

Audit Scotland

Annual report on gender equality

A progress report for July 2008 to June 2009

June 2009

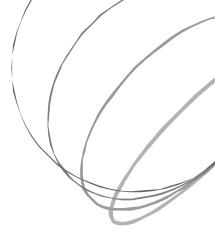


 AUDIT SCOTLAND



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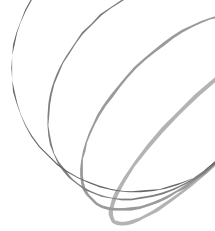
Introduction

Background

1. Around 200 public bodies in Scotland spend more than £31 billion of public money each year. This includes the Scottish Government, local councils and NHS bodies. The duty of the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission is to help ensure that public money is spent properly, efficiently and effectively.
2. Our role in Audit Scotland is to provide the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission with the services they need to carry out their duties. The Auditor General is independent, reports to the Scottish Parliament, and is held accountable for Audit Scotland's work. The Accounts Commission is independent of local councils and of government and can make reports and recommendations to Scottish ministers.
3. This report details progress in achieving equality and diversity objectives for Audit Scotland with specific reference to our Gender Equality Scheme. The Gender Equality Scheme 2007-10, published in June 2007, contains an action plan which set out the specific steps we planned to take to improve gender equality within Audit Scotland. Progress in achieving these steps are reported against the key areas of the diversity excellence model which is a measurement framework structured around key processes and their impact.

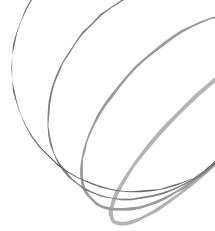
The Gender Equality Duty

4. There are three public sector equality duties for race, disability and gender. These place duties on public bodies to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote equality of opportunity. The public sector equality duty for gender, introduced in June 2007, requires us to report annually on progress on our Gender Equality Scheme and the focus of this report therefore is predominantly on this aspect with reference to broader developments where appropriate.
5. In addition to reporting progress against our gender outcomes in the Gender Equality Scheme we also have a duty to report specific information regarding our employees including the extent to which we promote equality between male and female staff. Our Annual Diversity Monitoring Report provides an analysis of our staff profile by gender, age and ethnicity. It is also provides a key means of checking whether discrimination is evident in our employment practices and key elements of our equal opportunities policy are being implemented effectively. This is detailed more in the section on People Results (refer paragraph 30).



Audit Scotland's Equality Schemes

6. We have developed equality schemes and corresponding action plans for race, gender and disability in response to legislative requirements and all schemes are published on our website. During 2009, we will progress to a single equality scheme, covering all six equality strands. This will give further momentum to the equality agenda, and will allow us to respond more effectively to the anticipated requirements of the Single Equality Act. To date, we have established a project team to lead this development and work has started to review the previous schemes in place. It is anticipated that we will publish our single equality scheme in autumn 2009, following appropriate communication and involvement activity.
7. Whilst we are committed to meet the equality duty obligations, the legislation is only one driver for paying attention to these important issues. We believe that as an employer, a public body, and as an auditor and service delivery agent to the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission we can take a leading role in the promotion and application of best practice in diversity and equality of opportunity. We continue to promote the equalities agenda at a number of levels including setting out our corporate plan commitments with an equality dimension, considering diversity and equalities issues in scoping new national studies and through Statutory Performance Indicators covering aspects of equalities.



Progress to June 2009

Management and Leadership

8. Our Gender Equality Scheme specifically highlights our focus on mainstreaming the management of diversity and equality by ensuring managers have the necessary skills and competence to manage diverse teams and to embrace the opportunities to promote equality in the work that we do. Securing and sustaining a culture of equality and diversity across the whole of Audit Scotland means our senior leaders and managers are committed to the equalities agenda. Achievements in this area in the last 12 months include the following.

New Diversity & Equality Steering Group

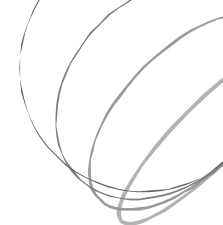
9. During 2008, we established a revised approach to the strategic management of the diversity agenda within Audit Scotland. Our Diversity Working Group was replaced by a new Diversity & Equality Steering Group (DESG) which has been established to provide long-term and continuing support, and leadership for all diversity and equality issues. The DESG includes senior leads for each business area together with Practitioner and Specialist members who have an interest in the subject of equality and diversity. The DESG has a strategic role but its membership, rooted within different teams based across Scotland, is able to ensure that action and the process of culture change takes place at a local level. This is done through local management and delivery teams. The DESG is accountable to Audit Scotland's Senior Management Team.

Management Development Programme

10. We have now completed the first phase of our Management Development Programme (MDP1). MDP1 included dedicated training sessions about equality and diversity for senior managers, and provided them with an opportunity to explore and exchange views about the equality agenda, and refresh their understanding of employer duties. MDP1 was independently evaluated and this information is now being used to help inform a refreshed tendering process for future management development. We envisage that this second phase, MDP2, will be designed and piloted during late 2009.

Other Training

11. We continue to utilise on-line training solutions to ensure that all staff and managers acquire knowledge and demonstrate their learning through a computer based package. This interactive training is undertaken by all new staff as part of their induction programme with managers required to complete additional modules which assist in providing a better understanding of their responsibilities for staff supervision and managing by example.



Competency Framework

12. Our competency framework, which helps our people understand the behaviours which we seek to promote in our work, was refreshed during 2008. Staff were invited to participate in the process of identifying our priorities for this project and the importance of behaviour and attitudes which support diversity and equality is woven throughout the competency descriptions. The revised framework is now operational for all staff and managers as part of the performance management and appraisal system.
13. A similar project is now nearing completion for our twenty-five most senior managers and leaders.

Policy & Strategy

14. The Diversity Excellence Model requires that the management of diversity is mainstreamed with a clear strategic aim communicated effectively, sensitively and implemented. In managing diversity we recognise that our workforce consists of a diverse population and differences of culture, background, preferences and values are recognised and understood, and those differences are valued. That is also true of our approach as an auditor and service delivery agent to the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission. Within our Gender Equality Scheme we have interpreted this into various actions required and progress in this area is highlighted below.

Benchmarking

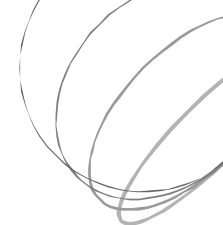
15. We informally benchmark with other public sector organisations, including UK audit & inspection agencies such as the National Audit Office, Audit Commission and Wales Audit Office. This benchmarking is carried out through initiatives such as the Public Audit Forum, and covers gender information as well as a range of other equality & diversity data. This activity also enables Audit Scotland staff and managers to build relationships with practitioners from other employer organisations and exchange information upon good practice.

Implementing and progressing our Gender Equality Scheme

16. The recently formed DESG enables a co-ordinated approach to the implementation and progress of our Gender Equality Scheme across the different functions of our organisation. Our DESG maintains an action plan which underpins our strategic aims and allows a structured response to internal and external drivers which impact upon the diversity and equality agenda including those relating to gender. Specific progress on tools to enable consideration of diversity and equality are considered as follows:

Equality Impact Assessment

17. Progress has been made in ensuring that equality impact assessments (EqIA) are both integral to all our activity and that a co-ordinated approach is evident across the organisation. As part of the developments toward developing a single equality scheme, the DESG recently undertook work to identify priority policies or activities from across Audit Scotland which require full equality impact assessments, to ensure these are being carried out.



18. We have also adopted the Scottish Government's EqIA tool and customised the process and documentation to meet Audit Scotland's needs. A training programme has been developed in support of EqIA, and this has been delivered to staff involved in current EqIA activity. Further training events have been organised throughout 2009. The EqIA tools, training and supporting materials all include an emphasis on ensuring individual strands, such as gender, are effectively considered as part of the EqIA process.

Single Equality Scheme

19. As previously mentioned a key objective for us is publication of a single equality scheme covering all equality strands including gender. To date we have established a project team to lead this development and work has started to review the previous schemes in place. It is anticipated that we will publish our single equality scheme in autumn 2009, following appropriate communication and involvement activity.

Project Management Framework

20. Our guidance booklet 'Building diversity and equality into our work' is used throughout our project cycles to ensure that equality and diversity issues are considered and addressed. Public Reporting Group reports use gender equality statistics where appropriate and aim to gather evidence that is representative of a diverse population. We are improving in the way in which we represent the views and experiences of diverse groups of people, for example our recent overview of mental health services also contained a supplementary report highlighting views from service users and carers from a range of backgrounds who had attended our focus groups.

Forward work programmes (FWP)

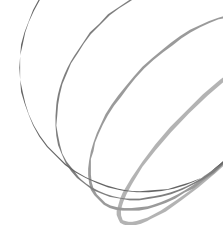
21. Equality impact considerations are included within our FWP. As part of the development of Best Value audits across the public sector, we are developing an equalities audit framework which will be used to assess the performance of public bodies and this will be highlighted within our public reports.

People

22. Our gender equality scheme includes provisions for how we will ensure people understand, are committed to, are involved and recognised in the effective management of diversity. Developments since June 2008 include the following.

Involvement

23. We remain committed to involving our staff in the management of diversity. Integral to much of Audit Scotland's work is a consideration of how people are affected by public policy and practice. Impact assessment type activity has always been a part of our normal practices particularly with regard to our external work and we are now working to make this more explicit and evidenced. Our processes for delivering this are detailed in the previous section on Policy and Strategy.



24. During 2008/09 significant work has been undertaken to build a diversity delivery infrastructure which is fit for purpose in taking forward the diversity agenda across Audit Scotland. In recent years our Diversity Working Group (DWG) achieved good progress in designing and implementing all our equality schemes including the Gender Scheme. As previously mentioned they have now been replaced with a DESG who have a more strategic remit to help mainstream diversity and equality within the organisation and ensure a co-ordinated response to this agenda.
25. Membership of the DESG includes a much richer mix of staff and senior management from all of our four Business Groups. The group meets bi-monthly to discuss topical issues and the progress of the organisation's overall diversity and equality objectives. The DESG is supported by delivery groups within each business area. In February 2009 a detailed terms of reference document was published which outlines the DESG's and delivery groups' key roles and responsibilities; the knowledge, skills and competence required by those involved; and the key objectives for delivery in 2009. Leads have been established for each equality strand including gender and it is the remit of that individual to ensure that gender is effectively represented as an equality strand particularly with regard to developments such as a single equality scheme covering all strands. Members of the steering group also have responsibility to ensure that all ideas and developments are effectively communicated to all internal and external stakeholders.

Measuring staff opinion

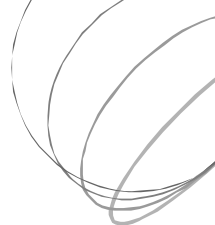
26. In addition to the membership of our DESG we regularly undertake focus groups and workshops to help ensure that projects and initiatives benefit from the input of a diverse group of staff and managers.
27. As part of the staff rewards project we invited staff to complete a short on-line staff survey to gauge views on our current reward system and other alternative pay systems. Responses were analysed and once we had obtained survey results additional focus groups were held to find out more about staff views. These opinions have been used to inform the development of the project which is now in its later stages.
28. Work is now already underway which will lead to our 2009 survey of staff opinion. The equality and diversity agenda will continue to form an important part of our next survey.

People Results

29. We are keen to understand how our organisation is perceived in relation to our work on equality and diversity and make use of monitoring data and employee research for this purpose.

Employee monitoring

30. Our annual equality monitoring results in a report which examines gender data alongside other equality strands such as disability, race and age. The gender specific data is examined in relation to our actual practice in connection with recruitment, promotions, appraisal outcomes, access to training, flexible



working arrangements and people leaving Audit Scotland. Where a statistical trend or anomaly is identified this is followed up with further analysis to try and better understand the root cause.

31. Our next report which will cover the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009 is currently being compiled. This report will be presented to the DESG and Audit Scotland's Senior Management Team.
32. As part of the annual information request, the DESG has agreed that information on disability matters should be sought from staff. Future letters may request staff to volunteer information on other equality strands.
33. We are not currently monitoring transgender status as part of our HR monitoring processes but we are continuing to review trends and good practice in this area and will revise our approach if appropriate. We are committed to ensure discrimination does not occur in relation to transgender status and gender identity and we will ensure appropriate measures are incorporated into our revised single equality scheme.

Equal Pay Review

34. The Code of Practice on equal pay recommends equal pay reviews as the most appropriate method of ensuring that a pay system delivers equal pay free from gender bias. We carry out an annual review of pay in accordance with this Code to identify any pay gaps between men and women doing equal work or work of equal value. The last review was undertaken during 2008, and concluded that our pay, grading and performance management systems are designed to be non-discriminatory. The next equal pay review will be carried out later in 2009.

Opinion Survey Results

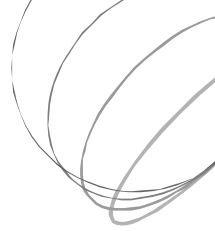
35. Our pay modernisation programme has in part been driven by the need to ensure compliance with equalities legislation. Whilst this mainly relates to age discrimination legislation i.e. very long pay spines being a key aspect which is likely to be affected, the programme has also sought compliance on gender specific issues, and other strands. The data from our rewards project survey was analysed by demographic group including gender to provide insight into the results.

Partnerships & Resources

36. The Diversity Excellence model emphasises the need to have partnerships and resources aligned and deployed to take into account the diverse needs of all stakeholders. Within our Gender Equality Scheme we interpreted this into some specific actions around facilities and procurement.

Information Technology & Communications (IT&C)

37. Audit Scotland has consulted widely with staff regarding their IT&C needs. This consultation revealed that many staff wanted the size and weight of portable IT hardware to be reduced (some 70% of Audit Scotland staff). Many of our staff frequently travel to client sites and stay away for business at some of



our more remote client locations. During 2008/09 we have been able to facilitate an improvement in this area. Whilst we have procured smaller, lighter laptop hardware we have also been able to take advantage of new developments in IT access so that many staff no longer need to transport IT hardware at all. This has been made possible through the use of Citrix Access Gateway technology.

38. Although the introduction of this new technology is of benefit to all staff, the introduction of lightweight equipment in particular has additional benefits for female employees and we have received positive feedback from pregnant employees who were concerned about the weight of previous equipment. Benefits to staff have also been matched by savings gained by a reduction in the number of laptops & desktop personal computers. In addition, improved use of technology that allows staff to access our IT systems from off-site locations has allowed the more effective use of home working and other forms of flexible working.

Facilities

39. We utilise an on-line work station assessment package to educate staff regarding the facilities adjustments that are available to support their needs whether related to gender or other specific needs. Whilst this assessment package was completed by existing staff when it was introduced in the early part of 2008, we ensure that this assessment is completed by all new staff complete as part of their induction programme.

Procurement

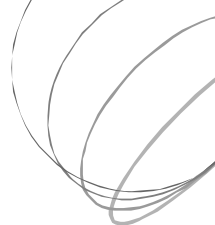
40. We previously reported that our procurement guidance has been revised to include equality and diversity requirements and we continue to expect our suppliers to adopt the same standards as ourselves with regard to valuing diversity and promoting equality.

Processes

41. The systematic design, review and improvement of processes to manage (and leverage) stakeholder diversity is an integral part for our approach using the diversity excellence model. With regard to gender equality our focus here has been inclusive communication processes as well as consideration of our quality framework.

Communication

42. Our communication approach is designed to ensure inclusivity in language and we consciously avoid gender bias in terminology used. We have developed a summary of published guidance on the acceptable and sensitive use of language in relation to diversity, which includes guidance on language, related to gender, and has made this available to Audit Scotland staff.



Libro Intranet Resources

43. To support our staff in understanding and mainstreaming equality and diversity into their work, we are developing our intranet site Libro. The aim of this development is to provide all staff with quick and easy access to resources on diversity and equality and support the promotion of diversity and equality. This includes links to external sites and good practice we identify.

Best Value Review of Recruitment & Selection

44. Audit Scotland has undertaken a review of the way it attracts, recruits and selects new employees. This has included an EqIA undertaken as part of the review. The outcomes of the review will help inform the processes and procedures employed by the organisation as we re-engineer our approach to recruitment and selection during 2009.

Customer Results

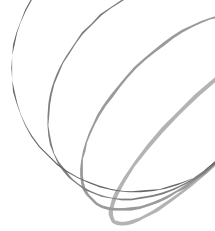
45. Our clients and stakeholders are diverse and we are always looking for opportunities to ensure equality in our relationships; and to leverage the influence we have on ensuring they in turn ensure equality in their service provision.

46. During 2008, we supported the Accounts Commission in its review of the way Best Value audits are carried out. This review highlighted that equalities was an area that should be further developed in the second round of Best Value audits (BV2). We are working with the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and other interested parties, in support of the Accounts Commission, to develop a consistent and coherent approach to addressing equalities within BV2. As part of its consultation on the approach to BV2, the Accounts Commission has published an equalities audit framework.¹ This framework outlines the key questions which may be explored as part of a BV2 audit, such as:

- How well does the organisation know the profile and needs of its diverse communities?
- Does the organisation and its partners lead improvements in equality effectively?
- Does the organisation have a modern, diverse workforce which reflects the local community?
- Are services responsive to their diverse communities?
- Does the organisation deliver positive outcomes for its diverse communities?

47. The equalities audit framework applies across all strands of equality and, depending on the outcome of the risk assessment process, has been designed to allow auditors the flexibility to focus specifically on equality issues (e.g. gender, race, disability) or to make equalities judgements under other Best Value areas such as community engagement, scrutiny, and people management.

¹ Consultation documents (March 2009) can be found at www.audit-scotland.gov.uk



Society Results

48. We continue to implement some of the recommendations of the Crerar Review around joint working between audit and inspection agencies. In building our relationship with the new Equality and Human Rights Commission we are identifying how we can work together to best effect. The extent to which councils are delivering on their equality duties has been incorporated within the shared risk assessment framework which Audit Scotland has developed with its local government scrutiny partners as part of its joint scrutiny planning development work.

Key Performance Results

49. The Diversity Excellence Model encourages us to look at the extent to which our work on diversity and equality contributes to our business results. With regards to gender, alongside the other equality strands we will be developing our approach to measuring this and will incorporate this into our revised combined scheme.

Conclusion

50. We have continued to make good progress during the last 12 months to eliminate discrimination and promote equality across all equality strands within Audit Scotland. We have highlighted areas of gender specific activity as well as some of the cross strand work which is also having an effect on gender equality. In particular significant work has been undertaken to build a diversity delivery infrastructure which is fit for purpose in taking forward the diversity agenda across Audit Scotland. The DESG provides a more strategic remit to help mainstream diversity and equality within the organisation and ensure a co-ordinated response for the future.

51. We have also continued to promote equalities through our influence on external stakeholders. A key development in this area is the ongoing work with the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and other interested parties to develop a consistent and coherent approach to addressing equalities within BV2.

Next steps

52. As we are moving towards a single equality scheme, this will be the final annual report specifically on progress against gender equalities.