

Representation and understanding

Valuing diversity

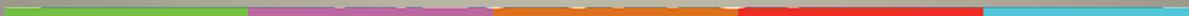
Dignity and equality

# Equality Outcomes

2013-2017

National Library of Scotland

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## **NLS Equality Outcomes**

### **Background**

The Public Sector Equality Duties require the Library to publish a set of Equality Outcomes. These outcomes amount to a statement of the positive contribution that the Library intends to make to the fulfilment of the aims of the General Duty of the Equality Act 2010. The aims are as follows:

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

Equality Outcomes are not simply a list of fixes that an organisation intends to make in order to update physical access to buildings, for example. Outcomes are high level strategic goals that will drive the organisation's development as a body that genuinely values equality and diversity. Outcomes should bring about change and should challenge an organisation to mature and mainstream its thinking with regard to equality and diversity in its customer service delivery and employee relations.

In addition to the 2010 Equality Act, it is important to note that the 2012 National Library of Scotland Act requires NLS to "exercise its functions with a view to...promoting the diversity of persons accessing the collections". For NLS, promoting diversity is therefore part of our core statutory functions, in addition to the obligations placed on all public bodies by the 2010 Equality Act.

This document highlights how we will deliver our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and also contributes to the fulfilment of the delivery of our functions under the new National Library of Scotland Act. We hope that it will help us to extend our reach to even more people than ever before, bringing people together and helping to improve society through access to ideas and knowledge.

The Library sees the sharing of ideas and knowledge as a force for good, and believes that access to literature allows people with very different opinions and backgrounds to learn about others and develop their own thoughts and ideas. The diversity of our collections is an asset to all who hope to build a society based on increased learning and understanding.

## Issues identified

These draft outcomes were identified as a result of reviewing a range of information and inputs. The Library's most recent user statistics were reviewed and compared against national averages for demographic indices such as age, ethnicity, gender, and disability. A workshop with staff was held where staff discussed equality issues and concerns and flagged up areas of good practice. An assessment of the Library's corporate publications over the last ten years was undertaken.

What this revealed was that in many respects the Library performs well with regard to attracting a diverse mix of customers and staff. The composition in both areas shows that the numbers of people from ethnic minorities are statistically higher than the national average for Scotland. Anecdotal feedback from staff that work in customer facing roles suggested that the cosmopolitan mix of people using the reading rooms across a variety of ethnic and cultural profiles probably reflected the cosmopolitan nature of research communities generally. However, as the Library is increasingly accessed remotely it was noted that we currently know little about the composition of our website users with regard to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Discussion about the Library's recent events and exhibitions was reassuring in that staff gave account of a diverse range of themes attracting a diverse range of people. Events focused on religion and faith had been well attended, and a high profile event featuring gay rights campaigner Peter Tatchell being interviewed by former Bishop of Edinburgh Richard Holloway was seen as a particularly good example of diversity in action. Whilst one series of events was noted as particularly targeting twenty- and thirty-somethings, most events tended to attract middle aged and older audiences, although this was just anecdotal feedback.

What was noted as a concern was the very small numbers of under-18s in NLS user statistics. However, statistics for attendance at events and learning activities showed that the Library was reaching this audience in different ways. Feedback from staff involved in education and outreach work suggested that the Library was not focusing as it once had on services for children in our buildings, although the web-based school curriculum resources in the Learning Zone were identified as a positive development. The concern was noted that resources for service development for under-18s appeared to be decreasing. A survey of images of people in corporate publications showed that in recent years children had disappeared from the pages of our Annual Review and magazine Discovery. This survey of images of representation also showed that people with disabilities or from ethnic minorities were also "invisible".

Feedback from staff showed that employees are concerned that the provision of services for customers and employees in wheelchairs is not good enough. The exclusion of mobility impaired people from the George IV Bridge reading rooms remains a concern. However, the number of our customers who defined themselves as having a disability has increased from 6% to 8% in the last year, and this may be related to the extension of online services, making NLS services more accessible to people's homes and workplaces. The Library does not know to what extent our web-based resources are being accessed by people with mobility impairment, and this was seen as a gap in our understanding that we would like to address.

Feedback from staff also suggested that the main diversity issue for the Library was a socio-economic one, with a sense that very few of our customers came from areas or backgrounds of economic disadvantage or poverty. In addition to being a diversity concern in itself, the socio-economic composition of our users may present secondary issues regarding the protected characteristics, and this was also noted therefore as something that the Library's Equality outcomes should address. The Scottish Government's statistics showing a link between disability and increased likelihood of unemployment and economic disadvantage were noted.

What emerged from the discussion and statistical analysis were examples of good practice such as in our events programming and outreach work where diversity appeared to be at the very heart of the process. This is something we are proud of and we would like to ensure that this extends to other areas of our work with collections, customers, and organisational development.

What also emerged were some gaps in the profile of who uses us, notably teenagers and mobility impaired users. Opportunities to develop closer links with other users and non-users with other disabilities such as blindness or partial sightedness, dyslexia, or hearing loss need to be taken to make sure that we address not just the more obvious issues of access to buildings but also issues such as technological and language barriers to access for remote users.

Our review of data and inputs did not reveal any evidence that people with protected characteristics associated with sexual orientation, transgender, pregnancy and maternity, or religion and belief, are disadvantaged on account of these characteristics.

## **The Outcomes**

Based on this analysis, the Library has now developed a three-themed approach to address these issues by identifying five principal outcomes:

### **Representation and understanding**

1. The Library will extend its appeal to people who currently do not think of it as a place, service, or employer that has something to offer them.
2. We will improve our understanding of who uses us and doesn't use us, and who works for us, by improving the recording and analysis of statistics and asking ourselves and others new questions.

### **Valuing diversity**

3. NLS will use its collections and services to help to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those that do not.

### **Dignity and equality**

4. Our customers and employees will be able to enjoy our collections, buildings, services and remote services without obstacle or embarrassment.
5. Our managers will demonstrate that they understand the different needs of individuals, and the importance of equality for all.

In the pages that follow, the activities that will support and deliver these outcomes are outlined. Occasionally we have given particular focus to some groups that we feel are particularly under-represented or require specific attention. But elsewhere the objective is to create a working and customer environment that welcomes and values everybody.

## **Representation and understanding**

### Outcome 1

“The Library will extend its appeal to people who currently do not think of it as a place, service, or employer that has something to offer them.”

#### Activity area 1a:

Address issues of non- or under-representation through media and public relations work, with specific campaigns targeted at teenagers, blind and partially sighted groups, wheelchair users, and profile-raising amongst different socio-economic groups and rural groups. Related tasks:

- Review our corporate publications and advertising in light of equality and diversity objectives, paying particular attention to the use of images of people.
- Plan specific advertising campaigns to target our under-represented user communities.
- Co-ordinate our roadshows and other new outreach work with relevant third party events, building on good practice as demonstrated in current education and outreach work.

### Outcome 2

“We will improve our understanding of who uses us and doesn’t use us, and who works for us, by improving the recording and analysis of statistics and asking ourselves and others new questions.”

#### Activity area 2a:

Improve our understanding of who uses us online. Related tasks:

- Review our website to ensure it provides appropriate engagement and feedback on equality and diversity issues and to serve as a platform to communicate what we are doing in this area.
- Ensure our audience research programme encompasses both onsite and offsite users as well as the needs of potential users of the Library.
- Identify ways to use improve the customer registration system so that it can gather relevant information.

#### Activity area 2b:

Review our market research and consultation practices to take account of all protected characteristics, and to look at the impact on equality and diversity of socio-economic background and rural dwelling. Related tasks:

- Follow up broader market research findings with market research targeted specifically at under-represented communities.
- Ensure all market research provides an opportunity to gather data on protected characteristics.

Activity area 2c:

Establish methods to recover equalities data for attendance at events, exhibitions, workshops, and other methods of accessing the Library and its services.

Activity area 2d:

Improve our understanding of who works for us. Related tasks:

- Allocate a resource in the Human Resources department to interrogate the online recruitment equality monitoring statistics and to develop the quality of personnel records and reporting so that we are able to produce reports in line with regulation 6 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.
- Hold twice yearly equality staff forums to discuss issues.
- Run a series of staff events that raise the profile of equality and diversity issues and build confidence in the reporting of concerns, requirements, and suggestions.
- Repeat the employee profiling survey following staff communication and engagement work.

## **Valuing diversity**

### Outcome 3

“NLS will use its collections and services to help to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those that do not.”

#### Activity area 3a:

Development of digitisation programme to specifically address issues and concerns relating to diversity. Related task:

- Amend digitisation project approval process and criteria to place focus on the need for projects to contribute to diversity and equality objectives of the Library.

#### Activity area 3b:

Develop events programme to attract a greater diversity of attendees. Related tasks:

- Pilot signing, subtitling and audio description at events where funding and circumstances allow.
- Complete an equality impact assessment on our events and exhibitions programme.
- Review distribution of marketing leaflets in light of equality and diversity objectives.

#### Activity area 3c:

Involve blind and partially sighted, and deaf and hearing impaired communities in the planning and development work for the Scottish Sound Archive at the earliest opportunity.

## **Dignity and equality**

### Outcome 4

“Our customers and employees will be able to enjoy our collections, buildings, services and remote services without obstacle or embarrassment.”

#### Activity area 4a:

Examine options to develop physical access and customer facilities at George IV Bridge, and deliver a project proposal. Youth groups, senior citizens groups, disabled users and non-users, maternity groups, and community groups will be included at the earliest stages of planning. Related tasks:

- Delivery of access solutions for our reading rooms facilities based on consultation with wheelchair users.

#### Activity area 4b:

Review our website, remotely accessed resources and services, and intranet to identify areas for improvement in terms of access and screen reader accessibility.

Related tasks:

- Ensure that the NLS Web Strategy addresses equality compliance as part of our plans to significantly increase digital access to content.
- Review our current use of the recruitment website to confirm whether it is fit for purpose for people reliant on screen reading software, and implement changes required to deliver equality of access.
- Review of the Intranet to ensure compatibility with best practice standards for screen reading, sight impairment, and dyslexia.

### Outcome 5

“Our managers will demonstrate that they understand the different needs of individuals, and the importance of equality for all.”

#### Activity area 5a:

Training and development of managers in equality and diversity issues. Related tasks:

- Implement equality impact assessments and deliver training on the use of the assessment tool. Provide follow up training and awareness.
- Provide training and awareness sessions on depression and mental health as an area where current understanding could be improved.

#### Activity area 5b:

Review working from home policy in light of the Equality Act.

## **Invitation**

These are the Library's Equality Outcomes for the next four years. We will publish a new set of outcomes in April 2017, and a mainstreaming report in 2015 that shows the progress that we have made.

We would like this document to help to start a dialogue between the Library, its customers, and people who we have yet to serve. Our business has always been the valuing and celebration of culture and ideas, knowledge and learning. But the 2010 Equality Act has provided us with an opportunity to look at how we are doing and where we can do more for you.

We would like to hear from you about our Equality Outcomes, or about any other ideas, hopes or concerns you may have as a result of reading this document.

Do please contact:

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