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Cover: 1: Beach at West Sands, St Andrews, Fife. 2: Kyle of Lochalsh with the road bridge over to the Isle of Skye visible beyond, Highland. 3: Mountain bikers, Balblair Mountain Bike Trails, near Bonar Bridge, Highland. 4: Two skiers at Nevis Range Ski Centre, Highland.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S FOREWARD

It gives me great pleasure to present VisitScotland's Single Equality Scheme (SES). This statement of our commitment to Diversity and Equality represents a significant and essential step forward for us as an organisation. As Scotland's national tourism agency, encouraging people to visit our beautiful country from across the world, we are particularly sensitive to the needs of all people and must reflect this in everything we do.

Beyond representing the right values for the organisation, I am especially pleased to be able to present a Scheme that is very business focused and gets away from mere process and procedure in order to effect real changes for our staff and for our customers. This is not an interest on the fringes of what we do.

Our view is that diversity includes everybody, not just the equality groups, and our Equality Statement confirms this approach with a reference to the diversity of 'personality and workstyle'.

This is a journey and we are just starting out, but we have made good progress. The SES is a sign of Senior Management Team (SMT) and Board commitment to Diversity and Equality and we want to integrate managing diversity into the structure of our organisation. We have also, for the first time, included this commitment in the

VisitScotland Corporate Business Plan for 2010/12.

Our own Diversity and Equality training programme, some of which has been 'tested' on the SMT and Board, is new and innovative, and we are looking forward to the challenges it will present. I personally found the Implicit Association Test, which is part of our new equality training programme, very revealing and I know this is going to be a most enlightening voyage of self discovery as well as of wider organisational development.

Most of us face bias of some sort. It may be unconscious but it is not rational, it is not logical and it is not good for business. This scheme will help us to identify opportunities to benefit from a more open and positive approach to Diversity and Equality. This will make VisitScotland not only a better place to work but a more effective driver of Scottish tourism.



Philip Riddle
Chief Executive, VisitScotland

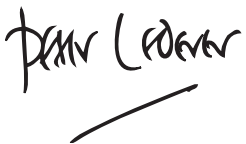


"Diversity is the quality of human relationships within the organisation."

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWARD

I have been in the Tourism and Hospitality industry for 40 years and have always marvelled at the diversity of our industry – the opportunities for all levels of skills, experience and background to find employment. However, the more I see and experience, the more frustrated I become that we allow our biases to influence decisions and actions. Why else would we have an industry that has such diversity in the ranks but so few signs at supervisory, management or Board levels?

I want all our industry to take the lead in promoting equality and diversity to improve the progress of people from diverse groups within the sector and beyond. To this end, I am proud that VisitScotland is meeting that challenge. This is not about policy and procedure, this is about creating an environment where everybody, whatever their race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or religion, feels motivated and secure in the knowledge that they have every opportunity to succeed. This is about the development of our talent.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Lederer".

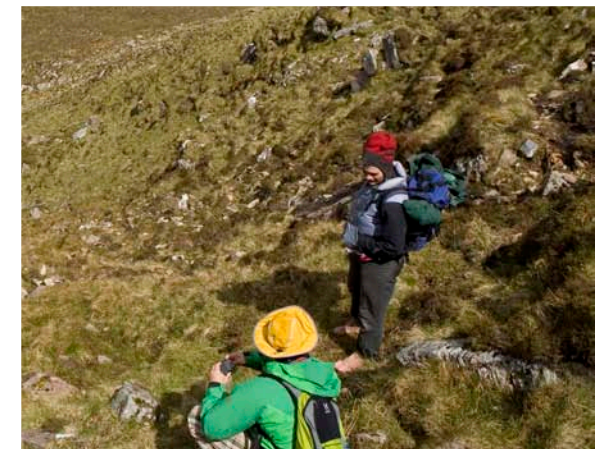
Peter Lederer
Chair, VisitScotland



"This about the development of our talent."

EQUALITY STATEMENT

“The basic concept of managing diversity accepts that the workforce consists of a diverse population of people. The diversity consists of visible and non-visible difference which includes factors such as gender, transgender, 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.”



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION – A VERY DIFFERENT APPROACH

The average Single Equality Scheme is 150 – 350 pages long; just browse through all the public sector web-sites! Glossy pages, actions plans that run into 40 – 50 pages, but what actually changes as a result? Does anybody really read them? Do they change the quality of life for the people mentioned within them? If you have read this page so far, what will make you read further? You may have an interest in diversity and equality; maybe you think it's all political correctness gone mad, if so you are probably in good company!

VisitScotland is starting its journey to understand the concept of diversity in a different way, so we want to get beyond the 'group' thinking, putting people into categories. For example, the disabled group; in order to promote equality we could have 40 actions in a glossy plan, with timelines, etc., but at the end of the day, when we ask disabled people the question "what changed as a result of our actions?" The honest answer is, "not a lot."

The USP to any Single Equality Scheme is how we value our own people and how we invest in their future. We have to get it right 'at home' to get it right for our customers.

It means we start by looking at people as individuals, valuing their contribution. Having the dialogue that opens up a debate, one that may make us feel uncomfortable, but at the end of the day will actually change something for the people that matter, our staff and our customers.

DIVERSITY IS A CHANGE PROCESS NOT A STRUCTURE

Diversity has been central to many public sector organisations for many years, so why are people left feeling that nothing really has changed or improved, why are we still going over the same ground as we were 15 years ago? The root of good diversity management is found in the quality of human relationships. Diversity is fundamentally about behaviour and how we work out those relationships in the workplace, no matter which 'group' we belong to. Diversity is really an ongoing process not a structure, which is built once and stands as a monument for all to see. Some organisations believe they have 'arrived' but diversity management is a change process that must grow and develop within the organisation, it must be flexible, it must support its people and its key business objectives. Once we understand that concept we will begin to add real value to the business of VisitScotland and, as it says in the business statement, it will "give us the edge over our competitors". We will work better together in order to achieve a better outcome.

"Having the dialogue that opens up a debate, one that may make us feel uncomfortable... but will actually change something..."

No amount of new equality legislation will restore the confidence in diversity and equality, it will give us a framework, an important one that has laid the foundation for this Single Equality Scheme approach, but it alone will not drive us to change. We need to examine the process of our behaviours, our perceptions, our bias, and our natural tendency to stereotype. We all do this and it is a shared human problem, if we fail to move beyond that we will still be here in another 15 years time asking the same questions.

The definitions that have been used to group people into categories, and the way in which the entire discussion has been framed, sends a message out that diversity and equality is really only for select groups of people. "This isn't something that's going to necessarily benefit me in any way. And in fact, not seeing any benefit, I now have to look at whether or not this is going to have a negative impact on me." And so people begin to think in terms of, "if this is going to help them, maybe it's going to help them at my expense!"

EVERYONE HAS SOME WORK TO DO

VisitScotland will endeavour to move to a broader understanding and a much more humanistic understanding, which is that biases and prejudice are shared problems. There's nobody in this organisation, regardless of what kind of upbringing or what kind of life experience they've had, they have all been socialised to see the world through a set of glasses that get placed on us by people who we consider to be authority figures at a very young age. Now, everybody's wearing glasses. They don't all have the same content, but everybody is wearing glasses.

This means that everybody has some work to do, and understanding what's in those lenses, and then trying to figure out ways to minimise the impact of those lenses is the reality that we face.

This is why VisitScotland is doing away with the traditional approach to Single Equality Schemes, we are not going to have a 120-page document for you to wade through, nor have endless lists of actions. The scheme is split up into easy to read sections, there is "The Law – What You Need To Know", and Why We Need A Scheme, but the key part of this document are the strategies we outline in Appendix 1, which are moving us forward together as an organisation.

THE LAW – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RR(A)A), the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) and the Gender Equality Act 2007 impose a statutory general duty to promote race, disability and gender equality. The aim of the duty is to make equality central to the way public authorities work, and to put it at the heart of policymaking, service delivery, and employment practice. Under 'general duty', in carrying out their functions public authorities must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination in respect of race and disability
- Promote equal opportunities for all, regardless of race, disability and gender
- Promote good relations between people from different racial groups

Gender Equality:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex
- To promote equality of opportunity between women and men

In addition the DDA requires public authorities to:

- Eliminate harassment because of disability
- Take steps to take account of a person's disability, even where that involves treating them more favourably than others, and
- encourage participation by people with a disability in public life

The 'general duty' is supported by a number of specific duties to make sure public authorities are in a position to meet the duty to promote equality. These include duties to produce and maintain race, disability and gender equality schemes and to collect and publish employment monitoring data.

VisitScotland has addressed this requirement by drafting this Single Equality Scheme (SES), demonstrating the organisation's commitment to ensuring that equality issues are at the heart of our policy making and service delivery. It supports the Corporate Plan and the five key corporate objectives for 2009/11. Diversity and equality have recently established a high priority on the business and corporate agenda, and this Single Equality Scheme gives the organisation an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment by tackling race disability, and gender equality at all levels. A specific section outlining the strategy for embedding

diversity into the business will be incorporated into the main body of the Corporate Plan for the very first time this year.

Although current equality legislation does not require the same level of compliance for the other four equality groups:

1. Sexual orientation
2. Age
3. Religion and belief
4. Transgender (we are purposely including transgender issues as a separate strand)

VisitScotland will be taking all the above into account in all the Equality Impact Assessment's and the Equality Policy Statement is designed to promote all aspects of equality to support our staff, managers and customers. The Equality Policy ensures that our responsibilities are clear and transparent for both our staff and our external customers. A copy is available on our website: www.visitscotland.com.

This Single Equality Scheme represents a continuation of our previous Disability and Gender Equality Schemes. VisitScotland as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) was not originally listed in the Code of Practice under the Specific Duties, therefore we were not obliged to publish a scheme for Race, however, to continue our ongoing commitment to race

equality it is now included within this scheme. It describes our strategy for meeting the statutory general duty and the specific duties over the period 2010/2013. We are committed to:

- Making the scheme part of the culture of work of VisitScotland
- Identifying and assessing relevant functions and policies
- Assessing, and consulting on the likely effects of proposed policies on meeting the duty
- Monitoring policies for any adverse impact on all seven minority groups
- Publishing the results of our assessments, consultations and monitoring
- Making sure all our customers and stakeholders have access to information about us and about our services;
- Training our staff on the equality duties
- Monitoring specified areas of employment in line with the specific duty for employers

We are going to have some dedicated strategies that will inform our work in dealing with the human problem we all share; this will not be a blame culture, but a shared learning. It will be based on equality outcomes that will make a difference for our staff and our customers. It will not be based on promotion for one strand or the other, however,

each strand will be at the centre of the actions, and specific feedback will be used to perhaps work on some individual projects from time to time. This strategy will be promoting equality for the whole organisation and for those whom we work, both externally and internally, as our customers.

Feedback from our consultation with disability groups supports this approach:

"However, the majority of participants felt that an inclusive approach is preferable as it means that disabled people are not treated separately. The group was keen that a holistic approach be taken where people are seen as individuals rather than labelled and pigeon-holed."¹

"...this will not be a blame culture, but a shared learning."

There are, of course, specific actions that the organisation must take to support staff with a disability in order that they can operate from a level playing field. These are outlined in Appendix 1.

¹ VisitScotland and Highlands & Islands Consultation Day Event report – Capability Scotland Oct 2009.

At present disabled people do not have the same opportunities or choices as non-disabled people. Nor do they enjoy equal respect or full inclusion in society on an equal basis. The poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion experienced by many disabled people is not the inevitable result of their impairments or medical conditions, but rather stems from attitudinal and environmental barriers. This is known as 'the social model of disability', and will provide the basis for a successful implementation of the duty to promote disability equality within VisitScotland.

The actions identified will at the same time support the key business objectives contained within VisitScotland Corporate Business Plan 20010/13. An Equality Statement is included in the main body of the Corporate Plan for the first time, and underlines our commitment to mainstreaming diversity into the core business of the organisation. This will be a fundamental step in ensuring that VisitScotland meets the requirements of the legislation but also delivers real change and does not leave us tied down in 'process'.

1.1 VISITSCOTLAND – “ONE TEAM FOR TOURISM WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO EXCEED VISITOR EXPECTATIONS”

To contribute significantly to the advancement of Scottish tourism by giving it a real presence in the global

marketplace and benefitting the whole of Scotland.

1.2 VISITSCOTLAND'S PRIORITIES

- Market Scotland to all parts of the world to attract visitors
- Provide information and inspiration to visitors and potential visitors so they get the best out of a visit to Scotland
- Provide quality assurance to visitors and quality advice to industry
- Work with partners to help the industry meet – and strive to exceed visitors expectations

1.3 VISITSCOTLAND'S CORE BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

The Single Equality Scheme is designed to support the key corporate objectives of the organisation:

- Maximise the economic value of the brand: Increase economic benefit through stretching and promoting a successful Scottish tourism brand.
- Inspire through information provision: Increase economic benefit and enhance the visitor experience through provision of information and inspiration.
- Promote quality: Increase economic benefit and enhance the visitor experience through the provision of quality assurance to the visitor and quality advice to the industry.



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01: The people who come and work for us do not leave a part of themselves at the door, their different talents and skills will help us build solutions
 02: The rainbow flag is a celebration of difference, change and tolerance

- Manage effectively: Manage our business effectively and efficiently building a positive corporate reputation.
- Generate income: Generate income and in kind contributions to support our core activities.

1.4 THE CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AGENDA

The Single Equality Scheme will support the Scottish Government's Sustainability Agenda and the vision to make Scotland Europe's most sustainable – economically, environmentally and socially – destination by 2015.

Diversity is affected by social and economic factors; minority groups are not homogenous but are as divided by the issues of class, gender, age as the rest of the population. These factors often shape individuals' lives as much as race, ethnicity or culture. This will develop our thinking and guide our actions, as we explore the more 'holistic' approach to diversity.

1.5 VISION

We will develop diversity policies and training to meet VisitScotland's business and legislative requirements now and for the future. In particular we will implement this Single Equality Scheme that will support external customers, thus improving the customer experience and providing more choices. This will also demonstrate VisitScotland's commitment

to equality issues, by supporting our staff and managers, and making the organisation an employer of choice.

It will support culture change in the organisation through a business focused Diversity and Equality strategy that encourages and empowers managers to take decisions and, when required, face up to making hard choices. Through training, managers will learn to recognise the different and varied skills their staff bring to the workplace. By integrating diversity management into the key leadership skills, and enabling line managers to develop their teams it will benefit VisitScotland's corporate agenda.

1.6 DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

Diversity literature suggests there are strong organisational reasons for adopting diversity management and the associated philosophy and approaches. Evidence of a positive correlation between effective diversity management and improved organisational performance has been overwhelming in recent years. For example, Barkema, Baun and Mannix (2002)² position diversity as one of the main challenges facing management in the 21st century. They refer to studies that examine the negative outcomes of diversity and argue that the effective management of diversity delivers positive results and eliminates potential negative repercussions, such as conflict, in teams.

Ozbilgin and Tatli (2008)³ have probably the best summary of the benefits of diversity management:

- Reducing the potential for backlash impact associated with affirmative action.
- Meeting diverse customer demands more effectively.
- Improving understanding and ability to succeed in the complex globalisation of markets.
- Delivery of the psychological contract, improved employee relations and reduced labour turnover.
- Improvements in the quality and performance of internal workforce in terms of skills, creativity, problem solving and flexibility.

1.7 NEW VALUES – EPIIC

The value of a diversity strategy goes beyond the way we treat our staff, stakeholders and customers. Diversity needs to be integrated into the very fabric of the organisation and reflected in the way we make and deliver our policies and business. It is fundamental to the way we work and our ability to be an effective organisation. It will support VisitScotland's values:

² Barkema, H.g., Baum J. and Mannix E. (2002) Management Challenges in a New Time. Academy of Management Journal Vol 45 No 5 October.

³ Ozbilgin, M. F. and Tatli, A. (2008) Global Diversity Management: An Evidence Based Approach. London & New York: Palgrave.

- Excellence: We strive to achieve excellence in all that we do, exceeding customer expectations in the delivery of our products and services.
- Pride: Our staff are managed and developed to be proud, passionate and effective ambassadors for our organisation and for Scottish tourism. Proud to work for VisitScotland, we want to be an employer of choice attracting and retaining the best people.
- Integrity: Working together, not over-promising and enforcing quality levels.
- Innovation: We are innovative, constantly changing the status quo and seeking new and better ways of doing things, not afraid to take risks where justified.
- Caring: thinking about how we work with colleagues, caring for Scotland the brand and protecting the reputation of VisitScotland.

Scotland to flourish, through increasingly sustainable economic growth.

It takes a fresh look at what's happening in tourism markets, both globally and in Scotland, and how the tourism market might change over the next decade. It sets out what tourism and hospitality businesses, related sectors like transport and retail, and the public sector agencies which support them, need to do to keep Scottish tourism growing sustainably in that changing market. A focus on how VisitScotland can help the Industry growth by innovation and exploring specific markets, e.g. accessible tourism, can only support this sustainable change. Most importantly it stresses that we can't stand still – unless we grow our tourism sector, we'll lose it to the competition.

THE INDUSTRY AMBITION IS TO INCREASE REVENUE GROWTH BY 50%

“Our ambition is to keep pace with global trends over the next 10 years – if we do this we will achieve 50% revenue growth (in real terms). It will be vital to achieve that growth sustainably – by this we mean social, economic and environmental sustainability. Tourism growth must not be at the expense of our environment, or our culture and communities.”

SUMMARY

This Single Equality Scheme will look to support the business of VisitScotland, in order that we can make a significant contribution to the Scottish Government's Financial Strategy. We will look to balance the needs of the business with the need to comply with legislation; we will consult as we move forward with this agenda, so as to enable business managers to understand the change and the reason for it. Ultimately, we will demonstrate this by integrating the equality agenda into the business processes.

It will:

- Assist in the revenue growth target of 50%
- Support the social sustainability agenda of the Scottish Government
- Make us an employer of choice for all sections of the community
- Mean that we will retain the good quality staff we have working for us, and attract the best people from diverse backgrounds to join in our success
- It will enable staff to personally develop their skills and talents both for themselves and for the business

1.8 EXTERNAL FACTORS AFFECTING VISITSCOTLAND

The Scottish Government's Financial Strategy. Scottish Tourism – The Next Decade: A Framework for Change⁴

The Scottish Government's purpose is to create a:

- a more successful country with opportunities for all of

SECTION 2: THE SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

2.1 SO WHY DO WE HAVE ONE?

Public authorities are required by law to promote equality in terms of race disability and gender. When the current Single Equality Bill, currently going through the UK Parliament, becomes law in 2010/11, this responsibility will extend to other equality strands, such as age, transgender, sexual orientation, religion and belief. An Equality Scheme is a strategy which includes an action plan, summarising how VisitScotland will build equality into its corporate aims, and how it will monitor and evaluate its performance. (See Equality Outcomes Appendix 1)

2.2 VISITSCOTLAND'S SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME (SES)

There is a legislative requirement under Race, Disability and the Gender Equality duty to produce an Equality Scheme for these three strands. VisitScotland has taken the decision to publish a SES, thereby combining the three schemes into one easily accessible document. This SES details VisitScotland's commitment to disability, gender and race equality in all aspects of its work, including development of its policies and delivery of its services to customers. VisitScotland will also have an underlying commitment throughout this Scheme to include the other strands: sexual orientation, age, religion and transgender issues as part of

the equality assessment process where this is relevant to the business and the organisation. Actions to promote these will be contained within the strategy document. This will form a foundation upon which to build further work in these areas when the Single Equality Bill becomes law.

We believe this makes good business sense, especially in this current economic climate and demonstrates to our staff and customers that we are an inclusive organisation.

2.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THIS SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

The Diversity and Equality manager is responsible for policy issues relating to the whole diversity and equality agenda, together with the HR managers for each directorate. This includes the publication of this Single Equality Scheme, its three year revision, and production of annual progress reports on the Scheme's Action Plan.

Supporting this Scheme is an Equal Opportunities Policy, which is published on the internal intranet (the Hub) for VisitScotland staff, and also on the VisitScotland website for all external customers to view: www.visitscotland.com.

Through raising awareness of the scheme and assessing policies and functions, the Scheme will be produced in

consultation with all of VisitScotland's business areas at Senior Management Team (SMT) and Head of Department level. We will also consult with external bodies, our key stakeholders and our own staff and managers within VisitScotland.

This document has been discussed and agreed with the Trade Unions.

2.4 AIMS OF VISITSCOTLAND'S SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

In putting the Single Equality Scheme into practice, we intend to achieve the following outcomes over the next three years:

- Increased satisfaction with the delivery of our functions across all the equality strands
- Recognition within the business that diversity and equality can become a tool for increasing revenue and supporting economic growth within the tourism industry
- Identification and removal of any adverse impact of our functions and policies, within the boundaries of proportionality, appropriateness and adaptability
- An organisation that recognises talent, values difference, attracts the best people, and retains them
- Increased employee awareness of equality and diversity issues, and how good diversity management is critical to the business performance of VisitScotland

Actions to support these outcomes are attached in more detail in Appendix 1.

2.5 ACCOUNTABILITY

The Chief Executive working closely with the Chairman, the Board and the SMT, are accountable for ensuring that VisitScotland's Single Equality Scheme and the Actions identified in Appendix 1 are put into practice.

On a day to day basis, the Equality and Diversity manager together with the Senior Management team (SMT) will be responsible for ensuring that their business areas, where appropriate, are meeting the requirements of the equality scheme.

"This Single Equality Scheme will form a foundation upon which to build when the new Single Equality Bill becomes law in October 2010."

The Equality & Diversity manager is supported by the Diversity Project Team (DPT) who are made up of staff from around the organisation, who meet on a quarterly basis to discuss the progress, and the barriers, and then design

effective solutions to promote and integrate diversity into the business functions.

There is also a responsibility on all VisitScotland staff to ensure that they are familiar with the Single Equality Scheme and are familiar with its relevance in respect of their own duties.

2.6 COMPLAINTS

Employees wishing to complain about VisitScotland failing to meet its duties under either the DDA or the RR(A)A , or the Gender Equality Act (or any of the Equality Legislation as summarised in Appendix 3) can do so by raising the matter with their line manager, their HR manager (for employment issues), or the Diversity and Equality manager for advice on issues concerning discrimination. There is a specific internal Equal Opportunities Complaints procedure that is available on the HUB, VisitScotland's internal website, which will outline the process in clear steps, in the case of making a formal complaint. This formal procedure will investigate each case thoroughly by using specially trained Equal Opportunities Investigators.

2.7 MEDIATION TEAM

There is also a trained in-house team of mediators in VisitScotland, who have been trained in third-party conflict



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01: Signposts point the way, but we have to take the risk to travel
02: If we do not resolve conflict it will hold us back and prevent progress

"VisitScotland values input from our customers and stakeholders, this is a living document and will be reviewed in 2011."

management; each member has a professional accredited qualification.⁵ The team is available for resolving conflict when all other channels of resolution have failed. The team is available for mediation in-house, but also to other NDPB's in Scotland, it is part of a joint shared services venture, led by VisitScotland's Equality and Diversity manager as part of the NDPB Equality Forum.

For Staff

For more information about internal formal EO complaints procedure, or the Mediation service refer to the procedures on the Hub, or contact the Equality and Diversity Manager:

Chris McCoy

Ocean Point
94 Ocean Point Drive
Edinburgh EH6 6JH

Tel: **0131 472 2259**

Email: **chris.mccoy@visitscotland.com**

For External Customers

Customers who believe that they have been discriminated against by VisitScotland, or that we have not by our actions fulfilled our commitment to equality and diversity, then in the first instance please write to:

Ranald Duff

Quality Development Manager
VisitScotland
Cowan House
Inverness Business & Retail Park
Inverness IV2 7GF

Email: **qa@visitscotland.com**

2.8 REVIEWING THE SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

The Scheme will be reviewed in 2011. As a result of the Review a revised scheme will be launched, which will run for a further three years.

2.9 REPORTING THE RESULTS OF THE SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

Equality legislation requires that VisitScotland produces an annual progress report, highlighting the results of

monitoring of employment policies and procedures, this will also include results in terms of monitoring disability and gender. In addition this will also provide an overview of progress against the action plan as required by the disability legislation.

In addition, VisitScotland is required under disability legislation to produce a report in December 2009 to:

- give an overview of the progress made in relation to disability equality
- set out proposals for continuing progress

2.10 CONCLUSION

This Single Equality Scheme, therefore, incorporates the December 2009 disability update and will be posted on the VisitScotland website. This will provide evidence of VisitScotland's commitment to diversity and equality and meet our legal requirements to the public sector duties, both current and planned, for all seven strands of equality.

⁵ At the time of writing the team is currently undergoing training, and will be operational by March 2010.

APPENDIX 1

AIMS OF VISITSCOTLAND'S SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME (REF 2.4)

1. Increased satisfaction with the delivery of our functions across all the equality strands

Action to achieve outcomes

- a. Disability Equality Training for front line Visitor Information Centre (VIC) staff
- b. Disability Consultation events – internal and external.
- c. Dual Tracking in sick absence monitoring for staff with a declared disability
- d. Disability Two Ticks Symbol in recruitment
- e. Setting up a Disability Staff Network group
- f. Changing Faces membership
- g. Lesbian, Gay Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) Stonewall – Diversity Champions
- h. Gender Equality – Equal Pay Review

Value and Evidence to support involvement

- a. To increase awareness for dealing with customers, understanding their own reactions enabling them to provide a more informed customer service. To meet our legal obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act.
- b. Disability Consultation with staff, two events held in

partnership with Highlands & Islands Enterprise in Inverness. To get feedback on proposals contained within the Single Equality Scheme, and fulfill the legal requirement to consult. Information for disabled staff and line managers from disability organisations available at consultation events in order to help with making reasonable adjustments, and promote equality of opportunity.

- c. VisitScotland are implementing the policy of 'dual tracking' sickness absence for people with a disability that has been declared to the organisation. As a reasonable adjustment to ensure that disabled staff are not put at a disadvantage. This means keeping a robust sickness record, whilst making an adjustment for periods of disability related absence.
- d. To sign up with Job Centre Plus to use the Disability Two Ticks Symbol to promote equality for disabled people who apply for jobs in VisitScotland, assurance that we will interview all those who meet the minimum criteria, (the first tick) and will also help those who become disabled whilst working for us to stay in their job, (the second tick).
- e. Setting up a disability staff network group as a means of support and information sharing for those with a disability. Time out to discuss with like minded staff about

the pressures of having a disability in the workplace and how best to change attitudes and overcome barriers. Invite guest speakers who, despite a disability, have succeeded in business, to give support and mentoring advice. To use as a sounding board for consultation on any new HR policies in the workplace, or any advice regarding equality impact assessment for projects, proposals coming from the business.

- f. VisitScotland is a member of Changing Faces, a UK based charity who promotes equality for people with facial disfigurements: There are an estimated 1.3 million people with a significant facial or body disfigurement in the UK – they have a disposable income of around £8bn. If an organisation's workforce is 'face aware', catering seamlessly for people with disfigurements, it is likely to attract those 1.3 million away from competitors, along with their spending power! Employing staff members with disfigurements in client or customer-facing roles sends a strong message to clients or potential customers that the organisation not only welcomes people with disfigurements as customers and staff, but it is proactive in choosing the right person for the job based on skill and merit, rather than appearance.
- g. LGBT – Stonewall: VisitScotland are now members of Stonewalls Diversity Workplace Champions, this means

we have access to publications and advice from Stonewall. VisitScotland will complete the Workplace Equality Index next year to assess how far we have come in promoting LGBT equality. This will benchmark us against other companies. We will also explore supporting Stonewall to set up a Diversity Champions group for the hospitality industry in Scotland, as a pilot. This will be led by Stonewall, with input from VisitScotland. This will look at promoting Scotland as an LGBT friendly destination, and also for attracting LGBT people to work in the industry. Project to be shared at the NDPB Equality Forum as another example of shared service. Discussions around setting up an LGBT network group for VisitScotland LGBT staff, either as an in-house group, or to link in with other NDPB groups. Research indicates that LGBT staff are 20 – 30% more productive if they are 'out' at work.

- h. Gender Equality: Equal Pay Review, completed 2008/9 – separate report will be available soon. Equal Pay Statement to be drafted and submitted by April 2010 .

2. Recognition within the business that diversity and equality can become a tool for increasing revenue and supporting economic growth within the tourism industry

Actions to support outcome

- a. Designing a project brief to present to the Scottish Government on the value of marketing to the accessible market to enable us to commission research into this subject.
- b. Equality and Diversity manager to design bespoke Equality and Diversity training for external bodies, and deliver across the public sector to support shared service development of this training.

Value and evidence to support involvement

- a. To assess the potential of the market for travellers to Scotland, who have issues of accessibility, to provide increased revenue for Scottish tourism, whilst also enhancing the visitor experience.

It will give VisitScotland a competitive advantage in the current economic climate, as the accessible market is largely untapped and has massive potential for growth. Initial research that developed our thinking for this project revealed that:

There are 10 million people with a disability in the UK with purchasing power of over £80bn a year.⁶

In Europe as a whole there are 45 million disabled

people with a purchasing power of €166bn.⁷

In the US, an estimated US\$13.6bn is spent annually on travel by disabled people alone.⁸

The Employers Forum on Disability did some research in 2005/6 called the 'Walk Away Pound' stating the cost of disabled people 'walking away' from accommodation, events, and activities. 83% of disabled people have 'walked away' in 2005/6, unable or unwilling to make a purchase, access accommodation or partake in an activity, or event.

32% said they had 'walked away' from hotels, events, attractions, etc. because of staff attitude, physical access, products poorly designed, inflexible service or unwillingness to make reasonable adjustments. It is interesting to note that staff attitude comes before physical access, so begs the question as to why all our efforts are usually directed at the physical?

⁶ Welcome Legacy: Tourism Strategy for the 2012 Games – A Consultation, DCMS, 2006.

⁷ Improving Information on Accessible Tourism for Disabled People – European Commission, 2004.

⁸ Winning: A Tourism Strategy for 2012 and Beyond – DCMS, 2007.

The research will provide evidence for a more targeted approach to marketing aimed at the accessible market. It also has the potential to increase visitor numbers, thus supporting the Scottish Government's aim of increasing revenue growth by 50% by 2015.

The research will also provide the Scottish tourism industry with hard evidence that there are considerable financial benefits in working with this market. Use research findings as a revenue enhancer for VisitScotland, (marketing, selling, and quality assurance) throughout tourism businesses/ bodies.

- b. Two courses are currently under design as per section 4a (see below), that will be available from March 2010. Two customers have requested courses to date.

3. Identification and removal of any adverse impact of our functions and policies, within the boundaries of proportionality, appropriateness and adaptability

Actions to support outcome

- a. Design a light touch training programme about the business benefits and drivers for having the Equality Impact Assessment process as part of the project management brief.

- b. Equality and Diversity manager to provide training sessions for VisitScotland.
- c. Training for Quality Assurance (QA) team.
- d. Continuing our survey of the VIC estate and meeting our commitments under the DDA legislation. All these will be guided by our criteria of proportionate, reasonable, necessary and appropriate.
- e. Ongoing advice and guidance to all directorates on practical equality impact assessments.

Value and evidence to support involvement

- a. To develop a light touch to EqlAs, looking at adverse impact on policy, looking to develop some 'lateral thinking' around EqlAs, in order to reduce the burden on the business, and also avoid the 'tick box' mentality, which achieves very little change for both our staff or our customers
- b. Staff and managers understand why EqlAs should be part of the business process and they begin to mainstream into project plans.
- c. Training on diversity at the QA team meetings and updates, to provide Quality Advisors with enough

information about equality legislation to support them working with customers within the QA scheme.

- d. In the Disability Annual review 2009, 72% of our estate had been assessed for DDA compliance. This SES reports that now 100% of VisitScotland properties have now been assessed for DDA Compliance – schedule of works to be completed by 31 March 2010. We have a budget of £100k set aside for all works identified from these assessments, which includes some of the ongoing works being progressed or completed to improve access for all.
- e. Advice provided by Equality and Diversity Manager on an ongoing basis, where this is appropriate, proportionate and necessary.

4. An organisation that recognises talent, values difference, attracts the best people, and retains them

Actions to support outcome

- a. A programme of diversity training, based on a fresh approach that delivers change: SMT and Board to sample training in January 2010 to engage with the course first hand, then cascade to the organisation over 2010/11.

Value and evidence to support involvement

- a. A new approach to diversity training to remove stereotyping and bias: Helping managers to work with their unconscious bias, enabling them to think in a different way, and therefore change behaviours. This is based in developing a foundation upon which to build the training programme that will challenge but not blame, and will open up dialogue and explore the difficult subjects, focusing on a shared responsibility. Research has clearly proved that this type of training works and changes people's unconscious bias, and so affects their behaviour. Ensuring an ongoing dialogue within teams to deal with 'facing up to hard choices', helping managers to manage diversity, understand what it means to value difference, recognise talent, and maintain an effective workforce.
- b. This training will support the work done to develop a Talent Management programme for VisitScotland.

5. Increased employee awareness of equality and diversity issues, and how good diversity management is critical to the business performance of VisitScotland and supports the Scottish Government's financial strategy

"To focus the Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth."⁹

Actions to support outcome

- a. Presentations and induction sessions from the Diversity and Equality manager about the business case for adopting a business focused diversity strategy. Having a page dedicated to the diversity strategy incorporated into the body of the Corporate Business Plan.
- b. Diversity and Equality manager managing advising on external complaints: working with the QA team to ensure that customers receive the correct information around areas of equality and discrimination law. Also working with QA team on the review of the QA process to ensure a 5-star customer experience and that our customers are aware of discrimination law and their corporate social responsibility under the equality policy of VisitScotland.
- c. Setting up and arranging the training for a Mediation in-house team, who will operate within VisitScotland and also provide a mediation service to other NDPB's. Ongoing management of the team, via the mediation referral team in VisitScotland. The Mediation Project Team (MPT) will 'go live' by mid-March 2010.

- d. Having a robust Equal Opportunities Complaints procedure, that sits alongside the grievance procedure, but is focused on the resolution of EO formal complaints, under discrimination law, and a strategy to prevent further escalation to Employment Tribunal (ET).

Value and evidence to support involvement

- a. To engage both new and current staff in the business benefits of having a diversity strategy that supports the business performance: Benefits include, reduced costs, access to a wide talent pool, improved creativity, innovation and problem solving and enhanced reputation with clients and stakeholders.
- b. Risk and reputation management, both for the organisation and for our Ministers.
- c. Mediation is especially effective when used at the initial phase of any disagreement, before conflict escalates. An early intervention can prevent both sides from becoming entrenched and the difference turning into a formal dispute. Independent research indicates that conflict between individuals creates stress, which causes a lost productivity, which costs organisations.

⁹ Scottish Governments Economic Strategy.

money, damages its reputation and risks legal action. This is a joint venture in partnership with the NDPB Equality Forum led by VisitScotland, who have a trained pool of accredited mediators who can be used to reduce and manage conflict in any of the public sector bodies in Scotland. Timely mediation interventions can support and ensure business performance is not affected by enabling staff to restore the working relationship, increase productivity, reduce conflict, work better together and monitor the agreements made. The Diversity and Equality manager will be the account manager for the ongoing relationship with the consultant trainers – Total Conflict Management (TCM).

Benefits

This will reduce the need for buying in expensive professional mediators, (£1,300 per day approx) as the team will provide a professional service to NDPB's at a significantly reduced cost.

- Shared service means a reduction in costs for the public purse
- Better value for money
- Better quality training and support
- Increases sharing of expertise across the public bodies, increases satisfaction from our customers
- Personal development for staff within the team, valuable experience of working in different organisations

and cultures, which they bring back to their own organisations

- Shared and reduced training costs

Working with the NDPB Equality Forum to ensure shared service working supports the equality programmes in all NDPB's, sharing expertise, training methods, good practice, and producing reports that outline the outcomes achieved by the group. Evaluation of the project will be done in partnership with Glasgow University with their team who are currently doing research on mediation in the workplace.

- d. Strategy for EO Complaints, which meets with employment law, but also ensures resolution of genuine complaints, and also provides an opportunity to assess whether the formal procedure is relevant, or would there be a better way to resolve, i.e. mediation, training etc., by way of a case conference time out at the beginning of the process. The project will be supported by a team of trained Equal Opportunities investigators who specialise in investigating discrimination cases.

These actions will be monitored over a 12 month period and progress reported back annually to the VisitScotland Board and Senior Management Team.

Full review of the Scheme and its actions will be in 2011.



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