

# VisitScotland's Commitment to Equality & Diversity

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*A progress report on VisitScotland's work around equality and diversity, in line with our obligations under the Scottish Specific Duties of the Public Sector Equality Duty.*

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## **Chief Executive's Foreword**



This report outlines the progress VisitScotland has made since 2013 towards our equality outcomes. However, it is more than that. It serves to also underline our ongoing commitment to mainstreaming equality by reducing discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between different groups in our society both within VisitScotland and in the wider Scottish population.

Much has already been achieved in mainstreaming equality into our work.

We now have a dedicated programme of activity focused on Accessible Tourism. This aims to support tourism businesses and destinations in catering for visitors who have accessibility requirements such as disabled people, families with young children and older people, so that tourism in Scotland is inclusive and available to all. Our Accessible Tourism pilot project in Glasgow and Strathclyde Country Park will continue to July 2015, and we will use it to inform our future work in this area.

We offer equality and diversity training to our staff, and will be delivering a new training programme from this year to continue to raise staff awareness of equality issues and how they relate to their particular role within the organisation.

VisitScotland is also at the forefront of promoting equality in the wider public sector in Scotland as a founding member of, and major contributor to, the NDPB Equality Forum, which provides a focus for the exchange of best practice and cross-body support of equality initiatives.

We regard youth as no barrier to working in Scotland's tourism industry, and are committed to helping develop opportunities for the employment of young people in the sector. We currently offer paid graduate and Modern Apprenticeships placements every year, as well as a number of other work experience and internship opportunities for young people.

As well as using this report to update on our progress towards our 2013 equality outcomes, we have also taken the opportunity to revise and significantly expand our outcomes to better reflect our wider work with all the protected characteristic groups. These expanded outcomes have been formulated following extensive research and consultation with relevant stakeholders. While we have taken many important steps towards mainstreaming equality, we recognise that this is an ongoing commitment and that there is still more that we can do. Our revised outcomes will form the focus of our efforts towards this over the next two years.

**Malcolm Roughead**  
**Chief Executive**

## **Introduction**

### **About VisitScotland**

As Scotland's national tourism organisation, VisitScotland's principle role is to market Scotland to the world as a tourism destination, attracting as many visitors, with as high a visitor spend, as possible. We provide information, inspiration and quality assurance to visitors and potential visitors to ensure that they get the best out of a visit to Scotland, and provide quality advice to our industry partners to help them meet – and strive to exceed – visitors' expectations.

We are a medium-sized organisation, with just over 700 employees working in teams across Scotland in a number of local offices and a network of over 70 Information Centres. Collectively, almost 100 of our staff have achieved professional qualifications from bodies such as the Chartered Management Institute and the Chartered Institute of Public Relations, and we have 75 speakers of foreign languages.

Our **overarching purpose** is to grow and develop Scotland's visitor economy sustainably through our core activity of marketing and events and by working in partnership with businesses and communities. At VisitScotland we believe that tourism is leading economic transformation across Scotland – it creates jobs, sustains communities and provides a critical shop window for business activity across all sectors. We work in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders to deliver on a local, national and international stage, creating economic benefit for every corner of Scotland.

In 2013, tourism contributed £4.6 billion to the Scottish economy, £1.5 billion of which was contributed by visitors in the Accessible Tourism market<sup>1</sup>. We therefore have a crucial role to play in helping deliver the Scottish Government's purpose to focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

### **2014 – the year that Scotland welcomed the world – and beyond**

2014 was the 'Year of Homecoming' – a year-long coordinated programme of inspirational events showcasing the very best of Scottish arts, culture, food and drink, nature, activities, history and ancestry. The Year of Homecoming was part of the Scottish Government's 'Focus' or 'Themed' Years programme which aims to support and drive Scotland's tourism and events industries to both domestic and international markets. With a record-breaking 2 million attendances at over 1000 Homecoming events across Scotland, 2014 was the year in which Scotland welcomed the world to take part in a unique celebration of all that the country has to offer.

Homecoming Scotland supported both new and existing events to strengthen the

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<sup>1</sup> Figures from the Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS), the Great Britain Day Visitor Survey (GBDVS) and the Northern Ireland Statistical and Research Agency (NISRA).

sustainability of the Scottish tourism and events industries, long term. Homecoming events took place in every Local Authority area in Scotland and provided an opportunity to celebrate Scotland's diversity and bring about new opportunities for access to tourism and for businesses working in the sector. Over 1000 tourism and non-tourism businesses harnessed Year of Homecoming opportunities, and funding support was provided for 137 events throughout Scotland.

Thousands gathered in locations across Scotland for the Homecoming events throughout the year, with, for example, over 12,000 people experiencing the opening of Andy Scott's horse head sculptures in Falkirk at the International Launch of the Kelpies, a 20,000 capacity crowd enjoying the two-day, sold out 'Bannockburn Live' festival, and 38,500 people discovering more about the great Scottish naturalist John Muir at the first ever John Muir Festival.

The first 6 months of 2014 equated to the strongest first half of a year for inbound tourism to Scotland since 2008<sup>2</sup>, highlighting the success of the Year of Homecoming in creating and raising awareness of opportunities for tourism in Scotland. 2014 provided a unique platform for Scotland to demonstrate to the world that it is the perfect stage to host world class events, providing a world class welcome. It also gave the people of Scotland, in communities the length and breadth of the country, the opportunity to feel part of something.

The success of Homecoming 2014 provides a fantastic platform to boost the celebration of the future Themed Years, which are the 2015 Year of Food and Drink, the 2016 Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design, the 2017 Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology and the 2018 Year of Young People.

## **Our objectives**

Our Corporate Plan for 2013–2016 initially outlined 5 key objectives to support us in the delivery of our core purpose:

- **Marketing:** We will market Scotland and its outstanding assets to visitors from all parts of the world, including the promotion of Scotland to people living in Scotland, to visit different parts of the country.
- **Customer Experience:** We will provide information and inspiration to visitors both locally and globally via their preferred choice of medium.
- **Quality and Sustainability:** We will provide support and advice to businesses, with the goal of improving the quality and sustainability of the tourism sector in Scotland and we will provide assurance to visitors through our Quality Schemes.
- **Working in Partnership:** We will listen to and work with the industry, partners and stakeholders to shape our offering and support.

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<sup>2</sup> [Homecoming Scotland 2014: The Highlights](http://www.visitscotland.org/what_we_do/deliveringforscotland/homecoming_scotland_2014.aspx). Available at [http://www.visitscotland.org/what\\_we\\_do/deliveringforscotland/homecoming\\_scotland\\_2014.aspx](http://www.visitscotland.org/what_we_do/deliveringforscotland/homecoming_scotland_2014.aspx)

- **Events:** We will support the national events strategy and its delivery and sustain, develop and promote Scotland’s international profile as one of the world’s foremost events destinations.

To reflect the new priorities set out in the Programme for Government 2014–2015 and the refreshed Economic Strategy for Scotland, we have re-defined how we will work in support of our overarching purpose. We now have a single core objective, namely to contribute to the [Tourism 2020 Strategy](#)<sup>3</sup> ambition of growing tourism revenues by £1 billion by 2020.

The afore-mentioned areas of work now form the strategies we will adopt in order to deliver this core objective, and we have expanded these strategies to also include the following:

- **Accessibility:** We will strive to make tourism in Scotland inclusive and available to all.
- **Internationalisation:** We will utilise all our platforms to enable Scottish based tourism businesses to market to a global audience.
- **International Engagement:** We will work within the One Scotland Partnership<sup>4</sup> to optimise the potential offered by Scotland’s Diaspora and our strategic partnerships at regional, European and global levels.

## **Our approach to Equality**

Enhancing access to tourism in Scotland, promoting the social and economic benefits of fostering good relations within the tourism industry and between tourism businesses and visitors, and supporting positive opportunities for the sector, are key features of each of our strategies. Equality is therefore an integral driver of our function as a service provider to both tourism businesses and visitors, and also of our own commitment as an employer, and we strive to mainstream the delivery of equality throughout our organisation.

Our dedicated equality outcomes outline the focus of our work towards meeting our duties as a public authority under the general equality duty of the Equality Act 2010, which are to have due regard, in the exercise of our functions, to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

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<sup>3</sup> Scotland’s National industry-led tourism strategy, led by the Scottish Tourism Alliance (STA). More details are available on [the STA website](http://scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/tourism-scotland-2020/): <http://scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/tourism-scotland-2020/>.

<sup>4</sup> One Scotland Partnerships are an initiative proposed by the Scottish Government in the Programme for Government. They will set out clear trade and innovation goals for specific international markets, but consider the opportunities for the wider public sector, business, industry, universities, Innovation Scotland and the Innovation Centres, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Scotland’s international communities and Diaspora to contribute to their delivery.

Here, we provide an update of our progress towards each of our equality outcomes, and towards integrating our equality duties into the overall work of our organisation.

## **Meeting our Equality Duties**

### **The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 consolidated a range of equality laws that had been in place since the 1970s. The Act sets out the 'protected characteristics' – the personal characteristics that are protected by law.

Under the Act, the protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

It is unlawful to discriminate, harass or victimise another person on the grounds of their having a protected characteristic, or if there is a perception that they have a protected characteristic, or if they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic. The Act also protects people who have a protected characteristic against discrimination relating to employment – both when engaged in and when seeking employment.

The Equality Act 2010 forms the foundation of our Equality policy. It is our policy to provide employment and service delivery equality to all, irrespective of their protected characteristics.

### **The Public Sector Equality Duty**

On 5 April 2011, the public sector equality duty in the Equality Act came into force. VisitScotland is subject to this duty, which comprises both a general equality duty and specific duties.

#### **The General Equality Duty**

Under the general duty in the Equality Act itself, VisitScotland, in the exercise of its functions, must have due regard to the need to:



- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, in particular by removing or minimising disadvantages, recognising that the needs of people in protected groups may be different from others and meeting these needs, and encouraging participation in public life.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

## The Specific Duties

VisitScotland is also subject to specific equality duties that were introduced by Scottish Ministers through the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. The specific duties came into force on 27 May 2012 and aim to assist authorities in meeting their obligations under the general duty.

Under the specific duties, we are required to:

- ***Report on mainstreaming the equality duty***  
The specific duties require us to report on the work we have done towards integrating the general equality duty into the exercise of our function. The first equality mainstreaming report was due for publication on 30 April 2013, and we are required to publish a report every 2 years following this date.
- ***Publish equality outcomes and report progress towards meeting these***  
The specific duties also require us to publish a set of equality outcomes that will guide us in meeting our obligations under the general equality duty. We were required to publish our first outcomes no later than 30 April 2013, and must publish a new set every 4 years following this date. The duties require us, where reasonable, to involve representatives of protected characteristic groups in the development of our outcomes, and to gather relevant evidence relating to people sharing protected characteristics.

Whilst we published our initial outcomes in 2013 and are not required to develop a new set until 2017, we have taken the opportunity here to set out a revised and expanded set of outcomes that build on our original commitments. We will aspire to these revised outcomes until we publish our new set in 2017.

In addition to defining our equality outcomes, the specific duties require us to publish a report every 2 years, starting in April 2015, to outline the progress we have made towards achieving our outcomes.

- ***Gather and use employee information***  
We are also required to gather information on the composition, recruitment, development and retention of VisitScotland employees in relation to their protected characteristics. The duties require us to publish annual figures every

2 years following the publication of our initial equality mainstreaming report in 2013.

- ***Publish gender pay gap information***  
The specific duties require us to publish information on our gender pay gap – specifically, the percentage difference between men’s average hourly pay and women’s average hourly pay – every 2 years as part of our equality mainstreaming report.
- ***Publish statements on equal pay***  
Under the specific duties, we were required to publish an equal pay statement in April 2013, and are required to publish a new statement every 4 years thereafter. Our equal pay statement, published in 2013, includes our policy on equal pay and information on occupational segregation. We will publish our next equal pay statement, as the specific duties require, in April 2017.
- ***Assess and review policies and practices***  
We are required under the specific duties to assess the impact in relation to the needs of the general equality duty of applying proposed new or revised policies and practices.
- ***Consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement***
- ***Publish in a manner that is accessible***  
The specific duties also require us to ensure that our equality information, as outlined above, is published in a format that is accessible to the public. Our reports are published on our [corporate website, www.visitscotland.org](http://www.visitscotland.org), under ‘Our Policies’.

### **Requirements of this report**

In line with the specific duties, this report contains the following information:

- Our revised equality outcomes for 2013–2017.
- Our progress towards mainstreaming the equality duty.
- Our progress to date towards achieving our equality outcomes.
- Updated figures on the composition, recruitment and development of our employees and a summary of how we are using this information to better perform the general equality duty.
- An update of our gender pay gap information.

Staff from across a range of our directorates have been involved in compiling this report, including in particular our Equality and Diversity, Accessible Tourism, core Human Resources (HR), Learning and Development, Corporate Communications, Operations, Insight, and Partnership Relations teams, our Staff Innovation Group, and representatives of senior management.

# **Our Equality Outcomes 2013–2017**

## **Overview**

In our first equality outcomes and mainstreaming report published in 2013, our key outcome focused on the needs of disabled and older people and others with access requirements. Our aim was to harness the growing Accessible Tourism market, and help make Scotland a destination recognised internationally as ‘accessible’ and highlight the resulting economic, cultural, and social benefits thereof. Part of our outcome was also to contribute towards increasing the spend of the Accessible Tourism market on domestic tourism in Scotland.

Our initial report also included consideration of other groups with protected characteristics within the scope of the Accessible Tourism project, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people and ethnic minority communities. With our initial focus on working with disabled and older people, we were not able to progress work with these other protected groups to the same extent as we were with the aforementioned groups.

However, as part of our overall equality strategy, we have now committed to progressing our equality work. We have therefore reviewed our equality outcomes and have expanded these to reflect our wider work in relation to all of the protected characteristic groups. Our priority areas for action were informed by desk-based research and engagement with equality groups representing people with protected characteristics. The below sections outline our revised outcomes, how we developed these, and our work towards addressing them.

The approach we take to addressing our equality outcomes is focused on fulfilling our duties under the public sector equality duty. Our equalities agenda is dynamic, and is continually developed and added to in line with the activities of the organisation as a whole.

## **Our revised Equality Outcomes**

### **Developing our outcomes: evidence gathering and involvement**

Evidence from a number of research and engagement initiatives has underpinned our revised outcomes, including:

- Findings from the VisitScotland staff survey (2013).
- Quantitative data on the VisitScotland staff demographic.
- Quantitative data from the Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS) 2013, the Great Britain Day Visitor Survey (GBDVS) 2013, and the International Passenger Survey (IPS) 2010.

- A review of the findings of consultation events, held in partnership with Capability Scotland, with disabled people about their experience of tourism in Scotland<sup>5</sup>.
- Feedback from regular engagement with disabled people and disabled people's organisations, including through coordination of an Accessible Tourism Steering Group.
- Feedback from engagement with LGBTI equality groups, including Stonewall Scotland, LGBT Youth, LEAP Sports and the Equality Network.
- Findings from research, in partnership with the Equality Network and the Scottish Government, into the LGBT tourism opportunity for Scotland<sup>6</sup>. This research involved a consumer survey which investigated the level of tourism information provision for the LGBT market and the wider travel needs of the LGBT market.
- Ongoing internal review of staff learning and development opportunities.
- Feedback from engagement with the Tourism Skills Group (ongoing, since 2012).
- Feedback from discussions with Higher Education Institutions.
- Feedback from Scottish Government consultation with race and faith groups regarding Scotland's Themed Years.

Themes relating to specific protected characteristic groups, notably disabled people and LGBTI people, were highlighted in our research as priority areas for action. We therefore chose to prioritise these areas in the development of our outcomes, and also because they are particularly relevant to the exercise of our function to service users as Scotland's national tourism agency.

Key findings of our research included the following:

- Challenges for disabled people and others with access requirements in accessing tourism services in Scotland – notably a lack of, and desire for, more detailed accessibility information.
- Gaps in information provision about tourism in Scotland specifically targeted at LGBTI visitors, and a particular wish for more information about safety and the local legal situation in Scotland for LGBTI visitors.

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<sup>5</sup> [VisitScotland Accessible Tourism Involvement Events, Report of Findings](http://www.visitscotland.org/about_us/our_policies/equality_scheme.aspx). Available at: [http://www.visitscotland.org/about\\_us/our\\_policies/equality\\_scheme.aspx](http://www.visitscotland.org/about_us/our_policies/equality_scheme.aspx)

<sup>6</sup> [LGBT Topic Paper, 2014](http://www.visitscotland.org/research_and_statistics/tourism_sectors/lgbt.aspx). Available at: [http://www.visitscotland.org/research\\_and\\_statistics/tourism\\_sectors/lgbt.aspx](http://www.visitscotland.org/research_and_statistics/tourism_sectors/lgbt.aspx)

- A possible lack of engagement of Scotland's ethnic minority communities in Scotland's 2014 Year of Homecoming.

## Our revised Equality Outcomes 2013–2017

Equality outcome(s)	Planned activities	Anticipated outputs	Protected characteristic(s)	General duties addressed
<p><b>Overall:</b>            Harness the growing global Accessible Tourism market and help make Scotland a destination recognised internationally as 'accessible', and highlight the economic, cultural, and social benefits thereof.</p> <p>Improve tourism information provision, and enhance the tourism experience in Scotland, for disabled people and others with access requirements (e.g. older people and families with young children).</p>	<p>a. Speaking engagements at key industry events, to talk about Accessible Tourism.</p> <p>b. Develop resources for tourism businesses about catering for the Accessible Tourism market.</p>	<p>a. Greater awareness among tourism businesses in Scotland of Accessible Tourism and the possibilities for engagement with this market.</p> <p>b. (i) Training tools for tourism businesses to learn about catering for the Accessible Tourism market.</p> <p>b. (ii) Engagement of key frontline staff in Scotland's tourism businesses in Accessible Tourism training tools.</p> <p>b. (iii) Additional relevant guidance for tourism businesses on aspects of accessibility, e.g. accessibility at events.</p>	<p><u>Disability</u>, Age, Pregnancy and maternity</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct (1)</p> <p>Advance equality of opportunity (2)</p> <p>Foster good relations (3)</p>

Equality outcome(s)	Planned activities	Anticipated outputs	Protected characteristic(s)	General duties addressed
	<p>c. Involve disabled people and disabled people’s organisations when engaging with tourism businesses about Accessible Tourism.</p> <p>d. Develop a strategy for improving information provision for Accessible Tourism visitors in Scotland.</p> <p>e. Encourage tourism businesses in Scotland to provide more information for visitors in the Accessible Tourism market.</p> <p>f. Plan and implement an Accessible Tourism ‘destination’ project, with input from disabled people and disabled people’s organisations.</p>	<p>c. Constructive dialogue between the tourism industry and disabled people.</p> <p>d. Guidance for tourism businesses on how to create ‘Access Statements’.</p> <p>e. (i) Increased number of ‘Access Statements’ created by Scottish tourism businesses.</p> <p>e. (ii) Enhanced tourism information provision for visitors with access requirements.</p> <p>f. Learning and recommendations on creating an accessible ‘destination’.</p>		

Equality outcome(s)	Planned activities	Anticipated outputs	Protected characteristic(s)	General duties addressed
	g. Develop Accessible Tourism elements of Scotland's Themed Years.	g. Activities around Accessible Tourism for relevant Scotland's Themed Years.		
<p><b>Overall:</b> Improve information for LGBTI visitors about tourism in Scotland.</p> <p>Enhance awareness among LGBTI visitors of Scotland as a safe and welcoming place to visit.</p>	<p>a. Develop and deliver an information platform for LGBTI visitors to Scotland.</p> <p>b. Engagement with LGBTI organisations regarding the travel and tourism priorities of the LGBTI market.</p>	<p>a. (i) Information on <a href="http://www.visitscotland.com">www.visitscotland.com</a> dedicated to welcoming LGBTI visitors.</p> <p>a. (ii) Improved tourism information provision for LGBTI visitors to Scotland, including information about safety and support.</p> <p>b. Enhanced promotion of tourism opportunities in Scotland to LGBTI visitors.</p>	Sexual orientation	2, 3
<p><b>Overall:</b> Improve awareness of opportunities for ethnic minority communities in Scotland to become involved in the 2014</p>	Collaborate with Scottish Government and BEMIS in the development of the 'Multicultural Homecoming 2014'	Multicultural programme of events for Homecoming 2014.	Race, Religion or Belief	2, 3



Equality outcome(s)	Planned activities	Anticipated outputs	Protected characteristic(s)	General duties addressed
Year of Homecoming.	initiative.			
<b>Overall:</b> Enhance staff awareness of organisational equality and diversity matters.	a. Review procedures for gathering employee equality and diversity information.  b. Review opportunities offered to staff for learning around equality and diversity.	a. Greater staff engagement with equality and diversity monitoring questionnaires, leading to enhanced picture of staff demographic.  b. Updated resources for staff learning around equality and diversity.	All	1, 2, 3
<b>Overall:</b> Enhance support for employment of young people in tourism.	a. Review youth employment strategy and further develop our programme of youth employment initiatives.  b. Maintain and further develop links with Higher and Further Education establishments and other organisations / groups involved in youth employment.	a./b. (i) Formalised programme of youth employment initiatives.  a./b. (ii) Revised youth employment strategy.  a./b. (iii) 'Youth Champion' at strategic level.  a./b. (vi) Investors in Young People accreditation (through Investors in People).	All (young people in all protected characteristic groups)	2, 3

Equality outcome(s)	Planned activities	Anticipated outputs	Protected characteristic(s)	General duties addressed
<p><b>Overall:</b> Maintain a supportive and inclusive working culture and environment which supports staff engagement and professional development.</p>	<p>a. Further develop and raise awareness of professional development opportunities for staff.</p> <p>b. Investigate further possibilities for staff engagement and cross-organisation collaboration.</p>	<p>a. Continued engagement of staff with learning and professional development opportunities.</p> <p>b. Enhanced staff engagement initiatives.</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>2, 3</p>

## **Mainstreaming Equality**

As an organisation, we recognise that successfully meeting the general equality duty is not only about working towards specific equality outcomes, but about ensuring that the needs of the duty are an integral part of our everyday practice. We consider promoting equality to be an organisation-wide responsibility, and have sought to mainstream equality throughout our functions.

The following are examples of our work as an organisation towards mainstreaming the general equality duty:

### **Accessible Tourism**

VisitScotland's Insight team carries out regular monitoring and analysis of the profile of Scotland's visitors, markets and tourism industry. This, and other, research has highlighted a growing number of visitors to Scotland who have access requirements, such as disabled people, families with young children, and older visitors, and who form part of the 'Accessible Tourism' market. In the UK alone, there are 11.6 million people living with a long-term disability, impairment or illness. In 2013, the Accessible Tourism market contributed £1.5 billion to Scotland's economy, and had grown in value to Scotland by 20% since 2009<sup>7</sup>. This emphasised the necessity and demand for high-quality Accessible Tourism services and destinations in Scotland to cater for this valuable market. This was recently highlighted in our report on tourism trends for 2015<sup>8</sup>.

VisitScotland has established a dedicated programme of activity focused on identifying and promoting the opportunities presented by Accessible Tourism in Scotland. Since our initial equality outcomes and mainstreaming report in 2013, this programme has expanded to become a key feature of our function as an organisation. We have recruited an additional staff member to the small team leading this work, and the programme has also recently received a dedicated budget. We have chosen to focus on work in this area of the protected characteristics, as it was highlighted as a priority in our research and is particularly relevant to our function as a service provider.

Our Accessible Tourism programme covers a range of activity, including both providing support to individual tourism businesses and coordinating larger projects. This work aspires to promote equality by contributing towards eliminating discrimination for people with access requirements in accessing tourism services in Scotland, advancing the equality of opportunity for access to tourism, and encouraging dialogue between visitors in the Accessible Tourism market and the Scottish tourism industry. Through our work in this area, we also aim to help

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<sup>7</sup> Figures from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Disability Facts and Figures (January 2014), available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/disability-facts-and-figures>, the GBTS 2013 and the GBDVS 2013.

<sup>8</sup> [Trends for 2015](http://www.visitscotland.org/research_and_statistics/trends_and_insights.aspx). Available at [http://www.visitscotland.org/research\\_and\\_statistics/trends\\_and\\_insights.aspx](http://www.visitscotland.org/research_and_statistics/trends_and_insights.aspx)

increase visitor spend on Accessible Tourism in Scotland and therefore the contribution of this market to Scotland's economy.

As part of the Accessible Tourism programme, VisitScotland chairs an Accessible Tourism Steering Group comprised of disabled people's organisations, disabled individuals, tourism industry representatives, Scottish Government and VisitScotland officials. The group meets approximately quarterly to discuss issues relating to the accessibility of tourism services in Scotland. Recommendations from the group are taken into consideration in the development and delivery of our Accessible Tourism programme, and in our engagement with tourism businesses in Scotland. VisitScotland was also instrumental in discussions with the Scottish Government which inspired the first ever debate on Accessible Tourism in the Scottish Parliament, held in 2014.

While we have a dedicated team working day-to-day on our Accessible Tourism projects, the consideration of accessibility is also embedded throughout all relevant directorates of our organisation. For example:

- VisitScotland operates 4 core Quality Assurance schemes which promote and maintain standards among tourism establishments. As part of their work, our Quality and Tourism Advisors in our Quality and Standards team offer advice to tourism businesses on improving their accessibility and catering for the Accessible Tourism market.
- Our Strategic Partnerships teams liaise with businesses to identify opportunities for participation in our Accessible Tourism initiatives.
- Our Business Events team and our Equality and Diversity and Accessible Tourism teams are working with the Edinburgh Convention Bureau (ECB) on planning for an international disability conference due to take place in Scotland in 2016. VisitScotland provided a contribution on Accessible Tourism to ECB's bid for the conference, and this contribution was recognised in feedback as a significant factor in the decision to choose Scotland as the host country.

Addressing the Accessible Tourism market has been defined in one of our equality outcomes. Detailed information about the specific work that we have undertaken in this area to date can be found in the ['Progress towards meeting our Equality Outcomes'](#) section of this report.

### **Internal reporting**

VisitScotland's Equality and Diversity manager reports biannually to our Board on our overall work towards meeting the general equality duty and our progress towards meeting our equality outcomes.

VisitScotland also circulates a biennial survey to all staff which aims to identify issues concerning staff and gauge overall employee sentiment. The results of these surveys are used to inform the development of our policies and offerings as an employer.

## **Learning and Development**

We have an active learning and development programme, which aims to support staff in the development of their knowledge and core skills. Our vision is to be an organisation where learning is current, continuous and on demand, and we promote to staff the 70:20:10 framework for learning and development – namely that 70% of their learning activity should happen through on the job experience, 20% through learning from others, and 10% through formal training such as workshops, workbooks and online learning.

We offer workshops, e-learning courses, learning worksheets and a learning library on a diverse range of themes such as communication skills, leadership and management development, health and safety, equality and diversity, and performance management. In addition, staff are encouraged to undertake work-related Further and Higher Education programmes to assist them in gaining specific formal qualifications. In support of this, VisitScotland offers financial assistance and time off for study and examinations for eligible cases.

We are currently reviewing the equality and diversity training opportunities offered in our learning and development programme, and plan to implement a new equality and diversity training course in 2015/2016. This will build on the equality training programme that we previously rolled out in 2009–2013 that informed staff of the implications and impact of the then new Equality Act. The new training will also serve to introduce staff to, or provide a reminder of, the more innovative and applied approach to equality training which considers the impact of unconscious bias on management and HR processes, decision making, and relationships both with other staff and with our service users. We aim, through this new training, to raise staff awareness of their capacity to consider the general equality duty in their own roles, and the implications of this for their teams, projects, and delivery to VisitScotland's service users.

All staff, regardless of protected characteristics, are offered equal opportunity of access to our learning and development courses. In supporting all staff in positive professional development, we aim to contribute towards eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and strengthening good relations within our workforce, and to build capacity within our organisation to promote equality in our external functions.

## **Customer Experience – Events programme**

VisitScotland also operates a 'Customer Experience – Events' programme (formerly the 'Outreach' programme) through which staff have the opportunity to represent VisitScotland at a wide range of events in Scotland, around the UK, and overseas. These events cover diverse themes from trade fairs to music festivals to major sporting events.

The Customer Experience – Events programme is open to all staff in all of our locations throughout Scotland. Participation in the programme is an opportunity for staff to engage with members of the public, key tourism industry figures, and external

stakeholders, and supports the development of their core skills in communication and engagement and their specialist knowledge of the key sectors of Scotland's tourism industry. In addition, as teams working at the events are comprised of diverse individuals with a range of skills, it is an opportunity for staff to meet and work with people from across the organisation, supporting a spirit of collaboration and good relations within our workforce.

For example, we ran an extensive Customer Experience – Events programme in 2014 for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and the Ryder Cup at Gleneagles. Staff were given the opportunity to become 'VisitScotland Ambassadors' for these events. 'Ambassadors' were responsible for meeting, greeting and assisting members of the public, athletes and delegates at a network of VisitScotland information points, established to service the increased demand for visitor information during the events. The Ambassador programme allowed us to utilise the expertise – including both product knowledge and language skills – of our staff working in both our local and head offices, and fostered good relations both within our workforce and between our staff and our service users.

### **Queries, advice and complaints**

While queries or complaints to VisitScotland regarding equality and diversity matters are directed towards our Equality and Diversity team, this team works with staff across all relevant directorates of the organisation to find the most effective solutions. This regularly involves engaging with our Visitor Services staff who are in direct contact with our service users, and also our Communications and Press teams. As a result of this collaborative approach, our Equality and Diversity staff have raised awareness throughout the organisation of the details of the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty, and also how they impact on the delivery of our various functions.

VisitScotland's Equality and Diversity team also offers advice to tourism businesses on their duties under the Equality Act 2010 as providers of goods, facilities or services.

### **Promoting equality in the wider public sector**

VisitScotland is a founding member of the Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB) Equality Forum which meets approximately quarterly to discuss issues relating to the delivery of the public sector equality duty. The group provides a platform for the exchange of best practice in relation to meeting the needs of the general duty, and enables cross-body support of equality initiatives.

VisitScotland leads and manages the Mediation Partnership Team (MPT), one of the Forum's most successful initiatives. The MPT comprises 12 individuals from across the NDPBs who have been professionally trained and are now accredited workplace mediators working in the public sector in Scotland. In the last 2 years, the MPT has successfully handled over 37 workplace mediation cases, including cases of disability discrimination, bullying and harassment, and discrimination on the grounds of race that may otherwise have resulted in the engagement of formal procedures. The work of the MPT, by definition, has helped mainstream the principles of the

general duty by eliminating discrimination, victimisation and harassment of those with protected characteristics, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations, and has promoted the essence of the Equality Act in a real and visible way. Owing to the success of the MPT, it will be necessary to train an additional 6 mediators in 2015/2016 in order to increase the team's capacity. VisitScotland's Equality and Diversity manager has also delivered unconscious bias training and conflict management training to several of the other bodies represented on the Forum.

Through taking a leading role on the NDPB Equality Forum, VisitScotland has been able to contribute to helping mainstream equality in the wider public sector, as well as within our own organisation. VisitScotland has been responsible for chairing the Forum since the group's inception, and has recently (in 2015) handed over this role to Scottish Enterprise.

### **Gathering and using employee information**

VisitScotland is committed to gathering information about the relevant protected characteristics of our employees and to using this information to better perform the general equality duty. In line with our obligations under the public sector equality duty specific duties, we collect information on the composition, development, recruitment and retention of staff within our organisation. Up to date information about the profile of our workforce since our last equality outcomes and mainstreaming report can be found in the ['VisitScotland employee information, 2013–2015'](#) section of this report.

The key feature of our workforce that has come to light in this process is the consistently high proportion of female staff in our organisation. As a public sector body that attracts most of its staff from the private sector, VisitScotland is not always able to compete on salary alone, particularly with the current government pay restrictions imposed upon it. Instead, we must maximise our competitive advantages in order to attract and retain the staff we need to effectively deliver our function as an organisation, which in the case of VisitScotland includes supporting a working environment that is attractive to women. Understanding our staff gender demographic has influenced the development of our staff benefits including childcare vouchers, generous maternity leave, the facility to buy additional annual leave, and a flexible working environment, which all contribute to creating a workplace that best supports our staff.

## **Progress towards meeting our Equality Outcomes**

The following section outlines the steps we have taken to date towards specifically meeting our revised equality outcomes, and how addressing our outcomes has helped us pay due regard to the needs of the general equality duty. Where relevant, we have also summarised our plans for our work going forward until our next equality outcomes and mainstreaming report in 2017.

### **Accessible Tourism**

#### **Equality outcome(s):**

Harness the growing global Accessible Tourism market and help make Scotland a destination recognised internationally as 'accessible', and highlight the economic, cultural, and social benefits thereof.

Improve tourism information provision, and enhance the tourism experience in Scotland, for disabled people and others with access requirements (e.g. older people and families with young children).

#### **Progress towards meeting the outcome:**

- **Action:** VisitScotland has developed a free online Accessible Tourism training course aimed at managers and key frontline staff of tourism businesses, which aims to inform about how best to cater for the Accessible Tourism market. The course is available to all on our [corporate website](http://www.visitscotland.org), [www.visitscotland.org](http://www.visitscotland.org).

Since its launch in July 2014, 853 individuals have registered for the course, and 248 have completed it to date. The course was also featured in the debate in 2014 on Accessible Tourism in the Scottish Parliament as an example of a best practice tourism initiative focused on advancing equality of opportunity for all.

**Future plans:** We will start work on an updated version of the training course in 2016/2017, following consultation with visitors and tourism businesses to inform improvements to the tool.

- **Action:** VisitScotland has worked together with VisitEngland to offer a free online tool for tourism businesses that guides them through the completion of an 'Access Statement'. An Access Statement is a detailed description of a business's facilities and services, as well as information about the surrounding area and travel advice. The tool is available to all on our [corporate website](http://www.visitscotland.org), [www.visitscotland.org](http://www.visitscotland.org).

To date, 80 tourism businesses have downloaded the Access Statement template and have begun work on their Statement. So far, feedback from visitors has been positive, commending our focus on promoting the importance of providing useful information for visitors in the Accessible



Tourism market. Feedback from businesses has also highlighted that not only have Access Statements been well received by their visitors, but they have also encouraged the businesses themselves to review and improve the accessibility of their services.

**Future plans:** We will engage more Scottish tourism businesses with the Access Statement tool, and aim for a total of 150 businesses to have started their Statements by 2017.

We have also recently completed consultations with disabled people, families with young children, and other representatives of the Accessible Tourism market to inform our development of an updated version of the Access Statement tool. We aim for this tool to be available in time for the publication of our next equality outcomes and mainstreaming report in 2017.

- **Action:** VisitScotland has organised a series of workshops for tourism businesses offering advice on catering for the Accessible Tourism market. These workshops have been delivered throughout Scotland and have been over-subscribed, suggesting an enthusiasm in the industry for our support in this area.

These workshops have directly resulted in delegates accessing our Accessible Tourism support materials, including completing the Accessible Tourism online training course and creating Access Statements for their businesses.

- **Action:** VisitScotland's Accessible Tourism project manager has delivered regular presentations about Accessible Tourism at a range of tourism industry events since the inception of our Accessible Tourism programme, engaging with businesses of all sizes from across Scotland. These presentations have included promoting the 'business case' for Accessible Tourism and increasing awareness of opportunities for the industry to cater for this market.

These events have recently included the ScotHot conference – Scotland's largest hospitality, tourism and catering show – in March 2015 as part of Scottish Tourism Week, and a number of regional tourism conferences including, among others, the Highland Tourism conference, the Aberdeen City and Shire Tourism conference, the Orkney Tourism conference and the annual conference of the Scottish Tourism Alliance.

The majority of these presentations have been delivered in collaboration with disabled people, with a view to fostering good relations between visitors and the industry and encouraging dialogue about meeting the needs of the Accessible Tourism market.

These speaking engagements have led to businesses establishing contact to express their interest in providing for the Accessible Tourism market, and engaging with our Accessible Tourism support materials.

**Future plans:** We have an active timetable of future speaking events regarding Accessible Tourism for 2015. We will continue this in 2016/2017, ensuring that the focus of our engagement is in line with the progress made by the Scottish tourism industry towards catering for the Accessible Tourism market.

- **Action:** VisitScotland's Accessible Tourism team has assisted Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) in the development and successful delivery of an Accessible Tourism project as part of their Visitor Attraction Management module, for the first time in 2014/2015.

Feedback from students and course coordinators has been positive. The collaboration has succeeded in raising awareness amongst the next generation of tourism service providers of practical ways in which to eliminate discrimination against, and enhance equality of opportunity for access to tourism services for, disabled people, and has helped foster good relations between the students and professionals in the tourism industry.

**Future plans:** In October 2015, we will work with GCU towards mainstreaming Accessible Tourism into the hospitality syllabus in the 2015/2016 academic year.

- **Action:** VisitScotland is currently leading an Accessible Tourism pilot project in Glasgow and Strathclyde Country Park which is taking a holistic approach to creating an Accessible Tourism 'destination'. Together with city and regional partners, we are working with local businesses that represent the various elements of the tourism chain (travel, accommodation, hospitality, visitor attractions, etc.) to produce a set of itineraries of 'things to see and do' tailored for visitors in the Accessible Tourism market, and to generally improve the availability of accessibility information for the area.

**Future plans:** Following completion of the pilot in July 2015, we will review the success of the project and compile a series of core recommendations to inform future work into accessible destinations.

- **Action:** Scotland has become a member of the Network of European Regions for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism (NECSTouR), one focus of which is to reduce barriers for Accessible Tourism visitors in Europe. VisitScotland provides principal support to Scottish Government's representation in the network.

The network provides a platform for the exchange of best practice around advancing equality of access to tourism services, and participation in the network ensures that work on Accessible Tourism in Scotland is represented at European level.

- **Action:** VisitScotland collaborated with Edinburgh-based tourism businesses and the disabled access review charity, Euan's Guide, to arrange the flagship Scotland event for the inaugural Disabled Access Day in early 2015. The event showcased to the public the work of assistance dogs, and involved the charities Guide Dogs Scotland, Dogs for the Disabled, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and Canine Partners.

The event was open to all and provided a platform for communication and the fostering of good relations between members of the public and representatives of the disabled people's organisations, inspiring positive discussion about disabled access.

**Future plans:** We have provided input into the impact report for Disabled Access Day 2015, which is due for publication later this year. VisitScotland will continue its involvement in the initiative and will work again with the organisers on events in Scotland for Disabled Access Day 2016.

### Additional future plans

- We aim to lead by example, and are currently developing Access Statements for all of the VisitScotland properties (Visitor Information Centres and local offices) in order to improve the availability of access information for our visitors. These Statements will be completed by Spring 2016.
- We are in the process of developing a number of additional Accessible Tourism support materials for tourism businesses, including guidance on improving accessibility at events.

We plan to test this 'Accessible Events' guidance on an event as part of our Accessible Tourism pilot project, and will use the lessons learnt from this to inform the final development of the guidance. We aim to make the 'Accessible Events Guide' available on our corporate website in 2016. The guidance will support Scottish tourism businesses to consider accessibility as an integral feature of their events in order to maximise their potential audience and enhance the experience for visitors, and thereby contribute to Scotland's events industry, which is worth an estimated £2 billion to the Scottish economy<sup>9</sup>.

- As part of a wider review of our online resources, we are planning improvements to the way in which information for visitors about accessible accommodation and holidays is displayed on our [consumer website](http://www.visitscotland.com), [www.visitscotland.com](http://www.visitscotland.com).
- We are currently working in partnership with the Scottish Government to develop a programme of activity around Accessible Tourism for Scotland's Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design. This programme will be rolled

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<sup>9</sup> Estimation by the Scottish Events & Festivals Association (SEFA).

out in 2016 to coincide with the other initiatives taking place for this Themed Year.

## **LGBTI tourism**

### **Equality outcome(s):**

Improve information for LGBTI visitors about tourism in Scotland.

Enhance awareness among LGBTI visitors of Scotland as a safe and welcoming place to visit.

### **Progress towards meeting the outcome:**

- **Action:** VisitScotland, in partnership with the Scottish Government and the Equality Network, has undertaken visitor research into the needs and priorities of the LGBT tourism market.

In response to the research findings, VisitScotland has developed a series of pages on our [consumer website, www.visitscotland.com](http://www.visitscotland.com), that aim to provide useful information to welcome LGBTI visitors to Scotland. The content of the pages was developed in collaboration with our internal LGBT staff group. In addition to giving details of the LGBTI scene in Scotland and events with LGBTI themes, the pages also provide information about safety and support for LGBTI visitors to Scotland – a key priority highlighted in the visitor research.

Homecoming 2014 also partnered with LGBT Youth, the Equality Network and LEAP Sports to boost the engagement of the LGBT community in the Year of Homecoming.

**Future plans:** There are more than 3.6 million LGBT people in Britain, who contribute an estimated £80 billion to Britain's economy<sup>10</sup>. Going forward in 2015, we aim to include the LGBTI tourism sector in our environmental scanning activities in order to monitor current trends in the market. We will disseminate this information internally as part of our trends research in order to raise awareness of opportunities to enhance access to tourism for this sector.

## **Engaging Scotland's communities in the 2014 Year of Homecoming**

### **Equality outcome(s):**

Improve awareness of opportunities for ethnic minority communities in Scotland to become involved in the 2014 Year of Homecoming.

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<sup>10</sup> Figures from the Office for National Statistics and the Out Now 2008 Millivres Gay Market Study.

## **Progress towards meeting the outcome:**

- **Action:** In partnership with BEMIS (Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland), the 'Multicultural Homecoming' programme celebrated the diverse nature of Scotland's communities through a series of events and engaged varied ethnic minority groups in celebrating their own interpretation of Scotland as home.

In addition, Glasgow and Edinburgh Mela celebrated the diverse cultures within Scotland for Homecoming through music, dance and art, and 16 football teams with more than 120 players from diverse cultural backgrounds competed in The Scottish Football Association's Multicultural Homecoming Cup.

## **Organisation-wide engagement with equality and diversity matters**

### **Equality outcome(s):**

Enhance staff awareness of organisational equality and diversity matters.

### **Progress towards meeting the outcome:**

- **Action:** As part of our commitment to enhancing staff awareness of our responsibility as an organisation to consider equality and diversity, we have reviewed our approach to collecting staff equality and diversity information. We recently (December 2014) updated the format of our equality and diversity monitoring questionnaire, and completed an organisation-wide initiative to encourage staff to update their equality and diversity information. We were keen not to simply collect the information but to explain the reasons why we were doing so, with the aim of improving levels of staff engagement with the information-gathering process and also generally enhancing staff awareness of our commitment to equal opportunities.

The initiative involved disseminating clear, accessible and engaging information about the benefits of equality monitoring to staff through a variety of internal channels, and in particular encouraging support at senior level. In our gathering of the information relating to the relevant protected characteristics, we emphasised that staff had the option in each case to 'prefer not to say', ensuring that those wishing to engage in the process but not disclose some or all of their information felt able to take part.

We experienced high levels of engagement with the initiative, with approximately 80% of staff updating their records. This has allowed us to gain a more comprehensive picture of the current composition of our workforce than in previous years.

**Future plans:** We are continuing the review of our equality information-gathering procedures in order to further streamline the process.

## **Additional future plans**

- As outlined in the [‘Mainstreaming Equality’ section of this report](#), we are in the process of developing a revised equality and diversity training course programme for staff and will implement this in 2015/2016. We aim for all of our current staff to have completed the training in 2016, and the programme will also be offered to all new employees. This will ensure that we support our staff in their capacity and responsibility to mainstream equality into their practice.
- We are currently encouraging VisitScotland staff to complete our online Accessible Tourism training course. The programme has been rolled out to our Quality and Tourism Advisors and Industry Relationship Managers, to help inform their advice to tourism businesses on addressing the Accessible Tourism market. In the next stage of the programme, the training will be completed by key staff in our Facilities and Visitor Services team. We aim for the training course to become incorporated into our core learning and development programme for all staff.

## **Youth employment in tourism**

### **Equality outcome(s):**

Enhance support for employment of young people in tourism.

### **Progress towards meeting the outcome:**

- **Action:** Since publishing our first equality outcomes and mainstreaming report in 2013, we have undertaken a comprehensive review of our youth engagement initiatives. While many of our initiatives have been in existence for a number of years, we have amended aspects of these to align them with our organisational strategies, and have formalised the programme of activity in order to allow effective monitoring of each initiative. As part of this, we have also developed a revised youth employment strategy which is currently undergoing internal review.

Details of our youth engagement initiatives, which are focused on advancing equality of opportunity for young people for careers in tourism, and on fostering good relations between young people and professionals in the tourism industry, are as follows:

- **Graduate scheme**

We currently offer approximately 6, year-long paid graduate placements annually across our organisation. The graduates are offered extensive training opportunities and valuable work experience throughout their placement, in addition to support in applying for jobs to help ensure that they are in a sustainable

position at the end of their placement. A number of the graduates have subsequently been successful in applying for full time roles with VisitScotland.

In 2013, the scheme was reviewed and amended so that graduates now remain in a single role throughout the entirety of their placement, rather than doing short-term projects in different directorates. This has helped enable them to develop a depth of knowledge and experience in a particular area, which has proved valuable when applying for future jobs.

- **Modern Apprenticeships**

We offer approximately 6 Modern Apprentice vacancies annually across our organisation for students aged 16–19 years of age. The year-long placements are paid, with a guarantee of a full time job at the end of the scheme. During their placement, the Modern Apprentices undertake a formal qualification (SVQ) in a relevant topic, such as IT, Customer Service, Business Administration, or Marketing. The scheme has been very successful to date, with the majority of apprentices completing their qualifications and entering full time roles within VisitScotland. While Modern Apprenticeships have been offered by VisitScotland for a number of years, since 2013 we have formalised the scheme and structured it so that there is now a single annual intake of students, which has simplified our monitoring of the scheme's progress. Interviews for the scheme are now also by group assessment centre.

- **Career Academy mentoring**

VisitScotland offers mentorships to students entering their fourth year at secondary school who come from underprivileged backgrounds or from areas of Scotland with high levels of deprivation. We provide mentors from across the organisation to mentor the students over a 2 year period, and the programme also includes a month-long, paid work experience placement at VisitScotland. Since its inception in 2012, this programme has been of significant benefit to both the students taking part and the mentors within VisitScotland, and has resulted in a number of the students being taken on as seasonal employees at VisitScotland Information Centres. The number of mentorships offered was recently increased from around 4, to 6 mentorships each year.

- **Work Experience**

We currently liaise with a number of secondary schools to offer a range of opportunities for work experience within our organisation. Work experience placements typically last 1 week and are undertaken primarily (but not exclusively) in our Visitor Information Centres. The majority of work experience opportunities

are targeted at students in their fourth year at secondary school. For example, in 2013 and 2014 we offered 40 and 60 placements, respectively, in various directorates of our organisation.

○ **Internships**

We offer a limited number of internship opportunities, outwith our graduate and Modern Apprenticeship schemes, for UK and international university and college students.

○ **Engagement with Higher and Further Education establishments**

VisitScotland actively engages with a number of Higher and Further Education establishments and other organisations regarding opportunities for young people in the tourism industry. Examples include:

- VisitScotland delivers regular presentations to students at Queen Margaret University to raise awareness of careers in tourism and the creative industries. We also deliver *ad hoc* career presentations and workshops at universities and colleges throughout Scotland during the academic year. A range of staff, representing the various directorates of our organisation, are involved in the delivery of these presentations and workshops.
- Through our membership of the Tourism Skills Group, we are working in partnership with organisations including Skills Development Scotland, the Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions, the Scottish Tourism Alliance, and People 1<sup>st</sup> on how to maximise our student engagement programmes throughout the tourism sector.
- VisitScotland supports Skills Development Scotland in the delivery of presentations and workshops to young people across Scotland on the opportunities for Modern Apprenticeships in the tourism industry.
- VisitScotland also plays an active role in a cross-functional group with members from across Scotland's NDPBs to explore ways to engage and promote youth employment in the public sector.

**Future plans:** The above programme of activity is confirmed for continuation in 2015, and we will continue to monitor our contribution to the creation of opportunities for employment of young people in the tourism industry. Our next equality outcomes and mainstreaming report in 2017 will include a report on the progress of these initiatives.



## **Additional future plans**

- As part of our revised youth employment strategy, we plan to establish 'Youth Champions' at strategic levels of our organisation to endorse our initiatives for attracting and recruiting young people to VisitScotland.
- In 2015/2016, we are starting work towards achieving Investors in Young People accreditation (part of the 'Investors in People' (IIP) framework).

## **Staff engagement and development**

### **Equality outcome(s):**

Maintain a supportive and inclusive working culture and environment which supports staff engagement and professional development.

### **Progress towards meeting the outcome:**

- **Action:** In June 2013, VisitScotland established an internal 'Staff Innovation Group'. The group comprises staff from all levels and from every directorate of the organisation, and looks at novel ways of actively engaging all VisitScotland staff. Since its inception, the group has succeeded in bringing together staff from across all of our locations in Scotland in a programme of activities designed to create a 'one team' spirit, and instil pride in the organisation and in individuals' work.

In 2014, the group launched the 'Brilliant Moment Maker campaign'. The campaign started with a range of projects and activity to inform staff about the great things happening in Scotland in 2014 – the Commonwealth Games, the Ryder Cup and the celebrations for the Year of Homecoming – and inspire them to take part.

In this first year of the campaign, the group:

- Produced lanyards, information cards, pin badges and calendars to inform and inspire staff about the events in 2014.
- Introduced Yammer, a social media channel on which staff are encouraged to share their experiences of 'brilliant moments' across Scotland. This channel has connected staff across our locations in Scotland who would not normally meet in person.
- Inspired by the Commonwealth Games, engaged staff in the sending of a VisitScotland 'baton' around 53 Visitor Information Centres and offices, covering a distance of over 1000 miles. Staff were encouraged to take a photograph to mark the arrival of the baton in their location and post this on Yammer, in the aim of fostering a sense of community within our workforce.

- Engaged staff throughout all of our locations in Scotland in 14 staff competitions. The prizes for these were visits to locations throughout Scotland or attendance at special events to help support the development of staff specialist knowledge of key areas of Scotland's tourism.
- Secured an additional day of leave for staff in recognition of an exceptional year of work for Homecoming 2014.

**Future plans:** The members of the Staff Innovation Group act as internal ambassadors, and are continuing the Brilliant Moment Makers campaign in 2015. The group's activity in 2015 is focused around Food and Drink (in celebration of the 2015 Year of Food and Drink), Golf (in recognition of the 9 major golf tournaments taking place in Scotland in 2015) and Scotland's Events.

- **Action:** VisitScotland has further developed its programme of staff development opportunities, which are offered to all staff regardless of their protected characteristics. Key elements of this programme include:

- **Internal mentoring programme**

VisitScotland runs a voluntary internal mentoring programme through which staff wishing to be mentored are paired with a mentor within the organisation for 1 year. We provide internal coaching and mentoring training to both the mentee and mentor, as well as external coaching if required.

This programme has grown year on year since its inception in 2012, and feedback from staff suggests that it is regarded as a highly valuable and successful programme of development.

- **Management Development Passport course**

We currently offer a 6 month management development course for new or developing managers within our organisation. The course covers many aspects of management and leadership including change management, performance management and development, people management and managing emotional intelligence.

Participants are also required to complete a short dissertation to achieve a Level 5 ILM (Institute of Leadership and Management) qualification as part of the course.

- **Pilotlight programme**

Since 2013, VisitScotland has supported a number of our senior managerial staff in participation in the 'Pilotlight' programme. Pilotlight is a charity that matches senior business

people with charities and social enterprises, to act as mentors or coaches for the charitable organisations. For our staff, these have included, for example, charitable organisations involved in Commonwealth Games Legacy projects.

In addition to advancing the development of the VisitScotland staff taking part, this programme involves work with charities and social enterprises that represent people with protected characteristics and therefore contributes towards eliminating discrimination against, and advancing equality of opportunity for, people in these groups.

**Future plans:** The above initiatives have been confirmed for continuation in 2015, and we continue to monitor the progress of, and feedback regarding, each scheme. We will include a report on the progress of our staff development programme in our next equality outcomes and mainstreaming report in 2017.

## **VisitScotland employee information, 2013–2015**

The sections below give a breakdown of the following, in relation to the protected characteristics, for the period since our last equality mainstreaming report (May 2013 – January 2015):

1. [The composition of the whole VisitScotland workforce](#)
2. [Employees awarded internal promotions](#)
3. [Employees attending Learning and Development courses](#)
4. [Employees who left the organisation \('leavers'\)](#)
5. [Individuals who applied for a vacancy with the organisation](#)
6. [Individuals recruited to the organisation \('new starts'\)](#)

In all cases:

- All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal point. In some cases, this has an impact on the calculation of totals (i.e. totals may not always be whole numbers).
- Counts of employees in each category and the total number of employees included in the analysis have not been provided in order to prevent disclosure of employee identity by deduction.
- The data at January 2015 is a combination of new information provided by employees in December 2014 (81% of staff) and existing historical information in the cases of those employees who chose not to provide updated information.

## **Whole workforce composition**

### **1. Characteristics of VisitScotland whole workforce, May 2013 – January 2015**

#### **1.1. Disability**

<b>Employee status<sup>11</sup></b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2014</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2015</b>
Disabled	2.3	2.0
Not disabled	97.7	98.0
Prefer not to say	0	0
No information provided	0	0

#### **1.2. Sex**

<b>Employee status</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2014</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2015</b>
Female	66.2	66.3
Male	33.8	33.7
Prefer not to say	0	0
No information provided	0	0

#### **1.3. Gender reassignment**

Information on gender reassignment was collected for the first time in 2014/2015 in relation to our whole workforce composition through the means of a question in our equality monitoring questionnaire.

<b>Employee identifies as transgender?</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2015</b>
Yes	0.2
No	66.6
Prefer not to say	0.8
No information provided	32.4

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<sup>11</sup> In all cases this is self-assessed, in accordance with the definition of disability in the Equality Act 2010 as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term (12 months or more) adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities (including progressive conditions such as cancer, HIV, and multiple sclerosis, which are regarded by the Act as a disability from the day of diagnosis).

#### 1.4. Age

Age bracket (years)	Percent (%) of employees at January 2014	Percent (%) of employees at January 2015
16-20	0.9	2.0
21-25	6.9	7.5
26-30	14.2	15.4
31-35	14.5	15.4
36-40	11.3	10.0
41-45	10.5	9.7
46-50	12.6	12.2
51-55	9.6	10.2
56-60	9.6	9.1
61-65	6.6	5.4
66-70	2.5	2.3
71-75	0.7	0.8
76-80	0	0
81-85	0	0
86-90	0.1	0.2

#### 1.5. Marriage and civil partnership

Employee status	Percent (%) of employees at January 2014	Percent (%) of employees at January 2015
Civil partnership	0.3	0.3
Married	45.5	45.7
Not married or in a civil partnership	48.5	49.5
Prefer not to say	0	0
No information provided	5.7	4.5

#### 1.6. Religion or belief

Employee religion or belief <sup>12</sup>	Percent (%) of employees at January 2014	Percent (%) of employees at January 2015
Buddhist	0.1	0
Christian	36.5	40.3
Hindu	0.7	0.6
Muslim	0.3	0.3
None	37.0	40.5
Other	1.0	1.4

<sup>12</sup> In all tables, this list includes only those religions or beliefs that are represented in the VisitScotland workforce. A number of religions and beliefs were stated by employees in the 'Other' category. These include: Atheist, Catholic, Humanist and Jedi.

<b>Employee religion or belief<sup>12</sup></b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2014</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2015</b>
Pagan	0.6	0.6
Roman Catholic	0.3	0.3
Sikh	0.1	0.3
Prefer not to say	4.2	4.9
No information provided	19.0	10.8

### 1.7. Ethnic group

<b>Employee status<sup>13</sup></b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2014</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2015</b>
Bangladeshi	0.1	0.2
Chinese	0.1	0.2
Indian	1.0	1.1
Other	1.0	0.8
Other Asian	0.1	0
Other Black	0.1	0
Pakistani	0	0.2
White	91.4	92.8
<i>Total in Ethnic Minority groups<sup>14</sup></i>	2.6	2.3
Prefer not to say	0	0
No information provided	6.0	4.9

### 1.8. Sexual orientation

<b>Employee status<sup>15</sup></b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2014</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2015</b>
Bisexual	0.4	0.3
Gay man	1.5	1.7
Gay woman	1.2	1.5
Heterosexual	84.4	88.2
Prefer not to say	3.7	3.5
No information provided	8.9	4.8

<sup>13</sup> In all tables, this list includes only those ethnic groups that are represented in the VisitScotland workforce.

<sup>14</sup> In all tables, this is in relation to all employees – including those who have not provided information on their ethnic group.

<sup>15</sup> In all tables, this list includes only those categories that are represented in the VisitScotland workforce.

### **1.9. Pregnancy and maternity**

In the period May 2013 – January 2014, approximately 1.5% of the workforce started a period of maternity leave.

In the period February 2014 – January 2015, approximately 2% of the workforce started a period of maternity leave.



## **Development**

### **2. Characteristics of VisitScotland employees who received internal promotions, May 2013 – January 2015**

#### **2.1. Disability**

<b>Employee status</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2014</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2015</b>
Disabled	0	2.3
Not disabled	100	97.7
Prefer not to say	0	0
No information provided	0	0

#### **2.2. Sex**

<b>Employee status</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2014</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2015</b>
Female	65.5	67.4
Male	34.5	32.6
Prefer not to say	0	0
No information provided	0	0

#### **2.3. Age**

<b>Age bracket (years)</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2014</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2015</b>
16-20	0	0
21-25	17.2	11.6
26-30	31.0	25.6
31-35	31.0	20.9
36-40	6.9	14.0
41-45	6.9	9.3
46-50	0	7.0
51-55	0	4.7
56-60	3.4	4.7
61-65	3.4	2.3
66-70	0	0
71-75	0	0
76-80	0	0
81-85	0	0
86-90	0	0

## 2.4. Marriage and civil partnership

<b>Employee status</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2014</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2015</b>
Married or in a civil partnership	68.9	41.9
Not married or in a civil partnership	27.6	55.9
Prefer not to say	0	0
No information provided	3.4	2.3

## 2.5. Religion or belief

<b>Employee religion or belief</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2014</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2015</b>
Buddhist	0	0
Christian	48.3	37.2
Hindu	3.4	0
Muslim	0	0
None	41.4	46.5
Other	0	2.3
Pagan	0	0
Roman Catholic	0	0
Sikh	0	0
Prefer not to say	0	4.7
No information provided	6.9	9.3

## 2.6. Ethnic group

<b>Employee status</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2014</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2015</b>
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
Indian	3.4	0
Other	0	2.3
Other Asian	0	0
Other Black	0	0
White	96.6	97.7
<i>Total in Ethnic Minority groups</i>	3.4	2.3
Prefer not to say	0	0
No information provided	0	0

## 2.7. Sexual orientation

<b>Employee status</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2014</b>	<b>Percent (%) of employees at January 2015</b>
Bisexual	0	2.3
Gay man	6.9	2.3
Gay woman	0	0
Heterosexual	89.7	88.4
Prefer not to say	3.4	7.0
No information provided	0	0

### 3. Characteristics of VisitScotland employees who attended centrally organised Learning and Development courses, May 2014 – January 2015

Due to a change within our organisation in the coordination of Learning and Development courses, comprehensive records of staff attending centrally organised courses are only available from May 2014. The following therefore represent cumulative figures of staff who have attended courses since May 2014 until January 2015.

#### 3.1. Disability

Employee status	Percent (%) of course attendees, as at January 2015	Percent (%) of all employees at January 2015
Disabled	0.6	2.0
Not disabled	99.4	98.0
Prefer not to say	0	0
No information provided	0	0

#### 3.2. Sex

Employee status	Percent (%) of course attendees, as at January 2015	Percent (%) of all employees at January 2015
Female	71.7	66.3
Male	28.3	33.7
Prefer not to say	0	0
No information provided	0	0

#### 3.3. Age

Age bracket (years)	Percent (%) of course attendees at January 2015	Percent (%) of all employees at January 2015
16-20	3.3	2.0
21-25	13.6	7.5
26-30	28.6	15.4
31-35	25.3	15.4
36-40	8.1	10.0
41-45	7.2	9.7
46-50	4.8	12.2
51-55	5.4	10.2
56-60	2.4	9.1
61-65	0.9	5.4
66-70	0.3	2.3
71-75	0	0.8
76-80	0	0

<b>Age bracket (years)</b>	<b>Percent (%) of course attendees at January 2015</b>	<b>Percent (%) of all employees at January 2015</b>
81-85	0	0
86-90	0	0.2

### 3.4. Marriage and civil partnership

<b>Employee status</b>	<b>Percent (%) of course attendees at January 2015</b>	<b>Percent (%) of all employees at January 2015</b>
Civil partnership	0.6	0.3
Married	27.1	45.7
Not married or in a civil partnership	68.4	49.5
Prefer not to say	0	0
No information provided	3.9	4.5

### 3.5. Religion or belief

<b>Employee religion or belief</b>	<b>Percent (%) of course attendees at January 2015</b>	<b>Percent (%) of all employees at January 2015</b>
Buddhist	0	0
Christian	40.7	40.3
Hindu	0.6	0.6
Muslim	0.9	0.3
None	44.6	40.5
Other	1.5	1.4
Pagan	0	0.6
Roman Catholic	0	0.3
Sikh	0.6	0.3
Prefer not to say	3.6	4.9
No information provided	7.5	10.8

### 3.6. Ethnic group

<b>Employee status</b>	<b>Percent (%) of course attendees at January 2015</b>	<b>Percent (%) of all employees at January 2015</b>
Bangladeshi	0.3	0.2
Chinese	0.3	0.2
Indian	1.2	1.1
Other	0	0.8
Other Asian	0	0
Other Black	0	0

<b>Employee status</b>	<b>Percent (%) of course attendees at January 2015</b>	<b>Percent (%) of all employees at January 2015</b>
Pakistani	0.6	0.2
White	94.3	92.8
<i>Total in Ethnic Minority groups</i>	2.4	2.3
Prefer not to say	0	0
No information provided	3.3	4.9

### **3.7. Sexual orientation**

<b>Employee status</b>	<b>Percent (%) of course attendees at January 2015</b>	<b>Percent (%) of all employees at January 2015</b>
Bisexual	0.3	0.3
Gay man	1.2	1.7
Gay woman	1.2	1.5
Heterosexual	91.3	88.2
Prefer not to say	3.3	3.5
No information provided	2.7	4.8

## **Recruitment and retention**

### **4. Characteristics of individuals who left VisitScotland ('leavers') in the period May 2013 – January 2015**

'Leavers' includes staff who left the organisation as a result of either: resignation, retirement, dismissal, death during service, end of contract, illness or accident, mutual agreement, or voluntary redundancy. The statistics are not subdivided by reason of leaving due to the small numbers of people involved in the majority of categories and the possibility for disclosure of identity.

#### **4.1. Disability**

<b>Employee status</b>	<b>Percent (%) of leavers</b>
Disabled	3.1
Not disabled	96.9
Prefer not to say	0
No information provided	0

#### **4.2. Sex**

<b>Employee status</b>	<b>Percent (%) of leavers</b>
Female	73.1
Male	26.9
Prefer not to say	0
No information provided	0

#### **4.3. Age**

<b>Age bracket (years)</b>	<b>Percent (%) of leavers</b>
16-20	9.2
21-25	19.5
26-30	13.3
31-35	8.7
36-40	8.2
41-45	7.1
46-50	6.6
51-55	7.1
56-60	8.4
61-65	7.2
66-70	3.6
71-75	1.1
76-80	0

<b>Age bracket (years)</b>	<b>Percent (%) of leavers</b>
81-85	0
86-90	0

#### 4.4. Marriage and civil partnership

<b>Employee status</b>	<b>Percent (%) of leavers</b>
Married or in a civil partnership	30.9
Not married or in a civil partnership	65.8
Prefer not to say	0
No information provided	3.3

#### 4.5. Religion or belief

<b>Employee religion or belief</b>	<b>Percent (%) of leavers</b>
Buddhist	0.3
Christian	43.2
Hindu	0.2
Muslim	0.2
None	36.1
Other	0.3
Pagan	0.5
Roman Catholic	0.7
Sikh	0
Prefer not to say	0.2
No information provided	18.4

#### 4.6. Ethnic group

<b>Employee status</b>	<b>Percent (%) of leavers</b>
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0.3
Indian	0.5
Other	1.5
Other Asian	0.5
Other Black	0.2
Pakistani	0
White	92.8
<i>Total in Ethnic Minority</i>	3.0



<b>Employee status</b>	<b>Percent (%) of leavers</b>
<i>groups</i>	
Prefer not to say	0
No information provided	4.3

#### **4.7. Sexual orientation**

<b>Employee status</b>	<b>Percent (%) of leavers</b>
Bisexual	0.2
Gay man	1.0
Gay woman	0.8
Heterosexual	85.4
Prefer not to say	3.9
No information provided	8.7

## 5. Characteristics of individuals who applied for a vacancy with VisitScotland in the period August 2013 – January 2015

Due to a change in the technical system used to manage applications to VisitScotland, comprehensive records of applicants to the organisation since our last equality outcomes and mainstreaming report are only available from August 2013. The following therefore represent cumulative figures of individuals who have submitted an application to VisitScotland since August 2013 until January 2015.

Our current system captures information relating to disability, sex and gender, and ethnic group of applicants.

### 5.1. Disability

Status	Percent (%) of applicants
Disabled	3.5
Not disabled	95.4
Prefer not to say	0
No information provided	1.1

### 5.2. Sex and Gender

Status <sup>16</sup>	Percent (%) of applicants
Female	63.4
Male	35.4
Transgender	0.1
Prefer not to say	0
No information provided	1.1

### 5.3. Ethnic group

Status <sup>17</sup>	Percent (%) of applicants
Bangladeshi	0.4
Black African	0.5
Chinese	1.1
Indian	2.0
Other	2.9
Other Asian	0.7
Other Black	0.2
Pakistani	0.6
White	90.4

<sup>16</sup> This list includes only those categories represented in the applicants to VisitScotland.

<sup>17</sup> This list includes only those ethnic groups represented in the applicants to VisitScotland.

<b>Status<sup>17</sup></b>	<b>Percent (%) of applicants</b>
<i>Total in Ethnic Minority groups</i>	8.5
Prefer not to say	0
No information provided	1.1

## 6. Characteristics of individuals recruited to VisitScotland ('new starts') in the period May 2013 – January 2015

'New starts' includes Visitor Services staff members who are employed on a seasonal basis. These comprise the majority of new starts in the above period – approximately 73%.

### 6.1. Disability

Employee status	Percent (%) of new starts
Disabled	2.1
Not disabled	97.9
Prefer not to say	0
No information provided	0

### 6.2. Sex

Employee status	Percent (%) of new starts
Female	70.1
Male	29.9
Prefer not to say	0
No information provided	0

### 6.3. Age

Age bracket (years)	Percent (%) of new starts
16-20	14.3
21-25	26.2
26-30	16.4
31-35	9.3
36-40	3.5
41-45	5.4
46-50	5.1
51-55	6.5
56-60	5.8
61-65	4.7
66-70	2.1
71-75	0.7
76-80	0
81-85	0
86-90	0

#### 6.4. Marriage and civil partnership

<b>Employee status</b>	<b>Percent (%) of new starts</b>
Married or in a civil partnership	28.5
Not married or in a civil partnership	70.6
Prefer not to say	0
No information provided	0.9

#### 6.5. Religion or belief

<b>Employee religion or belief</b>	<b>Percent (%) of new starts</b>
Buddhist	0
Christian	50.0
Hindu	0.5
Muslim	0.2
None	44.4
Other	0.7
Pagan	0.2
Roman Catholic	0.7
Sikh	0.5
Prefer not to say	1.4
No information provided	1.4

#### 6.6. Ethnic group

<b>Employee status</b>	<b>Percent (%) of new starts</b>
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0.5
Indian	0.9
Other	1.2
Other Asian	0.2
Other Black	0
Pakistani	0
White	95.1
<i>Total in Ethnic Minority groups</i>	3.0
Prefer not to say	0
No information provided	1.9

## 6.7. Sexual orientation

<b>Employee status</b>	<b>Percent (%) of new starts</b>
Bisexual	0.2
Gay man	1.4
Gay woman	1.2
Heterosexual	93.2
Prefer not to say	3.0
No information provided	0.9

## Gender pay gap information

The following table gives details of VisitScotland's gender pay gap, correct at January 2015. The gender pay gap shown here is the percentage (%) difference between men's average hourly pay (excluding overtime) and women's average hourly pay (excluding overtime).

Grade	Gender	Total headcount	Ratio	Average FTE salary <sup>18</sup>	Percentage (%) of average female to average male pay	Percentage (%) pay gap
1	Female	203	72.9%	£13,959	100.0%	0%
	Male		27.1%	£13,959		
2	Female	40	75.0%	£17,333	101.4%	-1.4%
	Male		25.0%	£17,097		
3	Female	85	76.5%	£19,400	105.4%	-5.4%
	Male		23.5%	£18,403		
4	Female	123	68.3%	£24,883	100.6%	-0.6%
	Male		31.7%	£24,745		
5	Female	93	60.2%	£31,804	89.1%	10.9%
	Male		39.8%	£35,704		
6	Female	33	63.6%	£42,844	98.8%	1.2%
	Male		36.4%	£43,349		
7 & 8	Female	23	43.5%	£62,834	94.6%	5.4%
	Male		56.5%	£66,406		
<b>All Staff</b>	Female	641	67.1%	£19,761	84.5%	15.5%
	Male		32.9%	£23,373		

The overall gender pay gap for VisitScotland must be viewed in the context of our workforce profile. The overall ratio of females to males within the organisation is approximately 67% : 33%, with women outnumbering men in nearly all pay grades. As a result of this distribution, and the greater numbers of staff in lower grades compared with higher grades, it is inevitable that the proportionately larger numbers of female staff in lower grades will skew the data and will influence the representation of the complete gender pay profile.

The gender pay gap at almost every grade is within a tolerance of 5%, except notably grade 5, where the gap exceeds this. From further analysis, it would appear that the larger gap here is the result of higher market pay amongst (predominantly male) digital and technical staff.

<sup>18</sup> Median average full time equivalent salaries at 31 January 2015.

Whilst the gap at grades 7 and 8 is also slightly outwith a tolerance of 5%, we aspire to offer support to senior female staff in preparation for competing for senior positions when these opportunities arise, and are currently exploring ways in which to do so.

In line with the overall gender profile for the organisation, it follows that females make up a high proportion of our lower graded and lower paid staff, typically at grades 1, 2 and 3. This group of staff has been assisted in recent years by the living wage and low pay measures implemented by VisitScotland in line with the Scottish Government's pay policy which has seen staff within this group receive pay awards well ahead of inflation – up to 23% since 2011 in some instances. In addition, we are working towards establishing target pay rates for staff based on their experience and performance in a particular role or grade which again, due to the level of female staff we employ, we believe will have a positive effect on the overall pay gap.

We are also currently working with the Scottish Government towards achieving gender balance on our Board.



## **Appendix 1**

### **VisitScotland's Equal Opportunities Policy**

A full copy our policy is available on our [corporate website, www.visitscotland.org](http://www.visitscotland.org), under 'Our Policies'.

#### **Statement of Policy**

The basic concept of managing diversity accepts that the workforce consists of a diverse population of people. Diversity consists of visible and non-visible differences which include factors such as gender, transgender, sex, social and economic background, race, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, personality and work style. It is founded on the premise that harnessing these differences will create a productive environment in which everybody feels valued, where their talents are being fully utilised, and in which organisational and business goals are met.

#### **VisitScotland's Business Statement to support Diversity Management**

We aim to support culture change in the organisation through a business-focused Equality and Diversity strategy that encourages and empowers managers to take decisions and, when required, face up to making hard choices. Recognising the different and varied skills and talents our staff bring to the workplace, and integrating diversity management into their key leadership skills, enables line managers to develop their teams to the benefit of VisitScotland's corporate and business agenda, thus giving us the edge over our competitors.

#### **Our Commitment**

We believe that this commitment to equality to all groups will have a business benefit, as our customers and stakeholders will have an assurance that we will take action, within our remit, to meet and treat society as it stands. This will ensure that equality is at the heart of our service delivery and all of our policy making. VisitScotland will apply the same level of commitment to uphold and challenge any acts that would be, or could appear to be, discriminatory to any of the groups as named in this policy.

#### **Our Aim**

VisitScotland is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees and others who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the grounds as stated in our Statement of Policy above, or as set out in the Equality Act 2010 as 'protected characteristics'.

VisitScotland also recognises that there are groups in society who are discriminated against and therefore aims to make sure that all the people it serves have equal access to all facilities and services.

VisitScotland is an equal opportunity employer and all existing and prospective employees of VisitScotland will be treated fairly and have equal access to all employment opportunities.

## **Service Delivery**

All of VisitScotland's customers, both internal and external, are eligible for the same quality and level of service, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. VisitScotland will promote equality of opportunity by:

- Providing services to meet visitors' actual, rather than presumed, needs.
- Providing accessible information about the holidays and opportunities available to visitors.
- Ensuring all staff are trained to provide an appropriate and informed response to all visitors and stakeholders.
- Delivering services in ways which are appropriate to our service users' needs and, wherever possible, removing barriers which may deny access.
- Ensuring any complaints of discrimination are dealt with speedily and fairly.
- Requiring that those who provide services on behalf of VisitScotland have policies in place that result in services that are sensitive to the needs of all sections of the community and that they abide by this equality policy, or one of equal value which they own as an equal opportunities employer or provider.

## **To whom does the policy apply?**

VisitScotland's Equality policy applies to all those who work for, or apply to work for VisitScotland. This includes:

- Job applicants and potential applicants
- Employees
- Contract and seasonal workers
- Agency workers
- Trainee workers and students on work experience or placements
- Volunteer workers

This policy also covers all of our external service users and stakeholders, with whom we do business or have a working relationship.

## Implementation and Equality Commitments

The Chief Executive has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. However, each Director, Head of Department, all line managers and staff also have responsibilities in meeting the requirements of this policy. We expect all our employees to abide by the policy and help create an equality environment in support of VisitScotland's business and corporate objectives.

In order to implement this policy we are committed to:

- Working within the legislation as set out in the Equality Act 2010
- Providing opportunities for all employees in the workplace including recruitment, selection, promotion and retention processes
- Taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate
- Treating all employees fairly, whether full-time or part-time, permanent or temporary
- Encouraging, valuing and managing diversity
- Providing a working environment which is free from harassment, bullying and discrimination
- Regarding all breaches of this Equality policy as misconduct, which may lead to disciplinary proceedings
- Creating an organisational culture where everyone knows that their contribution is valued
- Ensuring that, in our procurement procedure and when working with outside agencies, we obtain evidence that they own and abide by their own Equality policies, or that they will comply with VisitScotland's Equality policy in their dealings with our organisation and our workforce.

VisitScotland will however apply this policy within the bounds of reasonable, proportionate and appropriate means.

This policy is fully supported by the Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team and has been agreed with the Equality Policy Group and the Trade Unions.