RENFREWSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

EQUALITY, DIVERISTY & INCLUSION
HR5

Title	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Author	Kate Crawford Depute Assessor & ERO
Approved By	Management Team
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Reviewer	Shona Carlton PAO
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Review History

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1	Review of Policy	September 2026

1. Introduction

1.1 Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board ("The Board") believes that equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are essential to delivering excellent public service and being a great place to work. We know when people feel respected, valued and included, they can thrive. As an equal opportunities' employer, we are committed to building a workplace where everyone can be themselves, contribute fully and feel a sense of belonging. A diverse workforce brings a wide range of perspectives, experiences and strengths, helping us to better understand and meet the needs of our stakeholders. We aim to embed the principles of fairness, inclusion and respect into everything we do, from recruitment and development to service design and delivery. .

1.2 We actively promote a positive and inclusive working environment for everyone, regardless of religion or belief, disability, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, and race. We also recognise and support diversity in caring responsibilities, social- economic background and trade union membership or activity. We want all employees to feel safe, respected and empowered to succeed.

1.3 This policy aligns with the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation. All employees are expected to follow the principles of this policy, helping to create a culture where equality, diversity and inclusion are part of everyday working life.

2. Purpose and Aims

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out the Board's vision and commitment to EDI in the workplace. It aims to promote EDI in all aspects of the Board's work and to foster a working environment where everyone can reach their full potential, free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

2.2 We believe that everyone deserves to feel safe, respected and included at work. EDI shapes how we work, lead and serve, and these values have long guided our approach. While we've taken important steps to embed them across the Board, we recognise that good intentions are not enough. That's why we are committed to taking meaningful action, making EDI part of everyday practice, visible in our decisions, behaviours and service. The commitments below reflect both the actions we already take and the areas where we must continue to improve, strengthen and hold ourselves to account.

2.3 To achieve this we will:

- Provide training to all employees on equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Develop and apply policies, procedures and practices that support our EDI responsibilities.
- Ensure the needs of our diverse communities are reflected in service delivery and service redesigns.
- Work towards a workforce that better reflects the people we serve.
- Foster a safe and inclusive working environment, free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour wherever it occurs.
- Monitor and evaluate our EDI practices to ensure they meet legal standards and reflect best practice.

2.4 By working together, with each of us playing our part striving to meet these commitments, we can build a workforce that is stronger, fairer and more compassionate for everyone.

3. Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all employees of the Board. It also extends to external agencies, partners and contractors working with the Board who are expected to uphold and comply with its principles and requirements.

4. What is Equality, Diversity and Inclusion?

4.1 Equality is about making sure you are treated fairly and given fair chances. It is about giving you an equality of opportunity to access all services and opportunities available to help you reach your potential.

4.2 Diversity is about recognising, respecting and valuing differences. It is not about treating everyone exactly the same but treating people as individuals and creating a working culture and practices that enables you to understand and appreciate differences.

4.3 Inclusion is when you feel valued and accepted in your team and in the wider organisation, without having to conform. Inclusive organisations support employees, regardless of their background or circumstance, to thrive at work. This requires practices and processes that break down barriers to inclusion and actively value difference

5. Legal and Policy Framework

5.1 The Board is committed to meeting its legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 which consolidates and strengthens previous anti-discrimination laws. The Act protects you from discrimination based on nine protected characteristics:

Age

Disability

Gender reassignment

Marriage and civil partnership

Pregnancy and maternity

Race (including ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality)

Religion and belief

Sex

Sexual orientation

5.2 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), the Board is committed to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Fostering good relations between different groups.

5.3 We recognise that creating a safe, respectful and inclusive workplace is both a legal and ethical responsibility. Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, we must ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees. Inclusive health and safety practices, such as accessible emergency procedures, reasonable adjustments for those with disabilities, and training that reflects diverse needs, are essential to supporting EDI.

5.4 Recent changes to the Equality Act 2010 have introduced a proactive duty on the Board to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. This includes harassment by colleagues, managers and third parties such as service users or members of the public. We will continue to strengthen our policies, training and reporting mechanisms to reflect this duty and foster a culture where unacceptable behaviour is challenged, and you feel safe to speak up.

5.5 We recognise the changes under the Employment Rights Act 2025, which strengthen existing duties by the Board to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.

5.6 Legal interpretations of protected characteristics continue to evolve through case law, including recent judgments clarifying how terms such as “sex” are understood within the Equality Act. We will ensure our policies remain legally compliant, inclusive and respectful of all protected characteristics.

5.7 These legal duties are supported by a range of Board policies and procedures that help embed equality, diversity and inclusion into everyday practice. This includes how we recruit, support, develop and manage our workforce, and how we respond to concerns. Key policies and resources include:

- The **Recruitment Policy**, which promotes fair and inclusive hiring practices.
- The **Respect at Work Policy**, which sets expectations for respectful behaviour.
- The **Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures**, which provide clear routes for addressing concerns.
- The **Code of Conduct for Employees**, which outlines standards of behaviour aligned with EDI principles.
- **Mandatory EDI training** and **staff induction**, which ensure all employees understand their responsibilities.

6 Responsibilities

6.1 Embedding and upholding EDI is a shared responsibility within the Board. Everyone, managers, employees, trade unions/employee representatives, and external partners, has a role to play in upholding the principles of this policy and contributing to an inclusive working environment.

6.2 This section outlines the specific responsibilities of key roles in supporting and upholding the principles of this policy:

6.3 **The Management Team** will:

- Promote a culture that values equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Monitor the application of this policy and take action to address inequalities.
- Ensure all policies and procedures reflect EDI principles.
- Provide training and guidance to raise awareness and build understanding.
- Publish statutory EDI information in line with legislation.

6.4 **Managers** will:

- Undertake necessary training provided by the Board to engage and uphold this policy and ensure their teams do the same.
- Implement this policy within their teams and lead by example.
- Promote a respectful and inclusive working environment.
- Apply policies fairly and consistently.
- Respond to concerns or complaints about discrimination promptly and appropriately.

6.5 **Employees** will:

- Undertake necessary training provided by the Board to engage and uphold this policy.
- Understand and uphold the principles of this policy.
- Treat others with respect and challenge inappropriate behaviour.
- Support efforts to promote equality and report concerns to their manager.

6.6 **Trade Unions Colleagues/Representatives** and **External Partners** will:

- Support employees who raise or are subject to concerns.
- Work within the principles of this policy.

7. Disciplinary Action

7.1 As an employee, you have the fundamental right to be treated with dignity, fairness, and respect at work. We are firmly committed to fostering a safe and inclusive working environment, where unfair treatment is not tolerated. We recognise that such treatment can have serious and lasting impacts, and we will take all necessary steps to address concerns promptly, sensitively, and in line with our values and legal responsibilities.

7.2 We will take all concerns and complaints seriously. If an issue is raised by an employee, partner, external agency, or contractor, it will be investigated thoroughly and with sensitivity. Where a breach of this policy is identified, appropriate and proportionate disciplinary action will be taken in line with our procedures.

7.3 Where an employee of a partner organisation, external agency, or contractor is found to have breached this policy, we will report the matter to their employer for appropriate action under their own disciplinary procedures. In severe cases, this may result in the Board reviewing or ending its working relationship with the individual or organisation.

8. Learning and Development

8.1 EDI principles are embedded across all Board training. In addition, EDI is a mandatory training module for all employees. You will be supported and encouraged to complete this training in a format that suits your role and learning style, whether online, face-to-face, or through toolbox talks. Completion of this training is a vital step in ensuring that everyone understands their responsibilities and can contribute to a respectful and inclusive working environment.

8.2 A wide range of additional EDI training modules is available through iLearn which support deeper learning on specific topics such as unconscious bias, inclusive leadership, cultural competency, and trauma-informed practice.

8.3 We will continue to review and enhance our training offer to reflect emerging best practice, legislative changes, and feedback from employees and service users. Managers are expected to actively promote EDI learning within their teams and ensure that training is not only completed but meaningfully applied in day-to-day practice.

9. Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment

9.1 This policy has been impact assessed in line with the Board's obligation to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

10. Confidentiality

10.1 All information relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is handled with the utmost care. It is recorded, maintained, and processed confidentially and securely by the Board. This ensures compliance with data protection legislation and reflects the Board's commitment to safeguarding sensitive information and promoting trust across the workforce.

10.2 Information processed may include paper or electronic records and will be done so in line with the Data Protection Laws, including the UK General Data protection Regulation ("UK GDPR"), the Data Protection Act 2018 and any enactment thereunder or amendment thereto.

11. Monitoring and Review

11.1 This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains aligned with current legislation, best practice, and organisational priorities relating to equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Reviews will take into account feedback from trade unions, service users, and stakeholders to ensure the policy continues to reflect lived experience and evolving needs.

11.2 We will continue to meet our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), ensuring due regard is given to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations. Equality Impact Assessments will be conducted for all relevant policies and service changes, and statutory EDI data will be published in line with legal requirements.