



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

PROGRESS REPORT 2015

1. ABOUT RENFREWSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

The Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board ("The Board") comprises elected representatives as follows:-

Renfrewshire Council	8
East Renfrewshire Council	4
Inverclyde Council	4
TOTAL	16

The Chief Officer is the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer ("the Assessor"), who reports to the Board on the management of the service.

The Clerk and Treasurer to the Board, together with the Assessor, provide the administrative, financial and organisational framework within which the Assessor and his staff operate.

The Assessor and ERO is responsible for three functions and services to the constituent authorities. These are:

- The compilation and maintenance of the Electoral Register.
- The maintenance and annual publication of the Council Tax Valuation List.
- The maintenance of the non-domestic Valuation Roll.

There are around 253,000 registered electors in the area, residing mainly in the 160,000 or so domestic subjects shown in the Council Tax Valuation List. The Valuation Roll has some 10,000 entries with a total rateable value in the region of £337m. The Assessor's service operates from one office in Paisley and employs the equivalent of 47 full-time staff.

Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board serves an area with a population of just over 345,000 based on current population statistics.

The aim of the Board as an employer and a service provider is to ensure that all our stakeholders and employees are treated equally and fairly and that discrimination and harassment are avoided. We wish to actively promote equality of opportunity and to ensure that our service delivery meets the needs of all sectors of the population we serve.

Our Aims

- To ensure that the services we provide are delivered in line with statutory provisions.
- To ensure that Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion are central elements in our planning and delivery of services.
- To strive for continuous improvement in the delivery of our services.
- To ensure that our service provision reflects the needs and priorities of our stakeholders.
- To consult our stakeholders about the way we develop and deliver our services.
- To work in partnership with our constituent authorities to achieve improvements in service provision for our mutual customers.

- To publish information about the level of services customers can expect to receive.
- To develop clear and effective customer suggestion and complaint systems.
- To develop and maintain systems for measuring, monitoring and managing our performance.
- To develop systems which encourage employees to communicate openly.
- To promote a safe and healthy working environment for our employees.
- To encourage our employees to develop themselves to achieve their full potential.

With respect to the Equality Duty, the functions of Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board are of a limited nature and are heavily prescribed by legislation.

Board's Three Main Functions

With regard to Council Tax, the Assessor's staff inspect and survey each new domestic property as required in order to assess the appropriate valuation band at which it should be entered on the Valuation List. Once the appropriate band is determined the details are passed to the relevant Council in order that the Council may levy Council Tax.

Therefore, the Assessor's engagement with members of the public for Council Tax is generally in order to make an appointment to inspect a property, to issue a Valuation Notice giving details of the valuation band determined and to deal with appeals and enquiries which relate to the valuation band.

With regard to Non Domestic Rates, the Assessor's staff inspect and survey new or altered properties as required in order to assess the rateable value which should be entered in the Valuation Roll. The Assessor's staff will also re-assess the rateable value of every non-domestic property as part of each general revaluation, which normally takes place every 5 years. Once determined the details of new and revised rateable values are passed to the relevant Council in order that non-domestic rates may be levied.

Therefore, the Assessor's engagement with members of the public for Non Domestic Rates is generally in order to make an appointment to inspect a property, to issue a Valuation Notice giving details of the rateable value determined and to deal with appeals and enquiries which relate to the rateable value.

With regard to Electoral Registration, the Assessor's staff undertake a canvass by issuing a canvass form 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.

Therefore, the Assessor's engagement with members of the public for Electoral Registration is generally to issue canvass forms and gather the information returned, together with dealing with general enquiries and applications to be added to the Electoral Register.

The Board's core functions are 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.

The Equality Act 2010 and Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 set out a number of duties for Public Authorities.

2.1 The General Equality Duty

The General Equality Duty requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

2.2 The Protected Characteristics

The public sector equality duty covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The public sector equality duty also covers marriage and civil partnerships, with regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination in employment.

Age

Relates either to a person or persons of similar age. The Act protects people of all ages. However, different treatment because of age is not unlawful if you can demonstrate that it is proportionate means of meeting a legitimate aim. Age is the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination.

Disability

Person or persons have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out day to day activities which would include tasks like using a telephone, reading a book or using public transport. The Act includes a new protection from discrimination arising from disability. This states that it is discrimination to treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability (eg a tendency to make spelling mistakes arising from dyslexia). This type of discrimination is unlawful where the employer or other person acting for the employer knows, or could reasonably be expected to know, that the person has a disability. This type of discrimination is only justifiable if an employer can show that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Additionally, indirect discrimination now covers disabled people. This means that a job applicant or employee could claim that a particular rule or requirement the Board has in place disadvantages people with the same disability. This is unlawful unless it can be justified. The Act also includes a new provision which makes it unlawful, except in certain circumstances, for employers to ask about a candidate's health before offering them work.

Gender reassignment

A person or persons who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. A reference to a transsexual person is a reference to a person who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. The Act no longer requires a person to be under medical supervision to be protected – so a woman who decides to live as a man but does not undergo any medical procedures would be covered.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Breastfeeding mothers are protected against discrimination for the first six months. After six months a breastfeeding mother is protected through the sex discrimination provisions in the Equality Act. The additional protection for the crucial first six months after a woman has given birth is in recognition of the fact that she needs the strongest possible protection against discrimination that may occur in the early months when it is most important to the health of both mother and child.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Includes only a person or persons who are married or have civil partners.

Race

A person or persons referred to by colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.

Religion or Belief

A person or persons of any religion or of no religion at all. Also includes a person or persons of any religious or philosophical belief or no belief at all. Discrimination because of religion or belief can occur even where both the discriminator and recipient are of the same religion or belief.

Sex

A reference to a person is to a man or a woman while a group reference is to persons of the same sex

Sexual Orientation

Means a person's sexual orientation towards persons of the same sex, persons of the opposite sex or persons of either sex. A reference to a person is to a person of a particular sexual orientation while a group reference is to persons who are of the same sexual orientation.

The Act also makes explicit the concept of 'dual discrimination', where someone may be discriminated against or treated unfairly on the basis of a combination of two or more of the protected characteristics.

2.3 Discrimination Defined**Direct Discrimination**

Direct discrimination occurs when a person (including local authorities, trade unions, employment agencies, vocational training bodies etc) discriminates against another if, because of their protected characteristic they are treated less favourably than others.

Discrimination by Association

Already applies to race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Now extended to cover age, disability, gender reassignment and sex. This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Perception Discrimination

Already applies to age, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Now extended to cover disability, gender reassignment and sex. This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination

The Act harmonises the different definitions of indirect discrimination and extends the definition to now include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Under the Act it is an offence to directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise a person because they have one or more protected characteristic, or because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination occurs when a policy or action appears neutral but its impact particularly disadvantages people with a protected characteristic, unless the person applying the provision can justify it as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Harassment

Harassment involves unwanted conduct which is related to a relevant protected characteristic and has the effect or purpose of violating an individual's dignity or creating a degrading, hostile, humiliating, intimidating, or offensive environment for the complainant. The Act also includes harassment based on perception and association. Employees will now be able to complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them, and the complainant need not possess the relevant characteristics themselves.

Third party harassment

Covers age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. The Act makes the Board liable for harassment of their employees by people (third parties) who are not employees of the Board, such as customers or clients. The Board is only liable when harassment has occurred on at least two previous occasions, the employer is aware that it has taken place, and has not taken reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again.

Victimisation

Occurs when a person subjects an individual to detriment because the individual has brought proceedings under the Act, the individual has given evidence or information in connection with proceedings under this Act, the individual has done any other thing for the purposes of or in connection with the Act, or the individual has made an allegation (express or otherwise) that the person or any other person has contravened the Act.

A person is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Public Sector Equality Duty

PART 1

Mainstreaming the Equality Duty – Updated April 2015

The Board will, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, will advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and will foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3. Embedding Equalities – Mainstreaming the Equality Duty

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 is a standing item on the agenda for discussion at the Assessors' monthly Management Team meetings. Any issues relating to equality matters are discussed in full and thereafter information is cascaded down from the Management Team meetings via bullet points and individual team briefings.

All staff had received Equalities Training as part of the Board's commitment to keeping staff aware of any changes/issues which will affect them in their day to day business on behalf of the Board. This training was compulsory for all staff from the Assessor & ERO down through all staffing grades.

3.2 Equal Pay

In April 2011 the Board implemented the national single status agreement for Local Authority Employees in Scotland. In accordance with this agreement all jobs have been re-evaluated to ensure that there is no gender bias. The re-evaluation 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 has introduced a revised pay structure and package of terms and conditions of employment. Again the pay structure and package of terms and conditions have been endorsed by the consultant as non-discriminatory in terms of their proposed application. An integral element of the revised pay structure and package of the terms and conditions is a range of policies which are aimed at, amongst other things, eliminating discrimination and promoting an appropriate work life balance.

Having reviewed the pay structure, the terms and conditions and the equal pay related policies and procedures currently in place, the Board is satisfied that these are non-discriminatory and meet the Board's Equality Duties. However, the Board also recognises that it is important to continue to monitor these provisions and, with the support of Renfrewshire Council, will continue to update these and develop new policies as required.

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 which are listed below:

- Supporting Attendance
- Computer Use
- Customer Comments and Complaints Procedure
- Disciplinary Policy
- Exit Questionnaires
- Flexi-Time Scheme
- Flexible Working
- Grievances
- Health and Safety
- Job Sharing
- Maternity, Adoption and Paternity Leave and Pay
- Special Leave
- Travelling and Subsistence
- Lone Working
- Respect at Work
- Stress
- Mental Health & Well Being in the Workplace
- Unpaid Absence Due To Illness
- Code of Conduct

The Board is satisfied that the above Policies and Procedures are non-discriminatory and meet the Board's Equality Duties. However, the Board also recognises that it is important to continue to monitor these provisions and, supported by Renfrewshire Council, will continue to update these and develop new policies as required. Any new policies or amendments to existing policies will be impact assessed before implementation. Arrangements are in place to facilitate regular meetings with representatives from Renfrewshire Council to discuss these issues.

3.4 Recruitment and Selection

The Board operates a policy to ensure that recruitment and selection is undertaken within a framework which is fair, consistent, avoids discriminatory practices and provides equal access to all jobs. It includes a commitment that any disabled applicant who satisfies the minimum requirements will be invited for interview.

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 Service Plan

The Board has a Service Plan of which equalities form an important part. The Service Plan is a standing item on the agenda of the Assessor's' Management Team meetings. The Plan is therefore under constant review and monitoring. Any changes made are relayed to all staff via team briefings and the subsequent posting of Minutes on the Board's internal "Notes" data base for all staff to read.

3.6 Access to the Board's Premises

The Board operates out of the Robertson Centre in Paisley. The building had an extensive refurbishment in 2009/10 and has been adapted for wheelchair accessibility, provides disabled toilet facilities and a hearing loop has been installed.

The office is accessible by a ramped access suitable for wheelchair use and is open plan in layout. There is a lift to all floors and there is disabled toilet provision on the ground floor and upper floor. There is also an internal stair lift for an area of the premises which has a small set of stairs.

There is good car parking associated within the curtilage of the office. Specific spaces have been reserved as Disabled parking bays.

3.7 Communication with the Board

The Board has contracted with Global Language Services Limited, a translation service, to provide translations where necessary. The Board's Website also includes a facility to translate the content into a wide variety of languages. Access to the Board's literature and correspondence is an area we intend to look at in more detail in the equalities outcomes section of this report.

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. The Board also publishes information on its website www.renfrewshire-vjb.gov.uk

3.8 Training

Funding for training for all staff is a difficult issue. Nevertheless the Board does have a Training Team who are constantly reviewing the opportunities for additional training in equality issues.

Training is an important tool to ensure that staff is aware of the importance of Equality issues and to ensure that they behave in a way that is non-discriminatory.

As previously mentioned the Assessor & ERO has adopted a Top-Down Strategy and has ensured that the Assessor, all of the Management Team and all staff have undergone Equality Training. This training has been deemed to be compulsory and steps will be taken going forward to ensure all "new starts" are given the opportunity of this training as part of their induction package.

Notwithstanding the above the Board recognises that ongoing refresher courses in equality training is desirable for all staff and this will be undertaken in-house.

3.9 Renfrewshire Equalities Focus Group

The Board is represented on this group which this group promotes equality and diversity across Renfrewshire Council Services, membership of this group enables a relatively small organisation such as the Board to learn from good working practices and experiences. Any issues raised by attendance at this group are fed back into the Assessors monthly management team meetings.

3.10 Appeals and Complaints to the Board

The Board has in place provisions whereby our service users may complain about the organisation and a form is available for this purpose.

3.11 Customer Feedback Survey

The Board has issued customer feedback survey forms in the past which requested users of the service to comment upon aspects of the service they have received. Each of these forms also asked for details of the gender, disability, racial and ethnic origin of the customer. Customer feedback forms are being reviewed with a view to issuing on a more regular basis.

3.12 Scottish Assessors Association

The Assessor is a member of the Governance Committee of the Scottish Assessors' Association which has equality issues as a standing item on the Agenda of its regular meetings.

In brief, the Scottish Assessors' Association was instituted in 1886 and is a voluntary organisation where all Assessors and their senior staff are members. One of the functions of the Association is to facilitate consistency of approach in the administration of rating, council tax and electoral registration services throughout Scotland. Being a member of the Scottish Assessors' Association Governance Committee gives the Assessor, and his staff, the opportunity to share information on equality issues and agree best practices with colleagues from throughout Scotland.

3.10 Work Experience

Every year the Board makes available up to 3 places for young people, still in full-time education, to gain training and work experience for a week at a time.

This facility, which requires substantial planning and preparation, is provided in partnership with Work Experience Services and gives an invaluable insight into the working environment of a busy office.

3.11 Impact Assessment

The Board adopts, wherever appropriate, the policies, practices and procedures of Renfrewshire Council. This includes, among others, policies concerning; Equalities, Recruitment and Selection, Respect at Work, Harassment and Bullying and Training and Development, etc.

The equality impact of the policies and procedures that the Board adopts from Renfrewshire Council will be assessed by Renfrewshire Council. Any changes arising from such impact assessment will be reflected by updating the Board's policies, practices and procedures in line with those of Renfrewshire Council.

The Board's Management Team will review the impact on equality groups of the practices and procedures followed in the exercise of its statutory functions which do not directly follow those of Renfrewshire Council at regular management meetings.

Where the impacts arising from these practices and procedures are considered to be of high relevance a full impact analysis will be carried out in accordance with Renfrewshire Council's guidance.

3.12 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.

Currently the Board enters into very few procurement contracts directly. Contracts of any substance are procured via list of approved contractors supplied by the Scottish Government 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 will have 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.

3.13 Exit Questionnaires

The Board has procedures for Exit Questionnaires and all staff leaving the service are invited to complete a questionnaire. Any equality related issues are highlighted and reported to the Management Team where appropriate.

3.14 Introduction of Electoral Registration

In September 2014 a new form of Electoral Registration was introduced in Scotland. This changed the law from having someone within a household registering everyone who was eligible to vote in that household, to an Individual Registration process where the emphasis was now on the individual to register.

This change was effective from the 19th September, the day after the Scottish Independence Referendum at which the voting age had been lowered to include eligible 16/17 year olds.

Therefore, the Electoral Registration Equality Outcome 3 in our 2013 Report has been looked at in some detail, please see more information on this in Part 3 – Progress since 2013 and our Aims for 2015-17.

Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Public Sector Equality Duty

PART 2

Workforce Monitoring

INTRODUCTION

1. WORKFORCE

1.1 Profile of Workforce by Gender

WORKFORCE GENDER PROFILE			
Workforce Total	Male	Female	PN
47	36%	64%	0%

1.2 Profile of Workforce by Age

WORKFORCE AGE PROFILE	
Age Group	Employees
16-24	8.6%
25-29	2.1%
30-34	4.2%
35-39	8.6%
40-44	8.6%
45-49	17%
50-54	25.5%
55-59	10.6%
60+	10.6%
PNTS (Prefer Not To Say)	4.2%

The age profile of Board staff is skewed towards those who are in excess of 40. There are no staff in the 16-24 age group, with the highest percentage of staff in the 45-49 bracket. The age profile of the staff is an issue discussed further in the Equality Outcomes section.

2015 Update

We can see that we have made some progress towards achieving the recruitment of younger people to the Board. We had no employees in 2013 in the 16-24 age bracket and now we have 8.6%. This against a backdrop of the fact that there has been little change in the workforce and therefore everyone who remains in post is 2 years older.

1.3 Profile of Workforce by Disability

WORKFORCE DISABILITY PROFILE	
	Employee
Identified as having a Disability	4.2%
Identified as not having a Disability	83%
PNTS	12.8%

1.4 Profile of Workforce By Marriage and Civil Partnership

WORKFORCE MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP PROFILE	
Marital Status	Employee
Married/Civil Partnership	53%
Not Married/Divorced/Single/Separated	42.5%
PNTS	4.5%

1.5 Profile of Workforce by Nationality and Ethnic Group

WORKFORCE BY NATIONALITY PROFILE	
Nationality	Employees
British	42%
Other	47%
PNTS	11%

WORKFORCE BY ETHNIC GROUP PROFILE		
Ethnic Group		Employees
White	Scottish	79%
	English	2%
	Welsh	0%
	Northern Irish	0%
	Irish	0%
	Other white ethnic group,	11%
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Group	Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups	0%
Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British	Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British	0%
	Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British	0%
	Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British	0%
	Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British	0%
	Other	0%
African	African, African Scottish, African British	0%

	Other	0%
Caribbean or Black	Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British	0%
	Black, Black Scottish or Black British	0%
	Other	0%
Other Ethnic Group	Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British	0%
	Other	0%
PNTS		8%

1.6 Profile of Workforce By Religion or Belief

WORKFORCE RELIGION OR BELIEF PROFILE	
Religion or Belief	Employee
Buddhist	0%
Church of Scotland	40%
Roman Catholic	6.5%
Other Christian	4%
Hindu	0%
Jewish	0%
Muslim	0%
No Religion or Belief	25.5%
Sikh	0%
Pagan	2%
Other Religion or Belief	2%
PNTS	24%

1.7 Profile of Workforce By Sexual Orientation

WORKFORCE SEXUAL ORIENTATION PROFILE	
Sexual Orientation	Employees
Bisexual	0%
Gay	0%
Heterosexual/Straight	81%
Lesbian	0%
Prefer Not to Say	19%

1.8 Profile of Workforce by Occupational Segregation By Grade

WORKFORCE OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY GRADE PROFILE		
Pay Grade	Male	Female
Grades C-E	15%	23%
Grades G-J	15%	26%
Grades K-O	2%	15%
Chief Officer	2%	2%

1.9 Profile of Workforce by Section and Gender

WORKFORCE BY SECTION AND GENDER PROFILE			
	All Staff	Male	Female
Administrative	55%	19%	36%
Technical	36%	13%	24%
Management	9%	2%	6%

There is a noticeable gender imbalance between the Administrative and Technical Teams and between low and high paid staff. This is an issue discussed in greater detail in the Equalities Outcomes section.

2. GENERAL STAFFING

2.1 Promotion

There were two promoted posts available during years 2013/14. The statistical breakdown of these two posts is covered in the tables included in this report.

2.2 Grievance

During the calendar years 2013/14, there were no grievance issues by any member of staff. Despite this it is recognised that this is an important area that could have equalities issues. Accordingly, workforce grievance issues will continue to be monitored closely.

2.3 Disciplinary

During the calendar year 2013/14, there was one disciplinary issue dealt with by the Board. It is recognised that this is an important area that could have equalities issues. Following an investigation into the issue in 2014 it was found that there were no equality issues involved. However, workforce disciplinary issues will continue to be monitored closely,

2.4 Respect at Work

During the calendar years 2013/14, there were no issues raised with respect to the Board's Respect at Work Policy and Procedure. Despite this it is recognised that this is also an important area that could have equalities issues. Accordingly, Respect at Work issues will continue to be monitored closely.

2.5 Return to Work of Women on Maternity Leave

During the calendar year 2013/14 one member of staff returned to work from Maternity Leave. The return to work was in line with the appropriate policy. A second member of staff is currently still on Maternity leave.

2.3 Workforce Leavers

All staff leaving the service are asked to complete an exit questionnaire. As a result of the returned questionnaires it has been confirmed there are no equality issues with those who left the service in 2013/14.

3. CONCLUSIONS ON WORKFORCE MONITORING

Undertaking this analysis has highlighted some issues which the Board needs to consider in the light of its equalities responsibilities.

In the Equality Outcomes 1 and 2 of this report these two key issues are addressed from the workforce monitoring analysis, namely the lack of young people working for the Board and the gender imbalance between the Administrative and Technical sections, both of these issues are developed into Equality Outcomes.

2. **RECRUITMENT & PROMOTION INFORMATION**

2.1 Profile of Recruitment by Gender

RECRUITMENT BY GENDER PROFILE	
Gender	Percentage of Total Applications
Male	31%
Female	69%

2.2 Profile of Recruitment by Year of Birth

RECRUITMENT BY YEAR OF BIRTH PROFILE	
Decade of Birth	Percentage of Applications
1990s	19%
1980s	17.8%
1970s	12%
1960s	31%
1950s	17.8%
1940s	0%
PNTS	2.4%

2.3 Profile of Recruitment By Disability

RECRUITMENT BY DISABILITY PROFILE	
Disability	Percentage of Applications
Disabled	3.7%
Not disabled	96.3%

Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board gives a commitment to interview any applicant for employment who meets the minimum requirement for the job and has declared they are disabled.

2.4 Profile of Recruitment by Marriage

RECRUITMENT BY MARRIAGE PROFILE	
Marital Status	Percentage of Applications
Married	39%
Not	61%

2.5 Profile of Recruitment by Race

RECRUITMENT BY RACE PROFILE	
Ethnic Group	Percentage of Applications
White	95.2%
Other	2.4%
Prefer Not to Say	2.4%

2.6 Staff Survey

Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board is an employer that promotes equality of opportunity and where diversity is welcomed and respected. Do you agree there exists a perception of equality & opportunity ?	
Agree	71.4%
Disagree	5.7%
Prefer not to say	22.9%

Do you agree diversity is welcomed and respected?	
Agree	80.0%
Disagree	2.9%
Prefer not to say	17.1%

Everyone who works for RVJB fully appreciates the equalities duties placed on both the Board and their own individual duty to promote equality and prevent harassment and discrimination. Do you agree that as an employee of the Board you have a duty to adhere to the Board's policy and the Equalities and Duty as part of your employment ?	
Agree	100.0%
Disagree	
Prefer not to say	

Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Public Sector Equality Duty

PART 3

**Equality Outcomes – Progress since 2013 and
our Aims for 2015-17**

INTRODUCTION

In 2013 we set three Equality Outcomes, these reflected the size and nature of the Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board. Since our report in 2013 we have been informed that our organisation will now have to explore offering Voluntary Early Retirement and Voluntary Redundancy packages over the next two financial years. It is therefore difficult to gauge what will happen to the present workforce in the next two years of this plan.

However, our first two outcomes covering age and gender imbalance in our workforce are still relevant and how we have addressed these and the outcomes will be looked at under each of the Equality Outcomes.

Our third target was focused on Electoral Registration and in particular to work with underrepresented groups and those with protected characteristics, this will be further explored and outcomes discussed in the next part of this report.

EQUALITY OUTCOMES

Equality Outcome 1

Young People have a greater representation within our workforce

Inequality Problem

Having undertaken our workforce monitoring analysis in 2013, it was apparent that young people were grossly under represented within our workforce.

We have taken steps to rectify this and we now have 4 members of staff who are under 25 yrs old.

We believe that this Equality Outcome is still relevant and we will retain this over the next two year period in an attempt to further build on the achievements to date.

During 2015-17

We will aim to further reduce our average workforce age, if we are able to fill vacancies.

To assist in reaching this outcome we will:

- We will consult with young people and identify any actions we can take to assist them gain employment.
- We will continue to offer workplace experience to young people still in full time education and consider opportunities to participate in Government schemes such as Young Apprenticeships etc.
- Where possible we will look towards recruiting placement students from university from suitable courses.
- We will consult, either using our own resources or in conjunction with Renfrewshire Council, with local schools, colleges and universities and identify any actions, when the opportunity arises, that we can take to attract school leavers and graduates.
- In conjunction with the national web portal, myjobscotland, we will consider additional means of attracting young people to vacant positions within our service e.g. local newspapers, job fairs etc.
- We will consider expanding our efforts to raise the profile of Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board, particularly towards young people through media sources they are familiar with e.g. our web site, Scottish Assessors Portal, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.

Equality Outcome

Young people have a greater representation within our workforce.

If we can achieve this we will then be advancing the;

General Equality Duty

To “Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don’t” and,

“Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it”.

Note

In setting this equality outcome it is recognised that Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board is a small organisation with limited staff numbers (47 in total). It follows that the employing of new staff, particularly in the current economic climate, is a very small number and that consequently the opportunity to significantly alter the staff profile over a short space of time is limited.

Furthermore, we have been asked to explore the possibility of staff taking VER/VR over the financial years 2015-17. Until the impact of this is known it is difficult to predict what movement there may be in our current staffing profile.

Equality Outcome 2

Gender Segregation within our Clerical Section is improved

Inequality Problem

In 2013 we identified within our Clerical section there is a very marked and obvious issue concerning gender segregation.

We had 13 members of staff employed in the Clerical section, 12 were female and 1 was male.

The Clerical section represents a significant part of the administration section and of the total workforce, therefore, the gender segregation evident there is not insignificant.

During 2014 we managed to make some progress in addressing this particular equality outcome whereby we employed 3 new members of staff all of whom were male and two of whom were under 25, so this helped us achieve lowering the age and gender profiles.

During 2015-17

We will endeavour to employ more suitable qualified men in our Clerical Section.

To assisting in reaching this outcome we will:

- In conjunction with Equality Outcome 1, we will endeavour to employ more suitably qualified men in our Clerical section.
- In the first instance we will work with our staff to overcome the wrongly perceived view that clerical duties are for women.
- We will consider advertising any vacant posts in a range of alternative media sources such as local newspapers, Schools, Universities, Colleges etc.
- We will consult with the Human Resources department of Renfrewshire Council to look at ways of attracting more males to clerical roles.
- We will continue to offer workplace experience to young people still in full time education

If we can achieve this we will then be advancing the;

General Equality Duty

To “Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don’t” and,

“Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it”.

Note

In setting this equality outcome it is recognised that Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board is a small organisation with limited staff numbers (47 in total). It follows that the employing of new staff, particularly in the current economic climate, is a very small number and that consequently the opportunity to significantly alter the staff profile over a short space of time is limited.

Furthermore, we have been asked to explore the possibility of staff taking VER/VR over the financial years 2015-17. Until the impact of this is known it is difficult to predict what movement there may be in our current staffing profile.

Equality Outcome 3

Underrepresented groups and those with protected characteristics are empowered to actively contribute and participate in Electoral Registration.

Inequality Problem

The Electoral Register is the cornerstone to democracy and public accountability within the United Kingdom. Research undertaken by the Electoral Commission suggests that certain groups of people are less likely to choose to register to vote. These groups are young people (17-24 year olds), black and minority ethnic British residents and home movers.

During 2013/14 we have had, as previously mentioned the most significant change to Electoral law in the last 100 years, mainly the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration. In part this change to the law was to help encourage and engage with the electorate which would result in a maximising of registration levels across the United Kingdom and help prevent electoral fraud. This has translated into a further requirement on Electoral Registration Officers to actively engage and encourage all members of the public to become registered.

This resulted in a number of initiatives and activities undertaken by the Board, the most significant examples are listed below.

- **Building on Partnership Working**

We have for the last seven years engaged with our local secondary schools in our three constituent authorities delivering Registration Workshops. In the run up to the Scottish Independence Referendum, and partly because we had to reach even more pupils in schools due to the lowering of the voting age to 16 yrs, partnership working was looked at again and we decided to include our local Community Education officers from the three councils. This helped us deliver a workshop which we presented in partnership with each of our Returning Officers' staff and their respective Community Education Teams, to all secondary schools in our Board area.

- **Targeting Young Voters**

Whilst working in our local secondary schools helps us to promote registration levels amongst some young voters it still leaves the possible gap of reaching those young people who have left school. In an effort to try and capture this particular group we along with our colleagues in Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board and Dundee City Council worked in conjunction with a private company to develop an App for use on mobile phones to encourage registration and to deliver news and events relating to registration/elections in the local area. This pilot project is currently under review and will be evaluated in the coming months at which point consideration will be given to whether or not this pilot may be developed further.

We also took a very active role in the "National Voters Registration Day" in both 2013 and 2014. We had staff attend college and university campuses to encourage registration amongst those young people who are in further education.

As part of this year's registration we have once again visited campuses and colleges with the theme "Registering to Vote is a Piece of Cake". We found the novelty factor of giving away cakes if students registered to be successful, and we aligned this to a prize draw in which those who registered had the opportunity to win vouchers.

- **Private Rented Accommodation**

This is another area where there is evidence from the Electoral Commission of under registration. To help address this we have taken the opportunity to attend Private Landlord Forum meetings run by our local councils, at which we can promote the inclusion into their "Tenancy Packs" a postcard encouraging the tenants to register and giving our contact details.

- **Disabled Forum & Youth Groups**

Over the last two years we have visited a variety of forums such as Young Disabled Adult Forum in Quarriers Village and the Young Disabled Adults Youth Group in East Renfrewshire. We have also worked with Inverclyde Council's Disability Forum.

During 2015-17

Our aim going forward is to build on what we have already achieved, and to carry out the following activities:

- Increase public awareness by participating in bespoke television and radio advertising.
- An electoral registration advertisement has been purchased which can be used on a variety of media displays. We will consider the use of such advertisements on our website, partner organisation websites, LCD screens in public buildings/libraries and uploaded to Youtube, Twitter, Facebook, etc.
- Due to the imminent changes planned by the Scottish Government to permanently reduce the voting age for Scottish Parliamentary and Local Government Elections to 16yrs we will need to ensure we continue to liaise closely with the local authority Education Departments to obtain names and addresses of young people or young attainers eligible to be added to the Electoral Register. Continue to engage with local Secondary Schools and run workshops with pupils of a suitable age
- Continue to visit further education colleges and universities.
- Through the Scottish Assessors Association, the Association of Electoral Administrators and other groups advise on the likely impact on registration levels for new legislation. Adopt, where appropriate, best practice in the registration process as advised by the Electoral Commission.
- Continue to highlight that Global Language Services are available.
- Investigate speech enabled facility on our website to encourage more BME British voters to register to vote.

If we can achieve this we will then be advancing the;

General Equality Duty

To “Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don't “and,

“Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.”

Appendix 1

Staff Questionnaire



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING FORM CONFIDENTIAL

Equality monitoring helps the Board ensure that its policies, services and employment practices are fair, reasonable and meet the needs of the workforce. As part of this process, the Joint Board is legally required to collect and review equality data. Individual situations can change, therefore, it is important that the Joint Board has an accurate picture of the workforce. The Joint Board intend to use this opportunity to update employee's equality information. The Joint Board would request that you complete this form so that it has up to date and accurate equality information. In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the information you give will be used by the Joint Board for the purpose of providing statistical reports and equality monitoring. The details, provided by you, will not be passed to any external bodies.

1. PERSONAL DETAILS

Surname: _____ Forename: _____
 Post Title: _____
 Employee Number: _____

2. GENDER IDENTITY

How would you describe your gender?

☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Prefer not to answer

Have you ever identified as a transgender person or trans person?

(for the purpose of this question, 'transgender' is defined as an individual who lives, or wants to live, full-time in the gender opposite to that which they were assigned at birth)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to answer

3. MARITAL STATUS

What is your legal marital status?

☐ Single ☐ Married/Civil Partnership ☐ Living with partner ☐ Divorced
☐ Divorced/Separated ☐ Separated ☐ Widowed ☐ Prefer not to answer

4. AGE

What is your date of birth?

Day: _____ Month: _____ Year: _____ ☐ Prefer not to answer

5. CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

Do you have caring responsibilities? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Yes (children under 18) ☐ Yes (other) ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to answer

6. RELIGION OR BELIEF

What is your religion or belief?

☐ Buddhist ☐ Church of Scotland ☐ Hindu ☐ Humanist ☐ Jewish
☐ Muslim ☐ None ☐ Other Christian ☐ Sikh ☐ Pagan
☐ Roman Catholic ☐ Prefer not to answer ☐ Other religion or belief, please specify _____

7. SEXUAL ORIENTATION

What is your sexual orientation?

☐ Bisexual ☐ Gay ☐ Heterosexual/Straight ☐ Lesbian ☐ Prefer not to answer

8. NATIONAL IDENTITY

What is your national identity?

☐ Scottish ☐ English ☐ Welsh ☐ Northern Irish ☐ British ☐ Prefer not to answer

Other, please specify _____

9. ETHNIC GROUP

What is your ethnic group? For this question, you should choose one section from A to G to indicate your ethnic group. Choose H if you prefer not to answer this question.

A. White

- ☐ Scottish ☐ Other British
☐ Irish
☐ Gypsy/Traveller
☐ Eastern European (for example Polish)
☐ Other white ethnic group, please specify _____

B. Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups

- ☐ Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups, please specify _____

C. 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, please specify _____

D. African

- ☐ African, African Scottish or African British
☐ Other, please specify _____

E. Caribbean or Black

- ☐ Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British
☐ Black, Black Scottish or Black British
☐ Other, please specify _____

F. Arab

- ☐ Arab, Arab Scottish, Arab British
☐ Other, please specify _____

G. Other

- ☐ Other, please specify _____

H. Prefer not to answer

- ☐ Prefer not to answer

10. DISABILITY

Under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day tasks.

Do you consider that you have a disability?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to answer

If yes to the above question, please state the type of impairment which applies to you. You may indicate more than one. If none of the categories apply, please mark 'Other' and specify the type of impairment.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning disability (<i>such as Down's Syndrome or dyslexia</i>) or cognitive impairment (<i>such as autism or head injury</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical impairment (<i>such as difficulty using your arms or mobility issues which means using a wheelchair or crutches</i>)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Long standing illness or health condition (<i>such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sensory impairment (<i>such as being blind/having serious visual impairment, or being deaf/having a serious hearing impairment</i>)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental health condition (<i>such as depression or schizophrenia</i>)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (<i>such as disfigurement</i>) please specify _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to answer

11. PREGNANCY/MATERNITY LEAVE

Are you currently pregnant or on maternity leave?

- ☐ Pregnant ☐ On maternity leave ☐ Neither ☐ Prefer not to answer

12. DATA PROTECTION ACT

In terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, I consent to the information which I have provided being processed to monitor the effectiveness of the Joint Board's Equality and Diversity Policy. I understand that this information will be held on manual or electronic records.

Signed Date

If you have any questions that you would like to ask about this form, please contact Kate Crawford.

Appendix 2

Recruitment Questionnaire



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING FORM

CONFIDENTIAL

In order to check the effectiveness of the Board's Equality and Diversity Policy, The Board monitors a range of areas where people may experience discrimination. The Board would be pleased if you would complete the form below. The information you give will not be available to people involved in the selection process and will be used for monitoring purposes only. All information will be treated in strict confidence and no names will be shown in any statistics produced.

1. POST DETAILS

Advert Reference Number: _____ Post Title _____

Service: _____ ☐ full-time ☐ part-time

2. GENDER IDENTITY

How would you describe your gender?

☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Prefer not to answer

Have you ever identified as a transgender person or trans person?
(for the purpose of this question, 'transgender' is defined as an individual who lives, or wants to live, full-time in the gender opposite to that which they were assigned at birth)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to answer

3. MARITAL STATUS

What is your legal marital status?

☐ Single ☐ Married/Civil Partnership ☐ Living with partner ☐ Divorced
☐ Divorced/Separated ☐ Separated ☐ Widowed ☐ Prefer not to answer

4. AGE

What is your date of birth?

Day _____ Month _____ Year _____ ☐ Prefer not to answer

5. CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

Do you have caring responsibilities? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Yes (children under 18) ☐ Yes (other) ☐ No
☐ Prefer not to answer

6. RELIGION OR BELIEF

What is your religion or belief?

☐ Buddhist ☐ Church of Scotland ☐ Hindu ☐ Humanist ☐ Jewish
☐ Muslim ☐ None ☐ Other Christian ☐ Sikh ☐ Pagan
☐ Roman Catholic ☐ Prefer not to answer ☐ Other religion or belief, please specify _____

7. SEXUAL ORIENTATION

What is your sexual orientation?

☐ Bisexual ☐ Gay ☐ Heterosexual/Straight ☐ Lesbian ☐ Prefer not to answer

8. NATIONAL IDENTITY

What is your national identity?

☐ Scottish ☐ English ☐ Welsh ☐ Northern Irish ☐ British ☐
☐ Prefer not to answer Other, please specify _____

9. ETHNIC GROUP

What is your ethnic group? For this question, you should choose one section from A to G to indicate your ethnic group. Choose H if you prefer to not answer this question.

A. White

- ☐ Scottish
- ☐ Other British
- ☐ Irish
- ☐ Gypsy/Traveller
- ☐ Eastern European (for example Polish)
- ☐ Other white ethnic group, please specify _____

B. Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups

- ☐ Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups, please specify _____

C. 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, please specify _____

D. African

- ☐ African, African Scottish or African British
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

E. Caribbean or Black

- ☐ Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British
- ☐ Black, Black Scottish or Black British
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

F. Arab

- ☐ Arab, Arab Scottish, Arab British
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

G. Other

- ☐ Other, please specify _____

H. Prefer not to answer

- ☐ Prefer not to answer

10. DISABILITY

Under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day tasks.

Do you consider that you have a disability?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to answer

If yes to the above question, please state the type of impairment which applies to you. You may indicate more than one. If none of the categories apply, please mark 'Other' and specify the type of impairment.

- ☐ Learning disability (such as Down's Syndrome or dyslexia) or cognitive impairment (such as autism or head injury)
- ☐ Long standing illness or health condition (such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy)
- ☐ Mental health condition (such as depression or schizophrenia)
- ☐ Physical Impairment (such as difficulty using your arms or mobility issues which means using a wheelchair or crutches)
- ☐ Sensory Impairment (such as being blind/ having serious visual impairment, or being deaf/ having a serious hearing impairment)

- ☐ Other (such as disfigurement)

please specify _____

- ☐ Prefer not to answer

If you have a disability and you require assistance to enable you to attend for, and participate fully in the interview process (for example ramp access, large print material, a signer), please provide details in the application form)

11. PREGNANCY/MATERNITY LEAVE

Are you currently pregnant or on maternity leave?

- ☐ Pregnant ☐ On maternity leave ☐ Neither ☐ Prefer not to answer

12. TO BE COMPLETED BY EXISTING BOARD EMPLOYEES ONLY

Are you applying for a promoted post? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to answer

13. DATA PROTECTION ACT

In terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, I consent to the information which I have provided being processed to monitor the effectiveness of the Board's Equality and Diversity Policy. I understand that this information will be held on manual or electronic records.

Signed.....

Date.....