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# Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB)

## Equalities Report 2006

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## **Foreword by George Reid MSP, Presiding Officer**

It is with much pride and pleasure that I present this fourth equality annual report highlighting our progress on delivering key priorities to promote greater equality. This year has been one of continued success, with considerable achievements across the organisation. What follows in this report is a clear indication of the commitment towards equality, fairness and openness. A great deal of work has been achieved in ensuring that equality cuts across all areas of work making it integral to the way we deliver our business.

To be seen as an efficient and effective organisation we recognise the need to take account of equalities in everything that we do ensuring that our employment practices, services and other functions are equitable, fair and inclusive. This report demonstrates how we have progressed in meeting these aims and what plans have been developed to build upon our achievements so far.

I believe we are now in a position where we firmly grasp our strategic role in supporting equality in the Parliament and are fully prepared for the challenges as well as opportunities which lie ahead. This coupled with our continuous drive for improvement will help us to strive towards greater equality in the Parliament.

I personally would like to thank everyone who has shown their commitment and enthusiasm in delivering our equalities agenda.



**Presiding Officer and Chair of the  
Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body**



# Introduction

This report is the primary document that details the activities and progress we have made in the last year to promote equality. It highlights many examples of good practice across the Parliament, how we have taken forward our equality priorities and what plans are in place to further enhance our approach to promoting equality. The report reviews the performance of the SPCB in relation to the equalities agenda and the high level of commitment towards mainstreaming equality.

It also details some of the ways that we are developing to better meet the needs of services users and staff in relation to equalities.

This report pulls together all our achievements across each of the directorates in the Parliament. In compiling this report each directorate is asked to provide a progress report on how they have proactively promoted equality within their functions providing the basis for this report. Since introducing this process four years ago, it has been an extremely useful exercise in measuring the success of our equalities work and to what extent this has impacted on the organisation. It has helped us to gauge the level of activity taking place and areas where further action may be required.

This report is structured in seven sections. The first section reviews the level and involvement and participation within the Parliament to ensure that we are enabling everyone to have equal access to the work that we do. Section two focuses on the training we provide to staff so that they have a good level of understanding around inequalities which exist within society and how these can be overcome in the way in which we carry out our business. Section three concentrates on the services we provide to the public and how we are continually striving towards making our services accessible to everyone. Within section four, we look at what achievements have been made to build equality into our employment practices and in section five monitoring which is the most essential component for delivering equality highlights the systems we have developed. Finally the last two sections describe how we have progressed with our actions for change and what we intend to do in 2007.

## **Our Equalities Framework**

Delivering equality in an organisational context requires a comprehensive and robust framework. In the last few years, we have developed a strong framework which supports the implementation of the equalities agenda. This includes the work of the Equalities Team, a policy framework for equality, strong leadership and commitment and a formal process for monitoring progress.

## **The Equalities Team**

The Equalities Team which is based in the Corporate Policy Unit is responsible for overseeing the equalities agenda as well as supporting the mainstreaming of equality. This means that they design strategies to build equality into the work of the organisation as well as monitor the SPCB policies, practices and services, to ensure there is no potential for discrimination. The Team act as an important source of advice for offices across the organisation.

## **Policy framework for Equality**

The Parliament has adopted a comprehensive policy framework for equalities which sets our commitment to equality. There are a number of policies contained within the framework as well as practical guidance to assist anyone connected with the Parliament. This covers all aspects of our business in the Parliament.

Part of this framework includes the equality schemes which have been developed for race and disability. Each scheme includes a three year action plan showing how we intend to promote equality in the areas of race and disability.

There are also a number of areas where we have streamlined equality into our formal decision making and planning processes. For example, staff team meetings are structured in such a way that they include equalities as a standard agenda item and all proposals and papers put forward to Directors and the SPCB must also include any equalities implications.

## **The Equal Opportunities Committee**

The most important part of our framework is the annual reporting of our equalities work to the Equal Opportunities Committee. This provides an opportunity for the SPCB to give evidence on what progress it has made within the last year. Such scrutiny by the committee helped us maintain a strong focus on our equality priorities.

## **Mainstreaming Equality**

In delivering our framework for equality we recognise that “mainstreaming” is fundamental to the success of achieving greater equality within the Parliament. It is about the integration of equality of opportunity principles, strategies and practices into the everyday work of the Parliament. It means that equalities should be considered from the outset as an integral part of the policy and service delivery processes and the achievement of equality should inform all aspect of our work. This report provides many examples of how we have mainstreamed equality, however, our intention is to strengthen this process and to build upon what we have developed so far. The actions which we have set for 2007 demonstrate our commitment to improve our processes for mainstreaming.



# Section 1: Participation and Involvement in the Parliament

## 1.1 Introduction

One of our main aims is to increase awareness and understanding of the Parliament and to widen the opportunities for engagement and participation in parliamentary activities. The organisation as a whole takes these aims very seriously and this section highlights some of the ways the organisation has looked to meet these aims.

## 1.2 Consultation with external organisations

One of the ways to involve people in the business of the Parliament and to get feedback on how we are doing as an organisation is by consulting and involving external organisations in our work and seeking their assistance in helping us to make informed decisions on the services we provide. Some examples of who the organisation has consulted with and on what issues are detailed below.

### **Examples of consultation with external organisations:**

- The Justice 2 Committee has worked with groups such as the Scottish Interfaith Council and Women's Aid, to ensure they are seeking the views of relevant groups and that these views are put before the Committee.
- In April 2006, Visitor and Outreach Services launched a "Political Literacy Resource Pack". This was produced in collaboration with learners, the Outlook Project, Second Chance to Learn, WEA Edinburgh and Lothians and CLAN Edinburgh. It concentrated particularly on knowing more about MSPs. The pack was very well received and the external partners produced a second print run in the summer.
- The Web Editor and E-Services Manager visited a Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) centre to investigate technology such as screen readers, and improve awareness on website accessibility requirements to gain a better understanding of equalities issues.
- The Technology and Facilities Management Directorate maintained close contact with the Parliament's Access Audit Consultants, Buro Happold, on a variety of accessibility issues which arose during the year.
- A Disability Equality Group was established in June 2006 by the Equalities Team to assist with the development of the SPCB's Disability Equality Scheme. The membership of the group comprised of disabled individuals and representatives of disability organisations. The group provided both personal and professional advice on the barriers faced by disabled people along with recommendations on how the Parliament could overcome these barriers.

- The Corporate Policy Unit has been working closely with a voluntary organisation called PAMIS who campaign for people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, their family carers and professionals who support them. They have been involved in the procurement and installation of a suitable permanent hoist in the Parliament for use in one of our large accessible toilets with changing bench facilities. We have also been working with PAMIS in relation to the provision of suitable temporary mobile hoists for use at future events. The ultimate aim of this project will enable greater access of the Parliament to the people which PAMIS represent.
- The Corporate Policy Unit has consulted with the Glasgow Anti Racist Alliance on the proposal of a positive action programme for black and minority ethnic young people.

### **1.3 Increasing engagement and involvement**

One of our aims is also to engage and involve people in the work of the Parliament. To assist in meeting this aim we carried out a variety of work to increase the opportunities for engagement and involvement throughout the year and to make those opportunities available to as wide and diverse an audience as possible. Some examples of this work are detailed below.

#### **Examples of increasing engagement and involvement:**

- The Personnel Office's recruitment team have met with a variety of organisations to increase engagement with black, minority ethnic and disabled people providing information about jobs in the Parliament. This has included the black and minority ethnic careers fair in Dundee, Equality Scotland's Job Opportunities Support Project, the Job Centre and Intowork.
- The Procurement Office has maintained a relationship with the Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition to ensure that possible opportunities for social enterprises to do business with the Parliament are identified helping to make our suppliers and contractors from as diverse a range of businesses as possible
- The Festival of Politics team worked hard during the year to ensure that the 2006 Festival of Politics programme was highly inclusive and that we advertised that programme pro-actively. The programme was inclusive in that it explored a number of equality issues through dance, music and theatre. With that in mind we contacted a variety of equalities organisations with a view to widening the diversity of people taking part in the Festival.
- An exhibition focusing on the actions of the suffragette movement in Scotland was displayed in the Parliament from December 2006. The exhibition highlighted the campaign for equality by women in Scotland who campaigned to gain equal voting rights with men. This was explored through the display of artefacts and documents relating to the suffrage movement. The exhibition was pro-actively advertised to gender organisations with the aim of improving involvement with the Parliament.

## 1.4 Disability Equality Group

During the year we also developed our Disability Equality Scheme. Our first step was to seek volunteers for our Disability Equality Group to help us develop our scheme and prioritise our actions. We wrote to all Cross Party Groups in the Parliament seeking volunteers from those organisations and individuals who were already involved and interested in the work of the Parliament. We also sought volunteers from the staff. The group met over a number of months to consider information which had been gathered throughout the organisation on its current position on promoting disability equality to help identify barriers as well as future priorities. We also involved other stakeholders including MSPs and their staff by holding a focus group to seek their views.

The Group meetings were made as accessible as possible by deciding on suitable meeting times and dates; producing all meeting papers in font size 14; producing an easy read version of the note of the meeting; using rooms with microphones whenever possible; BSL interpreters were also provided to enable all members of the group to fully participate in the meetings and a graphic illustrator was used for the last meeting to provide a graphic note of the meeting to enable members with learning disabilities to fully participate in the process. The Disability Scheme was developed by the Group and agreed and published by the SPCB on 30 November 2006.



This photograph shows a meeting of the Disability Equality Group



This photograph shows graphic illustrator, Clare Hayton at work during a meeting.

# **Section 2: Equal opportunities training**

## **2.1 Introduction**

All strands of equalities are incorporated into the corporate training programme throughout the year. New members of staff and MSP staff participate in an equalities session included in their induction training. We have also continued to provide mandatory and voluntary equalities training through the year. Details of the training we have provided for staff during 2006 can be found below.

## **2.2 Core equal opportunities training programme**

We have continued to provide a full day mandatory “Equalities and Diversity in the Scottish Parliament” course for staff throughout the year. All new members of staff must attend this training followed by a half day “Dignity at Work” course. Each course informs staff of what the SPCB expects of all staff in terms of equalities and dignity at work whilst working in the Parliament and gives practical steps and tools to think about the possible issues and how to ensure they are being fair and treating everyone with equal respect in the workplace. It also gives them advice on how to deal with harassment and bullying should they be the subject of or witness to it. During 2006 we ran 6 “Equalities and Diversity” courses and 3 “Dignity at Work” courses.

## **2.3 Access for All training**

During May, June and October 2006 we ran disability equality training entitled “Access for All”. The training was split into two sessions; one session was about raising awareness and informing staff about the use of language and etiquette in relation to disability equality and the second session about the Parliament building, its services and how practically we can make sure they are accessible for all.

Senior management considered that the training was important for all staff, and was of particular importance to public facing staff. They therefore agreed that the training would be mandatory for public facing staff and voluntary for other staff. Approximately 210 staff attended the training. Feedback from the course was very positive and staff felt it was very relevant to their work.

## **2.4 Age Discrimination Seminars**

During October 2006 the Equalities Team undertook several activities to promote the new Age Discrimination Legislation to all staff, Members and Members staff. A display was placed in the Garden Lobby on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October to raise awareness of the new legislation and also to give Members, Members’ staff and staff the opportunity to ask questions about the new legislation and to take away some information on it. Information packs were issued to all Members and office heads to raise their awareness of the legislation and the impact on them as both individuals and employers.

Sessions entitled “New Age Thinking” were run during October 2006 to provide staff with the opportunity to learn about the new Age Legislation and what it meant for them as individuals and for the organisation as a whole. Separate sessions

were also run for line managers focusing on their responsibilities as managers. Overall the sessions were attended by almost 50 staff.



This photograph shows the display stand set up in the Garden Lobby about the introduction of the Age Discrimination Legislation in October 2006

## **2.5 Language training programme**

Language training continued to be available to staff during 2006, with training provided to those staff where the need for training had a direct relationship to their work. British Sign Language training was provided to 4 staff at various levels and Gaelic training courses were also run at various levels from Beginner to Advanced.

Foreign language training was provided during the year by the Institute for Applied Language Studies at the University of Edinburgh (IALS); however, rather than running an in-house programme as in previous years, interested staff attended the Community Classes held at the university. This enabled us to sponsor a broader range of courses and offer a more flexible attendance pattern for staff. Classes were available in French, Spanish, German, Italian, Japanese and Portuguese.

The Visitor Service team also attended an introduction to BSL course with a view to enhancing the level of service to members of the deaf community accessing the Parliament.

## **2.6 Job-specific training on equal opportunities issues**

Whilst we run mandatory equalities training and the Equalities Team develops and runs organisational related training, individuals and offices attended other equal opportunities training which may be specific to their role in the Parliament. Some examples of equalities training staff took part in during the year are detailed below.

- All Dignity at Work Contacts and Investigation Officers attended refresher training in November 2006. The training provided the Contacts and Investigation Officers an opportunity to discuss any problems they had encountered and be refreshed and brought up to date on equalities legislation and their respective roles within the Dignity at Work network.

- A one day Deaf awareness course was run in December 2006. Staff from across the organisation attended the course to help them with their work and raise their awareness of Deaf issues.
- As part of the Review implementation programme for Visitor Services, the guided tours programme has been refreshed. This included training for all guides on equalities issues, including the use of appropriate language.
- Staff in the Access and Information Directorate attended courses on Plain English, Mind Your Language and Information Alternatives.
- Mainstreaming training was provided for all clerks during 2006. The training provided clerks with practical ways of mainstreaming equalities considerations into the work of the committees.
- The Equalities Team attended training and seminars on various equalities strands including the Disability Equality Duty and Age Discrimination.
- Security specific training continued to include information on equality and diversity issues and raising the awareness of staff.
- Multi-skill training also continues to introduce Security staff to the wider implications and accessibility issues associated with high volume access control in the building.

# Section 3: Delivering services to the public

## 3.1 Introduction

This report has already highlighted how we look to meet our aim of increasing awareness and understanding through engagement and participation. For that engagement and participation to be successful we also need to deliver appropriate and inclusive services to the public. This section of the report highlights some of the areas we have looked to improve upon to deliver better services and some the work that the organisation has undertaken over the last year to maintain the services we already have.

## 3.2 Providing BSL Interpreters or other Communication Support

Throughout 2006, we have again striven to ensure that whenever a request for British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters or other communication support has been made, we as an organisation have been able to deliver. Over the year we have continued to use our contract to provide BSL interpreters and other communication support on 26 occasions. This has included the provision of British Sign Language Interpreters; speech to text reporters and electronic note takers. Below are some examples of when and how this support has been used.

- BSL Interpreters were used at each of the meetings of the Disability Equality Group to enable a member of the group to fully participate and contribute to the meetings.
- Interpretation services were provided on request during the Public Petitions Committee meetings in Dunfermline, Jedburgh and Glasgow.
- As part of its Disability Inquiry, the Equal Opportunities Committee ensured that on several occasions BSL Interpreters and speech to text reporters were at the meetings to allow participants to follow what was happening and to contribute to the proceedings.
- The Festival of Politics programme included 4 sessions which were translated into BSL as standard with a further session being BSL interpreted on request.
- BSL Interpreters have also been provided for Chamber business on several occasions including a debate on Mental Health and Deaf and Deafblind people, an Equal Opportunities Committee debate on Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities and a debate during Learn to Sign week entitled "No need to shout.....Just learn to Sign!"
- Several events during the year have also made use of BSL Interpreters. This has included an event hosted by the Cross Party Group on Learning Disabilities and Enable.

- BSL Interpreters have also been provided for visitors taking tours when this has been requested in advance of the tour.



This photograph shows a BSL Interpreter at work during Armando Iannucci's session at the Festival of Politics.

### **3.3 Ensuring that our written information is accessible to all**

Part of ensuring that we deliver good services is making sure that our information is accessible to all. With this in mind we produce all of our public information leaflets in a range of languages. These languages have been selected to reflect the citizen languages used in Scotland at the time of publication of these leaflets and also the visitor languages required. We currently provide information in Arabic, Bengali, British Sign Language (BSL), Chinese, Gaelic, Punjabi, Scots, Urdu, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Russian.

During 2006 we continued to ensure that equalities issues were taken into account when designing new publications and updating existing ones. We have also provided information in languages and formats that are currently not covered by our language policy such as Polish and easy read due to popular demand. Some other examples of work we have carried out to ensure that our information is accessible and available are detailed below.

- A handout for visitors has been introduced to cover the main points of the guided tours. This helps a variety of visitors.
- A new BSL video was developed during the year titled "Your Guide to the Scottish Parliament". The video is a guide in BSL on visiting the Parliament Building and also provides a summary of how the building was built.
- The Scottish Parliament's Information Centre has produced briefings specifically on equal opportunities issues throughout the year. These have included looking at sexual orientation and gender identity, religion and belief, race equality, disability and age.
- The Equal Opportunities Committee Disability Inquiry report was produced in 14 point font, with versions available in BSL, Braille, Moon, Easy Read



and Audio. It is hoped that this work will inform and guide other committee teams on the production of reports in accessible formats.

- During the year the fact sheet of information for objectors to Private Bills was revised and the language used simplified to make it easier for all to understand.
- The Education Committee published a summary leaflet for the early years inquiry report. 10,000 copies were distributed around the country, widening access to the findings with one of the reports being published in English and Gaelic.
- In order to make their written evidence more accessible for the Legal Profession Bill (over 600 submissions), the Justice 2 Committee provided CD-ROMS as an alternative to web-based access.

### **3.4 Updating guidance documents**

The majority of our staff follow or use some kind of guidance. This helps them carry out their work or advise and inform members of the public on how the Parliament works and on the processes followed. In order to ensure that guidance is up to date and to make staff aware of and take account of all equalities implications such documents are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Below are some examples of guidance which has been updated or changed during 2006 to assist staff and members of the public.

#### **Example of updating guidance to take equalities issues into consideration:**

- Desk instructions for committee clerks contain guidance on accessibility and the Participation Handbook provides information to staff on techniques to encourage participation.
- A review of the Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) system was carried out during 2006 by the Fire Safety Advisor and Equalities Manager. The language and terminology of the existing PEEP guidance was amended to reflect the social model of disability which shifts the emphasis away from the medical model of disability. This implies that the structures in society disable people because of the barriers they face in their day to day lives. It therefore shifts the onus onto organisations to remove those barriers which may prevent disabled people from contributing and participating equally to non disabled people.
- The Personnel Office has updated their retirement procedures in line with the new requirements under the Age Discrimination legislation.
- The Public Petitions Committee continues to monitor users of the system by asking petitioners to complete an equal opportunities form. A number of changes have been made to the form and to the Committee's procedures for equal opportunities monitoring at the suggestion of the relevant equalities organisations. Comparisons using census data can now be made between petitioners and the population in general. The equalities monitoring form indicates which ethnic group they belong to, helping us to identify any groups we are not reaching in relation to petitions.

### 3.5 Organising inclusive events and exhibitions

One of the areas that has increased dramatically over the period since we moved into the Parliament building is the holding of events and exhibitions. These are sponsored by Members or the Parliament and are hosted by a variety of voluntary organisations, charities and both public and private organisations. We have worked hard to ensure that such events and exhibitions are as inclusive as possible. Some examples of how we have done this are detailed below.

- We have continued to use our Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) for those attending events and have been providing advice and guidance to events organisers on the importance of PEEPs. This has resulted in an increase in PEEP submission in relation to events and making it easier for attendees and ushers to be aware of the evacuation needs of individuals.
- On several occasions during the year a temporary mobile hoist has been provided for events. This has enabled individuals who require the use of a hoist to attend events in the Parliament such as the Cross Party Group on Learning Disabilities and Enable event “The Same as You?”
- Ushers at events throughout the year are provided with briefings and awareness sessions on issues relating to each event including the need for individuals to use the Room for Contemplation for prayers during the event; the positioning of British Sign Language Interpreters and seating arrangements for BSL users; and the catering arrangements for those who are being supplied with Halal or Kosher food at events.
- The European Languages Award Ceremony was held in the Parliament in the autumn of 2006. The event was very successful with our Broadcasting Office providing the facilities for interpretation of the event into several languages such as French, Spanish and German simultaneously during the event. BSL Interpreters also interpreted the event. A number of DVDs of the events have been distributed to the organisers for use.
- Prior to the start of the previously mentioned Suffragette Exhibition the design was considered in terms of accessibility. This included consideration of the height of the displays and the size and style of font on graphic panels and inclusion of an audio-visual component of the exhibition. Transcript, large print, Braille and audio tape versions of the exhibition were also produced, along with a Gaelic language version of text.
- The External Liaison Unit has received a high volume of visitors and organised a number of related events and programmes for those visitors. When making such arrangements they have taken steps to positively promote equality. This has included the provision of hospitality in keeping with the culture or religion of visiting delegations and ensuring the Room for Contemplation is available for use.
- When preparing material for presentations to visiting delegations the Legal Services Directorate ensure that they remain aware of language constraints

and the need to deliver material in a simple and steady way including the need to make time allowances for the involvement of an interpreter.

- The Festival of Politics has continued to be one of our main events. Work continues to make the programme as inclusive and diverse as possible. In 2006, it featured participants from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds and representatives from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and disabled communities. Events included: a piece of political theatre focusing on disability; a celebration of the culture of Malawi; a play about slavery and the civil rights movement in the USA; a discussion on multi-culturalism and a performance of southern Asian music and dance which explored the issue of climate change. The Festival's programme and website met accessibility requirements and all venues used were accessible to wheelchair users and people with other access requirements.



This photograph shows members of Lung Ha's Theatre group at work during the Festival of Politics



This photograph shows two of the Sangeet Mala dancers at the Festival of Politics Launch



This photograph shows speakers and delegates at the Cross-Party Group on Learning Disabilities Event “The same as you?”

### **3.6 Outreach work**

The outreach team has continued to work with various schools throughout the year providing them with information and presentations on the Parliament, how it works and how they can get involved. This has included schools with a diverse range of pupils.

All community outreach events, parliamentary awareness seminars and engagement sessions are held in accessible venues with this being the primary non-negotiable factor in determining the venue for public facing outreach.

In late 2006, the Community Outreach Officer delivered parliamentary engagement seminars organised by the Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations (CEMVO). These were held in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee, with the Edinburgh session being hosted at Holyrood. Linked to this is the launch of Ethnic Minority Civic Congress (EMCC) at Holyrood in October 2006 – hosted and organised by the Outreach Services Team. So far these seminars have proved very successful and popular.



These photographs show delegates at parliamentary engagement seminars organised by the Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations (CEMVO) and held in the Scottish Parliament.



### **3.7 The work of committees**

The clerking teams are responsible for supporting the work of the Parliament's committees. As part of the responsibility they look to ensure that the committees build equality issues into all of their work. Below are some examples of the practical steps taken by clerking teams in meeting that responsibility.

- The Private Bills Unit held meetings with people who want to disagree (or object) to Bills before the Bills were introduced and again at the end of the time given for people to object. All meetings were held in the areas affected and in the evenings for the convenience of those directly affected by the proposed Bills. This meant that those who were working or had other responsibilities could attend a meeting near to home. On the Edinburgh Airport Rail Link (EARL) a meeting was also held to explain in detail the process that would be followed to ensure that everyone understood what would happen and how they could object.
- The Health Committee agreed an equal opportunities paper regarding the consolidation of Bills which required the person whose Bill it was (sponsor) to provide specific evidence on how their Bills met equal opportunities

concerns. The committee also specifically targeted equal opportunities representative bodies when seeking written evidence.

- Questions on equalities issues were included in several committee proceedings such as:
  - The Local Government Committee's consideration of the Prostitution (Public Places)(Scotland) Bill;
  - The Environment and Rural Development Committee's evidence sessions in respect of the Crofting Reform Bill;
  - The Justice 2 Committee scrutinised equalities information as part of a Stage 1 report for Bills and lines of questioning for witnesses;
  - The Local Government Committee questioned the Deputy Minister for Finance and Public Service Reforms during oral evidence on the 2007/08 Budget on the impact of equal pay settlements and on the funding provision of free personal care for the elderly;
  - The Edinburgh Airport Rail Link Committee took evidence from the promoter on how they had included equalities issues formally within their Bill, which although a requirement for Public Bills is not one applying to Private Bills.
  - The Local Government and Transport Committee asked the Minister for Transport during oral evidence about disabled access at railway stations and the young persons' concessionary travel scheme; and
  - The Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland were questioned on the impact of equal pay settlements during oral evidence to the Local Government Committee on their annual overview of local authority audits.
  
- Although the Audit Committee did not consider any primary legislation during the year, equalities issues were addressed as part of inquiries such as the NHS consultant contract, highlighting the impact of increasing numbers of women entering the medial profession.
  
- The Stage 1 report on Local Electoral Administration and Registration Services (Scotland) Bill included a recommendation that the Scottish Executive should examine whether more can be done to ensure that polling places are accessible to all voters and whether more innovative approaches to the siting of polling places might help improve participation at elections.
  
- All witness invitation letters from the clerking teams highlight equality issues, encouraging witnesses to raise any issues so that they can be addressed.
  
- When committees meet outside of Edinburgh they ensure that they invite representatives of the local community and equality groups to attend.
  
- To assist the Education Committee with the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Bill the Committee held a round-table evening event for private sector under-5 care providers; a pupil motivation stakeholders' event; a press launch for the early years inquiry; and focus groups. The Committee also asked the Equality Network to facilitate an evidence panel of equalities organisations. The panel included representatives from Gay Dads Scotland; Lesbian Mothers; Rainbow Families and LGBT Youth Scotland.



- Committees have provided information to witnesses in different formats including large print, Braille, audio and DVD. This has included copies of their evidence on DVD and audio as well as information prior to meetings such as agendas etc.
- To evaluate how accessible committee meetings are we routinely ask visitors about access and facilities. Feedback on witness experiences is encouraged and the responses monitored with any issues raised as appropriate.
- Prior to publication of the report of its “Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities” inquiry, the Equal Opportunities Committee consulted with those disabled people who had taken part in the inquiry on its draft recommendations. The comments received helped the Committee to refine the inquiry recommendations.

### **3.8 The Parliament Building at Holyrood**

The Parliament Building at Holyrood was built with an eye on accessibility, however, we recognise that we can never stand still in this respect and have continuously looked to improve the accessibility of the building in general. Over the last year some specific work has been undertaken to make the building more accessible and below are some examples.

- We have been working closely with an organisation called PAMIS to look at providing a permanent hoist in one of our larger accessible toilets with a changing bench. The procurement exercise for the installation of a permanent hoist was undertaken during November and December 2006 with the hoist being installed in spring 2007. In order to accommodate visitors in the meantime a mobile hoist has been hired on several occasions.
- Signage has been increased in certain areas informing Parliament users that CCTV is in operation in the area.
- Audio Tape and CD players have been purchased during the year to enable visitors to borrow an audio version of the text of temporary exhibitions as well as the permanent exhibition in the Main Hall.
- The planned introduction of an alerting system for deaf and hard of hearing system was re-commenced during 2006. The procurement procedure has now been completed and the contract will be awarded in early 2007 with installation of the system following thereafter.
- The Facilities Management office relocated accessible car parking spaces within the basement car park to make them more accessible to users.
- The Facilities Management Office continued to consult with the Equalities Team when making changes to the building or to room usage within the building. Consideration was given during the year to a waiting area for business visitors to the Parliament and an appropriate space was allocated with accessibility issues in mind.

### **3.9 The Disability Allowance**

During 2006 we 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 or other communication support workers for meetings between MSPs and members of the public.

Eleven applications were made for funds from the Disability Allowance with a total of £828.69 being spent during 2006/2007 to improve the accessibility of the services of MSPs. Here are examples of the ways in which some Members of the Scottish Parliament used the Parliament's Disability Allowance in 2006/7:

- Six Members have used the allowance to contract British Sign Language interpreters; and
- One Member has improved the access to their local office.



# Section 4: Recruiting & Retaining Staff

## 4.1 Introduction

We take equal opportunities very seriously in our role as an employer of approximately 500 staff. We aim to recruit staff following equal opportunities best practice and legislation. We also want to retain our staff so we are constantly trying to improve how we help and assist staff in carrying out their roles. This section includes some of the things we have done this year in terms of the recruitment and retention of our staff.

## 4.2 Our recruitment procedures

Our recruitment procedures already contain many measures to ensure that they are fair to all applicants but below are some examples of work we have carried out this year to develop our recruitment procedures further.

- Our recruitment procedures, practices and documentation have been updated to comply with Age discrimination legislation.
- The Personnel Office reviewed how job competencies are described in application forms and have taken steps to provide clearer and easier to understand descriptions of what is meant by each competency to help all applicants understand what is required for the job.
- The Personnel Office has implemented one of its action points from the Disability Equality Scheme to give disabled people the opportunity to contact us to discuss posts before deciding whether to apply or not.
- We also carried out a detailed analysis of the impact of our equality policies on the recruitment of staff in terms of gender, race and disability. This proved a very worthwhile exercise which helped us determine, the application and success rates of applicants from black and minority ethnic and disabled people. This helped us in considering a more pro-active in engaging with BME and disabled people.
- We also have information about applying for jobs translated into Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Punjabi and Urdu. We have included a paragraph in all of our job adverts and information to encourage a more diverse range of applicants.

## 4.3 Flexible working

One of the ways in which we work to retain staff is by having good flexible working arrangements in terms of both policy and also putting the arrangements into practice. We aim to agree all flexible working requests wherever possible to help to implement and promote more flexible working for staff whilst still enabling teams to continue to deliver services. Staff and the Directorates within which they work have made use of the flexible working patterns during 2006 in a number of ways including:

- Working compacted hours;
- Working Part-time hours;
- Using Job-share arrangements; and
- Home working.

These flexible working practices have been used by staff across the organisation for several reasons including meeting family, caring and cultural commitments. The practices are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that they continue to work for both the staff concerned and the organisation. Many staff throughout the organisation have also made use of our maternity and paternity arrangements during 2006.

#### **4.4 Making adjustments for staff**

Often adjustments for staff are simply 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. Here are some examples of some of the steps taken by different parts of our organisation to make adjustments for members of staff during the last year.

- The Legal Services Directorate looks to ensure that meetings are arranged so that staff who work part-time or compressed hours can attend.
- The Technology and Facilities Management Directorate have made use of the "Access to Work" scheme run by Job Centre Plus to assist a disabled member of staff.
- Several enhancements and customisations were made during the year to the telephone system to accommodate users with varying needs. This included providing phones with large buttons, amplification handsets and computer telephony integration.
- Several large monitors, ergonomic keyboards and other IT equipment have been provided to help accommodate users' needs.
- The Security Office made adjustments to their operational roster to ensure that those officers who were unable to wear ear pieces for radios were made exempt from wearing them, but could continue to carry out their Access Control Officer duties within the Chamber and Committee Rooms.
- The Access and Information Directorate continued to consult with the Health and Safety Manager and Occupational Health on the health and welfare for staff. Recommendations and suggestions taken on board included the supply of support furniture for staff with back problems and changes to working practices.
- An Official Reporter volunteered to provide assistance to a disabled member of staff who was taking an exam and who has difficulty typing for long periods of time by acting as a scribe.

# Section 5: Monitoring

## 5.1 Introduction

Despite having developed a robust framework for monitoring, we are continuously striving towards improving our processes for measuring the impact and progress of our equalities work. This very report has been a highly effective tool for monitoring our progress in the implementation of equal opportunities. It has also contributed to the mainstreaming agenda where action points for 2007 have been built into directorate and office management planning processes.

## 5.2 Recruitment Monitoring

In 2006 we have looked at areas where we do not routinely monitor and analyse statistics which have been incorporated into our actions for 2007. One area which we have focused on is the recruitment and selection of staff in relation to gender, race, and disability to ensure there is no discrimination in any aspect of these procedures. Part of this exercise reviewed the application and success rates of people applying for posts in the Parliament which identified a number of areas in need of action. We will now be collecting and reporting on this data on annual basis.

## 5.3 Equalities Staff Audit

Every two years we carry out an equalities staff audit to find out from staff about their experiences in the Parliament and their perceptions of how they have been treated in key respects in the workplace. It also provides a base line profile in respect of current staff to identify whether any imbalances exist and if there are, to carry out further investigation. In 2006, we published the results of the audit which has in many ways informed the work that we do. The results of the audit and our response to the recommendations within it can be found on our website at:

[www.scottish.parliament.uk/spcb/equality/2005/EOStaffAudit04-05-00.htm](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/spcb/equality/2005/EOStaffAudit04-05-00.htm)

## 5.4 Disability and Race Equality Schemes

This year we have also developed a more effective system for monitoring the progress of our disability and race equality schemes. For the disability equality scheme we have set up a disability equality working group comprising of both internal and external representatives. Their role is to assist us in monitoring our progress every six months and to help evaluate our current performance on disability equality. The reporting process for directorates, as described earlier has also been improved whereby each directorate must report on the progress of their race and disability equality actions. In addition the equalities team provide support to offices within directorates to ensure that we are meeting our goals within the specified timescales.

## **5.5 Personnel Systems for Monitoring**

Other processes for monitoring are currently being developed in line with the Human Resources change programme so that the equalities information we collect on staff will be more accurate and concise.

## **5.6 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 our services. Over 327,400 people visited the Scottish Parliament in 2006. This included a diverse range of people from Scottish communities, other countries and a significant number of people with disabilities.

Visitor Services have worked with Corporate Policy Unit and others to receive and act upon feedback from visitors, including disabled people to ensure that visitor services and events are as accessible and diverse as possible. This feedback has been collected through various ways and below are some examples of how this.

- We have received feedback from various individual and groups following visits and tours of the Parliament.
- Feedback is asked for from event hosts, MSP sponsors and delegates. This is monitored and discussed to consider improvements required to make events more accessible and inclusive. This feedback has meant improvements on how to work registration of delegates for those attending with carers.
- The Visitor Services Review reported the findings of its survey during 2006. This data will be used to inform strategies for visitor and engagement work.
- Feedback was invited from objectors (people who disagree with Bills) to previous Bills. The feedback received has resulted in a change to the way the Private Bills Unit works with them adopting the suggestion to send reminders to objectors about the deadlines for telling us they want to object.

# Section 6: Update on 2006 action points

In 2005, each directorate prepared a list of action points for 2006 relating to equality issues. This section provides an update on the key action points that were included in the SPCB's last Equal Opportunities Report in 2005.

- **We will ensure that equality issues and services to visitors and event delegates are improved as part of implementing the findings of the Visitor Services and Events Management reviews.** (Access & Information Directorate)

The review reports in 2006 were presented to the SPCB in June. The reports contained 76 recommendations overall and a number of efficiency targets. Similar recommendations have been grouped together to form 25 development projects for Visitor Services and 4 projects for Events. These will be implemented over a one to five year timescale and will result in a number of improvements in terms of accessibility and equality of opportunity.

- **We will ensure the development of the education, participation and outreach strategy incorporates equality issues.** (Access & Information Directorate)

The education, participation and outreach review will commence in 2007.

- **Planning and delivery of the Festival of Politics 2006 will be in line with the Equalities Framework. Improved ticketing arrangements will be put in place to facilitate access needs. The team will also explore the possibility of holding events outwith Edinburgh to improve access for all.** (Access & Information Directorate)

The Festival Team worked co-operatively with the Equalities Team to ensure that equal opportunities were fully integrated in the programming and delivery of the event. Whilst the Festival team explored the potential of holding events outwith Edinburgh, it was not possible to progress these for the 2006 Festival.

Festival news releases featured information on the crèche and accessibility, including BSL interpretation and wheelchair access. Festival photography included coverage of BSL interpretation at events. The homepage of the Festival website featured links to Holyrood visitor information on accessibility and crèche information.

Promotion work which had particular relevance to equality issues included a performance by Lung Ha's theatre group – the only theatre company in Scotland with professional production values to exclusively use actors with a

learning disability. This was promoted to the media including specialist media, and the event was highlighted on the Parliament and Festival websites.

A news release was issued highlighting events of international and multi-cultural interest, including Scotland's first Asian language musical group, Sangeet Mala, who were the focus of the photo shoot for the launch event.

- **We will look to continue to improve the Parliament's website to facilitate better access for people whose first language is not English, those with learning disabilities, additional literacy requirements and communication difficulties.** (Access & Information and Technology & Facilities Management Directorates)

A review of all documents available on the website was carried out during 2006 to ensure that they were in the most appropriate format. The Internet and Intranet Editorial Board complied with accessibility and formats and consider such issues routinely before any publication. Business & Information Technology Office have ensured that during the year the website had both the capacity and capability to carry translated versions of current and new publications.

- **Equalities issues will be taken into account when the official report software is reviewed and refreshed.** (Clerking & Reporting Directorate)

The official report is making progress on the project to replace the software that it uses to generate and publish text, one of the aims of which is to create a more easily searched and more accessible electronic publication.

- **We will ensure that we implement mainstreaming in the work of the committees, following on from the training delivered in 2005.** (Clerking & Reporting Directorate)

In implementing mainstreaming in the work of committees, all witness invitation letters from all teams raise equality issues so that these can be addressed as necessary. Some examples of mainstreaming include:

- The Health Committee agreed an equal opportunities paper about the consolidation of Bills which required the Bill promoters to provide specific evidence on how their Bills met equal opportunities concerns.
- The stage 1 report on Local Electoral Administration and Registration Services (Scotland) Bill included a recommendation that the Executive should examine whether more can be done to ensure that polling places are accessible to all voters and whether innovative approaches to the siting of polling places might help improve participation in elections.
- Many committees also included questions on access issues, the impact of equal pay and other issues through their consultations and inquiries.

Other mainstreaming examples can be found throughout the report.

- **We will publish the results of the second Equal Opportunities Staff Audit by end April 2006 and roll out a plan to implement the recommendations contained in the report.** (Resources & Governance Directorate)

Results of the second Equal Opportunities Staff Audit were published on 15 June 2006 along with our response and proposed actions to implement the recommendations in the report. Both of these documents are available on the Parliament's website.

[www.scottish.parliament.uk/spcb/equality/2005/EOSTaffAudit04-05-00.htm](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/spcb/equality/2005/EOSTaffAudit04-05-00.htm)

- **All appropriate guidance, policies and procedures will be updated to take account of the new Age Discrimination legislation by September 2006.** (Resources & Governance Directorate)

An audit of personnel policies was carried out and any issues identified by the Corporate Policy Unit and Personnel Office to be addressed in relation to the Age discrimination legislation was completed in October 2006. The Equalities Framework and all relevant equalities guidance have been reviewed and will be updated to comply with the employment equality age regulations early in 2007.

- **We will prepare a Disability Equality Scheme and have it agreed and in place by end November 2006.** (Resources & Governance Directorate)

Our Disability Equality Scheme was developed with the assistance and involvement of the Disability Equality Group. The Scheme was approved by the SPCB on 21 November 2006 and published on the Parliament's website on 30 November 2006.

- **Disability Awareness training sessions to be developed and delivered early in 2006. All front-line staff to attend as mandatory.** (Resources & Governance)

Disability Awareness training entitled "Access for All" was held during May, June and October 2006. 85.3% of those identified as mandatory attended the training along with several other members of staff who attended on a voluntary basis.

- **The Post Completion Advisory Group (PCAG) will continue to take equality issues into account in their advice on building issues.** (Technology & Facilities Management)

The Post Completion Advisory Group (PCAG) continued to take equalities issues into account in their advice on building issues, until the Group was dissolved in May 2006.

- **The snagging issues in relation to the accessibility of the building raised by the Access Audit Consultants and other feedback will continue to be addressed.** (Technology & Facilities Management)

The issues raised by the Access audit consultants, and other interested parties, continued to be addressed by the Holyrood Project Team and Facilities Management, in conjunction with the Equalities Team and Access & Information Directorate.



## Section 7: Our plans for 2007

Each directorate in our organisation has already prepared a list of action points for 2007 relating to equality 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 2007 (along with the name of the lead directorate in each case).**

- Ensure that all action points in the disability and race equality schemes are met. (**All Directorates**)
- Provide the three main public information publications in easy read along with other formats. (**Access & Information**)
- During the review of Outreach and Education Services when reviewing wider activity of engagement and participation include the needs of disabled stakeholders. (**Access & Information**)
- The Committee Office is to review how equalities issues are considered by committees in general and how the consultation process is undertaken with disabled people and people from other equalities strands. (**Clerking & Reporting**)
- Produce and publish a Gender Equality Scheme to be approved by the SPCB by June 2007. (**Resources & Governance**)
- Develop an equalities mainstreaming strategy incorporating all equality related schemes and other equality led initiatives and agree structures for mainstreaming equality across the Parliament by autumn 2007. (**Resources & Governance**)
- Develop an equalities impact assessment process to critically assess the impact of all policies and activities of the Parliament on groups which have been traditionally discriminated against and create a process for publishing the results of all impact assessments by December 2007. (**Resources & Governance**)
- Provide a fire alerting system for deaf and hard of hearing people by May 2007. (**Technology & Facilities Management**)
- Include consideration of all access and equality issues in future review of public space. Commence review in 2007. Including alternative styles of chair, different heights and chairs with and without arms. (**Access & Information and Technology & Facilities Management**)

- Publish SPCB Annual Equal Opportunities Report by March 2007. **(Resources & Governance)**
- The Personnel Office will complete a review of its recruitment procedures to ensure that procedures comply with the equalities framework and equalities best practice by December 2008 **(Resources & Governance)**
- To monitor and review the usefulness of the equal opportunities sections in papers to the SPCB and Senior Management. **(Chief Executive's Group)**
- Introduce a mentoring scheme in the Parliament to support female staff during their pregnancy, maternity leave and on their return to work. **(Resources & Governance)**
- Review current policies and provision to ensure compliance with the new equality regulations outlawing discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief and sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services by April 2007 and to provide appropriate training to staff. **(Resources & Governance)**
- Install a fixed-track ceiling hoist in garden lobby megaloo to allow the changing bench to be used safely and to make the Parliament more accessible to people who require the use of a hoist by March 2007. **(Resources & Governance and Technology & Facilities Management)**
- Along with Public Information and Procurement, Corporate Publications Team will have a contract in place for the production of easy-read versions of publications and to produce BSL videos, which includes text captioning. **(Access & Information)**
- An induction loop facility to be installed in the well of the Main Chamber by Easter 2007. **(Access & Information)**
- Continued promotion of equality related issues on the Scottish Parliament website homepage and news release content. **(Access & Information)**
- The Petitions Committee will develop and implement an equalities programme to address the equalities issues identified in their equality report for 2006. **(Clerking & Reporting)**
- Ensure new corporate planning process has disability and other equality issues built in from the very outset. Implement monitoring process to ensure planning process includes disability and other equality issues. (April 2007). **(Resources & Governance)**
- The Training and Development Team will work with the Equalities Team to review our current approach to equalities training (e.g. general equalities training/BSL requirements) in order to fulfil business needs and develop an implementation plan. As part of this work we will develop training for senior managers and refresher updates for staff who attended their mandatory training some years ago. **(Resources & Governance)**



**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 fhuaim no ann an cruth eadar-dhealaichte coimpiutair), sgrìobhaibh thugainn dhan seòladh os cionn no cuiribh fios thugainn le facs no post-D. Tha sinn a' cur fàilte air sgrìobhaidhean ann an cànan sam bith.

للحصول على المعلومات بلغات أخرى غير اللغة الإنجليزية أو بهيئات وصيغ بديلة (لغة برايل أو طباعة الحروف الكبيرة أو على أشرطة تسجيل صوتية أو بالصيغ الكمبيوترية المختلفة مثلاً) يرجى كتابة رسالة إلينا وإرسالها إلى العنوان المذكور أعلاه أو إرسال استفساراتكم إلينا عن طريق الفاكس أو البريد الإلكتروني. إننا نرحب بالرسائل المكتوبة مهما كانت اللغة المستخدمة في كتابتها.

ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਵੱਖਰੇ ਰੂਪ (ਉਦਾਹਰਨ ਵਜੋਂ, ਬਰੇਲ, ਵੱਡੀ ਛਪਾਈ, ਸੁਣਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਟੇਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਈ ਕਿਸਮ ਦੇ ਕੰਪਿਊਟਰ ਵਾਲੇ ਰੂਪ) ਵਿਚ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ, ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਉਪਰਲੇ ਪਤੇ ਤੇ ਚਿੱਠੀ ਲਿਖੋ ਜਾਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਪੁੱਛ ਗਿੱਛ ਫ਼ੈਕਸ ਜਾਂ ਈ ਮੇਲ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਭੇਜੋ। ਅਸੀਂ ਚਿੱਠੀ ਪੱਤਰ ਦਾ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸੁਆਗਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

对不是用英语写的信息，或者其它格式的信息（例如：盲文、大体字、录音带或者各种电脑格式），请写信至以上地址或者用传真、电子邮件将您的要求发给我们。我们欢迎您用任何语言给我们写信。

ইংরেজী ছাড়া অন্য কোন ভাষায় অথবা পাঠক উপযুক্ত অন্য কোন ধরনে (যেমন ধরন, ব্রেইলে, মোটা হরফে, টেইপ-ক্যাসেটে অথবা কম্পিউটারের বিভিন্ন ফরমেটে) তথ্যের জন্য, দয়া করে উপরের ঠিকানায় আমাদের কাছে চিঠি লিখুন অথবা আপনার অনুসন্ধানের বিষয়টি সম্পর্কে আমাদের কাছে ফ্যাক্স পাঠান বা ইমেইল করুন। আমরা যে কোন ভাষায় লিখিত যোগাযোগকে স্বাগত জানাই।

انگریزی کے علاوہ دوسری زبانوں یا متبادل ترتیب بندی (مثال کے طور پر بریل، بڑی طباعت، آڈیو ٹیپ یا مختلف طرز کے کمپیوٹر مواد (فارمیٹ)) میں معلومات حاصل کرنے کے لئے برائے مہربانی اوپر دیئے گئے پتے پر ہمیں خط لکھیں یا اپنی انکوائری کو بذریعہ فیکس یا ای میل بھیجیں۔ ہم کسی بھی زبان میں خط و کتابت کا خیر مقدم کرتے ہیں۔