

National Library of Scotland

Gender Equality Scheme 2007-2010

1. Introduction

The National Library of Scotland (NLS) is committed to ensuring that equality of opportunity is integral to all that we do. This document is the Gender Equality Scheme for NLS.

1.1 What is Gender Equality

Whereas 'sex' is defined as biological difference, 'gender' includes socially constructed differences. This means that the roles society places on men and women can result in significant disadvantage and inequality. Women are more likely to have caring responsibilities, which can limit their working lives and income and are more likely to be victims of gender-based violence. Men can be disadvantaged by workplace cultures which do not support their family or caring responsibilities. The essence of gender equality is the introduction of services for men, women and transgender individuals which meet their needs more closely. In relation to NLS, this will affect policy making, customer services and employment practices.

1.2 Background

The Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') was introduced to address the fact that despite 30 years of legal rights to sex equality (via the Sex Discrimination Act 1975), gender inequality and discrimination is still widespread. This Act enhances individual legal rights by placing the onus on organisations to promote equality, rather than on individuals to highlight discrimination. The Act also sets out general and specific duties with regard to rights and provisions in terms of gender and has the aim of 'gender neutrality' at its heart.

The Act introduced the Gender Equality Duty which came into force in April 2011, requiring bodies "to eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment; to promote equality of opportunity between women and men". This general duty requires public authorities to produce a Gender Equality Scheme ('the Scheme'). The 'specific' duties are intended to support progress in delivering the general duty with the key obligation of publishing a 3 year plan to address any identified areas of actual, potential or perceived inequality. The production of such a plan must involve gathering information on existing policies and practices to assess these for gender inequality and an element of consultation with stakeholders. The plan should be reported on annually and reviewed every three years.

NLS welcomes this positive duty and in accordance with the Library's overall Equalities Policy (see <http://www.nls.uk/professional/policy/index.html>) we will aim to ensure that fair and equal treatment for men, women and transgender individuals is 'mainstreamed' in our work planning.

This Scheme focuses on issues which have the greatest impact on gender equality and commits to a set of priority objectives, set out as specific action in section 5, selected on the principles of proportionality and relevance. NLS aims to meet our statutory obligations in a way that is efficient, effective and user-friendly; therefore we have tried to make this document as straightforward and easy-to-read as possible, so that it is accessible and meaningful to all.

2. Information Gathering: The Review Process

We conducted a review of existing information in order to inform our plans and determine if there were any areas where gender inequality was immediately identifiable.

2.1 We monitor a profile of newly-registered readers which includes asking people to identify themselves as male or female. The statistics for April 06 – March 07 reveal that 52% of our readers were female and 48% were male. A review of the figures for the last 4 years has revealed a year on year increase in the number of newly-registered female readers, to the extent that they were in the majority in 06/07 figures.

2.2 This reasonably balanced figure led us to prioritise and focus on the employment aspects of gender equality. We currently have 335 staff, 47.5% female and 52.5% male. A deeper analysis of these statistics has identified elements of horizontal and vertical occupational segregation.

Horizontal segregation occurs where there is a concentration of men or women in one particular job area and there are four Units in the Library where this is most evident, namely ICT, Collection Support Services, Security and Porter/Messenger Unit, which all have a very high proportion of men to women. NLS recognises that these occupations have traditionally been filled by men and wishes to challenge this stereotype.

Vertical segregation occurs where there is a concentration of men or women at different job grades. We were able to identify a potential 'glass ceiling' for women within our organisation as there was a high concentration of women at Band 6 and a marked decline in the number of women in higher Bands. One factor affecting this may be the lack of part-time jobs at higher Bands and whilst the Library has a robust Flexible Working Policy, there is currently only one senior manager working part time. The Action Plan in Section 5 sets out the measures we will take to address these issues.

2.3 We reviewed statistics on the gender of job applicants in recruitment campaigns, both internally and externally. The majority of campaigns showed an even split of male: female applicants and appointees, however, we noted that the number of male applicants was higher in traditionally 'male' jobs such as that of Porter/Messenger and Bookfetcher. As previously stated, the Library wishes to challenge such stereotypes and is committed to positive action to attract female applicants.

2.4 We carried out a "gender impact assessment" of our employment policies to determine their effect on the working environment. The Library has a number of employment policies which we believe contribute positively to an environment of gender equality. These include:

- Flexible Working
- Maternity Leave
- Paternity Leave
- Adoption Leave
- Parental Leave
- Dependents Leave
- Career Break
- Respect at Work (including bullying and harassment)

It is recognised that the Career Break Policy will need to be rewritten to align it with the practice of its use in the Library and this will be incorporated in the Action Plan.

We will continue to assess any new policies for their impact on gender and will extend our impact assessments to all NLS policies within the scope of the 3 year plan.

2.5 Gender and Pay

The Library pay system is subject to controls by the Scottish Executive and therefore has limited in-house flexibility. NLS score and place jobs within a 10 band pay scale using a job evaluation system (JEGS) which has been checked for sex bias.

A comparison of pay between male and female employees reveals a 0.4% difference in favour of men. A further breakdown compares the average pay of women working part-time and compares it to that of men working full time. The difference for NLS is 1.2% in favour of men. Our interpretation of these figures is that there is no significant gender bias related to pay in NLS.

Whilst we believe that equal pay on grounds of gender exists in the Library, other concerns (Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006) have led us to commit to a full scale pay and

grading review in the next year. This review will focus on equality of opportunity in employment and therefore gender equality will be an integral component.

3. Information Gathering: The Consultation Process

We recognised that the involvement of stakeholders was a key element in the production of the Scheme. As a result, a questionnaire was devised which was circulated to all Library staff and the Trade Union side were invited to comment in an interview. We are aware of a need to consult more widely with our external customers and this will form part of the planning process.

3.1 58% of Library staff responded to the survey. The results were extremely positive but did highlight some areas for action.

The gender profile of respondents to the staff survey was 58% female, 41% male and 1% reported that they were transgender. An overwhelming majority (90%) of respondents thought that men and women were treated equally at the Library, 88% felt that our policies gave the same advantages to men and women and 85% stated that they had never experienced unfair treatment because of their gender whilst working at NLS. In addition, 95% of staff felt that the Library's policies gave the same advantages to male and female customers. We wish to verify this figure by widening the scope of our consultation exercise to include users; however these initial results are very encouraging.

The following quote was indicative of the nature of the responses: "Men and women are provided with the same opportunities for training, employment, promotion, and so on. The Library is fully aware of its responsibilities as an employer and it makes regular efforts to ensure that messages such as equality in terms of race, gender, ability, sexuality and so on are heard across the organisation."

It is worth noting that just 9% of respondents felt that women were treated less favourably than men in regard to pay and grading. We intend that this figure will drop even further following the pay and grading review which will be a transparent process based on equality of opportunity.

There was only one area where a significant number of respondents (22%) felt that men were treated less favourably than women: family friendly policies. In practice, the Library's policies give equal rights to men and women to take time off to care for dependents, to work flexibly and to have access to parental leave, however a number of respondents felt that these policies were not visible enough: "I do feel that the Library could more actively promote flexible working arrangements where appropriate – while these are available, it does not appear to be the case that these are made consistently available across all departments."

A number of respondents also noted the horizontal segregation in various departments: "NLS should look at areas which are predominately women or men and ask why this is. Then work towards trying to make these departments more representative."

On the issue of gender equality for customers, a number of respondents identified that the lack of crèche facilities and the restricted weekend opening hours made it more difficult for parents, male and female, to use the Library.

3.2 The consultation interview with the Trade Union side reaffirmed the positive message we received from staff. There was praise for the manner in which NLS accommodated requests from staff for flexible working arrangements and dependents leave and the general opinion was that we treated men and women equally throughout the Library.

There was concern that we needed to do more to publicise our Flexible Working Policy during recruitment exercises and it was felt that the introduction of childcare vouchers would be of benefit to working parents of both sexes.

The Action Plan sets out how we intend to address the issues that were highlighted during the consultation process.

4. Monitoring progress, information and reporting

The Library has an Equalities Group which has a corporate responsibility for monitoring progress in all equalities matters and for reporting to the Library's Senior Management Team. It is chaired by Gordon Hunt, Director of Customer Services.

NLS will review the progress made each year on implementing, and if necessary adjusting, the Scheme as part of the Library's Corporate Plan and Annual Review. In addition departmental, divisional planning and work reviews throughout NLS will, as a matter of routine, consider equalities issues.

5. Action Plan 2007-2010

This table summarises the actions that NLS will take to promote gender equality.

What will we do?	Who?	When?
Continue to assess all existing and new policies and practices for their impact on gender	All directors and service managers	Ongoing
Produce an equality proofing template to aid with gender impact assessments and divisional plans	Strategic Policy Manager	By March 2008
Widen the scope of our consultation exercise to obtain more detailed information from users of NLS	Equalities group	April 2008
Consider collaboration with organisations who are in close proximity (e.g. the Central Library) regarding the use of their crèche facilities	Director of Customer Services	By December 2007
Consider weekend opening hours and whether an extension to these would improve access for working parents/carers	Senior Management Team	By December 2007
Complete a pay and grading review based on the principles of equal opportunity	Human Resources	By August 2008
Take positive action to attract women to apply for positions in departments which are predominantly male, or <i>vice versa</i> (this may include photographs of female staff engaged in traditionally "male work" on our vacancies web page).	Human Resources	Immediately
Promote the possibility of flexible working arrangements, especially in more senior jobs, during recruitment (this will include an insert into all job descriptions which states that part time/job share arrangements will be considered unless there are compelling reasons against this).	Human Resources	Immediately
Conduct a research exercise amongst Band 5 and 6 female employees to identify any actual or perceived barriers to promotion.	Human Resources	By March 2008
Revise the Career Break Policy to align it	Human Resources	By March 2008

with the practice of its use in NLS		
Introduce a childcare voucher scheme for staff	Human Resources/Finance	By March 2008

6. Further Information

If you would like any further information about this document, or have ideas on how the National Library of Scotland can further promote gender equality, please contact:

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For more information about UK Equalities legislation please see <http://www.cehr.org.uk>

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