at building the stamina, confidence and experience of people recuperating from an illness. During a period of training an individual was given the opportunity to build their confidence and acquire the skills, knowledge and experience in a security role. The outcome was that person was successful in gaining an interview and subsequent employment as a Security Officer at the Parliament.

- The Personnel Office continues to include a note in monthly systems e-mails to Members, their staff, and Parliamentary staff, to contact them if they need their pay advice notices in an alternative format, e.g. Braille or large text. We have made this a requirement as part of our contract with our new pay provider.
Section 5: Monitoring

5.1 Introduction

We have put in place a range of mechanisms to monitor whether our equal opportunities policies are being properly implemented in practice. This section outlines the main equal opportunities monitoring activities which we delivered in 2004.

5.2 Equal pay audit

The Parliament carried out its own detailed equal pay audit and the final report from this audit was published in April 2004 with very positive findings. The contractors found no areas of potential high risk within our pay system, although one area was highlighted as a potential medium risk and three areas were identified as having a potential small risk. These potential risks are currently being addressed.

The final report from our equal pay audit is published on the Parliament’s website, and information about the audit was also circulated to relevant external organisations as we felt that it might be helpful for other organisations to see how we went about delivering this project.

5.3 Equal Opportunities Staff Audit

During 2003 we carried out our first Equal Opportunities Staff Audit. The equal opportunities staff audit, which has been described by equalities organisations as an example of best practice, was carried out in autumn 2003. The audit was an anonymous survey of SPCB staff to provide the organisation with clear information about its compliance with equal opportunities legislation and the impact of its equal opportunities practices. An action plan has been devised to respond to the findings of the audit.

The audit found that 90% of the 431 respondents would recommend the SPCB as an employer and that 82% of respondents thought that significant progress had been made in the last 12 months in relation to equal opportunities issues.

The audit also sought to provide a snapshot of the SPCB's workforce across a number of equality measures. It asked about personal characteristics such as racial group, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age, relationship status and caring responsibilities. It also considered career opportunities and training, staff’s experiences of bullying or harassment and the application of the SPCB's job appraisal system.

A summary of the key results of our Equal Opportunities Staff Audit were published along with the SPCB Annual Equality Report for 2003. The full Audit report was published in July 2004. Both of these reports are available on the Parliament’s website.
5.4 Staff Survey

The Personnel Office carried out staff attitudes survey last year. The aim of the survey was to obtain the views of staff at the parliament on their employment and their attitudes to working here. The return rate for the survey was high (81%). The results indicate that 86% of our staff believes that our organisation is successful in actively promoting equal opportunities. The full report from the survey will be published during 2005 once the SPCB has considered the report and agreed the way forward. Any necessary action arising from the report will be undertaken during 2005.

5.5 Seeking feedback from members of the public

As well as monitoring our employment practices, we also ensure that members of the public who have contact with the Parliament have opportunities to provide feedback on the qualities of our services. Where appropriate, equal opportunities monitoring questions are incorporated into the questionnaires and feedback forms, so that we can build a picture of whether particular groups of people are less satisfied with the services that we offer than others.

Examples: Monitoring Service Provision

- All witnesses at meetings and guests at events are offered the chance to provide feedback, for example, by completing a questionnaire about their experience of giving evidence to a parliamentary committee. Any action points arising are reported to the relevant office in the Parliament so that we can continually improve the level of service we offer.

- Feedback was sought by the Equal Opportunities Committee clerks on the accessibility of its major European “Europe Disabled People” event in December 2004. The same approach will also be followed when the committee delivers events linked to its disability inquiry in 2005.

This photograph was taken at the Equal Opportunities “Europe Disabled People” event in December 2004.
Section 6: Update on 2004 action points

In 2003, each directorate prepared a list of action points for 2004 relating to equality and access issues. This section provides an update on the key action points that were included in the SPCB’s last Equal Opportunities Report in 2003.

In relation to the new building at Holyrood:

We will provide tours, including audio tours, of the new building in languages other than English. (Access and Information Directorate)

- The guided tours contractors are able to provide guides who speak a variety of languages other than English. The guided tour route is also fully accessible. Investigations have yet to be commenced on the viability of providing audio tours in the new building in languages other than English. However, we are committed to investigating the viability of this service during 2005.

A crèche facility will be provided at the new building, and we will publicise this facility to encourage people with young children to visit the Parliament and make use of the facility. (Technology and Facilities Management Directorate and Access and Information Directorate)

- The Parliament building now has a crèche for use by members of the public who are visiting the building. The availability of this facility for use by people with young children visiting the Parliament is publicised through our Parliament publications and on our website. Anyone who would like more information about our crèche is invited to contact us (our contact details are provided on the back cover of this report).

We will actively promote the accessibility of the new building. (Access and Information Directorate)

- Visitor facilities for disabled people and other target audiences have been taken into account by increasing the range of services available to ensure that the building and facilities are fully accessible. For example, our visitor information desk now incorporates a lowered section for the use of wheelchair users, we provide visitors with wheelchair and pushchair loans, we have set aside dedicated spaces for wheelchair users in the Chamber and committee room public galleries and installed permanent and portable hearing loops, adapted toilets, a crèche, and a tactile model of the Chamber. These and other accessible features of the Parliament building are promoted in our publications, press releases and on our website.
As a pilot, we will provide a British Sign Language interpreter for Question Times on four occasions and seek feedback from members of the public. Following this pilot, we will then develop a new policy for the provision of BSL interpreters for Question Times at Holyrood. (Resources and Governance Directorate)

- The Parliament’s Corporate Policy Unit arranged a pilot of providing a British Sign Language Interpreter for First Minister’s Question Time and Question Time over a four-week period in February and March 2004. The pilot provided us with the opportunity to look at issues such as the positioning of the audience in relation to the interpreters and receive feedback from those members of the deaf community who attended on the provision of this service. Options available to us in the new building, including broadcasting options, will be investigated during 2005.

We will consider options for providing a space within the new building to allow MSPs, their staff, Parliament staff and others to use for prayer or quiet contemplation. (Resources and Governance Directorate)

- A Room for Contemplation has been now been opened in Queensberry House for the use of MSPs, their staff, parliament staff and others. A policy was developed by the Corporate Policy Unit on the use of the room and all advised of the policy and the availability of the room in September 2004.

In relation to our written materials:

The range of publication materials that we produce will be revised to take account of the features of the new building and to further improve the accessibility of these publications. (Access and Information Directorate)

- The visitor information leaflets and other publication materials have been revised to take account of the features of the new building and the accessibility of these publications has been improved by producing them in twelve different languages for people living in Scotland and tourists visiting the Parliament (i.e. English, Gaelic, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Punjabi, Urdu, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish). These are also available on request in Braille and audio.

The success of our new leaflet, “Making Your Voice Heard”, will be assessed. This assessment will include a review of the take-up of those versions of the leaflet produced in ethnic minority languages. (Access and Information Directorate)

- The leaflet “Making Your Voice Heard”, which was the first publication produced by the Parliament in a range of ethnic minority languages, has been extremely successful. The number of copies of this leaflet in each of the selected ethnic minority languages which have been sent out to members of the public since the publication of this leaflet at the end of June 2003 is as follows:
We will build accessibility issues into the review of our website. (Technology and Facilities Management Directorate)

- Our website (www.scottish.parliament.uk) has been re-designed with improved accessibility in mind and a section of the site is dedicated to advice and guidance on accessibility issues. The website also continues to build on its tradition of containing content in different languages and has made this information more prominent on the website.

- Pages on the Internet site that are presented in the new template conform to Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)-A. There are also many accessibility features throughout the site that are in line with and surpass the UK Government guidelines from the Office of the e-Envoy.

We will publish clear guidance on how to submit a petition to the Parliament in a range of languages, including Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, Gaelic, Punjabi and Urdu). (Clerking and Reporting Directorate)

- Revised petitions guidance was launched in February 2004 and has been made available in the seven different languages above. The guidance is also available in Braille and on audio tape on request.

We will issue further guidance to MSPs about their responsibilities as employers and service providers under equal opportunities legislation. (Resources and Governance Directorate)

- The Equalities Manager produced a set of seven fact-sheets in January 2004 aimed at Members in relation to their responsibilities as both an employer and a service provider under the Disability Discrimination Act.

In relation to employment and training:

We will conduct a detailed equal pay audit to examine whether there are any unjustifiable pay gaps within our organisation. An action plan will be produced to implement any recommendations arising from the audit. (Resources and Governance Directorate)

- An Equal Pay Audit was conducted and the final report presented in April 2004. The contractors found no areas of potential high risk with
our pay system, one area was highlighted as a potential medium risk and 3 areas were identified as having a potential small risk. An action plan is being produced to address these potential risks.

**Children and young people will be involved in the selection process for the post of Commission for Children and Young People. (Resources and Governance Directorate)**

- Twenty children and young people from across Scotland helped the Scottish Parliament with the appointment of the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland in January 2004. The children produced a report on the candidates for consideration by the selection panel.

**Detailed training will be rolled out across our organisation relating to preventing and tackling bullying and harassment. A network of “Dignity at Work” contacts will also be established so that our staff will have someone they can talk to, in confidence, about these issues. (Resources and Governance Directorate)**

- In September 2004, we launched our new Dignity at Work (Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation) Policy and training was rolled out to all staff. The network of Dignity at Work Contacts was launched at the same time to give staff support about these issues. Those who volunteered to become part of the network were given specialist training.

**Our work-life balance policy, and a range of working arrangements to support this policy, will be launched. (Resources and Governance Directorate)**

- Our work-life balance policy and the accompanying suite of working arrangements were launched in June 2004. The suite of working arrangements includes flexible working hours; emergency/special leave; enhanced maternity, paternity and adoption pay; child care voucher scheme; part-time working; job share; career break and home working.

**We will continue to deliver the core equal opportunities training programme for all new members of staff, with dates for this training being offered to staff within the first three months after they have taken up their post. (Resources and Governance Directorate)**

- The two core training courses “Equality in the Scottish Parliament” and “Managing Diversity” remain compulsory for new staff starting work for the SPCB, and dates for these courses are now offered to all new entrants within three months of them starting work at the Parliament

**The training provided to front-line staff will be reviewed following the move to the new building to ensure that everyone knows what facilities exist within the building relating to accessibility (e.g. induction loops, wheelchair loan, etc.). This will ensure that members of the public are given accurate information about accessing the new building. (Access and Information Directorate)**
Staff were able to familiarise themselves early with the Holyrood site to identify access issues in advance of the migration. This also meant that knowledge and experience gained was put into practice before public entry in September. The number of visitors we receive in our new building is very high, and we will continue to ensure that our front-line staff receive the equalities training they require to deliver a high quality of service to all visitors.

In relation to the development of our internal policies:

**We will review the impact and effectiveness of having an “equal opportunities” section in all Senior Management Team papers.** (Chief Executive Group)

- In August 2003, the Senior Management Team (SMT) agreed a change to the template for its meeting papers to include a section entitled “Equal Opportunities”. At the time, it was noted that “almost everything we do impacts on equal opportunities – positively or negatively – in some way”.

- In practice, this observation has proved to be entirely accurate. Many people now routinely consult our Equalities Manager or Equalities Adviser before submitting their papers for discussion at meetings of our SMT. The main consequence of this is that equalities implications are assessed at an earlier stage in the preparation of new policies or initiatives. We are delighted with the continuing positive effects of this initiative, and we will continue to look for ways to ensure that senior management leads on the promotion of equalities issues in our organisation.

Our equal opportunities policies will be reviewed to ensure that these are relevant to the needs of the organisation and our staff and also to ensure that these remain up-to-date in light of changes to equal opportunities legislation. (Resources and Governance Directorate)

- Our Dignity at Work (Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation) Policy and the related complaints procedures have been reviewed and updated during the period of the report. We also provided a mandatory training course about the revised policy and procedures for all of our staff.

Our policy in relation to the use of languages in the Parliament will be reviewed in the light of experience. (Access and Information Directorate)

- A Language Policy Review Group was set up during 2004 to consider the Parliament’s language policy in light of experience. The policy has now been revised so that it provides clearer information about the work that we do across the Parliament in languages other than English. The revised Language Policy is available on our website.
Section 7: Our plans for 2005

Each directorate in our organisation has already prepared a list of action points for 2005 relating to equality and access issues. These action points will be built into the management and budget planning process and also into individual job-plans, where appropriate.

Here are details of the key action points relating to this area of work which we aim to achieve in 2005 (along with the name of the lead directorate in each case).

- We will investigate the scope for introducing recorded audio tours of the new Parliament building in a range of languages and in formats which some disabled people, e.g. people with learning difficulties, might find more accessible than printed materials. (Access and Information Directorate)

- We will continue to monitor the accessibility of the parliament building in order to identify and address any access issues in light of our experience of using the building and feedback from visitors. (Access and Information Directorate)

- We will ensure that any parliament events that we organise, including those taking place during the planned Festival of Politics in 2005, will take full account of equalities issues. (Access and Information Directorate)

- We will update the BSL video (“Getting Involved in the Scottish Parliament”) and investigate other possible ways for us to provide information about the Parliament in British Sign Language. (Access and Information Directorate)

- We will take access issues into account when the Official Report software is reviewed and refreshed. (Clerking and Reporting Directorate)

- We will ensure that new public information publications that we produce meet accessibility guidelines in terms of their content and design. (Clerking and Reporting Directorate)

- We will bring forward proposals in relation to training staff members in our Committee and Chamber Offices on how to build equalities issues into the work that they carry out to support parliamentary committees. (Clerking and Reporting Directorate)

- We will distribute information to Committees in relation to the monitoring of equalities issues. (Clerking and Reporting Directorate)

- We will develop responsible purchasing policy and procedures, which incorporate equalities issues. (Resources and Governance Directorate)

- We will carry out a detailed review of our recruitment procedures, a major component of which will be to carry out further checks to ensure that our procedures comply with equalities best practice. (Resources and Governance Directorate)
- We will implement any recommendations which arise from the results of the equal pay audit that we carried out in 2004. (*Resources and Governance Directorate*)

- Our Post Completion Advisory Group (PCAG), which is monitoring the post completion issues arising in relation to the building, will take equality issues into account in their advice on building issues. (*Technology and Facilities Management Directorate*)

- We will investigate the feasibility of incorporating a paging facility at the Parliament which would alert deaf people working in, or visiting, the Parliament building in the event of an evacuation of the building being required. (*Technology and Facilities Management Directorate*)

- We will carry out a review of signage throughout the Parliament building which will take account of relevant equalities and access issues. (*Technology and Facilities Management Directorate*)
If you would like more information about anything contained within this report, you are welcome to contact the Scottish Parliament’s Equalities Manager or Equalities Adviser:

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For information in languages other than English or in alternative formats (for example, in Braille, large print, audio tape or various computer formats), please contact us at the above address or send your enquiry by fax or email. We welcome written correspondence in any language.

Airson fiosrachaidh ann an cànanan eile seach Beurla no ann an cruth eile (m.e. ann am Braille, ann an clò mòr, air teip fhuaím no ann an cruth eadar-dhealaichte coimpiutair), sgriobhaibh thugainn dhan seòladh os cionn no cuiribh fios thugainn le facs no post-D. Tha sinn a’ cur fàilte air sgriobhaidhean ann an cànan sam bith.

للحصول على المعلومات بلغات أخرى غير اللغة الإنجليزية أو مسح وتصنيع بديلة (لغة برايل أو بطباعة الحروف الكبيرة) أو على أفراد تستخدم صوتية أو بالصيغة الكومبتيرية المختلفة مثلاً، يرجى كتابة رسالة إلينا وإرسالها إلى العنوان المذكور أعلاه أو إرسال استفساراتكم إلينا عن طريق الهاتف أو البريد الإلكتروني. إسئنا نرغب برسائل المكتوبة تذكيرًا كالمكتوبة في كتابتكم.

Airson fiosrachaidh ann an cànanan eile seach Beurla no ann an cruth eile (m.e. ann am Braille, ann an clò mòr, air teip fhuaím no ann an cruth eadar-dhealaichte coimpiutair), sgriobhaibh thugainn dhan seòladh os cionn no cuiribh fios thugainn le facs no post-D. Tha sinn a’ cur fàilte air sgriobhaidhean ann an cànan sam bith.

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