SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT EQUALITY ADVISORY GROUP

Terms of Reference

Background information

1. The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) has identified the need to establish an Equality Advisory Group to ensure that the Parliament, in everything it does, takes account of the needs of the wider community. It is important that everyone can access and participate in the activities of the Parliament and we are committed to making this happen. To help us achieve this, our aim is to establish an Equality Advisory Group that will assist us in delivering a successful strategy for equality.

2. From 2006-2009, the SPCB Disability Equality Working Group acted as an advisory group for the SPCB to advise on the development and implementation of the SPCB Disability Equality Scheme. However, now that our strategy and action plan takes account of all protected groups, we decided to disband this group and replace it with an Equality Advisory Group which represents the needs of all protected groups.

3. The decision taken to appoint a new group was agreed by the SPCB in March 2011 and we expect this group to be in place by September 2011.

Remit

4. The purpose of the group is to provide the SPCB with specialist advice and guidance on delivering its strategy and framework for equality. They will act as a consultative/involvement group to help advise on any equality considerations for specific activities being taken forward.

5. They will:
   - Advise on the implementation and evaluation of the SPCB strategy and equality action plan;
   - Provide advice on any practical solutions on issues relating to all protected groups;
   - Advise staff on any SPCB projects where there is need to consult/invoke diverse user groups;
Advise staff on the development of EQIAs and where there is or could be a differential impact on a group due to their protected characteristics;

Contribute to the analysis of the equality monitoring data gathered through the annual reporting exercise to help identify any trends or any specific areas where there are changing diverse needs; and

Advise on any emerging issues as they arise.

Please note that this role is not about developing or contributing towards public policy in Scotland but is specific to the work of the SPCB which is to support the parliamentary process.

Membership

6. Membership of the group will comprise of:

   • External representatives of each of the equality groups;
   
   • Selected staff to represent the SPCB; and
   
   • Staff with protected characteristics and with personal or professional experience of equality.

7. No more than 20 members will be appointed to the group.

Skills, Knowledge and Experience

8. Members should able to demonstrate a strong commitment and passion towards advancing equality.

9. They should have professional or personal experience of advancing equality and a strong desire to improve the lives of people who are disadvantaged due to their background or personal characteristics. Their interest may be in equalities generally or on a particular protected group, such as race, gender, disability etc however it would be helpful if they had a broad knowledge and understanding across all the protected characteristic areas.

10. They should have an interest in the work of the Scottish Parliament and have good communication skills to be able to express their views and constructively challenge and comment on the work of the SPCB either independently or through the support of a personal assistant.
11. They should be able to provide practical solutions and strategies in supporting the SPCB meet its commitment to equality and have the ability to act as an equality champion on behalf of the SPCB.

**Role and Responsibilities**

12. Members will be selected on the basis of their skills, knowledge and experiences that they can offer to the group.

13. All members will be expected to attend at least three meetings a year which will meet as often as necessary with a minimum of no less than three meetings a year.

14. Occasionally, the group may be asked to comment on specific activities of the Parliament which are outwith the formal meeting structure. Depending on the activity, we may only require the involvement of a few select members of the group.

15. The composition of the group will be reviewed every four years in line with the review of the SPCB equality strategy and action plan. The membership of the group will be next reviewed in December 2014.

16. The group will be supported by the SPCB Equalities Manager in terms of any access requirements and administrative support.

17. Minutes of each meeting will be recorded and circulated to the group five days after the meeting has taken place.

18. Papers will be sent to the group well in advance at least seven days before the meeting is being held.

**How to Apply**

19. Once you have read and understood the remit and responsibilities required for this role, we would be grateful if anyone interested in applying could contact Aneela McKenna, the Equalities Manager either by email at equalities.manager@scottish.parliament.uk or by phoning the HR Enquiry Service on 0131 348 6500 and requesting an application form. An application form will then be sent to you to complete and return by Monday 29th August 2011 after which all received applications will be considered by a panel and applicants informed of their success or otherwise. Any questions in relation to this should also be sent to the Equalities Manager using the above details. Please advise us of any specific requirements to assist you in this process.
Reimbursement

20. Whilst membership of the group is on a voluntary basis expenses will be reimbursed for attending meetings at the Parliament.