Equalities in the budgeting process

General comment - Equality Act 2010 and specific duties

As an Executive Agency of the Scottish Government Transport Scotland (TS) is subject to the duties above but not in its own right. TS is covered by the reference to 'the Scottish Ministers' and we would ask that you take this into account in our answers below. Any response received from the Scottish Government on general budget processes and equality mainstreaming will also cover TS.

- How were equalities issues taken into consideration in allocating budgets in 2012-13? (Please describe the process undertaken)

Our annual budgets for the services we deliver are allocated as part of the core Scottish Government spending review and budget setting processes. We do not therefore allocate budgets between services ourselves. We inform the core process by completion of comprehensive equality impact assessments and input to the equality budget statement. Ministers in turn use these to inform their decision making.

- Was the approach taken for the 2012-13 budget any different from that taken in 2011-12? (If YES, please describe what changed in your approach)

The Scottish Government have been developing and building on their approach to equality impact assessment over a number of years and we fully participate in that process.

- Can you provide any examples of how equalities considerations influenced agreed budgets? (Please provide up to THREE examples)

We do not set our own budgets so are unable to comment on how these considerations influenced the agreed budgets.

Equalities in mainstream services

- For your three most significant mainstream services (in terms of cost), please provide details of—

  a) The total budget for this service in 2011-12 and 2012-13
  b) The impact (positive or negative) that this service has on equality groups
  c) The impact (if any) that any budget changes have had on equality groups

Excluding the funding allocated to maintain and improve the trunk road network (including funding the new Forth Replacement Crossing) our three most significant mainstream services are (source – Spending Review 2011 and Draft budget 2012-13):
Rail services – 2011-12 £779.4m, 2012-13 £780.9m

The impact that rail services have on equality groups is considered fairly neutral. Train fares are subsidised to provide affordable transport. Scottish Household Survey data shows that young people are more likely to use train services, and disabled and low income groups less so. Budgetary changes have not had an impact on equality groups.

Bus services (including concessionary travel) - 2011-12 £255.3m, 2012-13 £248.6m

The concessionary travel scheme provides free bus travel throughout Scotland for everyone aged 60 and over and for the disabled and subsidises certain categories of travel for young people. The reduction in budget from 2011-12 to 2012-13 has not had an impact on any of the equalities groups.

Ferry services - 2011-12 £109.0m, 2012-13 £107.1m

The ferry services budget subsidises the provision of lifeline ferry services across Scotland, and subsidises fares across the Western Isles, Coll and Tiree. Based on the information available, the impact on equalities groups is considered fairly neutral.

Service provision for equalities groups

- For up to THREE services with a specific focus or provision for equalities groups, please provide details of—

  a) The total budget for this service in 2011-12 and 2012-13
  b) The impact that this service has on equality groups
  c) The impact (if any) that any budget changes have had on equality groups

The main service with a specific focus on provision for equalities groups is the delivery of the concessionary travel schemes, as covered above.

Mainstreaming equalities

- What specialist services or programmes have been, or are being altered, in the interests of mainstreaming?

- What monitoring is in place to ensure that the relevant equality groups continue to access an appropriate service?

We work with our key partners to continuously improve universal access, including for equalities groups, specific examples from our most significant mainstream service will hopefully help illustrate some of our work we do.

Rail and Equality

Disability is the equality characteristic that is addressed through a wide range of activity across rail. We are not aware of any particular issues relating to the other characteristics, although our work related to disability may impact on 'age' as many elderly people seek to use rail services.
Our main aim is to support the rail industry in Scotland to continue to improve access to rail services. The main focus is improving the physical environment and removing barriers to people with a range of disabilities, with much focus being on those with mobility impairments who struggle to access the Victorian rail network.

Some key activities include:

Managing the £41m Access for All programme, which funds Network Rail to create step free, accessible routes at stations identified by us. By the end of the programme 17 stations will have been improved by installing new footbridges with lifts or ramps where appropriate.

We also support ScotRail by providing around £1m each year to deliver a programme of smaller scale station improvements to improve access for disabled and other people.

Liaison with UK Government and EU Commission to ensure modern accessible standards for stations and trains are both known and applied by Network Rail and ScotRail. We raise awareness across TS and wider rail industry of standards and good practice that may support improved public transport integration.

We chair the Scottish Rail accessibility Forum. This quarterly meeting brings together TS, Scottish rail industry partners, Passenger Focus and a range of disability organisations.

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