

MEETING: 11 JANUARY 2018

REPORT BY: SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSION

EQUALITIES SUB-GROUP UPDATE

Purpose

1. This paper provides an update to the Commission on the progress of the work of its Equalities Sub-Group.

Background

2. At its meeting on 16 April 2015, the Commission, on approving its draft progress report on its duties in relation to diversity and equalities (subsequently [published on 30 April](#)), agreed that a sub-group of Commission members be established to allow further consideration of such matters, with a view to reporting to the Commission as appropriate. It was agreed that the sub-group consist of Sandy Cumming, Christine May and Pauline Weetman.
3. At its meeting on 13 April 2017 this year, the Commission considered two draft reports setting out how the Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland are demonstrating their duties under the Equality Act 2010. The reports, namely [Progress Report 2015-17](#), setting out progress against these duties, and [Equality outcomes 2017-19](#), were subsequently published in April 2017.
4. Consequently, therefore, it seemed opportune that the Equalities Sub-Group convene to consider current issues. The group met on 23 November 2017. The Commission Secretary and the Chair of Audit Scotland’s Diversity and Equalities Steering Group, Gillian Woolman (Assistant Director, Audit Services Group) attended the meeting. This report summarises the group’s deliberations and conclusions.

The Commission’s obligations

5. The Equality Act 2010 sets out a general duty for public bodies in that they are required to have due regard to the need to:
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not share it (the protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; race; religion or belief; gender; sexual orientation; marriage and civil partnership; and pregnancy and maternity).
6. As a listed public body covered by the specific duties in the Act, the Commission is required to publish equality outcomes and a report on how it is mainstreaming equalities into its functions and practices.
7. Under the legislation, equalities outcomes require to be agreed and published every four years. These were first published in April 2013 and progress against them were reported

in April 2015 and April 2017. This year's published report covered the Commission and Audit Scotland (the Auditor General does not have such a duty).

The Commission's current commitments

8. The outcomes which the Commission agreed in April are set out in **Appendix 1**. These outcomes differ from the previous version as they have been refined to two, rather than three, outcomes: the first covers the work undertaken by the Commission and Audit Scotland on its behalf; the second covers how Audit Scotland conducts itself as an employer.
9. While the Commission has an interest in the second of these, its prime interest is in the first of these: how the audit work secured by the Commission reflects how public services meet the diverse needs of all citizens and communities. The outcome agreed by the Commission sets out seven aspects in this regard, namely:
 - Use feedback from stakeholders on how to reflect equality and diversity in audit work which is carried out by staff sensitive to the diverse needs of stakeholders
 - Use data analysis to inform audit work and help understand who uses public services
 - Audit work programmes to incorporate equality and diversity issues in a way which is consistent with our audit duties
 - Publish all information and reports in formats that are accessible to all
 - Report all audit findings in a style that reflects the audience
 - Report on diversity and equality issues where appropriate
 - Support other public bodies in their scrutiny of diversity and equality
10. Appendix 1 also sets out the wide range of commitments to ensure progress in these areas. Audit Scotland's Diversity and Equalities Sub-Group (DESG), of which the Commission Secretary is a member, will take forward these commitments, with a view to reporting to the Commission as appropriate.

Progress against outcomes

11. The Sub-Group considered progress against these outcomes, most notably in the following areas:
 - As noted in the plan, an Equality and Human Rights Advisory Group (EHRAG) has been established, comprised of people from some 23 external stakeholder organisations that represent all of the protected characteristics to help shape the approach to equality in audit work. More specifically, the objectives for the group are to help auditors consider:
 - What are the equality issues Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission need to know about that will impact on audit work
 - What needs to be done differently and how can the group help or get involved.

The group meets twice yearly and to be used as a resource between meetings to inform audit work as appropriate on an ongoing basis.

The group has most recently considered the Commission's rolling work programme. An equality impact assessment (EQIA) of the programme is discussed below.

- An EQIA was undertaken in March 2017 in relation to the work programme. It included a review of equalities aspects of all existing and planned performance audit work, a summary of which is contained in **Appendix 2**. The EQIA has established commitments made by Audit Scotland to:
 - ensure equalities issues are considered at the early stages of drafting project scopes for individual audits, consulting with appropriate members of EHRAG as appropriate
 - identify how the audit might impact protected characteristic groups, and whether there is any equalities focused work that should be included
 - ensure that equalities are fully taken into consideration by audit teams throughout all parts of the audit process by making use of the equality and diversity prompts that have been added to each stage of the audit management framework.
 - consider the groups identified as potentially being impacted during fieldwork particularly, for example in the data analysed and stakeholders engaged with.

The Sub-Group felt that this approach helps to provide the Commission with a good level of assurance about how equalities feature in our approach to performance audit work. Moreover, it is the group's view that such assurance precludes the need at this point for any dedicated performance audit work in this regard.

The Sub-Group also noted, with particular reference to the outcome around 'reporting all audit findings in a style that reflects the audience', the potential of considering how messages in audit reports are aimed at specific communities or groups. The Sub-Group agreed to recommend that this be the responsibility of audit teams and sponsors as they consider how to promote the messages of an audit, which is an important part of the proposals to the Accounts Commission as it considers a draft report of a performance audit, overview report or BVAR.

Audit developments

12. The Sub-Group considered a range of other related developments, most notably:

- a. **Shared risk assessment:** the current guidance for the shared risk assessment process specifically requires local area networks - in considering the key strengths and weaknesses within a council, the opportunities it could exploit and the potential barriers to improvement - to focus their risk assessments around the a range of issues, one of which is how integral equal opportunities is to all services and whether compliance with equalities duties is clearly demonstrated.

The sub-group requested that coverage in this regard continue to be monitored.

- b. **Integrated approach to financial audit and auditing Best Value:** We are currently amidst the first year of the new approach to auditing Best Value. The new approach requires auditors to report on all Best Value characteristics – including equalities – at least once in their five year appointment. This will be done in annual audit reports but also as appropriate in Best Value Assurance Reports (BVARs).

The group noted that the early BVARs have so far been limited in their coverage of equalities and diversity issues. For the BVAR in Orkney Islands Council, however, considered by the Commission in December, equalities and diversity featured in the risk assessment in relation to the audit work, and thus in the BVAR. The audit team undertook a range of work to assess progress with the council's response to the

equalities agenda. The work included review of council and community partnership strategies and plans; equalities and diversity related documentation including, for example, equalities impact assessments linked to reports to council and published on the council website. The work also included review of Local Government Benchmarking Framework and council data and information relating to equalities and diversity. The team interviewed the council's equalities officer and also included equalities in interviews with a range of the officers, councillors and partners met during the audit. The work considered both equalities within the organisation and the council's work toward equalities in its communities.

The Commission will gain a perspective of the reporting of equalities and diversity issues in the integrated audit through the Controller of Audit's Assurance and Risk Report, to be considered by the Commission in February.

The Sub-Group was comfortable that the integrated approach and the reporting requirements therein would provide the Commission with sufficient assurance about councils' performance on their Best Value obligations in relation to equalities and diversity.

- c. The DESG meets quarterly, most recently on 21 November, the business at which included: progress of action plans from each of Audit Scotland's business groups; equalities issues arising from ongoing audit work; and EQIA work within Audit Scotland.
- d. Audit Scotland management team will hold an 'equality summit' on 23 January. Such 'summits' are designed to be an opportunity for the Management Team to focus on a specific policy issue. This summit will include members of the DESG.

Wider policy matters

13. The sub-group also noted a range of wider policy matters, most notably:

- a. The Scottish Government and COSLA have committed to refreshing [statutory guidance in relation to Best Value](#). This exercise remains ongoing, and the Commission and Audit Scotland continue to underline the need of this to be expedited. The current guidance, which was published in 2004, includes a section on 'equal opportunities arrangements' and it is anticipated that this will require updating.
- b. While the Commission's equality outcomes focus on the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act, the Commission should be mindful of the strategic policy commitment of the Scottish Government to reducing socio-economic inequalities, most clearly articulated in its [Fairer Scotland Action Plan](#), published in October 2016. The Sub-Group agreed that this is an area therefore to be further discussed by Audit Scotland and the Commission.
- c. A core driver of the 2015 Community Empowerment Act is to "reducing inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage"¹. To this end, the Act requires community planning partnerships to publish a local outcomes improvement plan (LOIP) by 1 October 2017.² The LOIP should set out the CPP's priorities for improving outcomes and tackling inequalities in their area. The LOIP is a driver for the CPP to develop integrated approaches to improving outcomes, based upon governance arrangements that focus on shared accountabilities. It should be specific about planned preventative work and how resources will be used in new ways to support prevention. CPPs are currently engaging with their communities on their

¹ Section 5

² Section 6

draft LOIPs. We can anticipate that these plans will increasingly be a focus of our approach to auditing Best Value.

- d. In July, the Scottish Government launched a consultation on [the Socio-Economic Duty](#) (closed on 12 September). The duty asks particular public authorities – notably councils and integration joint boards - to do more to tackle the inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage. The duty was included, at the UK level, in the Equality Act 2010 but has not yet been introduced in any part of the UK. The document invites views on the introduction of the duty, asking which public bodies should be subject to the duty and how they can demonstrate it is being implemented. The current proposal is that the duty will not include the Accounts Commission or Audit Scotland. Following the consultation, guidance will be developed later in the year.
- e. Also in July, the Scottish Government published [Scotland's Equality Evidence Strategy 2017-2021](#). Based on consultation with stakeholders, the paper sets out a strategic approach to strengthening Scotland's equality evidence base over the next four years. Several evidence gaps have been identified, such as race and ethnicity, age, disability, gender and pregnancy and maternity. The future actions include establishing priorities in the evidence gaps and considering the cost effective way to fill these gaps.
- f. On 26 April 2017, the Local Government Commission and Fawcett Society published [Interim report: does local government work for women?](#). The report from the Commission outlines key findings from data analysis of women's representation in councils across England and Wales, carried out by the Centre for Women and Democracy. It also presents the findings of a Local Government Information Unit survey of 2,304 councillors, carried out between December 2016 and January 2017. In its current Programme for Government, the Scottish Government has committed to a "comprehensive review of local governance ahead of a Local Democracy Bill later in this Parliament". The Sub-Group agreed that we monitor further national developments in this regard, notably whether the Local Democracy Bill addresses issues around local government elected members, including make-up and terms and conditions.

Commission membership and recruitment

14. The Sub-Group also considered the Commission's obligations to ensure diversity in its own make-up.
15. The [Scottish Government's Programme for Government](#) encourages public, private and third sector organisations to commit to gender balance on their boards of 50/50 by 2020. Moreover, the Scottish Government has made a specific commitment to securing gender equality on public boards through its Gender Representation on Public Board (Scotland) Bill. The Commission agreed at its August meeting to submit a response to the call for evidence by the Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee in its Stage 1 scrutiny of the Gender Representation on Public Board (Scotland) Bill, by providing a summary of the Commission's activities in recent rounds of recruitment of new members. The response is in **Appendix 3**.
16. In September, the Commission also participated in a research project, entitled *The difference that diversity makes to your board's governance*, which was developed by the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland and the Scottish Government, to review the difference that diversity is making to the governance of Scotland's public body boards. As well as establishing an evidence-base for that, the project aims to share the practices that Scotland's disparate body chairs and boards

have adopted to harness diversity. Every public body board in Scotland was encouraged to join. A submission from the Commission is available on the members' extranet.

17. The Commission has agreed with the Scottish Government the next round of appointments to the Commission. Our proposal is to fill four vacancies in the period to the end of 2018. Applications to this end will be sought in the period 26 January to 23 February. This therefore presents the opportunity for the Commission to consider, in conjunction with the Scottish Government, how to encourage diversity amongst applicants.
18. The sub-group endorsed a proposal to undertake a similar outreach approach to this recruitment round as took place in our most recent member recruitment round in 2015, most notably around offering potential applicants the opportunity to learn more about the role, through engagement with current Commission members or through a series of outreach events, 'The Commission uncovered', during the application period. These events – which featured for the first time in the 2015 member appointment round - will give prospective applicants the opportunity to learn more about the Commission, its responsibilities and the role of Commission members. It is proposed that three such events take place: in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen or Inverness.

Sub-Group's deliberations: summary

19. The Sub-Group discussed various aspects of progress, and concluded the following as recommendations to the Commission:
 - To continue to ensure that diversity and equalities issues features appropriately in the scoping of national performance audit work, with audit sponsors ensuring that this features in their liaison with audit teams (paragraph 11).
 - Further in this regard that targeting of messages to specific groups or communities be a part of the responsibilities of sponsors and audit teams in their reporting of draft reports to the Commission (paragraph 11).
 - To continue to monitor the prominence of diversity and equalities issues in the integrated approach to the annual audit and auditing Best Value (paragraphs 12a and 12b).
 - To specifically consider this matter as part of its consideration of the Controller of Audit's Annual Assurance and Risks report, which will be part of the agenda of the February meeting of the Commission (paragraphs 12a and 12b).
 - Given the assurance that the Commission can gain on audit coverage of diversity and equalities issues, not to pursue at this time any dedicated national performance work in this regard.
 - To consider further implications for our work in relation to socio-economic inequalities (paragraphs 13b to 13d)
 - To monitor national developments in relation to gender representation in local government, in particular whether a forthcoming Local Democracy Bill addresses issues around local government elected members, including make-up and terms and conditions (paragraph 13f).
 - To endorse the approach to the forthcoming recruitment round for new members.
 - In general, to endorse the importance of the Commission considering progress against its obligations and interest in relation to equalities and diversity on an annual basis.

Conclusion

20. The Commission is invited to consider this progress report, and in particular the recommendations of the Sub-Group set out in paragraph 19.

Paul Reilly
Secretary to the Commission
21 December 2017

APPENDIX 1: ACCOUNTS COMMISSION AND AUDIT SCOTLAND EQUALITY OUTCOMES 2017-19

Outcome 1: Audit work reflects how public services meet the diverse needs of all citizens and communities

What this will look like	How this will be done	How this is demonstrated
Use feedback from stakeholders on how to reflect equality and diversity in audit work which is carried out by staff sensitive to the diverse needs of stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with EHRAG members and stakeholders on regular basis about the future performance audit work programme Consult with EHRAG members on performance audits which have a focus on equality issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record of engagement with EHRAG members and stakeholders about the future performance audit work programme Record of engagement with EHRAG members in post-project reviews of performance audits Obtain feedback from EHRAG members about how well the needs of protected groups have been addressed Produce an EIA for the future performance audit work programme
Use data analysis to inform audit work and help understand who uses public services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse data about how different groups are using public services and how public bodies are using public money to reduce inequality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit reports will comment on how public money is being used to help reduce inequality
Audit work programmes to incorporate equality and diversity issues in a way which is consistent with our audit duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Area Networks (LANs) will consider whether any equality issues have been identified as part of the annual Shared Risk Assessment (SRA) process The revised approach to auditing Best Value in local government bodies includes an equal opportunities audit programme which will be applied where considered appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review of the draft council Local Scrutiny Plans and evidence templates Annual audit reports provide comment on audited bodies' compliance with reporting in line with the Act Where included within the scope of a Best Value audit, it will be duly reported
Publish all information and reports in formats that are accessible to all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to keep up-to-date with developments around sharing information in an accessible way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accreditation with accessibility organisations
Report all audit findings in a style that reflects the audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review all audit findings before annual audit reports are issued as part of current internal quality review processes Use an editor function to ensure audit reports are written in plain language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client feedback on annual audits monitored as part of the quality review process and through annual impact reports Positive feedback from readers about clarity of audit reports

What this will look like	How this will be done	How this is demonstrated
Report on diversity and equality issues where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The revised approach to auditing Best Value in local government bodies includes an equal opportunities audit programme which will be applied where considered appropriate • The LANs will consider whether any equality issues have been identified as part of the annual SRA process • Seek views from EHRAG members when developing performance audits that cover equality issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where included within the scope of a Best Value audit, it will be duly reported • Annual audit reports provide comment on audited bodies' progress in relation to mainstreaming equality • Annual review of the draft council LSPs and evidence templates • Positive feedback from EHRAG members about how equality issues have been covered in performance audits
Support other public bodies in their scrutiny of diversity and equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the findings of EHRC Scotland work in relation to how public authorities in Scotland have responded to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LANs will consider the results of this work as part of the SRA process • Review the results of this work for central government, local government and health bodies and consider whether specific work on equality should be proposed for the performance audit programme

Outcome 2: Audit Scotland promotes, understands and supports a diverse and inclusive workforce

What this will look like	How this will be done	How this is demonstrated
Staff feel valued and are treated with equity and fairness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff participation in the building a better organisation corporate programme • Continue annual staff survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in staff survey results on Personal Growth and Fair Deal
Staff feedback on how to support diversity and equality is embedded in how things are done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold events with staff to seek their views on equality issues, e.g. lunchtime seminars with invited speakers, workshops to discuss equality issues and equality presentations at team meetings • Consider conducting a survey of staff which focuses on equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on feedback from staff events/survey
Staff feel that their wellbeing is a priority for Audit Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff participation in the building a better organisation corporate programme • Continue annual staff survey • Conduct annual health checks with the occupational health provider • Offer free, fully confidential counselling sessions for staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in staff survey results on Wellbeing
Staff recognise that policies are written in plain language, adhere to current legislation and are accessible to all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out EIAs on new or significantly revised policies • Seek views from EHRAG members when developing EIAs • Ensure training is available for staff on writing in plain language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme of completed EIAs reviewed by the DESG and published on website • Relevant EIAs reviewed by EHRAG members as appropriate
There is a rigorous process for conducting EIAs when new policies are introduced or existing policies are updated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff are aware of the updated guidance to be used when conducting EIAs • Ensure staff are aware of the system where all key policies are put forward for an EIA at the point when a new policy is being developed or an existing one is being revised • Gather feedback from staff using the updated guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme of completed EIAs reviewed by the DESG published on website • Relevant EIAs reviewed by EHRAG members as appropriate • Positive feedback from staff about the updated guidance
A flexible approach to working practices operates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of uptake and refusal of flexible working arrangements • Seek feedback from staff on how TPT is working for them • Continue annual staff survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of flexible working arrangements • Mid-year review of TPT approach based on staff feedback • Improvement in staff survey results on Wellbeing
The reward system is fair and the gender pay gap and equal pay review results confirm this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out and publish results of gender pay gap and equal pay review • Continue annual staff survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of results of gender pay gap and equal pay review • Improvement in staff survey results on Fair Deal

What this will look like	How this will be done	How this is demonstrated
Information on workforce to be improved by encouraging staff to disclose personal information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to encourage staff to record, confidentially, information about protected characteristics • Analyse and monitor workforce statistics to identify any under-represented groups in workforce and record in annual progress report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of staff recording information about protected characteristics • More comprehensive information is available about staff profile • Report reviewed by DESG and conclusions and areas for improvement recorded and monitored by DESG
Increase the number of job applications from people in under-represented groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve engagement with equality groups representing all protected characteristics and seek views about how people from under-represented groups may be attracted to work with Audit Scotland (particularly people with a disability) • Examine ways to encourage greater awareness about Audit Scotland among people with protected characteristics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in under-represented groups applying, being shortlisted and getting appointed (particularly people with a disability)
Improve recruitment and selection processes and in response to feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to gather and report on statistics relating to applicants, shortlisted candidates and successful candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review report on workforce statistics and highlight areas for investigation • Increase in under-represented groups applying, being shortlisted and getting appointed (particularly people with a disability)

APPENDIX 2: WORK PROGRAMME – SUMMARY OUTCOME OF EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Audit	Summary	Groups impacted
Equal pay	<p>Equal pay is a substantial issue across local government in Scotland. At March 2015, Scottish councils had paid £605 million to employees in equal pay compensation and estimated that about 30,000 equal pay cases remained outstanding. This audit will focus on the implementation of the 'Single Status Agreement' in Scottish councils, including: scrutinising how councils have addressed equal pay claims; assessing their approaches to on-going equal pay issues; and considering how lessons learned can be applied to other challenges facing local government and the wider public sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender is a major focus of the audit, the group that has been impacted by equal pay cases and outcome of these
Cap futures follow up	<p>We published an update report on the Scottish Government's CAP Futures programme in May 2016. It is anticipated that this programme will come to an end in March 2017 once the £178 million budget has been utilised. We plan to review what action the Scottish Government took against our recommendations; what has been delivered for the money; and, what has still to be delivered and how this will be funded. We will also be able to provide an update on how successfully the 2016 payments to farmers were delivered, and how the 2017 application process went. This work will complement the work of our EAFA audit team and fit in with their local reporting timeline.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified at this point
City deals	<p>This audit will report on the development of City Deals to date, especially in relation to the establishment of governance and project management arrangements. A further City Deals audit is proposed for 2020/21 by which time some of the projects associated with each City Deal should be underway.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified at this point
Devolution of fiscal powers	<p>Continues series of reports looking at the devolution of New Financial Powers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified at this point
Children's mental health	<p>There was strong feedback in support of undertaking audit on children's mental health services we consulted stakeholders on the mental health briefing that was prepared for the AGS and the Commission. Research suggests early intervention has positive impact on life chances but CAMHS performance poor across Scotland and lack of monitoring of spend, outcomes, and transitions into adult mental health care. These areas would all fall within the scope of the proposed audit work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability - a key stakeholder and a group that is likely to be impacted by the recommendations of this piece of work • Gender - staff and carers involved in this area are likely to be largely female

Audit	Summary	Groups impacted
NHS workforce	The NHS workforce audit will be split into two parts. This first audit will focus on the clinical workforce in acute hospitals, and will assess how well the clinical workforce in acute hospitals is managed to meet the demands of the Scottish population for acute services. A subsequent, future audit will focus on the preparedness of the general practice and community-based workforce to meet increased demand for local care provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age - looking at the impact of an aging workforce
Early learning and childcare	The overall aim of the initial audit is to answer the question: How effectively are the Scottish Government and councils working together to improve outcomes for children and support parents by expanding access to funded early learning and childcare? We anticipate undertaking further audit work to assess the longer-term implementation and impact of this important policy as the funded hours increase further.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender - carers of children affected by early learning and childcare work and policy are likely to be disproportionately female Pregnancy and maternity - a group impacted by early learning and childcare policy
Ferries tendering	This audit will provide an overview of the VFM of ferry services in Scotland, with a particular focus on the recent Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services tendering exercise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None identified at this point
Health and social care integration part 2	The audit will follow up the emerging risks highlighted in the 2015 report, including: governance arrangements, budget-setting, strategic planning, engagement with the voluntary sector and carers, and the development of localities. Where possible, it will also examine the evidence for significant shifts in service delivery, from acute to community-based and preventative services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age - health and social care integration is more likely to impact older age groups Disability - also more likely to be involved with health and social care
Scottish fire and rescue service	This audit would follow-up on the recommendations made in the 2015 report and evaluate the SFRS' longer term progress in reforming how it delivers its services and contributes to the Scottish Government's community safety agenda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender - roles that went were largely female dominated
Self directed support part 2	Our previous audit (June 2014), examined councils' early progress in implementing the ten-year strategy and their readiness for the Act, which came into force in April 2014. This follow-up audit aims to establish whether councils, health and social care integration authorities and the Scottish Government are making sufficient progress in implementing SDS to achieve the aims of the SDS strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age - self directed support likely to impact older groups more than others Disability - a group likely to be more impacted by the Act.
Forth replacement crossing	This audit will report on the management of the FRC project, with a particular focus on delivery to cost and budget.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age - potentially, if there is a workforce angle Gender - as above

Audit	Summary	Groups impacted
ALEOs	We will build on previous audit work to examine how ALEOs are being used to deliver services more effectively and efficiently. This will include looking at the accountability arrangements in place to safeguard public money.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender - lack of data on gender in workforce. Councils may be moving staff to avoid equal pay issues
Community justice	Responsibility for community justice will be transferred from CJAs to CPPs in April 2017, together with the establishment of Community Justice Scotland. We propose a two-phase approach, with phase 1 assessing the immediate transfer of responsibilities and the establishment of CJS. Phase 2 will examine the longer-term impact of the reform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Religion or belief • Sexual orientation
HCW	We are proposing that the Commission puts its programme of How Councils Work reports on hold until the first 6 early BV audits (Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, West Lothian, Orkney and Clackmannanshire) have reported and that the Commission uses the evidence and issues arising from those audits to identify its priorities for future HCW reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified at this point
Digital progress in central government and health	This audit will look at the progress that the Scottish Government making in delivering on its digital ambitions. This will include progress against the digital strategy, the impact of new assurance arrangements, and comparing the approach and progress in the digital directorate in central government and the e-health directorate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability - this is a group that can face digital exclusion
Housing	The scope of this work is still to be decided, but is likely to focus on issues of housing supply and the degree of progress in delivering the Scottish Government's housing action plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability • Ethnicity - BME can be in poverty but not necessarily in deprived areas, so can be missed
Higher education - widening access: progress review	Our first report on higher education was published in 2016 and there were a number of areas that could warrant further work. These include participation (more detailed examination of student body, courses of study and outcomes) and widening access (first two targets are due to be delivered in 2020/21 and we could review progress). There are also likely to be significant implications for HE from Brexit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender - there can be quite extreme gender segregation among some subjects, often subjects that are mainly male are associated with higher paying jobs
Reforming public services through better asset management	This is still very much a live issue. The audit could build on our round-table planned for November 2016 to consider how better asset management is contributing to transformational change in the delivery of public services. This could include elements of the community empowerment act – Community Asset transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific equalities groups but possible significant inequalities issues.

Audit	Summary	Groups impacted
Mental health - prisoner healthcare	The majority of prisoners have mental health issues. Healthcare in prisons is the responsibility of the NHS and demand from the prison population is rising. There are concerns over the quality of healthcare being provided and the outcomes for prisoners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Age • disability
Value for money of NPD projects	Will use a case study approach to assess whether NPD has achieved its aim of curtailing excessive private sector profits, and assess the impact of the ONS decision to classify the Aberdeen West Peripheral Route as being subject to public sector control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified at this point
NHS workforce 2	We have reported on significant risks in relation to NHS workforce. We will carry out more detailed audit work on the community-based care workforce and in light of changing demographics of the workforce, role and NHS challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Age • Disability •
Waste management	The overall aim of the audit will be to assess how well Scotland is performing in meeting its current and future waste management targets. It will follow up previous reports on waste management in 2007 and the 2010 environment overview report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified at this point
Employability - transfer of new powers	The Scottish Government will assume responsibility for elements of employability support from April 2017, with the remainder transferring in 2018. We could review progress with the transitional arrangements in 2017 and preparedness for/early progress with full transfer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Gender • Disability
Broadband follow up	Will provide an update on what has been achieved from the public sector's two contracts with BT (due to complete at the end of 2017) as well as comment on progress towards the Scottish Government's vision of world-class infrastructure by 2020 and 100 per cent superfast broadband coverage by 2021.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified at this point

APPENDIX 3: RESPONSE BY THE ACCOUNTS COMMISSION TO THE CALL FOR EVIDENCE BY THE EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE ON THE GENDER REPRESENTATION ON PUBLIC BOARDS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Introduction

The Accounts Commission is the public spending watchdog for local government. We use our powers to hold local government to account and help it improve, and we assure the public about the performance of their council. While we are appointed by Ministers, we operate impartially and independently of councils and of the Scottish Government, and we meet and report in public.

We consist of 12 members, including a Chair and Deputy Chair. Our gender make-up has changed significantly in recent years: currently it is seven men and five women; in 2013 it was ten men and two women.

We have no comment to make on the Bill itself. Rather, in this brief response, we wish to help the Committee in its deliberations by offering some aspects of our own experience as a public body in committing to the Scottish Government's gender equality ambitions, by addressing two points raised by the Committee thus:

- the impact, if any, for those public authorities responsible for encouraging and recruiting women to public boards as non-executive members;
- the impact, if any, on people applying for an appointment as a non-executive member of a public board;

Impact on the body

We believe that we have had a successful experience of encouraging better diversity which has had a positive impact. Our most recent recruitment round in 2015 resulted in three women being appointed for three available positions. Our aim in the exercise was to increase the diversity of those applying for membership. It was recognised that this could be done without any significant change to the actual required attributes of members; rather, we aimed to direct the recruitment process to as wide an audience as possible by ensuring as much transparency as possible around our role and responsibilities.

An inherent challenge for the Commission – in line with any public body – has been to ensure that our relevance to peoples' lives – and thus their understanding of the value of our role – is clear. To do so, it has been important that the Commission promotes to people the significance of its role in holding local councils to account for their performance. While the Commission was established in 1975 to “secure the audit of all councils in Scotland”, its responsibilities have grown since then to incorporate much wider aspects of council performance, such as through our audit of councils' Best Value duty and our performance audit programme across local government (and indeed, in conjunction with the Auditor General for Scotland, across the public sector). Our current strategy commits us to ensuring that the service user experience is better reflected in our work. This in itself requires a much more vibrant interface with the public.

To fulfil these responsibilities, we need a membership which reflects wide interests, balancing the wide range of aspects of applying accountability and encouraging improvement in public services. The Commission is committed to reaching beyond what might be regarded as „traditional“ constituencies of prospective members, an aim not particularly helped by the barrier of possible public perceptions of our name of the 'Accounts Commission', which in itself may suggest a specific and narrow function. (It is perhaps worth noting that the accountancy profession itself has had a consistent underrepresentation of women: across

the world the average percentage of female members of accountancy professional bodies only marginally increased from 33% in 2012 to 35% in 2016.¹⁾

We therefore shape the personal qualities, skills and experience required of members in the following categories:

- Commitment to improvement
- Securing accountability and improving governance
- Communicating and engaging
- Making and articulating judgements

In our advert in June 2015 we specifically stated “whatever your background, if you are interested in this exciting opportunity, we would like to hear from you. The skills individuals have gained in the private or voluntary sector or as a user of council services are of particular interest”.

In our 2015 campaign, we also developed outreach activities: we made current members available to speak to anyone who was interested in applying and deciding if it would be ‘right for them’. Also, significantly, we put in place a series of events, known as ‘The Commission uncovered’, open to anyone, which explained the role and activities of the Commission. Attendees were very diverse in their backgrounds and interests, and indeed at least one of those eventually appointed had attended one of these events.

Most importantly, therefore, the Commission’s experience suggests that by reflecting on their impact to the public, public bodies can shape their recruitment activities – crucially without significant resource implications – to ‘widen the net’ of prospective candidates.

We will apply the learning from our 2015 member recruitment round to the next round of recruitment of two members in Spring 2017. We are mindful of the challenge of maintaining a balance of skills and experience of members, remaining committed to addressing gender balance, and encouraging greater diversity of background of our members.

Impact on members

In aiming for a wider diversity of membership, the Commission is mindful of the support needed for those members. For example, we are currently considering a draft policy to support members who are carers, such as providing expenses for such members when undertaking Commission duties. This exercise has involved researching existing practice in this regard amongst public bodies. Our experience tells us that such practice is limited. We are also mindful, however, of the potential resource implications of such a practice on public bodies. This may therefore be an area that the Committee would wish to explore further.

Accounts Commission August 2017

¹ Key facts and trends in the accountancy profession, Financial Reporting Council, 2017.