

# Mainstreaming equality and equality outcomes

Progress report 2017-19



## Who we are

The Auditor General, the Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland work together to deliver public audit in Scotland:

- The Auditor General is an independent crown appointment, made on the recommendation of the Scottish Parliament, to audit the Scottish Government, NHS and other bodies and report to Parliament on their financial health and performance.
- The Accounts Commission is an independent public body appointed by Scottish ministers to hold local government to account. The Controller of Audit is an independent post established by statute, with powers to report directly to the Commission on the audit of local government.
- Audit Scotland is governed by a board, consisting of the Auditor General, the chair of the Accounts Commission, a non-executive board chair, and two non-executive members appointed by the Scottish Commission for Public Audit, a commission of the Scottish Parliament.



## About Audit Scotland

Our vision is to be a world-class audit organisation that improves the use of public money.

Through our work for the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission, we provide independent assurance to the people of Scotland that public money is spent properly and provides value. We aim to achieve this by:

- carrying out relevant and timely audits of the way the public sector manages and spends money
- reporting our findings and conclusions in public
- identifying risks, making clear and relevant recommendations.

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# Executive summary

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- 1.** This report sets out how Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission, working with the Auditor General for Scotland, are addressing their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Equality outcomes were first set in 2013 and then revised in 2017. This report summarises the progress made in mainstreaming equality and achieving the two 2017 equality outcomes over the last two years.
- 2.** With respect to Outcome 1: Audit work reflects how public services meet the diverse needs of all citizens and communities, a stronger equality thread now runs through our performance audits. And that is down to the more established role played by our external advisors, the Equality and Human Rights Advisory Group. That has helped us adapt the scope of audits, how we engage with service users and report on findings. The report contains numerous examples of how equality has been advanced through our performance audits, including around access to children's mental health services and to broadband in rural areas.
- 3.** Equalities are also now part of our considerations for local government Best Value audit scopes and communications strategies. And this work will be further developed as part of the mandatory aspect of the five-year Best Value audit regime.
- 4.** Information on equalities now features in some annual audit reports, and the financial audit planning guidance for 2018/19 now explicitly includes equalities as an area to be considered over the course of an audit appointment.
- 5.** Good progress has been made on Audit Scotland's Outcome 2: Audit Scotland promotes, understands and supports a diverse and inclusive workforce. However, it is an area we continually revisit to ensure we are responsive to what we learn from both the gathering of employment data and our annual staff survey.
- 6.** We are also looking ahead: our future audit work will reflect, where appropriate, on how well public bodies are addressing human rights and socio-economic disadvantage. That will consider Scotland's changing landscape including its new financial powers, Social Security Scotland, the new Budget Review Process, the National Performance Framework and the Fairer Scotland Duty. This work will be approached in the same measured and consistent manner as our audit duties. And further materials will be developed to support auditors.

# Introduction

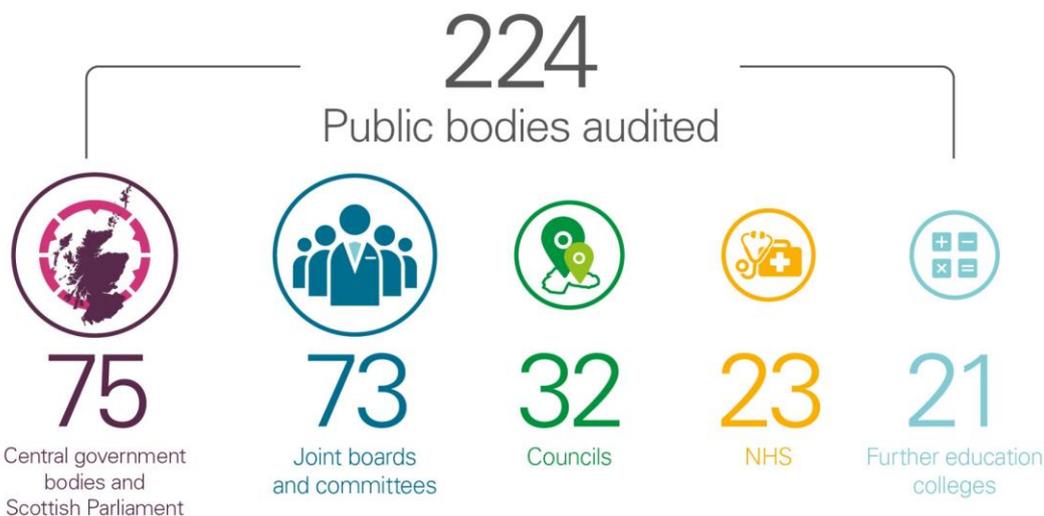
## Roles

**7.** This report is published jointly by the Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland.

**8.** The Accounts Commission is the public spending watchdog for local government. It holds councils in Scotland to account and helps them improve. It operates impartially and independently of councils, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament, and it meets and reports in public.

**9.** Audit Scotland is a statutory body that carries out audits and investigations for the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland. The board of Audit Scotland meets throughout the year and all meetings are open to the public. The Auditor General for Scotland secures the audit of the Scottish Government and other public bodies in Scotland, except local authorities. The Auditor General is independent of the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament.

**10.** Audit Scotland helps the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission to ensure public money in Scotland is used properly, efficiently and effectively. This is done by carrying out performance, Best Value and financial audits of various aspects of how public bodies work. Public audit in Scotland covers over 220 public organisations, including the Scottish Government, the NHS in Scotland and local councils. These organisations spend over £40 billion of public money annually.



The Auditor General and the Accounts Commission appoint the auditors. Approximately two thirds of the annual audit work (by value) is done by Audit Scotland and a third by private sector audit firms.

**11.** For more information about Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission, including our vision, structure, aims and priorities, see Audit Scotland's Corporate Plan 2018-21 and the Accounts Commission's Strategy and annual action plan 2018-23, both published on our website.

## About this report

**12.** This report sets out how Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission, working with the Auditor General, are addressing their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Under the Act, public bodies must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work: in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. The public sector equality duty, also known as the general equality duty, covers the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act
- advance equality of opportunity among all people
- foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

**13.** The Scottish Specific Duties require listed authorities to carry out the following activities:

- Report on mainstreaming the equality duty
- Publish equality outcomes and report progress
- Assess and review policies and practices
- Gather and use employee information
- Publish gender pay gap information
- Publish statements on equal pay
- Consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement.

**14.** Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission are listed authorities for both the Equality Act and the Specific Duties in Scotland. Consequently, they are required to report progress on mainstreaming the public sector equality duty and to report progress on their published equality outcomes. Revised [equality outcomes](#) were published in 2017:

- Outcome 1: Audit work reflects how public services meet the diverse needs of all citizens and communities
- Outcome 2: Audit Scotland promotes, understands and supports a diverse and inclusive workforce.

**15.** Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission, as separate organisations, have individual responsibility to publish this information every two years. As the work of these bodies is so closely linked, a joint report is considered preferable. It should be noted that the Accounts Commission is only directly concerned with Outcome 1, as the Commission gets its support from Audit Scotland. Both the steering group of internal members, and the advisory group of external members, address the audit work of both organisations.

**16.** The Equality and Human Rights Steering Group (EHRSG) oversees the mainstreaming of the public sector equality duty, and the implementation of Equality Outcome 1. The steering group has representation from all our business groups and its work includes:

- raising awareness of equality issues among staff
- helping to ensure the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are met
- working with business groups to help mainstream equality in our audit work.

**17.** We established an Equality and Human Rights Advisory Group (EHRAG) in 2016, involving people from a wide range of external stakeholder organisations (see [Appendix 1, page 22](#) for membership), to help shape our approach to equality in the work we do.

**18.** The Audit Scotland People Focus Group (PFG) oversees implementation of Equality Outcome 2. The PFG has been established to support the Management Team of Audit Scotland on key strategic employment matters, including review of diversity and equality reporting and outcomes, as they relate to the employees of Audit Scotland.

**19.** In relation to Outcome 2, a range of equality information, for example on how we gather and use employee information, is published on the Audit Scotland website, in line with the specific duties of the Equality Act. A summary of how compliance with these duties is ensured, is set out in [Appendix 2, page 24](#).

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# Mainstreaming equality

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## How have we mainstreamed the equality duty?

### Public performance reporting

**20.** The [equality outcomes](#) we refreshed in 2017 have made the equality duty integral to the work of Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission. The 2018-21 [Audit Scotland Corporate Plan](#) includes Diversity and Equality as one of three key organisational priorities. Meanwhile, the Accounts Commission's [Engagement strategy and plan: 2018/19](#) notes that Audit Scotland works, on its behalf, with the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and convenes an Equality and Human Rights Advisory Group to ensure consideration of equalities is embedded in its work.

**21.** We use our existing public performance reporting systems to publish equality impact assessments and our reports associated with mainstreaming the equality duty. All of our final reports on annual audits, performance audits and Best Value audits can be found on our external website. We provide examples in the next section of reports where equality has featured.

### Leadership

**22.** Audit Scotland's Management Team provide clear and consistent messages about the importance of the public sector equality duty, to ensure that it is given appropriate profile and emphasis. For example, Audit Scotland now publishes a diversity report and a separate gender pay gap report annually, whereas the duties only require publication every two years. Management Team initiated the debate about consideration of human rights and socio-economic inequality by holding an Equality Summit in 2018.

**23.** This has also influenced procurement decisions: for example with regard to our new archive storage provider, Redrock, its aim is to 'provide sustainable employment for disabled people and a quality service to our customers'.

### Staff awareness and understanding

**24.** A range of activities have helped raise staff awareness of equality and diversity issues in our work:

- On arrival, new staff undertake online training on diversity and equality as part of the overall induction. We are currently reviewing whether to update that training package.
- Members of the Accounts Commission have received diversity training.
- In November 2017, an equalities and human rights knowledge café was held. Several members of the EHRAG talked about the role of their organisation and why equality and diversity should matter to our audits, flagging up areas of persisting inequality for people with protected characteristics, for example those with a mental health disability.
- We published a blog on the role of EHRAG and publicised to colleagues the roll out of equality prompts in the refreshed Audit Management Framework (AMF).
- Members of the EHRSG have held sessions on equality and diversity at their business group team meetings. For example, in PABV a member of the Self-directed Support audit team talked about the ways they had engaged with

service users and disability organisations. They also described how they reported this in the final report in an accessible way.

- In 2018/19, there has been a particular focus on mental health: the provision of training on Mental Health first-aid, a Mental Health Awareness Week, and the organisation adopted as the new corporate charity is the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH).
- Four 'Women in Leadership' seminars were held in 2018.

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# Progress on equality outcomes

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

### We said we would:

- 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
- publish all information and reports in formats that are accessible to all
- incorporate equality and diversity issues in audit work programmes in a way which is consistent with our audit duties
- 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.

### Involving people who share a relevant protected characteristic and their representatives

**25.** The focus of stakeholder engagement work has been through Audit Scotland's Equality and Human Rights Advisory Group (EHRAG). It was established in 2016 and meets every six months. Membership is detailed in [Appendix 1, page 22](#).

**26.** Audit Scotland consults with EHRAG on the proposed forward work programme of performance audits and seeks input from members on proposed future topics. This has helped us embed equality and human rights concerns in our audit work and to gather views on potential topics for our future work programme.

**27.** The feedback from EHRAG has helped us build equality and human rights considerations more effectively into our audit work. For example:

- EHRAG recommended that the scope of the [Children and young people's mental health](#) (CYPMH) audit should look beyond statutory services to consider access to early intervention. The audit took this wider view of this service area and subsequently reported critically on several equality-related topics, including the current focus of CYPMH services, equity of access to services, and the range and level of performance and equality-related outcome data.
- EHRAG identified the need for the [2018 Broadband update](#) audit to consider access from a rural perspective. The audit subsequently did this and reported critically on the Scottish Government's engagement and

communication with rural communities and the performance of Community Broadband Scotland.

- Our engagement with EHRAG has led to the Scottish Human Rights Commission working with the Social Security audit team to ensure that implications of the UN Right to Social Security are appropriately reflected in our audit work in this area.

**28.** EHRAG has also identified several broader equality and human rights-related issues. This includes: the role of the refreshed National Performance Framework and the community empowerment agenda in promoting human rights, equality and human rights-based budget scrutiny; the impact of national and local budget changes on different groups or communities of interest (potentially including protected characteristic groups). We will continue to engage with EHRAG on these issues during 2019.

**29.** Each year we undertake an [Equality Impact Assessment](#) on the refreshed work programme and publish it on the Audit Scotland website.

### Progress in performance audit

**30.** Audit Scotland's Audit Management Framework (AMF) requires staff to identify relevant equality issues when scoping and carrying out national performance audits. For example:

- At the scoping stage: does the audit advisory group bring sufficiently diverse perspectives to this audit?
- At the evidence stage: are we speaking to local community groups or other organisations that might be able to help us understand who is and who isn't using the services, and what their experiences are; are we actively involving diverse groups in designing user surveys?
- At the reporting stage: have you, along with Communications colleagues, identified specialist media outlets that cater for specific groups and ensured they receive notice of the report and the publicity materials?

**31.** Audit teams include equality considerations in their methodology, fieldwork or reporting stages in performance audits. Examples of such audits, published since the last Mainstreaming report or audits that are currently in progress, include:



#### **Self-directed support: 2017 progress report (August 2017)**

The audit sought the views of families and carers on how the self-directed support process is working. The audit team produced an online survey with paper copies available and translated into Braille. The team regularly sought the advice and assistance of expert equalities groups. For example, an organisation that supports minority ethnic carers assisted with holding focus groups in people's homes. An easy read version of the report for people with learning disabilities was published.



#### **Equal pay in Scottish councils (September 2017)**

The report focused on eliminating gender discrimination in local government pay grades. Regular advice and support were provided throughout the audit from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and Close the Gap who were members of the audit advisory group. The report contained a section on the gender pay gap. It also provided a checklist for councils to ensure they are fulfilling the public sector equality duties regarding equal pay alongside scrutiny prompts for elected members.



### **Early learning and childcare (February 2018)**

Scoping for the audit highlighted equality issues, such as uptake of funded Early Learning and Childcare services by eligible two-year olds (e.g. children who are looked after and children of families in receipt of certain benefits) and about support available for children with additional support needs. The team produced an online guide for service users, parents and a video for parents to direct them to the guide.



### **Managing the implementation of the Scotland Acts (March 2018)**

The report provides findings on how the Scottish Government engages with clients and seldom heard groups. The audit team identified equalities as a relevant area to follow up in audits on social security.



### **Local government in Scotland: Challenges and performance (April 2018)**

The audit team considered equality issues in the annual audit reports on councils and information from the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) on equalities. The report considers the impact of budget cuts and community empowerment on more deprived communities. It comments on the gender balance of elected members. It also highlights that councils should ensure they meet the needs of more vulnerable groups with limited access to digital technology as they pursue their digital transformation programmes.



### **Scottish Fire and Rescue Service update (May 2018)**

The audit team identified equality issues at the scoping stage as data showed gender imbalance amongst uniformed staff. The report recommends that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service include equality impact assessments with papers to inform board decisions and set out in its workforce planning how it plans to eliminate the gender pay gap. The report highlights the gender imbalance of the workforce and the steps SFRS is taking to address this.



### **Scotland's colleges 2018 (June 2018)**

The audit team looked at college access and attainment for students with defined equality characteristics and at the gender balance among students and on college boards. The final report includes key messages, a number of exhibits and a case study relating to these equality issues.



### **Children and young people's mental health (September 2018)**

The audit team considered equalities at the scoping stage of the audit and commissioned a literature review on equalities and mental health. During the audit, the team engaged with a group of young people, and with a range of stakeholder organisations about relevant equalities issues. The final report includes an exhibit showing the prevalence of mental health issues amongst different groups of young people.

## **Progress in Best Value audit**

**32.** We assess Best Value over a five-year audit appointment, through the ongoing annual audit work, our Best Value Assurance Reports on individual councils, and through discrete pieces of work looking at specific issues. This approach ensures Best Value audits include consideration of equal opportunities issues. Judgements are reached on:

- how committed the council is to equal opportunities

- to what extent equal opportunities is embedded in service delivery
- to what extent the council promotes equal opportunities in the community.

**33.** Guidance has been prepared to support all auditors and this was supplemented with a briefing paper in December 2018. The Best Value toolkit on [equality](#) helps auditors establish the extent to which public bodies' arrangements for equality are designed to achieve, and are delivering, Best Value. Organisations may download and use the toolkit for self-assessment. In the six months to February 2019, there were 337 downloads of the toolkit from the Audit Scotland website, an average of 56 downloads per month.

**34.** An Equality Impact Assessment of Audit Scotland's approach to auditing [Best Value in local government](#) was published in April 2017.

**35.** Each Best Value Assurance Report now has a communications promotions plan which focuses on specific messages and specific local audiences. For example, for the East Renfrewshire Council BVAR (published November 2017) we published an easy read A3 poster which was distributed to libraries, GP and dental surgeries. Also, an e-newsletter was sent to key groups, particularly in the voluntary sector and community groups, including parent councils and community councils, highlighting and summarising key findings from each report. In the first month following publication of these additional outputs, we saw a 53 per cent increase in report downloads, plus additional social media coverage.

**36.** The following audit included equality considerations in the methodology, fieldwork and reporting stages of the audit:



#### **BVAR Orkney Islands Council, November 2017**

The audit team identified equalities as an area of potential good practice at the scoping stage. The team interviewed relevant council and partner leads on equalities issues and reviewed relevant documents. The report includes a section on equalities. For example, it comments on how equalities are considered in decision making processes, how the council works with its community planning partners to take forward equality issues, how the council is performing against its equality outcomes including gender pay gap information, and representation of elected members.

### **Progress in financial audit**

**37.** Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's annual audit report (AAR), [Annual audit of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar](#), published in September 2018 concluded that equality arrangements are established and consider the needs of individuals. Equality and diversity training is included in the induction programmes for all employees. This is outlined in the Equal Opportunities Statement and Policy which is available on the Comhairle website. However, the gender pay gap is substantial. The vast majority of part-time and lower paid grades are predominantly undertaken by female employees. The training strategy is currently being reviewed to incorporate improvement actions identified.

**38.** South Ayrshire Council's AAR highlighted that the council recognised its role as a large employer in ensuring that equality is built into everything it does. The council has developed an equality and diversity strategy and is committed to providing a positive, respectful and supportive working environment, and staff training is provided to support this.

**39.** The AAR for Glasgow City Council confirmed that the council has established a new Empowerment Unit and appointed a Director of Community Empowerment and Equalities. In addition to this, following the recent equal pay ruling, the council has established an equal pay project comprising workstreams to take this matter forward. Councillors are updated through cross-party group meetings.

**40.** The Audit Planning Guidance for 2018/19 audits, published October 2018, states that in addition to the coverage of equalities through Best Value audits of councils, auditors should confirm, for the other sectors, that there are organisational arrangements in place to secure Best Value when planning and reporting on the audit dimensions; the Scottish Public Finance Manual (SPFM) explains that accountable officers have a specific responsibility to ensure that arrangements have been made to secure Best Value. The guidance states that the nature and extent of this work will be determined by the annual risk assessment but that the Best Value characteristic of equalities is to be covered at least once during the five-year appointment period.

### **Accessibility and reporting all audit findings in a style that reflects the audience**

**41.** We work hard to ensure that our work, our services and our workplaces are accessible:

- The websites for both Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 level AA and has been awarded 'two ticks' accreditation for web accessibility by the Digital Accessibility Centre (DAC). The DAC audits our site every year to ensure we maintain our standards and the website is accessible to people with a range of disabilities, including those with hearing difficulties.
- Audit Scotland provides information in a variety of formats for all audiences, helping ensure this information is accessible to stakeholders with hearing difficulties. This includes PDF and RTF formats.
- All our podcasts are available as MP3s and have a transcript to ensure they are available and accessible.
- All our videos and animations on YouTube are captioned to ensure they are available and accessible.
- Contact details to enable members of the public to request alternative formats/languages, including BSL, are available on the back of all our published reports and stated on our website.
- We promote the use of the Contact Scotland BSL service, which gives access to an online interpreter who can communicate with us using sign language.
- When we are contacted to provide a BSL interpreter for a meeting, interview etc, we would arrange and pay for this service.
- Our main office, in Edinburgh, has hearing induction loops in meeting rooms and at reception.

### **Stakeholder engagement and supporting other public bodies in their scrutiny of diversity and equality**

#### **Youth Advisory Panel**

**42.** In 2018, working with Youth Scotland, Audit Scotland set up a Youth Advisory Panel. We are already delivering on our ambition that this panel will work with us to involve young people more in our work and use their voices and experiences as part of the audit process. It will also give those involved on our Youth Advisory Panel valuable experience and skills.

**43.** We're keen to involve young people in how we communicate our audit work, in ways that have value and meaning. The panel is already helping us with this, as described above in relation to the Children and young people's mental health report.

**44.** This builds on our work which has involved a range of service users in our audits on specific services, and now our youth panel is also getting involved in other aspects of our audit work. This includes helping to shape specific audits, looking at how we carry out the work and how we share the messages from our audits with young people. The Youth Advisory Panel will meet regularly throughout the two years that it will be running.

**45.** As well as the panel, we're keen to engage with a wider range of young people, from across Scotland, that's why, together with Youth Scotland, we've set up a larger, online community. They will work with the Youth Advisory Panel to feed in a wider range of views and experiences.

### Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee and the Scottish Human Rights Commission

**46.** Audit Scotland has been strengthening its links and engagement with the Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee and the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC). This is to ensure that we are considering equality-related budgets and performance in our audit work. It also helps us to adopt a more human rights-based approach in developing our work programme and audits. We hold regular liaison meetings with the Equalities and Human Rights Committee clerking team, SPICe staff (Scottish Parliament Information Centre), and the SHRC. We have held early discussions on the equality and human rights implications of the increased alignment between the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and the Scottish Government's refreshed National Performance Framework.

**47.** We are a member of the non-departmental public body equality forum which meets approximately three times a year. The group has equality representatives from the different NDPBs and is a forum for discussion and the sharing of good practice in relation to meeting the public sector equality duties. Over the past year, the forum has focused on equality monitoring and implementing the public sector equality duty (PSED).

**48.** An Audit Scotland representative is an observing member of the Scottish Government's Equality Budget Advisory Group. This is a non-statutory advisory group, with a remit to shape the equality and human rights approach to the Scottish budget. While we do not participate in any decision-making, our observing role helps inform our audit understanding of how human rights and equalities are being considered within the new budget process.

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

### We said we would:

- ensure staff feel valued and are treated with equity and fairness
- embed staff feedback on how to support diversity and equality in how we do things
- ensure staff feel that their wellbeing is a priority for Audit Scotland
- ensure staff recognise that policies are written in plain language, adhere to current legislation and are accessible to all
- ensure there is a rigorous process for conducting EIAs when new policies are introduced, or existing policies are updated
- operate a flexible approach to working practices
- ensure that the reward system is fair, and the gender pay gap and equal pay review results confirm this

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"The group were all really excited about what Inform100 could achieve and are already coming up with ideas on reaching out to hear the views of other young people to help Audit Scotland shape its work over the coming years."

**Julie, one of the Project Leads from Youth Scotland**

"I think it's a wonderful experience to get youth voices heard on topics that are important to us, also it helps us put qualifications on our CVs."

**Jacob, 14**

"Was really good to see it start to be youth-led and taking the lead in the process."

**Dylan, 23**

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- improve information on workforce by encouraging staff to disclose personal information
- increase the number of job applications from people in under-represented groups
- improve recruitment and selection processes in response to feedback.

## Our progress

### Ensure staff feel valued and are treated with equity and fairness

**49.** Audit Scotland has several policies and plans in place to promote equity and fairness among staff, including:

- Diversity and Equality Policy
- Equal Pay Policy
- Gender Reassignment Policy
- Religious Belief Observance Policy
- British Sign Language Action Plan.

**50.** Audit Scotland was successfully accredited with being an ['Engaged' Carer Positive Employer in Scotland](#) (Level 1) in November 2017. Carers are encouraged to identify themselves as carers and can access support within the organisation, such as our flexible working policy, to help them manage their work and caring responsibilities.

**51.** Audit Scotland have Disability Confident Employer status (Level 2) and we are working towards attaining Disability Confident Leader (Level 3). Members of our workforce can access occupational health and we implement recommendations for reasonable adjustments to meet peoples' diverse needs such as work station and office lighting requirements. We have recently set up a group, including members of our staff with disabilities, to look at making further improvements in this area.

### Listen to staff feedback on how to support diversity and equality in how we do things

**52.** Every year we ask all staff to complete the Best Companies staff survey. Information from this staff survey is reviewed by an internal group where action for improvement is identified. For example, we have had a particular focus on well-being as a consequence of survey results. We also review information showing how we are performing on diversity and equality and we review our gender pay gap information. We will identify further actions to be taken and seek wider feedback from staff on relevant issues.

### Ensure staff feel that their wellbeing is a priority for Audit Scotland

**53.** All members of staff have discussions with their line manager every year about how their work is progressing and their development needs. The process is designed to encourage open, future focused conversations about development and ensure staff feel appropriately supported to carry out their work. Effective line management has been identified as a development need and we are currently working on our approach.

**54.** Audit Scotland has adopted the Healthy Working Lives framework and is using this to provide a series of activities and events focused on improving health and wellbeing at work. Our aim is to achieve the Silver Award by March 2020. Over the past two years, we have been raising awareness of our mental health and promoting activities to support this. This includes managing stress and mindfulness awareness sessions. Our Healthy Working Lives campaigns encourage staff to become more active through a step challenge, lunchtime walks, cycle to work

schemes and marathon relay teams. All staff have the opportunity to attend an annual wellness check with healthcare practitioners. These checks provide a review of physical wellbeing and provide information on mental health. Over half of staff (58 per cent) attended wellness checks in 2017/18 and feedback to date has been largely positive. We will continue to focus on mental health over the next year. For example, we are looking at how we can better support colleagues with long-term medical concerns.

**55.** The Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) is our charity partner and we will, where appropriate, make use of any resources they can offer.

### Ensure there is a rigorous process for conducting EIAs when new policies are introduced, or existing policies are updated

**56.** Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are carried out to consider the impact that various policies, strategies, activities and approaches to audit work have on different groups, both within and outside the two organisations. EIAs are reviewed internally. All our EIAs are published on the Audit Scotland website. Examples include EIAs of:

- our new approach to Best Value auditing
- the refurbishment of our Glasgow office
- our pay policy
- our Career Development Gateway process.

### Ensure staff recognise that policies are written in plain language, adhere to current legislation and are accessible to all

**57.** As outlined above, all new or updated policies are subject to EIAs. We will continue to review policies and procedures, replacing or refreshing them as required. We train our staff to write in plain language and offer a bespoke training course. This helps ensure our reports are as clear and to the point as they can be.

### Operate a flexible approach to working practices

**58.** We introduced a more flexible approach to our working practices in 2017 with our Time Place Travel policy. This policy provides greater flexibility over place of work and individual working patterns. In July 2017, we asked staff for their views on how well this is working. The majority of staff feel that they have some degree of choice over where they work and their working pattern. The policy is seen as particularly supportive for those staff with caring responsibilities. Few staff reported a negative impact of the policy on themselves, their team or their client. The policy has now become standard working practice.

**59.** As part of our suite of family friendly policies we have a shared parental leave policy. We encourage all new parents to reflect on the policies we have in place to maximise their work life balance.

**60.** In addition to traditional office-based training, we are also offering more digital based learning and development opportunities, which staff can access in a way that suits their personal circumstances. For example, we are offering more 'how to' guides, recommending videos and online courses which can be accessed when and where is convenient for our staff.

### Ensure that the reward system is fair and the gender pay gap and equal pay review results confirm this

**61.** While equal pay for work of equal value is achieved through the use of our job evaluation system, our gender pay gap changes with the changing composition of our workforce from year to year. We published our gender pay gap information as at 31 March 2018 in March 2019. Our median gender pay gap is 7.96 per cent. This is an increase from last year when it was 4.86 per cent (the national median was 18.1 per cent at that time). The movement is attributed to the fact that 12 of

the 15 new trainees recruited in 2017/18 were female. We are committed to further reducing the gender pay gap and a range of measures have been identified. Our Gender Pay Gap Report can be accessed [here](#).

**62.** We recruit new trainee auditors every year. After the 2017/18 intake, 57 per cent of our professional trainees were female as at 31 March 2018. It is also noteworthy that 75 per cent of Audit Scotland's current executive management team is female.

**63.** The most recent equal pay review was published in 2016 and can be found [here](#). A refresh is currently under way with the findings scheduled to be finalised in April 2019 and published shortly after this date.

### Improve information on workforce by encouraging staff to disclose personal information

**64.** When recruiting new staff, all applicants are encouraged to fill out an equal opportunities monitoring questionnaire which includes age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic background, religion or belief, and marital or civil partnership status. The form is filled out voluntarily and is not part of the selection process. The information provided is confidential and only viewed by members of the Human Resources team. This information can help the organisation respond to the needs of minority groups. For example, all new staff are asked to state whether they consider themselves as having a disability or not, so that reasonable adjustments can be put in place if required. All employees are asked to update this information annually. This is voluntary and not all staff choose to disclose all this information. Employees can update information on their protected characteristics electronically at any time.

**65.** We have a statutory duty to publish a report on employee information every two years but we publish this information every year. Our last [Annual Diversity Report](#) was published in June 2018. It provides detailed commentary about the diverse characteristics of employees and information on the recruitment, development and retention of employees. The report highlights progress we have made and the impact new initiatives are having in supporting equality and diversity. The next report is scheduled for publication in June 2019.

### Improve recruitment and selection processes in response to feedback and increasing the number of job applications from people in under-represented groups

**66.** We advertise our vacancies using both mainstream and specialised job boards, along with advertising generally in disability and lifestyle publications.

**67.** We asked for feedback on our recruitment process at the end of 2018, following a number of recruitment campaigns. Most respondents said it was a positive experience and they generally formed a good impression of Audit Scotland from initial contact onwards. Feedback is routinely gathered every three months in relation to our recruitment and new start processes.

**68.** In 2018, we refreshed our recruitment and selection training. The training gives an overview of the full recruitment process including legislative and equality requirements across all stages of the process from the initial advert to appointment. To get the most from this training we also ask delegates to self-reflect on how confident they are in their ability to recruit the right people and how confident they are in challenging colleagues who hold views that differ from theirs. We also direct people carrying out recruitment to a range of videos, TED talks and online training covering topics such as unconscious bias prior to the training.

# Looking forward

## Equality outcomes 2017-19

69. The following [equality outcomes](#) were published in 2017. Outcomes tend to be set for a four-year period in recognition that it takes time for them to be fulfilled. These outcomes have been subject to review and are considered as appropriate to continue for the next two years:

### The vision for Audit Scotland

To be a world class audit organisation that improves the use of public money

#### This vision will be supported through equality outcomes:

1. Audit work will reflect how public services meet the diverse needs of all citizens and communities.

This will be done by:

- consulting with stakeholders on how to reflect equality and diversity in audit work
- ensuring that staff are sensitive to the diverse needs of stakeholders when performing audit work
- analysing data to help understand who uses public services and use this to inform audit work
- reflecting equality and diversity issues in audit work programmes, in a way which is consistent with the audit duties
- publishing information and reports in formats that are accessible to all
- reporting audit findings in a style that reflects the audience
- reporting on diversity and equality issues where appropriate
- supporting other public bodies in their scrutiny of diversity and equality.

2. Audit Scotland will promote, understand and support a diverse and inclusive workforce.

This will be done by:

- having a culture where people feel valued and where they are treated with equity and fairness
- seeking feedback from staff on how the organisation can support diversity and equality in how things are done
- supporting the wellbeing of staff
- ensuring policies are written in plain language, adhere to current legislation and are accessible to all
- ensuring key policies are subject to a rigorous equality impact assessment
- ensuring a flexible approach to working practices
- continuing to monitor against the Audit Scotland equal pay statement and ensure reward strategies are fair
- encouraging staff to disclose personal information to improve the extent of workforce information
- looking at ways to attract those from under-represented groups
- continuing to monitor recruitment and selection processes and implement improvements in response to feedback.

## Our new outcome

### Background

**70.** The public sector landscape continues to change, with an increasing focus on how public services support improved outcomes for Scottish citizens. A new National Performance Framework has been in place since June 2018, which includes 11 high-level outcomes for Scotland. Two of these outcomes relate to human rights and inequalities:

- We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination.
- We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally.

**71.** These outcomes will be affected by the way public services are funded and delivered. At a Scottish Government level, new financial powers are now operating, including increased tax raising powers, a new budget process and a new Social Security Agency. Locally, the integration of health and care services and citizen involvement in decision-making aims to deliver services differently in the context of increasing demand pressures.

**72.** Audit Scotland's Management Team hosted an internal 'Equalities Summit' in January 2018 and agreed to include consideration of both human rights and socio-economic inequality within the EHRSG remit. A workshop was held with representatives from throughout Audit Scotland, entitled 'Putting people at the heart of audit'. The result of those discussions was the establishment of two internal short-life working parties to address the two areas.

**73.** The working parties have given due consideration to:

- the definition of both topics, as interpreted by the United Nations and the European Commission, respectively
- the interaction of these topics by the Scottish Parliament
- the introduction of the Fairer Scotland Duty, which came into force on April 2018
- the National Performance Framework.

**74.** The principles of human rights, such as participation and accountability feature in the work of the Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland. Similarly, consideration of the presence and impact of socio-economic inequality has featured in several local government reports ([Case study](#)).

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## Case study

[Local government in Scotland: Challenges and performance 2019](#), March 2019

The overview set out two questions focused on inequality: what pressures councils face from demographic change, health and social inequalities; and how well are councils focusing on empowering communities to address inequality and improve inclusion. The report provides a high-level public commentary that states that:

- There needs to be a focus on how services are best delivered to communities and, in particular, how councils protect and empower the most vulnerable members of those communities.
- The number of people living in poverty has increased, putting additional pressure on council services.
- Most councils have a strategic focus on reducing inequality within their communities.

- In terms of Community Empowerment, councils are engaging with communities but there is less evidence of successful engagement with people from deprived areas.
- Councils need to be aware that in implementing digital transformation it is often the most vulnerable within society who have the greatest need for council services but who are least able to access them digitally.

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### Outcome to address human rights and socio-economic inequality through our audits

**75.** The purpose of this outcome is to recognise the increasing profile of human rights and socio-economic inequality in Scottish Government policy decisions and wider public sector policy implementation, including in local government.

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#### 3. In our audit work we will reflect how, where appropriate, public bodies address human rights and socio-economic disadvantage.

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This will be done by:

- reviewing information on the profile of the Scottish population and the people who make use of public services considering how this informs our understanding of human rights and socio-economic disadvantage issues and how this influences our audit work programme
  - reviewing evidence about how public bodies are delivering services and consider the needs of different user groups when budgeting, planning and organising services
  - taking an outcome focussed view as to what budgets aim to and have achieved over the long term
  - reviewing the appropriateness of a [human rights-based approach](#) and its applicability to audit work
  - encouraging staff to adopt the PANEL principles employed by the Scottish Human Rights Commission: Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination and equality, Empowerment of rights holders, Legality of rights
  - training and providing support to colleagues through the EHRSG and internal communications
  - consulting with stakeholders such as those on the EHRAG.
- 

**76.** We have begun engaging with staff on this topic by hosting a workshop, with the participation of the Scottish Human Rights Commissioner, on embedding human rights considerations in our audit work, at the Annual Audit Conference that was held in January 2019. In advancing this outcome we will be cognisant of resources available and prioritise as appropriate. Our next progress report will be published in April 2021 and will include progress against these three outcomes.

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# Appendix 1.

## Equality and Human Rights Advisory Group members

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Age Scotland



Close the Gap

Close the Gap



Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations (CEMVO) Scotland



Enable Scotland



Interfaith Scotland and the Edinburgh Interfaith Association



Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland (MWC)



Minority Ethnic Carers of People Project (MECOPP)



Saheliya



Scottish Secular Society



Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC)



Scottish Trans Alliance



SEEME Scotland

# Appendix 2.

## Meeting the specific duties of the Equality Act

Duty	Equality Act reference	Summary of requirements	Frequency	Last published
Mainstreaming progress	Section 3	Publish a report on the progress made to make the equality duty integral to the exercise of functions	At least every 2 years	This report (April 2019)
Equality outcomes	Section 4(1)&(2)	Publish a set of equality outcomes having involved protected characteristic groups/ individuals and used available evidence	At least every 4 years	April 2017
Progress against equality outcomes	Section 4 (1)&(2)	Publish a report on the progress made to achieve the equality outcomes	At least every 2 years	This report (April 2019)
Equality Impact Assessments	Section 5	Conduct EIAs for new/revised policies and publish these	Ongoing	Ongoing on our website
Gather and use employee information	Section 6 (1)&(2)	Gather information on staffing mix and recruitment, development and retention against protect characteristics	Annual	June 2018
Include employee information in mainstreaming report	Section 6 (3)	Include employee information and progress made in gathering and using this in mainstreaming report (if not published previously).	At least every 2 years	Diversity report June 2018
Gender pay gap information	Section 7	Publish percentage difference between hourly pay rates for men and women	At least every 2 years	Annually  March 2019
Statement on equal pay policy and occupational segregation	Section 8	Publish equal pay policy and analysis of employment by grade/role for gender, disability and race	At least every 4 years	Equal Pay Review  February 2017

# Mainstreaming equality and equality outcomes

## Progress report 2017-19

This report is available in PDF and RTF formats,  
along with a podcast summary at:

[www.audit-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk) 

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