



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba



Diversity & Inclusion

Innovation through diversity

Scottish Parliament's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021

Ro-innleachd Iomadachd is In-ghabhail Phàrlamaid na h-Alba 2017-2021

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Foreword



Paul Grice, Clerk/Chief Executive

Our commitment to achieving equality has been long standing. Equality is one of the Parliament's founding principles and there is no doubt in my mind that this principle is a prerequisite to the success of our organisation.

We have made some excellent progress to date - and we should celebrate that - but we can, and must, do more.

Diversity and inclusion is vital to our business as we engage on the issues that are important to the people of Scotland. That is why I am committed to increasing the diversity of our workforce. This means increasing our minority ethnic staff, helping our young people get into work and encouraging people from different social and economic backgrounds to see that the Parliament is a place for them.

To realise the full benefits that diversity can bring we must adopt a broader and more inclusive approach which combines a person's life experience and social context. By doing this we will create a better organisation for everyone, encouraging innovation and fresh ways of thinking to help us understand the communities and people we work with. To achieve this we must all challenge the way we think and the way we work to create an environment in which we can all perform to our best, feel valued, respected and motivated. I am excited by the prospect that this new Strategy is making us look at things differently.

For me personally, I didn't have the traditional career route of many senior public servants. I left school at 16 with relatively few qualifications, and then I went to technical college where I was lucky enough to get good advice and lots of encouragement. That was a turning point. From there I was able to get a great education and, with a lot of support, to build a career in the civil service before getting the best opportunity of all – to work for the Parliament. So whatever your background, I want you to know that here in the Parliament you will be supported and encouraged to make the best of your talents.

This is an ambitious Strategy but I believe diversity benefits everyone and I am determined to build on our momentum to create a workforce and a Parliament which truly reflects Scottish society.

Our commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

This Strategy identifies our ambition and intended outcomes for the next five years (2017-2021).

Strategy

We are committed to being a diverse and inclusive organisation but to become one we know we must challenge ourselves in our ways of working and thinking to be more receptive to new ideas, creativity and innovation and to support all our staff to achieve their full potential.

Our commitment is to put in place a framework to provide parliamentary staff with the tools and support to identify and overcome barriers to better build a diverse and inclusive workforce. We will integrate diversity and inclusion into everything we do and enable progress and results to be measured at an office and organisation level.

Our Vision



We want a Parliament that is accessible and open to people from all walks of life and backgrounds - as a place to work, to visit and to participate. Everyone will be respected and valued for their contributions and we will attract, develop and retain the best people who can excel in their chosen careers.

Our aims are:

- To have a diverse workforce that reflects modern Scottish society.
- To have an inclusive working environment where all staff are valued and respected.
- To identify and remove any barriers to success.
- To deliver services that are accessible and meet the needs and expectations of the diverse groups who connect with the Parliament.

Why are we doing this?

The aims in the Parliament's Strategic Plan are to provide high quality support to Members, improve parliamentary scrutiny, promote engagement and participation and be an exemplar of good governance. Having a diverse organisation will help us to achieve those aims.

We want to build on what we've achieved so far. We have a good track record as a fair and inclusive employer. We want to be an exemplar and so there is more we need to do.

We know that an individual's background too often influences their future success and there are some groups who are underrepresented in the make up of our workforce. For example, our [Annual Equality Monitoring Report](#) highlights that young people make up only 3.4% of our workforce (compared to 14% of the Scottish population) and 1.2% of our staff are from a minority ethnic background. The Scottish Census (2011) tells us that there are 4% minority ethnic people living in Scotland, 8% in Edinburgh and 10% in Glasgow.

However, this is not just a numbers game. We will ensure that everyone who works with us has access to a wide range of opportunities to enable them to develop their skills and their chosen career. By providing an environment where everyone can flourish, it will inspire us all to excel and have positive regard for each other's contributions.

We are introducing these changes not only because it is the right thing to do but because we believe that it will benefit everyone. We can all learn from others and a diversity of perspectives and knowledge can lead to better informed decision-making and high performance. Teams that have a wide range of skills and experience are those most likely to excel. More importantly, when the people of Scotland can look at the Parliament and see themselves reflected in our staff make up, they are more likely to want to engage with us or consider us as a place to work.

In addition, the SPCB has legal obligations and specific public duties that must be met. Under the Equality Act (2010) we are required to eliminate unlawful discrimination thereby minimising disadvantage for those individuals who are protected by the Act. As a public sector organisation we have duties to remove barriers and promote opportunities for those from protected groups in all aspects of our work; whether in our interactions with colleagues, Members and their staff and the public; the way we lead and manage our staff or the way we design and deliver our services and policies.



How will we do this?

We will undertake a range of activities, as reflected in our first year delivery plan. These will include:

How?

- Setting up a number of diversity staff networks.
- Establishing a Diversity Board to oversee the implementation of the strategy.
- Ensuring our new recruitment practices attract people from diverse backgrounds.

There is no doubt that in implementing the Strategy we will face challenges. For example, we have very low turnover of staff and almost 50% of us have been here since the Parliament was first established in 1999. This means we have a stable and motivated workforce and staff have told us through our staff survey that they are proud to work here. Recruitment is one of the ways in which we can look to improve the diversity of the workforce. Our low turnover does mean that there are fewer opportunities for new people to join the organisation and therefore we must be realistic about what we can achieve in terms of the lifetime of this Strategy. That said, we need to start looking at how we can do things differently and lay the foundations to enable us to have a more diverse workforce in the future.

We will engage with our staff and external organisations to help us in achieving our long term goals. We will also ensure that everyone understands that diversity and inclusion is relevant to them, even if they are not from a traditionally underrepresented group, and that everyone recognises the benefits of having a diverse and inclusive workforce.



Diversity staff networks

Diversity staff networks are a valuable resource in the workplace and add significant value to our organisation and staff. They can bring many benefits:

- Make underrepresented groups visible.
- Provide people with new skills and experiences, peer support and better collaboration across business areas.
- Connect us with local communities.
- Help us develop and improve policies and services.
- Make us a more diverse workforce.

One of the key challenges is to ensure that everyone understands the value of having these networks in place and the benefits they bring to the organisation and to everyone working at the Parliament. Through forming the Diversity Board, we will ensure that all the networks are focussed on delivering the organisation's priorities, identifying shared outcomes and addressing barriers through a range of improvement actions. We will continue to review the effectiveness of our networks annually.



Our outcomes

In line with other Scottish public sector organisations we have produced our intended outcomes to meet the general equality duty under the Equality Act (2010) - to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. It is important to have clear outcomes so we can evaluate the progress we are making.

Outcome 1

A diverse workforce that reflects a modern Scottish society.

- The Parliament attracts and develops people from the widest social backgrounds fully realising the benefits of a diverse workforce.



Outcome 2

An inclusive working environment where all staff are valued and respected.

- We have a workforce where people are encouraged to maximise their potential and we identify and remove any barriers to success.



Outcome 3

We meet the needs and expectations of the diverse groups who connect with the Parliament.

- Our public engagement activities enable people from diverse communities to engage with and participate in the work of the Parliament.
- We have the knowledge and expertise to make better informed decisions about the needs and experiences of all diverse groups.

Measuring our success

To help us do this we will report progress against our annual Delivery Plan, which will set out our specific actions on how we plan to achieve our outcomes along with our measures of success. Our Diversity Board will oversee the implementation of our annual Delivery Plan, and in the first year our focus will be to lay the foundations for this Strategy. Through our diversity staff networks, we will get candid feedback from staff and work up individual plans for each of the networks that we will build into our Delivery Plan. We will also use external benchmarks to help measure our progress and over the next five years we will work with a range of diversity partners to help us with specific activities in our Delivery Plan.

The first annual Delivery Plan will be part of the enabling phase, moving into implementation phase in year 2. This will be monitored and reported on annually to the Diversity Board and reviewed for progress against the Delivery Plan in 2017. Our Leadership Group will receive regular reports on progress.



Celebrating our achievements

Our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy builds on our existing good practice and our key achievements.

Our [Apprenticeship Programme](#) has been a real success. We will appoint 20 apprentices over 4 years and this year, many of our apprentices have completed their Modern Apprenticeship qualifications and secured permanent posts in the Parliament. One of our apprentices won the Role Model of the Year award at the Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations (CEMVO) Ethnic Minority awards 2016.

We ran a successful [Women in Leadership \(WiL\) programme](#) giving women the confidence and skills to achieve their personal goals for success. This was open to women from all grades and following on from the success of the programme an active Women's Network has been established.

The Parliament was the first ever building in Scotland to receive the Autism Access Award from the National Autistic Society and we have set up autism champions who promote autism awareness and provide advice and training to colleagues throughout the Parliament in how they can support people with autism when they visit the Parliament.

The Parliament is recognised by Action on Hearing Loss for its efforts in engaging with deaf and hard of hearing communities and received praise for its actions in the passing of the BSL Bill.





DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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We have this document available in different formats.

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