



Assessor & Electoral Registration Office

EQUALITY POLICY

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(covering all employees)

1 INTRODUCTION

This comprehensive Equality Policy forms the basis of our commitment to help us meet our obligations under the Equalities Act 2010. This policy will be reviewed on a 3-yearly basis. Amendments may be required outwith this period to reflect any changes in legislation or issues that may arise.

2 SCOPE

The policy applies to all Lothian Valuation Joint Board Staff at all levels including corporate, office, service and individual.

3 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

LVJB is committed to ensuring that no employee, job applicant or client receives less favourable treatment on the basis of their gender, age, disability, race, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy, caring responsibilities, nationality, political belief, trade union membership or length of unemployment.

The Equality policy is supported by a number of over-riding aims and objectives that the Board shall endeavour to achieve. These are indicated below:-

- To eliminate discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership.
- To advance equality of opportunity
- To foster good relations.

4 KEY AREAS

While issues of equality cover all aspects of the work of the Board there are a number of key areas where equality has particular significance. These are outlined below to highlight how this will be achieved, in conjunction with an indication of the actions and requirements that are necessary.

SERVICES

- Ensure that the allocation of financial resources within the organisation shall as appropriate take into account equality considerations.
- Ensure that equality considerations are integrated into all relevant areas of service planning, management and delivery.

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- Improve the Joint Board's awareness and understanding of the needs of different groups through liaison, involvement, and dissemination of information.
- Ensure that Joint Board services are accessible and delivered appropriately and sensitively in order to facilitate equality of treatment.
- Ensure that information about services is readily available, easily accessible and offered in appropriate formats and languages.
- Ensure that equalities are mainstreamed in to the organisation's policies, practices and services.

Ensure that data is obtained to monitor the demographic of protected characteristics within the organisation.

EMPLOYMENT

Recruitment and Selection

- Ensure job vacancies are accessible to people from all sections of the community by ensuring adverts are placed on the recruitment portal and are accessible in different formats and languages.
- Ensure that all employees and job applicants are not discriminated against because they have a responsibility for dependant children or adults.
- Ensure that applicants are not discriminated against on the basis that they have been unemployed for a long term.
- Ensure job adverts focus on the job needs so as to attract a broad spectrum of applicants.
- Ensure staff are aware of the policy, understand its requirements and are able to apply it within their own area of work

Dignity at Work

- Tackle harassment or bullying in the workplace.
- Ensure dignity at work and ensure any abuse is dealt with under the Joint Board's Disciplinary Procedure.

Policies and Procedures

- Carry out an impact assessment on all policies and practices to ensure any negative impacts towards any group are eliminated or minimised.
- Monitor and ensure that policies and working practices comply with relevant equalities legislation. This includes all areas of recruitment and selection, promotion, training and development, grievances, discipline, terms and conditions of employment and termination of employment;
- Ensure consultation with staff representatives.

Training and Development

- Ensure the performance appraisal scheme shall include all staff and that it is applied fairly
- Provide training and development opportunities for all staff.
- Encourage all staff who meet relative job criteria to apply for senior grades.

Equal Pay and Benefits

- Ensure pay scales do not discriminate any group of staff.
- Ensure that any new voluntary redundancy schemes are based on objective criteria and redundancy pay based on the statutory scheme as allowed under the regulations.
- Make provision for and support where possible career breaks.
- Provide a mechanism for applications from all staff to change work/life balance

RESOURCES

The Assessor shall ensure that in terms of budgetary, resource monies shall be available to meet the requirements of this policy and to promote the issues surrounding equality in all its forms. Time shall also be taken to ensure that all staff within the Board are aware of this policy and understand the need to consider and address equality issues during their daily work.

CUSTOMER CONSULTATION AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The Joint Board has developed an online customer care questionnaire and all stakeholders who use our service are encouraged to provide feedback through this mechanism.

Access to information in a variety of formats and through various media is vitally important. Our website is used extensively by our stakeholders particularly at certain key times. A review shall be undertaken to ensure the information is presented in an easy to understand manner and that where possible different formats and aids are available.

In addition we are pro-active by making direct contact with different organisations in order for information to be provided either at meetings or by advertisement in appropriate newsletters and similar.

RESPONSIBILITIES

For any policy to be successful it is essential that responsibilities are identified and allocated.

Noted below are the main responsibilities that are required to support the successful operation of this Policy:-

- The Joint Board's elected members will have overall responsibility for the policy and ensuring adequate resources are provided to ensure that the policy is adhered to.
- The Joint Board's Management Group have the responsibility for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the policy.

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- Managers within the Joint Board are responsible for ensuring that all aspects of their work comply with the policy.
- All staff are required to ensure fairness towards colleagues, service users and other members of the community in carrying out their duties.
- All staff must not discriminate against any person or group when at work or in the course of their duties in interactions with the public;
- All staff must not behave in any way which colleagues may find offensive;
- All staff should help promote the Policy in the workplace in all aspects of service delivery and to work towards the elimination of discrimination.

All staff have a duty to report instances of discrimination to their manager at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate action can be taken to remedy the situation. If employees feel that their line manager is responsible for the discriminatory behaviour they must approach the next tier of Senior Manager with their concerns immediately.

- Managers must ensure that any allegation of harassment or bullying is fully investigated and appropriate action taken if necessary.

5 MONITORING & REVIEW OF THE POLICY

In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty a bi-annual monitoring report will be prepared which will include all relevant statistical data collected in the previous two years. This report will be circulated to the Joint Board's Management Group which will provide an opportunity for consideration, suggested improvements and amendments to the policy. The monitoring report will also be circulated to the Joint Board's Elected Members.

The bi-annual monitoring and collection of statistical data will comprise of the following:-

- Employee age
- Training by gender, race, disability, age, religion or belief and sexuality.
- Salaries by gender, race, disability, age, religion or belief and sexuality
- Job applications by gender, race, disability, age, religion or belief and sexuality.
- Successful applications by gender, race, disability, age, religion or belief and sexuality.
- Leavers by gender, race, disability, age, religion or belief and sexuality
- Employment by gender, race, disability, age, religion or belief and sexuality
- Reviews will take into account the views of elected members, staff, community and voluntary groups and trade union representatives and we will continue to engage with people from the diverse communities in Lothian to help shape the services we deliver.

6 DISSEMINATION OF THE POLICY

The policy and annual monitoring report and reports outlining the Board's Duties under the Equality Act 2010 will be published on the Joint Board's website. These documents will be available in a range of formats and languages upon request.

The policy will also be available for staff perusal/reference on the Joint Board's Intranet.

Applicants for Joint Board posts will be made aware of the policy and it will form part of the induction programme for new recruits.

ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	DESIRED OUTCOME	TIMESCALE
To ensure the Equalities Policy is a constantly evolving document	Monitor and investigate any suggested improvements to the policy	A policy that truly meets today's needs and meets legislative requirements	Ongoing
Raise the profile of equality issues across the Joint Board	From 2013 prepare bi annual review for elected member approval and then publish on website	Heightened awareness of the Joint Board's commitment to equalities	Bi-annually and Ongoing
Raise public awareness	The up-to-date policy and annual report available on the website	To heighten awareness and encourage input from stakeholders	Ongoing
Availability of information relating to equalities available in various formats	Statement to be included in website and other documents, if possible	Encourage stakeholders to contact the Joint Board	Ongoing
Collection of statistical data for employment monitoring purposes	Collect and collate the data	Report findings annually to Lothian Valuation Joint Board	Ongoing
Raise awareness of equalities within the Joint Board	Ensure that equalities is an item on all internal meetings agendas	Staff are aware and alert to equalities issues and have a vehicle to raise concerns and suggestions	Ongoing
Customer Care Feedback	Scrutinise all customer care returns	Take on-board any positive suggestions to improve the service	Ongoing
Ensure electoral registration is available to all	Visit minority groups in Edinburgh and Lothian's and provide guidance and information	Ensure stakeholders are informed about the services provided	Ongoing

**THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE IN LARGE PRINT, BRAILLE,
VARIOUS COMMUNITY LANGUAGES AND CDROM**

Please contact our office, details are noted below:-

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