



Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board

Public Sector Equality Duty Progress Report 2015

Introduction

Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board (“the Board”) and the Assessor for Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board (“the Assessor”) remain committed to embracing and implementing the principles and ethos of the Equality Act 2010 and its associated Regulations such as the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

By fully adopting the principles and ethos of the Equality Act 2010, Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board continue to provide all electors, rate payers and council tax payers of Ayrshire, and its own staff, a service provision, culture and working environment which is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, where all members of our community have equal opportunities and treat each other with dignity and respect.

In order to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, listed public authorities, including Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board and the Assessor for Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board, are required to produce a progress report by no later than 27th April 2015.

The intention of this progress report is to provide a summary of the actions taken since 2013 that have helped integrate the general equality duty into the services and functions provided by Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board.

This progress report also gives Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board the opportunity to update our employee information and to report on the progress we have made in using our employee information to meet the needs of the general equality duty. Finally this report will allow us to review our progress towards meeting the equality outcomes that were set in 2013, and, if appropriate, consider whether our current equality outcomes require updating or perhaps suggest new outcomes.

This report is, therefore, in four parts, and will consider each of the following key areas;

- ***Part 1 - Mainstreaming The Equality Duty An Update.***
- ***Part 2 – Workforce Monitoring.***
- ***Part 3 – Equality Outcomes Progress Achieved Since 2013.***
- ***Part 4 – Equality Outcomes 2015 to 2017.***

It follows similar lines to our original 2013 report, this will allow the 2015 position to be readily compared and contrasted to the position reported in 2013.

It should be noted that having less than 150 employees we are not required to publish statements on equal pay or publish gender pay gap information.



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PART 1

MAINSTREAMING THE EQUALITY DUTY AN UPDATE

Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board – Who Are We?

1.0 The Board

Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board has been established since 1996 and discharges jointly the responsibilities which North, South and East Ayrshire Councils hold as Valuation Authorities.

The Board continues to have 16 elected councillors who are appointed by the constituent authorities as follows:

<i>East Ayrshire Council</i>	<i>5 members</i>
<i>North Ayrshire Council</i>	<i>6 members</i>
<i>South Ayrshire Council</i>	<i>5 members</i>

The Assessor, who is appointed by the Board, continues to be responsible for the preparation and maintenance of the Valuation Roll and Council Tax List, which are the base documents required for the three Ayrshire Councils to ingather Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax.

The Board has also appointed the Assessor to be the Electoral Registration Officer and be responsible for the preparation and maintenance of the Register of Electors, which is essential for all European, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections.

The Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer currently has a total of 49 members of staff which translates into a full time equivalent of 43.1 staff. In 2013 the equivalent figures were 46 and 42.1 respectively.

1.1 The Service Mission, Aims and Objectives of the Board

The Service Mission of the Board has not changed since 2013 and remains “*to provide equitable, customer focussed, best value, high quality, professional valuation and electoral services for all its stakeholders*”.

The aims and objectives of the Board are to:

- ***Ensure that our services are delivered in accordance with all statutory requirements.***
- ***Plan service development and delivery in accordance with the principles of Best Value and continuous improvement.***
- ***Consult our stakeholders about their needs and expectations.***
- ***Recognise our employees as both stakeholders and our most important asset.***
- ***Take individual and collective responsibility for the services provided by AVJB.***
- ***Encourage innovation and recognise achievement within the organisation.***
- ***Monitor and report performance levels to stakeholders.***
- ***Integrate equalities issues into all aspects of our service provision.***
- ***Build upon our achievements to date.***

1.2 The Scope of the Board’s Functions

The Assessor’s staff continue to inspect and survey domestic and non-domestic properties in order to assess the appropriate valuation band or rateable value that should be entered in the Council Tax (Valuation) List and Valuation Roll.

With regard to Electoral Registration, the Assessor’s staff continue to compile and maintain the Register of Electors. In order to provide this service a canvass form is issued by post to each household annually. In conjunction with other forms of checks, a number of door to door enquiries will also be undertaken to supplement this information. The information gathered will be used to compile the Electoral Register. In addition to the annual canvass, individuals who are qualified to do so, may apply to be added to the Electoral Register throughout the year.

The Board’s core functions continue to be heavily prescribed by statute and as a consequence these functions are freely available to all members of the public who meet the necessary statutory requirements in order for them to be entitled to those services. The Board’s core functions are therefore, by their nature, non-discriminatory.

2.0 Equality Duties

The Equality Act 2010 included a new public sector Equality Duty which replaced the separate duties on public bodies relating to race, disability and gender equality. It now also extends to age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

In providing the services mentioned above to the people of Ayrshire and, its day to day management of its staff, the Board is acutely aware of the duties imposed upon it by Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The general duties set out in Section 149 of the Act are summarised below and remain at the core of all services delivered by Ayrshire Valuation Board. They are;

- ***eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act***
- ***advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it***
- ***foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.***

The Act also sets out nine protected characteristics which are:

- ***Age***
- ***Disability***
- ***Gender Reassignment***
- ***Marriage and Civil Partnership***
- ***Pregnancy and Maternity***
- ***Race***
- ***Religion or Belief***
- ***Sex***
- ***Sexual Orientation***

The general duties listed above, and their interaction with the nine protected characteristics, are at the core of all services delivered by Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board. How we have been embedding the general duties, particularly with regard to the nine protected characteristics, into the delivery of all services since 2013 will now be considered in more detail.

3.0 Mainstreaming the Equality Duties

3.1 Top Down Involvement

Equality of treatment is a fundamental right and the Assessor and ERO has taken steps to ensure that a culture of equality is embedded in the organisation. A top down approach has been adopted and equality remains a standing item on the agenda for discussion at the Assessors' monthly Corporate Governance Forum. All equality issues are also reported and discussed at the Assessors monthly Management Team meeting. Any issues relating to equality matters that are discussed are cascaded down from the Management Team meeting via Bullet and Action Points, Minutes and individual team briefings all in accordance with the Assessors Communication Strategy which was introduced in early 2014.

All minutes taken at the Assessors' Management Team meetings are approved and made available to all staff via our internal SharePoint site. The Minutes of the Assessors Management Team meetings are also uploaded to our website on a regular basis.

3.2 Equal Pay

In July 2010 the Board implemented the national single status agreement for Local Authority Employees in Scotland. All jobs were, and continue to be, evaluated to ensure that there is no gender bias. The re-evaluation in 2010 was undertaken using the COSLA job evaluation model and, prior to implementation, an independent consultant was engaged to undertake an equality impact assessment of the outcomes. Following detailed analysis the consultant confirmed that the proposed outcomes were technically robust and non-discriminatory and suitable for implementation by the Board.

In conjunction with re-evaluating all posts the Board introduced a revised pay structure and package of terms and conditions of employment. Again the pay structure and package of terms and conditions was endorsed by the consultant as non-discriminatory in terms of their proposed application. This continues to be the case and has not changed since 2013, however, revised terms and conditions are currently being considered. As part of this review equalities issues will be fully considered.

3.3 Policies and Procedures

The Board has a range of policies and procedures in place, many of which are aimed at eliminating discrimination and promoting equality. Some of these policies and procedures are detailed below:

A Framework for Maximising Attendance at Work
Anti- Fraud and Corruption Strategy
Breaks at Work Guidance
Code of Conduct for Employees
Concerns at Work (Whistle Blowing) Procedure
Complaints Handling Procedure
Disciplinary Policy (including Guidance Documents, Handbooks etc)
Enhanced Leave Policy
Equality at Work Policy
Equalities – AVJB Public Sector Equality Duty Policy
Exit Interviews Procedure
Flexible Working Policy
Flexi-Time Scheme Guidance
Freedom of Information (Policy, Procedures and various Guidance Documents)
Grievance Policy (including Guidance and Handbooks)
Job Re-Evaluation Procedure
Job Sharing Policy
Managing Workforce Change
Maternity, Adoption, Paternity & Shared Parental Leave and Pay Policy
Occupational Health Guidelines to Referral to OCH and Ill Health Procedure
Recruitment and Selection Policy
Retirement Framework
Special Leave Policy
Stress Policy (including various Operational Guidelines, Handbooks etc.)
Supporting Employees in Managing Addiction Policy
Supporting Mental Wellbeing in the Workplace Policy
Temporary Workers Procedure
Terms and Conditions of Service
Training and Development Policy
Violence and Aggression at Work Policy

All policies, procedures, guidance documents etc. are reviewed on a regular basis. A rolling programme of review and updating has been introduced in an effort to ensure that all policies and procedures are relevant and fit for purpose.

3.4 Recruitment and Selection

The Board continues to operate a policy that ensures recruitment and selection is undertaken within a framework which is fair, consistent, avoids discriminatory practices and provides equal access to all jobs. The policy incorporates a recruitment charter and also includes a commitment that any disabled applicant who satisfies the minimum requirements will be invited for interview. Prior to interview an Access To Interview Form is issued to all shortlisted candidates to ensure that adequate provisions can be made for them to attend.

In conjunction with this policy, provision has been made to monitor amongst other things the racial, gender, disability and marital status of both successful and unsuccessful applicants. This information is not available to the interview panel.

3.5 Equality Group

A Staff Equality Group continues to meet to consider equality issues and how these can best be addressed in undertaking our statutory functions.

The Equality Group is made up of staff from all parts of the office in order that a fair and true representation of the office structure results. The Equality Group is chaired by the Head of Valuation Services and Assistant ERO who reports the outcome of their discussions to the Corporate Governance Forum and Management Team. Minutes of meetings are circulated to all staff and made freely available to all staff via our internal SharePoint site.

3.6 Service Plan

The Board has a Service Plan where equalities form an important part. The Service Plan is a standing item on the agenda of the Assessors' monthly Management Team meeting. The Plan is therefore under constant review and any changes made are relayed to all staff via team briefings and the subsequent posting of Minutes on the Boards internal SharePoint site.

3.7 Training

Despite the difficult economic conditions affecting the funding of local government the Board continues to take seriously its commitment to providing training where possible. We continue to have a Training Group who are constantly reviewing the opportunities for additional training in many areas including equality issues.

The Board continues to recognise that additional training in equality issues is required for all staff and this will be undertaken mainly in-house but where specialist training is required it will be sourced from outwith the organisation.

3.8 Access to the Board's Premises

Access to the Board's premises remains challenging but manageable. It has been recognised that the original part of the building, being a traditional Georgian town house with a series of steps at the entrance, presents problems for disabled users. The internal stairs and broken layout of the interior of this part of the building does not lend itself to use by disabled persons e.g. for wheelchair use.

The modern extension to the rear of the building is accessed from pavement level and its open plan layout does lend itself to use by disabled persons. Prominent signage at the front of the building still directs wheelchair users to the rear of the building where a parking space has been reserved for disabled customers and an access door, reception area and toilet suitable for disabled use has been provided.

The current layout and use of the Board's premises is under constant review by the Management Team and the office Health and Safety Working Group.

Between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2014, we received 1,358 visits by members of the public to our public counter. None of those visitors enquired about or used our disabled access.

Between 1st April 2014 and 31st March 2015, we received 5,594 visits by members of the public to our public counter. Again, none of those visitors enquired about or used our disabled access.

3.9 Access to Information Published by the Board

The Board creates a number of publications which are available in hard copy. Facilities are available whereby these publications can be made available in different languages, in Braille or on audio tape on request. Between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2015, we haven't received any requests for our publications to be translated into an alternative language, Braille or audio tape.

The Board also publishes information on its website which has the facility to increase font size and also includes a "brousealoud" speech enabled facility.

3.10 Communication with the Board

The Board has established that, other than English, the most common languages spoken in Ayrshire are Cantonese, Mandarin, Hindi, Urdu, Polish and Punjabi. The annual Electoral Registration Canvass Form and Revaluation and Valuation Notices incorporate details in each of the above languages which advise recipients on how to proceed if translation services on the content of the form is required.

3.11 Language Line

All of our staff have access to the translation facilities provided through "Language Line". All appropriate staff continue to receive training in the use of language line.

Between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2015, we haven't received any requests to use Language Line.

3.12 Sign Language Interpreter

The use of a sign language interpreter remains available through our lead authority, South Ayrshire Council. An electronic hearing loop has been provided within the main reception area. It is also portable and may therefore be taken to other locations within the office if required.

Staff have been made aware of the British Sign Language Online Video Relay Interpreting Service known as "ContactScotland". Details of this Scottish Government initiative have been circulated to all staff. Once more information about this recently introduced service has been sourced a procedural document will be rolled out to all staff and if necessary training will be organised for all necessary staff.

Between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2015, we have not received any requests for access to a sign language interpreter or use of the British Sign language Online Video Interpreting Service.

3.13 Correspondence

Wherever possible, all correspondence issued by the Board continues to be provided in Arial font size 12 for the benefit of partially sighted service users.

3.14 Suggestions Box

For some time now all staff have had access to a Suggestions Box and are encouraged to make suggestions that could improve the provision of our service to our customers and the working practices and environment of our staff.

The Suggestions Box is opened on a monthly basis and each suggestion is discussed by the Management Team and the appropriate action taken.

Between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2015, a total of 30 staff suggestions were placed in the Suggestions Box. This is encouraging and confirms that staff are continuing to feel comfortable using this facility and believe it has a valuable place in the day to day workings of the office.

3.15 Staff Conversation Events

This is a concept introduced by the new Assessor in October 2013. On a regular basis the Assessor has an open meeting with any member of staff who wishes to attend the event. Within reason, any issue is capable of being raised and on many occasions a wide variety of topics have been raised and discussed. Staff are encouraged to attend these events and use this open forum to raise any issues or concerns they may have.

3.16 Scottish Assessors' Association

The Assessor and the Head of Valuation Service and Assistant ERO are members of the Governance Committee of the Scottish Assessors' Association which has equality issues as a standing item on the Agenda of its regular meetings.

Being a member of the Scottish Assessors' Association Governance Committee gives the Assessor, and her staff, the opportunity to share information on equality issues and agree best practices with colleagues from throughout Scotland.

3.17 Ayrshire Equalities Partnership

The Head of Valuation Services and Assistant ERO, who is responsible for equality and diversity issues, remains a member of the Ayrshire Equalities Partnership. This is a multi-agency partnership comprising each of the three Ayrshire Councils, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Police Scotland, Fire Scotland, Ayrshire Minority and Ethnic Community Association, Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service, Ayrshire College and Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board. Any issues raised as a result of attendance at the Ayrshire Equalities Partnership are reported to the Assessors' Management Team and as a consequence cascaded to all staff.

A number of significant projects are on-going involving all of the partners, just two examples include;

- 1. The production of a 'Welcome Pack' for Asylum Seekers who have recently arrived in Ayrshire.**
- 2. The preparation of a pan Ayrshire conference on equality issues but with a particular emphasis on race, disability, age and L.G.B.T. issues.**

Given the size and limited resources available to Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board, membership of the Ayrshire Equality Partnership is an excellent resource. The contact with fellow equality and diversity officers and the sharing of knowledge and good practice is invaluable.

3.18 South Ayrshire Council Equalities Champions

The Head of Valuation Services and Assistant ERO remains part of the South Ayrshire Council Equality Champions Network which promotes equality across all Board and Council services. Equality Champions are drawn from a wide range of services and act as a key point of contact for employees who wish to raise issues relating to equality at work. Equality Champions meet quarterly and are undergoing a training programme to familiarise themselves with key issues affecting protected groups.

Any issues raised by attendance at the South Ayrshire Council Equality Champions Network are reported to the Assessors' Corporate Governance Forum and monthly Management Team meeting. All issues discussed are then cascaded to all staff via Bullet and Action Points, Minutes and team briefings.

3.19 Work Experience

The Board still makes available, through the Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce, up to six places for young people, still in full time education, to gain training and work experience for a week at a time.

Unfortunately Since 2013 no young people have been referred to us, nevertheless, this facility remains in place if and when it is required.

3.20 Appeals and Complaints to the Board

Since 2013 the Board has introduced the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Model Complaints Procedure. This standardises our approach to complaints handling and imposes a duty on us to formally report on the lessons learned and the outcomes of our complaints handling procedures. The SPSO's Model Complaints Procedure has, of course, equality issues at its core.

3.21 Customer Feedback Survey

The Board is currently updating its customer feedback survey forms. One of the principal areas of improvement within the form relates to our equalities monitoring question. It is our aim to have our updated Customer Feedback Form ready for issue during the summer of 2015.

All forms that are returned will be reviewed and analysed and a report prepared and presented to the Board. Once approved, the outcome of our customer survey will be published on our website. If required, further staff training will be undertaken to specifically address any issues raised.

3.22 Impact Assessments

The Board continues to adopt, wherever possible, the policies, practices and procedures of South Ayrshire Council, our lead authority.

The equality impact of any policy and procedure that the Board adopts from South Ayrshire Council continues to be assessed by South Ayrshire Council.

The Assessors' Management Team continue to monitor and review the impact on equality groups, and indeed all stakeholders, of the practices and procedures followed in the exercise of its statutory functions. Where the impacts arising from the delivery of these services are considered to be of high relevance a full impact analysis will be carried out in accordance with South Ayrshire Council's guidance.

3.23 Exit Interviews

The Board continues to undertake, where appropriate and where possible, Exit Interviews for all staff leaving the service, the exception being those leaving through ill health or retirement. Any equality related issues that are raised are reported to the Management Team.

Fortunately no equality issues have been raised through the exit interview process since 2013.

3.24 Individual Electoral Registration

On 19th September 2014, a new form of Electoral Registration was introduced in Scotland. Previously registration was by means of household registration, where one responsible person for each household was capable of registering all persons within that household. With effect from 19th September 2014, each person eligible to be added to Electoral Register must register on an individual basis.

This was a challenge in itself but allied to this was a requirement to improve the completeness and accuracy of the Electoral Register. As a consequence the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer was required to target certain groups who were perhaps previously under represented on the Register. Examples of groups identified included;

- **Young Voters**
- **Older voters possibly in care homes, nursing homes, etc**
- **Ethnic Minority groups**
- **Those who had moved house recently**
- **Over 18's still in full time education**

In addition to the above, during the Scottish Independence Referendum the voting franchise was extended to 16 and 17 year olds. This change in legislation presented a whole new raft of challenges and concerns. The Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer has, therefore, been required to adopt new practices and procedures in order to engage with young voters throughout Ayrshire.

Some of the practices adopted to engage with the groups listed above will be considered in much more detail later in this report. See Equality Outcome 3 in Part 3 – Equality Outcomes Progress Achieved.



Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board

Public Sector Equality Duty

PART 2

WORKFORCE MONITORING

1.0 Introduction

We continue to be committed to providing a workplace that embraces equalities issues and values diversity. We continually aim to create a workplace which is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying and where all employees and the wider community we serve are treated with dignity and respect.

In 2013 we noted that the Equalities and Human Rights Commission has recommended that one of the principal ways of gauging how effective our equality measures are is to monitor the composition of our workforce. Such an exercise may allow us to better understand the following issues;

- ***Identify key issues in employment.***
- ***Assess whether you are discriminating unlawfully in any of your employment functions and help identify action to remedy this.***
- ***Identify any actions you can take to avoid discrimination and harassment, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations.***
- ***Understand the impact of your employment policies, practices and decisions on people with different protected characteristics and thereby plan them more effectively.***
- ***Consider taking steps to meet the needs of staff and potential staff who share relevant protected characteristics.***
- ***Make informed decisions about policies and practices which are based on evidence about the impact of your activities on equality.***
- ***Demonstrate to the public and to audit, scrutiny and regulatory bodies how you are performing on equality.***
- ***Assess performance against that of similar organisations, nationally or locally.***

We will use our workforce monitoring data to:

- ***Continue to identify areas of occupational segregation by gender and consider measures to address these.***
- ***Continue to identify any disparities in the profile of our workforce by protected characteristic.***
- ***Review our equality outcomes.***

We will follow the 2013 analysis of our workforce and as part of this analysis undertake a comparison between the 2013 position and the position as it is now in 2015. We will again follow the non statutory guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission - *Employee information and the public sector equality duty: A guide for public authorities (Scotland)* which recommends that organisations work towards gathering and using information disaggregated by protected characteristics on the following key areas:

- ***Recruitment and promotion.***
- ***Numbers of part-time and full-time staff.***
- ***Pay and remuneration.***
- ***Training and development.***
- ***Return to work of women on maternity leave.***
- ***Return to work of disabled employees following sick leave relating to their disability.***
- ***Grievances (including about harassment).***
- ***Disciplinary action (including for harassment).***
- ***Dismissals and other reasons for leaving.***

As before, where it is feasible, and where information exists, this report will consider each of the above key areas by specific reference to the protected characteristic. Where there are gaps in information gathering we will highlight these and comment on how we intend to fill these gaps and report our progress in the future.

2.0 Reporting Categories

Prior to undertaking our workforce monitoring analysis it is worthwhile confirming the sources of our information and the basis in which it has been analysed.

Reporting categories on recruitment and selection are drawn from the National Recruitment Portal (Talent Link) where categories have been agreed nationally across all local authorities.

Data for our workforce has been drawn in part from South Ayrshire Councils Oracle HR reporting tool and from our Staff Equalities Monitoring Questionnaire which was issued, returned and analysed during early March 2015.

The workforce data used in the following analysis is therefore current as at March 2015. However, when considering certain issues such as recruitment and leavers the relevant data is based on the calendar years 2013 and 2014 which is the latest years where we have complete data and is therefore the most relevant.

Due to the relatively small numbers involved and the sensitive nature of some equality related issues a decision has been taken not to publish certain data where a colleague with a certain protected characteristic could be identified thus leading to a potential data breach and, more importantly, stress and anxiety by the member of staff concerned.

It is also worth noting that the following analysis is based on 45 members of staff who took part in our survey. Although we have a staff complement of 49, two members of staff were on long term sick leave when the survey was undertaken and two members of staff chose not to take part.

In the following analysis we have chosen to show the results of our 2015 analysis alongside our 2013 analysis. It is hoped that this will make it easier to compare and to identify any trends and patterns. It is also hoped that presenting our workforce monitoring in this way it will be easier to identify where progress has been made and where improvement requires to be made.

In the following tables the 2015 workforce monitoring figures are shown in black with the 2013 figures shown in red.

1.0 WORKFORCE

1.1 Profile of Workforce by Gender

WORKFORCE GENDER PROFILE				
Workforce Total	Male		Female	
49 (46)	17 (15)	34.69% (32.61%)	32 (31)	65.31% (67.39%)

There has been a very slight increase in the number of female members of staff since 2013.

1.2 Profile of Workforce by Work Pattern

WORKFORCE WORK PATTERN PROFILE				
Work Pattern	Male		Female	
Full Time	17 (15)	34.69% (32.61%)	23 (21)	46.94% (45.65%)
Reduced Hours			9 (10)	18.37% (21.74%)

Flexible working is a partnership between employer and employee and continues to be subject to the demand for Board services. It is nevertheless encouraging to note that 18.37% of staff are benefiting from working flexibly. However, this is a slight decrease from 21.74% of staff reported to be working flexibly in 2013. This may be a reflection on the increased demands placed on all parts of our service provision since 2013. It is also very interesting to note that all staff who are currently working flexibly are female.

1.3 Profile of Workforce by Age

WORKFORCE AGE PROFILE				
Age Group	Male		Female	
16-17				
18-21			2	4.44%
22-30	1	2.22%	(2)	(4.35%)
31-40	1 (2)	2.22% (4.35%)	1 (2)	2.22% (4.35%)
41-50	11 (9)	24.44% (19.56%)	12 (15)	26.66% (32.61%)
51-60	3 (4)	6.66% (8.69%)	12 (12)	26.66% (26.09%)
61-65	1	2.22%	1	2.22%
66-70				
71+				

The age profile of Board staff is still very heavily skewed towards those who are in excess of 41. Only two people (4.44%) are in the 18-21 age range and only five people are less than 40. The average age of all Board staff is 47.

In 2013 the average age of all staff was 48. Given that all staff are now two years older, this would suggest that more younger staff have been employed since 2013. This is encouraging and is a situation we aim to continue to improve upon. We will discuss this issue in more detail later in this report.

1.4 Profile of Workforce by Disability

WORKFORCE DISABILITY PROFILE				
	Male		Female	
Identified as having a Disability	1	2.22%	2 (3)	4.44% (7.69%)
Prefer Not to Say	2 (1)	4.44% (2.56%)		

Although three members of staff indicated positive for a disability, a total of two indicated an impairment. This outcome is consistent with our findings in 2013. We must also be ever mindful that 6.66% (and possibly up 11.10%) of our colleagues have a disability and plan accordingly.

1.5 Profile by Gender Re-Assignment

WORKFORCE GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT PROFILE				
	Male		Female	
Identified as Re-Assignment				
Prefer Not to Say				

No members of staff have identified themselves as a trans-gender person or trans person. In 2013 one member of staff indicated they did not wish say whether they identified themselves as a trans-gender or trans person. Overall the outcome in this category is very similar to 2013.

1.6 Profile of Workforce By Marriage and Civil Partnership

WORKFORCE MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP PROFILE				
Marital Status	Male		Female	
Single	2 (1)	4.44% (2.56%)	3 (2)	6.66% (5.12%)
Married/ Civil Partnership	12 (7)	26.66% (17.59%)	19 (20)	42.22% (51.28%)
Widowed				
Living With Partner	1 (2)	2.22% (5.12%)	1 (2)	2.22% (5.12%)
Divorced/ Separated	2	4.44%	5 (3)	11.11% (7.69%)
Prefer Not to Say	(2)	(5.12%)		

The vast majority of our staff (68.88%) are married or in a civil partnership and 11.11% are single which is an increase since 2013 (7.68%).

1.7 Profile of Workforce by National Identity and Ethnic Group

WORKFORCE BY NATIONAL IDENTITY PROFILE				
	Male		Female	
British	8	17.77%	11 (1)	24.44% (2.56%)
Scottish	9 (11)	20.00% (28.21%)	17 (23)	37.77% (58.98%)
English			(1)	(2.56%)
Welsh				
Northern Irish			(1)	(2.56%)
Other			(1)	(2.56%)
Prefer Not to Say				

57.77% of our workforce have identified themselves as Scottish and 42.21% have identified themselves as British. In 2013, 87.19% of our workforce identified themselves as Scottish and 2.56% as British. This is a substantial and suprising change and one that requires further investigation. Could it be the question asked was misleading or misunderstood or perhaps the Scottish Independence Referendum in September 2014 has changed our perceptions of national identity.

WORKFORCE BY ETHNIC GROUP PROFILE					
		Male		Female	
White	Scottish	15 (11)	33.33% (28.21%)	24 (23)	53.33% (58.98%)
	Other British	1	2.22%	4 (4)	8.88% (10.25%)
	Irish				
	Gypsy/Traveller				
	Polish				
	Other white ethnic group,				
Mixed Or Multiple Ethnic Group	Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups				
Asian, Asian Scottish Or Asian British	Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British				
	Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British				
	Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British				
	Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British				
	Other				
African	African, African Scottish, African British				
	Other				
Caribbean Or Black	Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British				
	Black, Black Scottish or Black British				
	Other				
Other Ethnic Group	Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British				
	Other				
Prefer Not to Say		(1)	(2.56%)		

97.77% of our staff have positively identified themselves as having a Scottish or Other British ethnic profile. The remainder of staff (2.22%), not shown on the table above, have identified themselves as having something other than a Scottish or British ethnic profile.

Since 2013 our ethnic group profile has changed, but only slightly.

1.8 Profile of Workforce By Religion or Belief

WORKFORCE RELIGION OR BELIEF PROFILE				
Religion or Belief	Male		Female	
Buddhist				
Christian (including Church of Scotland, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian Denominations)	10 (6)	22.22% (15.39%)	21 (21)	46.66% (53.85%)
Hindu				
Jewish				
Muslim				
No Religion or Belief	4 (5)	8.88% (12.82%)	6 (6)	13.33% (15.38%)
Sikh	1	2.22%		
Pagan				
Other Religion or Belief	1	2.22%		
Prefer Not to Say	1 (1)	2.22% (2.56%)	1	2.22%
Unknown				

Generally speaking there has been very little change to the workforce with respect to religion or belief since 2013. More colleagues are now identifying themselves as Christian and less are identifying themselves as having no religion or belief.

1.9 Profile of Workforce by Occupational Segregation By Grade

WORKFORCE OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY GRADE PROFILE				
Pay Grade	Male		Female	
Grades 1-5	3 (1)	6.12% (2.17%)	13 (11)	26.53% (23.92%)
Grades 6-8	1 (1)	2.04% (2.17%)	10 (12)	20.41% (26.09%)
Grades 9-10	8 (6)	16.33% (13.04%)	3 (3)	6.12% (6.52%)
Grade 11 and above	5 (7)	10.20% (15.12%)	6 (5)	12.24% (10.87%)

Since 2013 more male members of staff have been placed on Grades 1-5, more on Grades 9-10 and more on Grade 11 and above. Similarly, since 2013 more female members of staff have been placed on Grades 1-5, less on Grades 6-8 and more on Grade 11 and above.

1.10 Profile of Workforce by Section and Gender

WORKFORCE BY SECTION AND GENDER PROFILE						
	All Staff		Male		Female	
Admin.	27 (23)	55.10% (50.00%)	4 (1)	8.16% (2.17%)	23 (22)	46.94% (47.83%)
Technical	19 (18)	38.78% (39.13%)	11 (10)	22.49% (21.74%)	8 (8)	16.33% (17.39%)
Management	3 (5)	6.12% (10.81%)	2 (4)	4.08% (8.70%)	1(1)	2.04% (2.17%)

The gender imbalance within our Administrative section that was highlighted in 2013 is still very much apparent. Out of a total of 27 administrative staff, 23 are female. Despite this imbalance it is nevertheless an improvement since 2013. This issue will be discussed in more detail later in this report. See Equality Outcome 2 in Part 3 – Equality Outcomes Progress Achieved Since 2013.

It is encouraging to note that within our Technical section there remains a reasonable gender balance which is very much at odds with the general perception of the Surveying industry.

It is also noticeable that the Management Team has been reduced by 40% from 5 to 3. In addition the gender balance in the Management Team has improved with 2 males to 1 female. It is also interesting to note that our organisation is now lead by a female.

2.0 RECRUITMENT & PROMOTION INFORMATION

2.1 Profile of Recruitment by Gender

RECRUITMENT BY GENDER PROFILE			
Gender	Percentage of Total Applications	Percentage of Total Selected For Interview	Percentage of Total Successful Appointments
Male	61.72% (26.61%)	51.42% (38.46%)	62.50% (50.00%)
Female	38.27% (73.39%)	48.57% (61.54%)	37.50% (50.00%)
Prefer Not to Say			
Blanks			
Unknown			

Since 2013 we have received a far greater number of job applications from males (61.72%). This is a complete reversal from the position noted in 2013. Despite this fact a far higher number of females were invited for interview (61.54%). However, the above figures also indicate that if you were a male you were more likely to be successful in your application. This is not so concerning as it must be remembered that we were attempting to address a gender imbalance in our administrative team. This outcome is therefore not so surprising. During 2013/14 we recruited eight new members of staff, five male and three female.

2.2 Profile of Recruitment by Work Pattern

RECRUITMENT BY WORK PATTERN PROFILE		
Work Pattern	Male	Female
Full Time	62.50% (50.00%)	37.50% (50.00%)
Reduced Hours		

2.3 Profile of Recruitment by Year of Birth

RECRUITMENT BY YEAR OF BIRTH PROFILE			
Year of Birth	Percentage of Applications	Percentage of Total Selected For Interview	Percentage of Total Successful Appointments
1995 and after	4.93% (0.31%)	8.57%	12.50%
1994-1988	17.28% (29.05%)	11.42% (9.09%)	12.50%
1987-1978	30.24% (23.24%)	28.57%	12.50% (50.00%)
1977-1968	23.45% (17.13%)	25.71% (27.28%)	25.00%
1967-1958	16.04% (18.65%)	20.00% (36.36%)	37.50%
1957-1953	6.17% (8.26%)	5.71% (18.18%)	(50.00%)
1952 and before	1.23% (1.83%)	(9.09%)	
Blanks	0.61% (1.53%)		

The above table shows that we are now receiving more applications from younger job seekers. We also interviewed more young people and also employed more young people. This outcome is very encouraging as it was one of our stated aims in 2013 to employ more young people.

2.4 Profile of Recruitment By Disability

RECRUITMENT BY DISABILITY PROFILE			
Disability	Percentage of Applications	Percentage of Total Selected For Interview	Percentage of Total Successful Appointments
Disabled	3.70% (1.83%)	2.85% (9.09%)	
Not disabled	95.67% (50.46%)	97.14% (54.55%)	100% (50.00%)
Prefer Not To Say	0.61% (0.31%)		
Blanks	(47.40%)	(36.36%)	(50.00%)

Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board continues to give a commitment to interview any applicant for employment who meets the minimum requirement for the job and has declared they are disabled. Since 2013 we have received more job applications from disabled persons. Rather disappointingly only 2.85% of disabled applicants were selected for interview. This is an area we will review during future recruitment drives.

RECRUITMENT BY DISABILITY IMPAIRMENT			
Disability Impairment	Percentage of Total Disabled Applicants	Percentage of Total Disabled Applicants Selected For Interview	Percentage of Total Disabled Applicants Successful Appointments
Learning Disability	16.66% (13.33%)		
Longstanding Illness	33.33% (53.33%)	(100%)	
Mental Health Condition	(6.67%)		
Physical Impairment	16.66% (26.67%)		
Sensory Impairment	16.66%		
Other	16.66%	16.66%	
Prefer Not to Say			
Unknown			
Blanks			

2.5 Profile of Recruitment By Gender Re-Assignment

RECRUITMENT BY GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT PROFILE			
Transgender or Transperson	Percentage of Applications	Percentage of Total Selected For Interview	Percentage of Total Successful Appointments
Yes			
No			
Prefer Not to Say			
Blanks			
Unknown			
Fields not compatible			

As was the case in 2013 we have no information with respect to recruitment by gender re-assignment.

2.6 Profile of Recruitment by Marriage and Civil Partnership

RECRUITMENT BY MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP PROFILE			
Marital Status	Percentage of Applications	Percentage of Total Selected For Interview	Percentage of Total Successful Appointments
Single	43.20% (54.43%)	31.42% (15.38%)	25.00% (50.00%)
Married/ Civil Partnership	40.12% (22.94%)	60.00% (61.55%)	62.50% (50.00%)
Widowed	(0.62%)		
Living With partner	11.72% (10.70%)	8.57% (7.69%)	12.50%
Divorced/ Separated	4.32% (10.09%)	(15.38%)	
Prefer Not to Say	0.61% (0.61%)		
Unknown	(0.61%)		
Blanks			

2.7 Profile of Recruitment by Race

RECRUITMENT BY RACE PROFILE			
Ethnic Group	Percentage of Applications	Percentage of Total Selected For Interview	Percentage of Total Successful Appointments
White-Scottish	85.18% (90.52%)	77.14% (92.31%)	62.50% (100%)
White-other British	9.25% (5.50%)	17.14% (7.69%)	25.00%
White-Irish	0.61% (0.31%)		
White-Polish	(1.22%)		
White-Gypsy/Traveller			
White – Eastern European			
White – other white ethnic group	1.23% (0.61%)		
Mixed or multiple	(0.31%)		
Asian – Pakistani (inc Scottish/British)	1.23%		
Asian-Indian(inc Scottish/British)	0.61%	2.85%	12.50%
Asian-Bangladeshi(inc Scottish/British)			
Asian-Chinese(inc Scottish/British)			
Asian – other(inc Scottish/British)			
African(inc Scottish/British)	0.61%	2.85%	
African-other	1.23%		
Caribbean(inc Scottish/British)			
Black(inc Scottish/British)			
Caribbean or Black (other)			
Other-Arab(inc Scottish/British)	(0.31%)		
Other	(0.61%)		
Prefer Not to Say			
Unknown	(0.61%)		

Since 2013 we have received fewer applications from White-Scottish and White-other British applicants. Encouragingly we have received more applications from White-Irish, White-other White Ethnic Group, Asian-Pakistani, Asian-Indian and African. This is very encouraging and may suggest that Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board is perceived as a more diverse employer. Alternatively it may be simply a reflection of the difficult economic climate.

2.8 Profile of Recruitment by Religion or Belief

RECRUITMENT BY RELIGION OF BELIEF PROFILE			
Religion or Belief	Percentage of Applications	Percentage of Total Selected For Interview	Percentage of Total Successful Appointments
Buddhist			
Church of Scotland	36.41% (35.17%)	31.42% (38.46%)	50.00% (50.00%)
Hindu			
Humanist	1.23%		
Jewish			
Muslim	1.23%		
None	40.12% (39.14%)	40.00% (23.09%)	12.50% (50.00%)
Other Christian	8.02% (6.43%)	8.57% (15.38%)	
Sikh	0.61%	2.85%	12.50%
Pagan			
Roman Catholic	8.64% (9.79%)	8.57% (7.69%)	12.50%
Prefer Not to Say	3.08% (7.03%)	8.57% (15.38%)	12.50%
Other Religion or Belief	(1.83%)		
Unknown	0.61% (0.61%)		

Since 2013 our recruitment by religion or belief has changed very little. One worrying issue is the number of applicants selected for interview and the number of successful applicants who are not prepared to declare their religion or belief.

2.9 Profile of Recruitment by Sexual Orientation

RECRUITMENT BY SEXUAL ORIENTATION PROFILE			
Sexual Orientation	Percentage of Applications	Percentage of Total Selected For Interview	Percentage of Total Successful Appointments
Bisexual	(0.31%)		
Gay	1.23% (0.92%)		
Straight	96.29% (94.18%)	97.14% (100%)	87.50% (100%)
Lesbian	(0.61%)		
Prefer Not to Say	2.46% (3.06%)	2.85%	12.50%
Other			
Unknown	(0.92%)		

In a manner similar to religion and belief, the number of applicants, the number selected for interview and the number of successful applicants who are not prepared to say what their sexual orientation was is worrying.

3.0 TRAINING

3.1 Profile of Workforce Training by Gender

WORKFORCE TRAINING ATTENDANCE BY GENDER PROFILE				
	Total Staff		No. of Courses Attended	
Male	17 (15)	34.69% (32.61%)	88 (33)	38.10% (57.89%)
Female	32 (31)	65.31% (67.39%)	143 (24)	61.90% (42.11%)

The above figures confirm that throughout the office substantially more training has been undertaken since 2013. It is also very encouraging to note that the imbalance between male and female staff attending training has been addressed. It is also encouraging to note that 62% of training courses were attended by a female member of staff.

3.2 Profile of Workforce Training by Section

WORKFORCE TRAINING ATTENDANCE BY SECTION PROFILE						
	Total Staff	No. of Courses attended	Male		Female	
Admin.	27 (23)	117 (15)	18 (1)	15.38% (6.67%)	99 (14)	84.62% (93.33%)
Technical	19 (18)	92 (27)	50 (19)	54.35% (70.37%)	42 (8)	45.65% (29.63%)
Management	3 (5)	22 (15)	20 (13)	90.91% (86.67%)	2 (2)	9.09% (13.33%)

The above table also confirms the substantial increase in training throughout the office since 2013.

3.3 Profile of Workforce Training by Grade

WORKFORCE TRAINING ATTENDANCE BY GRADE PROFILE						
Pay Grade	Male			Female		
	Total Staff	No. of Courses attended	%	Total Staff	No. of Courses attended	%
Grades 1-5	3 (1)	13 (1)	5.63% (1.75%)	12 (11)	43 (7)	18.61% (12.28%)
Grades 6-8	1 (1)	3 (6)	1.30% (10.53%)	10 (12)	56 (8)	24.24% (14.04%)
Grades 9-10	8 (6)	40 (14)	17.32% (24.56%)	3 (3)	20 (3)	8.66% (5.26%)
Grade 11 and above	5 (7)	32 (12)	13.85% (21.05%)	6 (5)	24 (6)	10.39% (10.53%)

The above table also confirms that since 2013 substantially more training has been undertaken by staff throughout the office regardless of gender or pay grade. In addition substantially more female members of staff in grades 1-8 attended training.

4.0 WORKFORCE LEAVERS

4.1 Profile of Workforce Leavers by Reason and Gender

WORKFORCE LEAVERS BY REASON AND GENDER PROFILE		
Reason For Leaving	Male	Female
Deceased		
Dismissal		
End of Contract		
End of Temp Contract (Funding Ceased)		
End of Temp Contract (Post holder returned to work)		
Resigned	1 (4)	(2)
Retiral (Efficiency)	1	1
Retiral (Ill Health)	1 (1)	1
Retiral (Option)		
Voluntary Retiral		
Voluntary Severance		
Unknown		

Under normal circumstances staff leaving the service would be expected to undertake an Exit Interview. The exception being any member of staff how is retiring. From the above this meant that one member of staff should have undertaken an Exit Interview. However this member of staff was the head of department. As a consequence no Exit Interviews have been carried out since 2013.

5.0 GRIEVANCE

Since 2013 there have been no grievance issues by any member of staff. Despite this it is recognised that this remains an important area that could have equalities issues. Accordingly, workforce grievance issues will continue to be monitored closely.

6.0 DISCIPLINARY

Since 2013 only one disciplinary issue has been dealt with by the Board.

It is recognised that this remains an important area that could have equalities issues. Accordingly, workforce disciplinary issues will continue to be monitored closely.

7.0 RESPECT AT WORK

Since 2013 any issue raised with respect to the Board's Equality Policy has been dealt with quickly and informally. Despite this it is recognised that this is also an important area that could have equalities issues. Accordingly, Respect at Work and Equality issues will continue to be monitored closely.

8.0 RETURN TO WORK OF WOMEN ON MATERNITY LEAVE

Since 2013 there have been no members of staff returning to work following maternity leave. However, in accordance with our existing Policy - *“Maternity, Adoption, Paternity & Shared Parental Leave and Pay”* this important issue will continue to be monitored closely and reported on accordingly.

9.0 RETURN TO WORK OF DISABLED EMPLOYEES FOLLOWING SICK LEAVE RELATING TO THEIR DISABILITY

During 2013/14, we had one disabled member of staff returning to work following sick leave relating to their disability. This person returned to work on a phased basis after consultation with Occupational Health and their Line Manager.

It is recognised that this is an important area that has equality implications and will therefore continue to be closely monitored and any appropriate reporting and consequential action taken.

10.0 PROCUREMENT

Regulation 9 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, imposes a duty on public bodies when considering award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement, to have due regard to whether the award criteria should include considerations which will help it meet its Equality Duty. Any such award criteria should be related to and proportionate to the subject matter of the proposed agreement.

The Board still enters into very few procurement contracts directly. Contracts of any substance are still procured on behalf of the Board by South Ayrshire Council and are subject to their procurement procedures in accordance with the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2012. Any contracts that the Board does enter into directly are generally small in terms of the service procured and the monetary value of that service. Notwithstanding, the Board still has due regard to whether the award criteria should include considerations to enable us to better perform the Equality duty. By having due regard to the above, the Board can satisfy its requirements under Regulation 9 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.



Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board

Public Sector Equality Duty

PART 3

EQUALITY OUTCOMES PROGRESS ACHIEVED SINCE 2013

Introduction

In 2013 we set three Equality Outcomes which took account of the fact that Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board was a relatively small public body with a total staff compliment of 46. Any outcomes set at that time required to take cognisance of our size and the limited resources available to us.

Nevertheless, it became apparent whilst undertaking our workforce analysis that two very real equality issues were apparent closer to home than first thought. Accordingly it was decided to adopt two equality outcomes that could be achievable, given our limited resources and experience in equality and diversity issues, and would hopefully have the greatest impact on our own organisation.

Our third outcome was also developed on the basis that it would impact on all residents, business owners and organisations throughout Ayrshire. This outcome required to be identifiable and most importantly achievable.

Our three equality outcomes adopted in 2013 were as follows;

- 1. Young people have a greater representation within our workforce.**
- 2. Gender segregation within our Clerical/Administration is improved.**
- 3. Our services meet the needs of, and are accessible to, all members of our community.**

Within the next section of this report it is proposed to look at the actions undertaken in achieving these outcomes then consider the progress achieved and then finally in Part 4 consider whether our current outcomes require updating or change.

Equality Outcome 1

Young people have a greater representation within our workforce.

In 2013 we concluded that the inequality problem was as follows;

- ***Having undertaken our workforce monitoring analysis, it is apparent that young people are grossly under represented within our workforce.***
- ***We have no staff who are less than 21.***
- ***Only two members of staff (4%) are between 22 and 30.***
- ***51% of our staff are between 41 and 50 and 34% between 51 and 60.***
- ***Our youngest employee is 26 which means that 98% of our staff are in excess of 26.***

In 2015 the average age of our workforce is 47, in 2013 it was 48. Given that many of the staff surveyed in 2013 are still with us in 2015, this slight reduction in the average age of our workforce is significant because we are all now two years older, and all things being equal, would have resulted in an increase in the average age of our workforce. This appears to suggest that we do now employ more younger people.

In 2013 we had no staff who were less than 21 we now have 2 members of staff who are less than 21. Our youngest member of staff is 18.

The percentage of staff between 41 and 50 has remained relatively constant at approximately 51%. In addition we have witnessed a very small drop in the number of staff between 51 and 60.

In 2013 98% of our staff were in excess of 26. In 2015 93% of our staff are in excess of 26.

Since 2013 we have also employed 3 Modern Apprentices on fixed short term contracts. Most encouragingly all three have managed to secure other contracts and as result all three remain in full time employment. Also worth noting is that one of the Modern Apprentices has been offered a full time appointment with Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board. This contract is for a period of one year and offers this young person experience and skills in another aspect of our business.

In terms of the activities undertaken since 2013 these can be summarised as follows;

- **We continue to offer workplace experience to young people still in full time education and consider opportunities to participate in Government schemes such as Modern Apprenticeships. As indicated above this particular aspect of our activities has proven to be very worthwhile. Indeed we currently have two vacancies for Modern Apprentices which we hope to fill in the very near future.**
- **Through our lead authority, South Ayrshire Council, we have continued to engage with local schools, colleges and universities and identify any actions, when the opportunity arises, that we can take to attract school leavers and graduates. Our recent interaction in connection with Individual Electoral Registration with all S4, S5 and S6 pupils throughout Ayrshire has undoubtedly raised the awareness and profile of Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board.**
- **Using the national web portal, myjobscotland, we successfully attracted young people to vacant positions within our service. We aim to continue to use this resource as effectively and efficiently as possible.**
- **As indicated above, we have expanded our efforts to raise the profile of Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board, particularly towards young people through media sources they are familiar with. We recently launched a Voter App which, albeit it is still early days, has achieved some success.**

As indicated in 2013, in setting this equality outcome it is recognised that Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board is a small organisation with limited staff numbers (49 in total). It follows that the opportunity to employ new staff, particularly in the current economic climate, is very limited and that consequently the opportunity to significantly alter the staff profile over a relatively short period of time is still a challenge.

Our future intentions with regard to this Equality Outcome will be discussed in Part 4.

Equality Outcome 2

Gender segregation within our Clerical/Administration section is improved.

In 2013 we concluded that the inequality problem was as follows;

- **Within our Clerical/Administration section there is a very marked and obvious issue concerning gender segregation.**
- **We have 23 members of staff employed in the Clerical section, 22 are female and 1 is male.**
- **The Clerical/Administration section represents 50% of the total workforce, therefore, the gender segregation evident there is not insignificant.**
- **Whilst there is evidence of gender segregation within the Management Team, this is affecting a much smaller group and therefore does not directly affect as many staff.**

In 2015, 35% of our workforce is male and 65% is female. In 2013 the respective figures were 33% and 67%. This signifies a slight improvement on the identifiable gender imbalance throughout the office.

In 2013 a gender imbalance was most apparent within our Clerical/Administration section. At that time, of the 23 staff employed within that area, 22 were female and 1 was male. In 2015 we now have 27 staff employed in that section of which 23 are female and 4 are male. The gender imbalance for that particular part of our business has therefore improved from 96% female/4% male in 2013 to 85% female/15% male. This is a substantial improvement and one that is very encouraging.

Despite this improvement we aim to continue to address this continuing gender imbalance.

In terms of the activities undertaken since 2013 to achieve this improvement these can be summarised as follows;

- **In conjunction with Equality Outcome 1, we have endeavoured, and will continue to endeavour, to employ more suitably qualified men in our Administration/Clerical section.**
- **We have worked with our staff to overcome the wrongly perceived view that clerical/administrative duties are for women.**
- **We continue to offer workplace experience to young people still in full time education**

As indicated in 2013, in setting this equality outcome it is recognised that Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board is a small organisation with limited staff numbers (49 in total). It follows that opportunity to employ new staff, particularly in the current economic climate, is very limited and that consequently the opportunity to significantly alter the staff profile over a relatively short space of time is still a challenge.

Our future intentions with regard to this Equality Outcome will be discussed in part 4.

Equality Outcome 3

Our services meet the needs of, and are accessible to, all members of our community.

In 2013 we concluded that the inequality problem was as follows;

- *We recently published a report on the analysis of customer questionnaires issued by us during 2011. The “Report on the Issue of Customer Questionnaires” identified that 97% of customers visiting us indicated there was ease of access to our premises. Although this is very high, it is down on the previous report and as a result we should consider why 3% of our customers visiting our premises had some form of difficulty accessing the building.*
- *The same report also found that whilst 70% of customers visiting us found that our opening hours were ‘very convenient’, 27% found our opening hours were ‘fairly convenient’ and 3% were ‘not very convenient’. We need to investigate how we can improve accessibility to our services.*
- *In March 2010, the Electoral Commission published their report “The Completeness and Accuracy of Electoral Registers in Great Britain”. In this report they concluded, with respect to people not registering to vote, that “Under-registration and inaccuracy are closely associated with the groups most likely to move home. Across seven case study areas in phase two . . . under registration is notably higher than average among 17-24 year olds (56% not registered), private sector tenants (49%) and black and minority ethnic (BME) British residents (31%)”.*
- *It is very significant that one of the pilot areas taking part in the above survey was South Ayrshire. If the pattern developed in South Ayrshire is repeated in North and East Ayrshire it is possible to conclude that in Ayrshire 56% of 17-24 year olds have chosen not to register to vote and 49% of black and minority ethnic British residents have also chosen not to register to vote.*

Since 2013 we have been unable, due to retirements, internal restructuring, pressure on budgets and resources, to update and regularly issue our Customer Feedback Questionnaire. Unfortunately we cannot say whether customers visiting our premises find access and opening hours any more convenient.

However, as indicated earlier in this report we can say that in the past two years we have had no requests for use of Language Line, any interpretation services or use of our disabled access. Nevertheless, we should at least be able measure our customer feedback and as result we will give priority to this area. Indeed our updated Customer Feedback Questionnaire is being finalised and will be issued in the very near future.

Within this outcome much of the work undertaken to achieve positive results has been in connection with improving the completeness and accuracy of the Electoral Register. As indicated previously, on 19th September 2014, Individual Electoral Registration was introduced in Scotland.

This comprised a completely new method of registering to vote and placed an onus on Electoral Registration Officers to positively engage with the electorate in order to maximise registration and to reduce electoral fraud.

Since 2013 we have undertaken many initiatives in an effort to produce a full and accurate Electoral Register. The vast majority of these initiatives involved engagement with minority groups and/or groups representing individuals with a protected characteristic. Examples of just some of those democratic engagement initiatives are as follows;

- **Partnership Working**
Solid partnerships have been built with the three Ayrshire Returning Officers and together we have managed to run Electoral Registration interactive workshops in most secondary schools in Ayrshire. The aim is to build on this achievement in the coming years.

- **Registration App**
Working in partnership with Dundee City and Renfrewshire Electoral Registration Officer and a private company we have piloted a Registration App for mobile phones. This pioneering project was aimed at young people and students in the initial stages, depending on the success of the project, it may be developed further.

- **Pan-Ayrshire Engagement**
 - ✚ We have taken out Registration adverts in the three Ayrshire Councils information booklets.

 - ✚ Flyers have been issued with North & South Ayrshires Council Tax Bills.

 - ✚ Payslips contained registration information.

 - ✚ Joint radio advertising to coincide with the Electoral Commissions national campaign is still under consideration.

 - ✚ Media activity complimented by social media activity on registration has taken place and will be on-going.

- **Nursing Homes**
We have worked on a process to deal with nursing homes in order to maximise registration. Working in partnership with the care facilities we are providing advice and guidance on IER and other electoral matters and where appropriate making visits.
- **Till Roll Campaign**
IER adverts are being printed on the reverse of till receipts for Argos/Homebase in the three Ayrshire Authorities.
- **Libraries**
We have been working with all libraries throughout Ayrshire including supplying posters and leaflets on IER.
- **Elected Members**
All elected Members have been contacted with the offer to take/supply posters/leaflets and place these in their surgeries or other appropriate places.
- **Social Housing**
We are working with the three Ayrshire Councils to 'advertise' in their housing newsletters. We are also engaging with Housing Associations and Private Landlords.
- **Groups/Forums**
We are engaging with any group who requires additional advice on IER, or indeed any service we provide. Examples of some of the groups we have engaged with are the Inter-Faith Forum, Ayrshire Minority Ethnic Communities Association and the LGBT Ayrshire Forum.
- **Voter National Registration Day**
In 2014 we got heavily involved in the National Voter Registration Day where we had staff stationed for a full day in the three campuses of Ayrshire College and the University of the West of Scotland. Students in full time education continue to be targeted for awareness raising and engagement in the democratic process.
- **Engagement With Young Voters**
With the Scottish Governments announcement that 16 and 17 year olds will have the right to vote in future Scottish Parliamentary elections, greater emphasis has been placed on engagement with young people, particularly within the school environment. This is seen as a crucial part of our democratic engagement process and is therefore being integrated in to our functions and service delivery.

In addition to the above we will;

- **Continue to follow up on all concerns highlighted to us with respect to facilities available to customers who visit us.**
- **Continue to review access and egress to our premises.**
- **Continue to consider if we can use plainer and less technical language in certain questionnaires and forms issued by us.**
- **Continue to highlight that all correspondence is available in alternative forms such audio tape, Braille, etc**
- **Continue to highlight that Language Line is available.**
- **Maintain our “brousealoud” speech enabled facility on our website.**
- **Continue to work with Ayrshire Equality Partnership.**
- **Undertake more staff training, particularly with regard to equality issues.**
- **Continue to make available our Voter Registration App and, if possible, look at more ways of using digital media such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.**



Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board

Public Sector Equality Duty

PART 4

EQUALITY OUTCOMES 2015 to 2017

1.0 Introduction

In the final part of this report we will briefly review our existing Equality Outcomes and consider whether they are still relevant and whether they are still fit for purpose.

If they are still relevant we will attempt to say what we will do in the following two years to improve on them and to help to continue meet them.

However, if it is felt that our existing Equality Outcomes are no longer fit for purpose then we will consider whether it is possible, or practical, to substantially alter our existing Outcomes or indeed to develop new Equality Outcomes.

In each of our Equality Outcomes we have indicated that they have been chosen in order to meet the following general duties;

- ***Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.***
- ***Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.***

Our three core functions are heavily prescribed by statute and are therefore free and open to all regardless of who they are or if they possess a protected characteristic. It is therefore suggested that the remaining general duty; *“eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act”*, is not as relevant as the other general duties listed above.

Equality Outcome 1 – 2015 to 2017

Young people have a greater representation within our workforce.

Since 2013 the average age of our workforce has reduced from 48 to 47 and overall our age profile has changed and now features a slightly younger workforce.

In 2013 98% of our workforce were in excess of 26, however, in 2015 93% are in excess of 26.

Without doubt our most significant achievement with respect to this outcome is the fact that we have given three young Modern Apprentices a chance to begin working life. What is also most encouraging is that all three have gone on to other work or contracts and are still in full time employment.

For these reasons it is considered that this Equality Outcome is still relevant and fit for purpose. Accordingly we intend to retain this Outcome and in the next two years attempt to build on the successes achieved to date.

Between 2015 and 2017 we aim to;

- 1. Continue to reduce the average age of our workforce and will aim for a reduction from the current 47 to 46 by 2017.**
- 2. Continue to provide employment opportunities to young people - particularly Modern Apprentices. Since 2013 we have been able to offer employment to three Modern Apprentices. We will therefore aim to offer employment to another three young people between 2015 and 2017.**

If we can achieve these aims we will *“Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don’t”* and also *“Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it”*

Equality Outcome 2 – 2015 to 2017

Gender segregation within our Clerical/Administration section is improved.

In 2013 we had 23 members of staff employed in our Clerical section, 22 were female and 1 was male. In 2015 we now have 27 staff of whom 23 are female and 4 are male.

We have therefore increased male representation in our Clerical section from 4% to 11% in two years.

Gender imbalance is very noticeable in this part of our workforce albeit it has improved since 2013. Accordingly this Outcome is still relevant and worthwhile.

Between 2015 and 2017 we aim to;

- 1. Continue to address the gender imbalance in our Clerical section.**
- 2. Increase the percentage of male members of staff working in our Clerical Section from 11% to 20%.**

If we can achieve these aims we will “*Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don’t*” and also “*Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it*”

Equality Outcome 3 – 2015 to 2017

Our services meet the needs of, and are accessible to, all members of our community.

Since 2013 we have failed to engage with our stakeholders with regard to access to our premises and services. We, therefore, need to address this situation as a matter of urgency.

Whilst we know that use of our disabled entrance has not been required, neither has Language Line or any other form of interpretation service. Nevertheless we need to engage with the consumers of our services in order to determine whether we can improve on those services. For these reasons it can be said that this Outcome is still relevant.

In terms of under representation of certain minority groups on the Electoral Register, it is believed that substantial and significant improvements in this area have been achieved by us since 2013. It is a UK Government and Scottish Parliament stated aim that the Electoral Register should be as complete and accurate as possible, hence the reason for the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration.

Maintaining a complete and accurate Electoral Register is one of our core functions, this Equality Outcome is, therefore, still very much relevant and must therefore be retained.

Between 2015 and 2017 we aim to;

- 1. Improve engagement with our stakeholders in an effort to determine whether our service provision is meeting their needs. In particular we aim to focus on minority groups and disability groups.**
- 2. Due to restrictive legislation, maintaining a complete and accurate Electoral Register is extremely difficult to measure. Nevertheless, we will continue with all of the democratic engagement activities listed in Equality Outcome 3 in Part 3 of this report. However, we will also focus on engaging with ethnic minority groups, nursing homes, all Ayrshire secondary schools, Ayrshire College and the University of the West of Scotland in order to engage with young voters.**

If we can achieve these aims we will *“Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don’t”* and also *“Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it”*