



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

2021

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 her 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 approximately 278,000 registered electors in the area, residing mainly in the 170,000 or so domestic subjects shown in the Council Tax Valuation List. The Valuation Roll has approximately 14,200 entries with a total rateable value in the region of £380m. The Assessor's service operates from an office in Paisley and employs the equivalent of approximately 47 full-time staff.

Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board serves an area with a population of just over 350,000 based on the population statistics published in 2018.

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. This normally took place every 5 years but from 2023, when the next revaluation is due as the 2022 Revaluation was delayed due to the global pandemic, revaluations will take place every 3 years in line with the legislative amendments to the Valuation Acts. Once a revaluation is completed, 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 an annual canvass by issuing a communication to each household. Prior to 2020, a Household Notification Letter was issued by post to each household and the legislation which brought in Canvass Reform in 2020, now allows the Electoral Registration Officer to streamline this process and utilise other forms of communication. To maintain and ensure the accuracy of the Electoral Registers for the 3 constituent areas, other forms of checks, in line with data protection legislation are carried out with these checks supplemented by door-to-door enquiries where required. 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 during the annual canvass where information is gathered, 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 therefore 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 (e.g., 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 2021

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. A programme of refresher training is carried out every two years and was completed in March 2021.

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. Every post, which is either new to the existing structure or is amended, is evaluated using the agreed, current COSLA job evaluation model.

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.

With effect from 1st April 2021, the Board's lead authority, Renfrewshire Council, has revised the pay structure which will affect the Board's employees in a positive way. The effect of this new structure will reduce the number of pay grades, remove any overlaps between the pay grades and reduce the number of pay increments within each grade to a maximum of 5 by year 2025.

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 at Work
- Acceptable Use (Information Technology)
- Customer Comments/Complaint Leaflet
- Complaints Handling Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedures
- Exit Questionnaires
- Flexi-Time Scheme
- Flexible Working Hours
- Grievance Procedures
- Health and Safety
- Job Share Scheme
- Maternity, Adoption & Paternity Leave Allowances and Related Issues
- Special Leave
- Lone Working
- Respect at Work
- Stress Policy
- Equality and Diversity at Work
- 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.

In addition, all managers within the service completed a course on Equality and Diversity in Recruitment & Selection in November 2021

3.5 Service Plan

The Board has a 3-year Strategic 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 by Line Managers to all staff via team briefings. The Plan and the annual updates are published on the Board's website www.renfrewshire-vjb.gov.uk.

3.6 Access to the Board's Premises

The Board operates out of the ground floor of the Robertson Centre in Paisley. The building has been adapted for wheelchair accessibility and provides disabled toilet facilities.

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's Website includes a facility to translate the content into the five most used languages in Scotland – Polish, Urdu, Arabic, Punjabi, Chinese (Mandarin). We have also added the ability to translate into Gaelic. If a stakeholder wished another language, we would add this on request.

The Board creates a number of publications which are available in hard copy 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 continually reviewing the opportunities for additional training.

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 the Management Team and all staff have undergone Equality & Diversity Training. This training has been deemed to be mandatory and all "new starts" complete this training as part of their induction package.

Refresher courses in Equality & Diversity are mandatory and must be completed every two years. This type of training was completed by staff in May 2019 and again in March 2021.

As previously stated, all managers within the service completed a course on Equality and Diversity in Recruitment & Selection in November 2021.

3.9 Renfrewshire Equalities Focus Group

The Board is represented on this group which 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' 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 have adopted the new Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman Customer Complaint Handling Policy which was effective from 1st April 2021. The Customer Complaint Handling Policy is available to the public and published on our website.

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 being made available from the Board's website.

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 her staff, the opportunity to share information on equality issues and agree best practices with colleagues from throughout Scotland.

3.13 Impact Assessment

The Board adopts, wherever appropriate, the policies, practices, and procedures of Renfrewshire Council. This includes, among others, policies concerning; Equality and Diversity at Work, Respect at Work, Unacceptable Actions and Carers Leave, 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 the 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.

3.14 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 very few procurement contracts directly. Contracts of any substance are procured via a 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 directly are generally small in terms of the service procured and Renfrewshire Council's Procurement Service would provide guidance and guidance throughout the process. 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.

3.15 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.

3.16 Electoral Registration

Electoral Registration Officers continue to actively engage and encourage all members of the public to become registered and the underrepresented groups continue to be looked at in detail in terms of our third Equality Outcome, please see more information on this in Part 3 – Progress since 2019 and our Aims for 2021-23.

Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Public Sector Equality Duty

PART 2

Workforce Monitoring

INTRODUCTION

1. WORKFORCE

1.1 Profile of Workforce by Age

WORKFORCE AGE PROFILE	
Age Group	Employees
16-17	0%
18-21	7%
22-30	7%
31-40	7%
41-50	7%
51-60	52%
61-65	20%
66-70	0%
71+	0%
PNTS	0%

The workforce profile is based on forms completed by staff and only a limited number of staff returned their form. The age profile of Board staff is skewed towards those who are in excess of 40. There is one member of staff in the 16-21 age group, with the highest percentage of staff in the 51-60 bracket. The age profile of the staff continues to be an issue and is discussed further in the Equality Outcomes section.

1.2 Profile of Workforce by Disability

WORKFORCE DISABILITY PROFILE	
	Employee
Identified as having a Disability	0%
Identified as not having a Disability	100%
PNTS	0%

1.3 Profile of Workforce by Nationality and Ethnic Group

WORKFORCE BY ETHNIC GROUP PROFILE		
Ethnic Group		Employees
Asian/Asian British	Bangladesh, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Any Other	0%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	African, Caribbean, Any Other	0%
White & Asian, White & Black African, White & Black Caribbean	White & Asian, White & Black African, White & Black Caribbean. Any Other	7%
Other Ethnic Group	Arab, Any Other	0%
White	British - All Countries, Gypsy & Irish Traveler, Irish, Any Other	93%
	PNTS	0%

1.4 Profile of Workforce By Gender

WORKFORCE GENDER PROFILE	
	Employee
Male	20%
Female	73%
PNTS	7%

IS GENDER SAME AS ONE AT BIRTH	
	Employee
Yes	93%
No	0%
PNTS	7%

1.5 Profile of Workforce By Sexual Orientation

SEXUAL ORIENTATION	
	Employee
Bisexual	0%
Gay/Lesbian	0%
Heterosexual/Straight	87%
Other	0%
PNTS	13%

1.6 Profile of Workforce by Religion or Belief

RELIGION OR BELIEF	
	Employee
Buddhist	0
Christian (including others)	80%
Hindu	0%
Jewish	0%
Muslim	%
No Religion	13%
Sikh	0%
Any Other	0%
PNTS	7%

1.7 Profile of Workforce by Legal Marital or Same-sex Civil Partnership Status

LEGAL MARITAL OR SAME-SEX CIVIL PARTNERSHIP STATUS	
	Employee
Never Married & Never Registered	27%
Married	53%
Separated, but still legally Married	0%
Divorced	20%
Widowed	0%
In a registered Civil Partnership	0%
Separated, but still legally in a Civil Partnership	0%
Formerly in Civil Partnership but not dissolved	0%
Surviving partner from Civil Partnership	0%
PNTS	0%

1.8 Profile of Workforce by Role as Carer

ROLE AS CARER	
	Employee
Yes	27%
No	73%
PNTS	0%

2. **GENDER PAY REPORTING**

2.1 Profile of Workforce by Occupational Segregation by Grade

WORKFORCE OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY GRADE PROFILE		
Pay Grade	Male	Female
Grades C – E	13%	35%
Grades G – J	13%	27%
Grades K – P	2%	8%
Chief Officer	0%	2%

2.2 Profile of Workforce by Section and Gender

WORKFORCE BY SECTION AND GENDER PROFILE			
Pay Grade	All Staff	Male	Female
Administrative	46%	31%	51%
Technical	44%	69%	35%
Management	10%	0%	14%

2.3 Profile of Workforce by Salary and Gender

WORKFORCE BY SALARY AND GENDER PROFILE		
Employees	Total Salaries	Average Salary per Gender (Total salaries divided by no. of employees)
Male (13)	£380,694	£29,284
Female (35)	£1,105,703	£31,591
Gender Pay Gap	-£2,307	

3. GENERAL STAFFING

3.1 Promotion

The Board undertook a restructure in 2020 to promote efficiencies and to streamline service delivery. 4 members of staff in existing promoted posts were regraded as a result of gaining extra responsibilities. The new posts were evaluated in terms of the COSLA agreed scheme and after consultation with Unison.

3.2 Grievance

During the calendar years 2020/21, there were no formal grievance issues raised by any member of staff. Despite this it is recognised that this is an important area that could have equalities issues. Accordingly, if any workforce grievance issues arose, they would be investigated and monitored closely.

3.3 Disciplinary

During the calendar year 2020/21, there is a live disciplinary issue currently being dealt with by officers of the Board. Any workforce disciplinary issues are investigated and monitored closely.

3.4 Respect at Work

During the calendar years 2020/21, there were no formal 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 would be investigated and monitored closely.

3.5 Maternity Leave

During the calendar year 2020/21 no members of staff were on Maternity Leave.

3.6 Staff Retention

All staff leaving the service are asked to complete an exit questionnaire and the responses in these questionnaires are considered. During 2020/21 one member of staff left but did not complete an exit questionnaire.

4. 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 issues are still relevant and are developed into Equality Outcomes.

5. **RECRUITMENT & PROMOTION INFORMATION**

5.1 Profile of Recruitment by Gender

RECRUITMENT BY GENDER PROFILE	
Gender	Percentage of Total Applications
Male	30%
Female	70%

5.2 Profile of Recruitment by Year of Birth

RECRUITMENT BY YEAR OF BIRTH PROFILE	
Decade of Birth	Percentage of Applications
2000s	0%
1990s	10%
1980s	20%
1970s	20%
1960s	40%
1950s	0%
1940s	0%
PNTS	10%

5.3 Profile of Recruitment By Disability

RECRUITMENT BY DISABILITY PROFILE	
Disability	Percentage of Applications
Disabled	0%
Not disabled	100%

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.

5.4 Profile of Recruitment by Marriage

RECRUITMENT BY MARRIAGE PROFILE	
Marital Status	Percentage of Applications
Married	40%
Not	50%
Prefer Not To Say	10%

5.5 Profile of Recruitment by Race

RECRUITMENT BY RACE PROFILE	
Ethnic Group	Percentage of Applications
White	70%
Other	20%
Prefer Not To Say	10%

5.6 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?	
	Percentage of Applications
Agree	94%
Disagree	0%
Prefer Not to Say	6%

Do you agree diversity is welcomed and respected?	
	Percentage of Applications
Agree	94%
Disagree	6%
Prefer Not to Say	17%

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?	
	Percentage of Applications
Agree	100%
Disagree	0%
Prefer Not to Say	0%

Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Public Sector Equality Duty

PART 3

**Equality Outcomes – Progress since 2019 and
our Aims for 2021/23**

INTRODUCTION

In 2019 we continued with the set three Equality Outcomes that had been identified in 2017, these reflected the size and nature of the Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board. 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.

With regard to the Gender Pay Gap reporting it should be noted that on an arithmetical average it would appear we have a gender pay gap of £2,307 in favour of female staff. As previously stated, this is an arithmetical average and is due to the fact that as the grades progress the gender balance is towards female. The gender pay gap figure should be treated with caution as anyone employed at the same grade is paid the same salary regardless of gender.

EQUALITY OUTCOMES

Equality Outcome 1

Young People have a greater representation within our workforce

Inequality Problem

Unfortunately, in 2021 young people are still grossly underrepresented within our workforce although since 2019, the Board has made a slight advance in recruiting younger members of staff. Unfortunately, the placement student who was due to start in 2020 was unable to join the Board due to the working restrictions put in place to halt the transmission of Covid-19. The student is due to commence working with the Board in 2021.

Any recruitment which was carried out in 2020-21 was limited to myjobscotland/surveying recruitment websites as the ability to liaise with schools and attend job fairs was severely limited due to the pandemic.

We believe that this Equality Outcome is still relevant as we must reduce our average workforce age, and hopefully in the next two years we will build on the progress made since 2019.

During 2021-23

We will aim to further reduce our average workforce age.

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 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 (48 in total). It follows that the opportunity to significantly alter the staff profile over a short space of time is limited.

Equality Outcome 2

Gender Segregation within our Administrative Section is improved

Inequality Problem

In 2021 we have again identified within our Administrative section there is a very marked and obvious issue concerning gender segregation.

We have 22 members of staff employed in administration, 18 are female and 4 are male.

The administration section is 46% of the total workforce, therefore, the gender segregation evident there is not insignificant.

Despite carrying out a recruitment drive for 7 temporary clerical assistants in the first quarter of 2021, a small number of qualified males applied but unfortunately, none were successful.

During 2019-21

We will endeavour to employ more suitable qualified men to work within our Administrative 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 administration.
- 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 (48 in total). It follows that the employing of new staff to significantly alter the staff profile over a short space of time is limited.

Equality Outcome 3

Increasing the representation of 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. Electoral Registration Officers actively engage and encourage all members of the public to become registered and during 2019-21 this resulted in a number of initiatives and activities undertaken by the Board, the most significant examples are listed below. In addition, the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) for the Board is heavily involved with Accessibility Groups to further advance electoral registration.

During 2020, as a result of the Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Act 2020, the voting franchise in Scotland was widened. In relation to the Scottish Parliament and local government elections in Scotland, the Act gave the right to extend the electoral franchise to include all those with a legal right to live in Scotland and extending the right to vote to prisoners sentenced to 12 months or less. This extension will also apply in respect of other devolved elections that rely on the local government franchise.

For the Scottish Parliamentary Elections due to be held on the 6th May, a media advertising campaign to encourage registration and postal voting was televised in February and March 2021 and the advert was also publicised on RVJB's website.

- **Increase Public Awareness of the changes to the Election Franchise in Scotland**

To ensure the changes to the election franchise in Scotland was publicised to the relevant groups, the ERO for RVJB worked with various external bodies e.g., the Scottish Refugee Council, Electoral Commission and was instrumental in liaising with the Scottish Prisoner Service (SPS) for all EROs in Scotland to ensure the information required to be given to the relevant prisoners was available in every prison. The ERO also has ensured the data provided by the SPS to allow the prisoners to be registered is treated safely and securely whilst protecting their confidentiality.

RVJB website has been signposted to alert the potential electors who are now eligible to vote to have access to the information they need in order to apply to register to vote. Staff training was undertaken to ensure all staff had the necessary knowledge to help these potential electors with enquiries.

At the 2020 annual canvass a leaflet was inserted in correspondence sent to households which alerted all foreign citizens living in Scotland to the change to the law in Scotland.

- **Private Rented Accommodation**

This has been identified previously as an underrepresented group and there is evidence from the Electoral Commission of under registration. To help address this we have taken the opportunity to attend, where possible, 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.

- **Accessibility Groups**

The Electoral Registration Officer is heavily involved in Accessibility Groups in conjunction with both the Cabinet Office and Scottish Government to ensure electoral registration is accessible to all. As a result of the pandemic the Electoral Registration Officer has attended virtually various workshops with representatives suffering from, e.g., visual impairment, mental health and learning disabilities to gain knowledge regarding the issues facing the participants. This work is part of a national strategy for both Scottish Government and UK Parliament to make elections more accessible to all stakeholders.

- **Target Young Voters**

We had, for a considerable number of years, engaged with our local secondary schools in our three constituent authorities delivering Registration Workshops. As a result of resource implications, we decided to deliver bespoke training to the Council's respective Community Education Officers which now allows them to deliver the relevant workshops. As the voting age in Scottish only elections, is 16 years old, these workshops delivered by the Community Education Officers are even more crucial to ensure we maximise registration in young people.

We also actively engage with our three constituent authorities' Education Departments to ensure we have the relevant up to date data to allow this age group to register to vote.

During 2021-23

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 in conjunction with other Electoral Registration Officers.
- Scottish Government has permanently reduced the voting age for Scottish Parliamentary and Local Government Elections to 16yrs and we have 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 in line with data protection legislation.
- Continue to liaise closely with further education colleges and universities.
- Through the Scottish Assessors Association, the Association of Electoral Administrator, the Electoral Management Board, and other groups advise on the likely impact on registration levels of new legislation. Adopt, where appropriate, best practice in the registration process as advised by the Electoral Commission.

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

Monitoring Information Form

Monitoring Information



The elimination of discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010 and the advance of equality of opportunity and fostering good relations are at the heart of every activity of the Valuation Joint Board. The Board is committed to equal opportunities in employment, with the aim of ensuring that everyone who works for us receives fair treatment and we positively encourage applications from suitably qualified and eligible candidates regardless of age, disability, race, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership and caring status.

The information you provide on this form will be used to help achieve that commitment. **The information will not be shared with other members of staff and the information will be retained confidentially, and used only for equalities monitoring purposes**

Effective monitoring is an important means of measuring our performance and progress towards our equality and diversity goals. It also allows us to fulfill our legal requirements to collate equality information, required by the public sector equality duty. The collated information will not only help the Board demonstrate compliance with the law but will also assist in concentrating efforts on achieving a truly inclusive and diverse workforce.

The information collected will help us to identify disparities in outcomes and experiences between groups, identify trends over periods of time, to investigate the reasons for these differences and to put suitable actions in place. To help us achieve this aim we ask you to complete this monitoring form. We collate equality information on age, disability, race, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership and caring status.

The request for this information and how it is used is within the scope of data protection legislation which allows for the collation and reporting of special category data for monitoring purposes.

Where relevant the information may be used to assist us in the delivery of equal opportunity measures.

Please choose one option from each of the sections listed below and then tick or place an X in the appropriate box.

A. Your age

16 – 17	<input type="checkbox"/>
18 – 21	<input type="checkbox"/>
22 – 30	<input type="checkbox"/>
31 – 40	<input type="checkbox"/>
41 – 50	<input type="checkbox"/>
51 – 60	<input type="checkbox"/>
61 – 65	<input type="checkbox"/>
66 - 70	<input type="checkbox"/>
71 +	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do not wish to declare	<input type="checkbox"/>

B. Your disability

The Board believes that people are disabled by the barriers society places in their way and not by their own impairments. Providing this information will allow us to monitor our commitment to promoting diversity and developing a workplace environment where all staff are treated with dignity and respect.

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do not wish to declare	<input type="checkbox"/>

C. Your ethnic group

(These are based on the Census 2011 categories, and are listed alphabetically)

Asian/ Asian British

Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other Asian background (specify below if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British

African	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other Black/ African/ Caribbean background (specify below if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Mixed/ Multiple Ethnic Groups

White and Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>
White and Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>
White and Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other Mixed background (specify below if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other Ethnic Group

Arab	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other Ethnic Group (specify below if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>

White

British/ English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>
Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other White background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do not wish to declare

Do not wish to declare	<input type="checkbox"/>
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D. Your gender

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do not wish to declare	<input type="checkbox"/>

E. Is your present gender the same as the one assigned to you at birth?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

F. Your sexual orientation

Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

Bisexual	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gay/ Lesbian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heterosexual / straight	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify below if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do not wish to declare	<input type="checkbox"/>

G. Your religion or belief

(These are based on the Census 2011 categories, and are listed alphabetically)

Which group below do you most identify with?

Buddhist	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hindu	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jewish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/>
No religion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sikh	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other religion or belief (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

H. What is your legal marital or same-sex civil partnership status?

(These are based on the Census 2011 categories)

Never Married and never registered in a same-sex civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Married	<input type="checkbox"/>
Separated, but still legally married	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divorced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Widowed	<input type="checkbox"/>
In a registered same-sex civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Separated, but still legally in a same-sex civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do not Wish to Declare	<input type="checkbox"/>

I. Do you perform the role of a carer?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do not wish to declare	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name	
Date	

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/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)
- Physical Impairment (such as difficulty using your arms or mobility issues which means using a wheelchair or crutches)
- Long standing illness or health condition (such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy)
- Sensory Impairment (such as being blind/ having serious visual impairment, or being deaf/having a serious hearing impairment)
- Mental health condition (such as depression or schizophrenia)
- 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 2018, 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.....