



# **GENDER EQUALITY POLICY**

Personnel & Office Services  
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GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

# GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

(covering all employees)

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# GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

(covering all employees)

Lothian Valuation Joint Board is committed to ensuring that all staff are treated fairly irrespective of their gender and has taken measures to ensure that it fully meets the requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Equal Pay Act 1970 and Equality Act 2006.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Lothian Valuation Joint Board (Joint Board) aims to promote gender equality in all its operations and to prevent unlawful gender discrimination. It aims through this policy and other strategic policies to promote diversity, fairness, justice and equality of access and opportunity, identify any barriers to progress, expose inequalities and their underlying causes and take remedial and preventative action. An essential part in the development of the policy is to consult with staff.

## 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Gender Equality Duty comes into force on 29 June 2007. The aim is to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote equality of opportunity between women and men. This places specific duties on public authorities, to develop and publish a Policy. The Policy sets out gender equality objectives for the next three years, and assess the impact of current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality and mainstream gender equality into core functions.
- 2.2 The term 'gender' refers to the wider social roles and relationships which structure women and men's lives. The Duty includes both women and men and also transgender people.
- 2.3 The Policy will be reviewed at least every five years.

## 3 RECRUITMENT

- 3.1 Recruitment, progression and promotion are based entirely on relevant criteria, which do not include gender or gender related criteria.
- The use of gender language in advertisements will be avoided.
  - Person specifications shall focus on job needs only.
  - Where practicable, advertisements will be designed to attract a mixed-gender response through external advertising.
  - Gender related details will be separated from the application form as far as practicable.
  - The Joint Board will monitor gender of candidates short listed, interviewed and appointed.

## 4 SELECTION

- 4.1 Candidates will be selected on the basis of skills and abilities. Recruitment procedures will ensure that the process is fair, consistent and does not discriminate against a particular gender.

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- Only job-related questions should be asked of job applicants. Candidates will be measured against criteria to help decision-making.
- All successful applicants will be subject of a pre-employment medical examination irrespective of gender.
- Panel members must not make judgements about abilities of a candidate based on gender.

## 5 TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 Promotion and career development opportunities will be provided equally for all staff whatever their gender.
- Procedures relating to appraisal, re-grading and the award to accelerate or decelerate increments and other employment situations where selection is required will apply to staff regardless of gender. Any such review will focus on skills, abilities and potential.
  - Gender monitoring will be used to ensure gender bias does not occur.

## 6 PAY & CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

- 6.1 Lothian Valuation Joint Board recognises that incremental pay progression and other service-based rewards are an acknowledgement of the increasing experience and loyalty of staff. Pay scales will not be gender related.

## 7 DIGNITY AT WORK

- 7.1 Gender abuse, harassment or bullying e.g. name calling/derogatory jokes, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour, intrusive questions are serious disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Joint Board's Disciplinary Procedure.

## 8 RETIREMENT, VOLUNTARY EARLY RETIREMENT & VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY

- 8.1 The normal retirement age for Joint Board staff is 65.

### 8.2 *Early Retirement*

It is recognised that staff may seek, by mutual consent, to retire at an earlier age. Consent for early retirement will be based entirely on relevant criteria, which does not include gender or gender related criteria.

### 8.3 *Requests for Extension of Contract*

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 creates a right for employees to request to work beyond a compulsory retirement age. The Joint Board will consider any requests to continue to work after retirement age. Consent will be based entirely on relevant criteria, which does not include gender or gender related criteria

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#### 8.4 *Voluntary Redundancy*

Any new voluntary redundancy scheme will be based on objective criteria and will not be based on gender.

## 9 *LOCAL AGREEMENT*

- 9.1 This document is a local collective agreement between the Joint Board and the recognised Trade Unions. Every effort will be made by both parties to ensure that this document will be maintained as a local collective agreement and adjusted by agreement to meet changing future needs. In the event of failure to reach agreement both parties reserve the right to terminate this local agreement by giving four months notice in writing. In such circumstances the terms of the local agreement will cease to apply to existing and future employees.

## GENDER EQUALITY POLICY CONSULTATION

This document seeks staff feed back in developing the Joint Board's Gender Equality Policy and action plan. The Action Plan summarises current gender equality initiatives, existing commitments and priorities and highlights where these could be improved. It identifies proposed actions with tangible outcomes and the means to achieve these on various levels.

### 1 GENDER EQUALITY GOALS

Initial consultation has identified four key areas for consideration and action to promote gender equality, and should be incorporated into this GEP: -

- **Culture Change** - The need for transparency, awareness and main- streaming of all gender equality issues and initiatives.
- **Getting In** – Possible barriers to females, compared to males, gaining access to all career paths within the Joint Board. Perceived lack of advice, mentoring and encouragement from senior staff and line managers for those in junior posts.
- **Getting Back** - Support/flexibility for career breaks eg for maternity, caring responsibilities. Permitting flexibility for changing work/life balance because of these caring responsibilities e.g. switches to part-time from full time work.
- **Getting On** - through the 'glass ceiling', this requires improved information and encouragement for promotions to senior grades.

### 2 GENDER EQUALITY ACTIONS

As stated above the Joint Board is committed to ensuring that all staff are treated fairly irrespective of gender. As a result of initial consultation the Joint Board proposes to ensure equality by adopting suitable monitoring techniques under the four key areas.

- **Culture Change** - Promotion of the GEP and assessment of the impact of Joint Board policies on gender equality: raising awareness and mainstreaming gender equality into Joint Board strategies and performance management
- **Getting In** - Reviewing the gender balance in staff groups and levels where one gender is under-represented and establishing targets where appropriate
- **Getting Back** - Development of a workplace culture that recognises and respects family and carer responsibilities and flexible work options.
- **Getting On** - Career progression, promotions and grading reviews: At regular staff performance review meetings raise staff awareness of procedures related to gender equality.

Monitoring will be the responsibility of the Management Group.

#### 4 FURTHER INFORMATION GATHERING & CONSULTATION

Gender Equality will become a standing item on the Joint Consultative Committee agenda. The Committee comprises management and elected representatives from Unison. The JCC meets on a regular basis and will identify key issues, barriers and gaps and to suggest priority areas for action on gender equality.

Annual monitoring information will be used by the Joint Board to identify objectives and priorities regarding gender equality and to monitor progress.

#### 5 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Gender Equality Duty requires the Joint Board to assess the impact of all its policies and practices on gender equality. Impact assessment will review:

- Whether the Joint Board's commitment to gender equality is reflected in the policy/strategy?
- Whether there is any imbalance or under representation of any particular staff groups.
- How the policy addresses this and encourages progress towards achieving a more diverse workforce.
- Whether there are any gender differences in needs, barriers, and outcomes.
- How the policy helps to promote diversity and inclusivity and/or deal with any current inequalities?
- What senior staff member is charged with overseeing gender equality and monitoring and measuring progress?

#### 6 IMPLEMENTATION & RESPONSIBILITIES

The implementation of the Policy is the responsibility of the Assessor and her senior staff.

Any member of staff who considers that s/he has not been treated in accordance with the Joint Board's policies resulting from this Policy should raise their concerns with their line manager, or with the manager to whom they report, if the concern is about their actions. Continued dissatisfaction should be made in writing

The management group will be responsible for ensuring that Joint Board promotes gender equality across its entire staff and in all its operations, adapting its Gender Equality Policy, where necessary, to maximise gender equality as rapidly as possible in the future.

# APPENDIX 2

## LOTHIAN VALUATION JOINT BOARD GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

### **1 CONSULTATION**

- (a) To invite comment and discussion of this scheme from staff and union representatives – April and May 2007.
- (b) To seek Joint Board approval of the policy - June 2007.
- (c) To publicise the scheme on the Joint Boards web page and invite comments June and July 2007.

### **2 MONITORING**

To ensure that we have adequate gender monitoring of recruitment, selection, performance management, training, grievance, discipline, bullying and harassment and those leaving the Joint Board.

### **3 STAFF AWARENESS TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT**

- (a) Deliver appropriate training for all Joint Board staff in gender equality.
- (b) Ensure that all newly recruited staff are given as part of their induction information on gender equality.