

Our Commitment to Equality and Diversity

SNH's mission is to work with Scotland's people to care for our natural heritage. This means working with **all** of Scotland's people and it is important for us as an organisation to understand and appreciate the differences amongst Scotland's people and to appreciate the contribution that every individual can make in helping us achieve our aims. We must strive to enable the people of Scotland to care for and enjoy the natural heritage and in return ensure that the natural heritage enriches the lives of everyone in Scotland and beyond.

SNH is wholeheartedly committed to promoting and mainstreaming equality and diversity in all our activities and functions. SNH will strive to continually improve its ability to meet the needs of all sectors of the community and to maintain a culture and philosophy, which recognises all individuals regardless of age, colour, disability, ethnic or national origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion or a deeply held philosophical belief.

As Chief Executive, I will ensure that our commitment to this Disability Equality Scheme leads to real outcomes and practical improvements in the day to day life and experiences of disabled people. We are determined to do this for all the disabled people of Scotland and to the benefit of the natural heritage. The commitment of our staff will help us deliver these outcomes and improvements and we intend to provide the leadership, support and training they need to ensure success.

Ian Jardine
Chief Executive

So What Are Public Sector Duties?

From 4 December 2006 a new legal duty – the **DISABILITY EQUALITY DUTY (DED)** – is being introduced in the public sector. This new duty will mean that any public body, including SNH, will need to **actively** look at ways of ensuring that disabled people are treated equally. This requires organisations across the public sector to be **proactive** in ensuring that disabled people are treated fairly. SNH recognises that this duty is not just about changes to buildings or adjustments for individuals, but about including equality for disabled people into our culture and philosophy in practical and demonstrative ways.

The Disability Equality Duty will be followed by a Gender Equality Duty in April 2007, and later in 2007, SNH will also be required to meet specific obligations under the Race Equality Duty. Our longer term aim is to develop an overall strategy and programme of actions (an Equality and Diversity Programme) that will encompass all strands of equality. Although we promote SNH as an organisation committed to equality and diversity, we recognise that we still have a lot of work to do to proactively mainstream equality and diversity in all that we do. This document sets out a framework within which SNH will promote equality for and prevent discrimination against disabled people, as our employees, as users of our services and as participants in caring for and enjoying Scotland's natural heritage.

What Does this Mean for SNH?

The DED requires SNH to meet general and specific duties. The general duty requires that in carrying out its functions SNH takes due regard to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- Eliminate discrimination - this is unlawful under the act
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons

The specific duties require SNH to:

- Publish a Disability Equality Scheme
- Demonstrate that we have taken action and achieved appropriate outcomes – *change must happen*
- Report on progress (annually)
- Review and revise the scheme (at least every three years)

There are 4 key elements that are fundamental in developing our Disability Equality Scheme. These are:

- Involving disabled people
- Measuring progress
- Conducting impact assessments for all existing and new policies

- Developing and implementing of an action plan

How Does this Relate to What SNH Does?

As stated in SNH's Corporate Strategy the quality of people's lives depends on having a healthy, attractive, and properly working environment, as well as strong social structures and economic well being. Our Corporate Strategy sets out what we intend to do over a ten year period. This is based on the principles of sustainable development and has four main themes:

- **Caring for the Natural World** (caring for the natural heritage and understanding how it is changing)
- **Enriching People's Lives** (gaining the greatest personal and social benefits for people from having a good quality natural heritage)
- **Promoting Sustainable Use** (using the natural heritage in a way which respects its long-term value while delivering economic benefit)
- **Ways of Working** (how we work to deliver these points in a responsive, open efficient and effective way)

There are two key components to our main themes – the natural heritage and people. Therefore the overall aim of our Disability Equality Scheme and our longer term Equality and Diversity Programme is to achieve the best outcomes for the natural heritage and **all** people of Scotland regardless of age, colour, disability, ethnic or national origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion or a deeply held philosophical belief. Within this overall aim we have a number of key objectives that we wish to achieve:

- Eliminate discrimination of any kind from all our practices, policies and procedures
- Develop a proactive approach, mainstreaming equality into all decisions and activities to the extent that it becomes a natural way of working for SNH and is reflected in the behaviour of our employees
- Continue to develop as an inclusive organisation that proactively endeavours to meet the needs of the people of Scotland so that everyone can contribute towards caring for and enjoying the natural heritage. This inclusion will not only focus on the various strands of equality but will also take account of our commitment to regeneration and quality of life and the involvement of local communities to achieve social inclusion
- Develop our reputation as an employer that promotes equality and diversity not only in our employment policies and practices but through the way we work and the culture we promote
- Develop a workforce who are equality and diversity aware and encourage employees to demonstrate positive behaviours and attitudes towards all sectors of the community. Endeavour to be an organisation where disabled people feel empowered as key contributing employees
- Meet legislative requirements through the development of our equality schemes and ensuring key objectives and targets are met and real change is achieved

So What Has SNH Achieved So Far?

We recognise that SNH has a lot of work to do in order to meet the objectives we have identified above and acknowledge that this change can only be achieved over time. Our commitment is to continual improvement, whatever we achieve we will continue to identify areas for improvement in all aspects of equality and diversity. There are a number of areas of work in which we have already made progress and we will continue to build on these as part of our commitment to achieving equality for disabled people. These include:

- Development of the People Strategy (a statement of how SNH wish to achieve the delivery of our organisational objectives through our people) which includes a commitment to having a robust Equality and Diversity Strategy and identifies Management Team responsibility as personally championing equality and diversity within SNH
- A joint statement by SNH Management Team and Trade Union Side setting out SNH's policy in relation to achieving equality for disabled people
- Production of Staff Handbook guidance on managing equality and diversity
- A joint statement by SNH Management Team and Trade Union Side on Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation
- Production of Staff Handbook guidance on Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation
- Development of an Managing Equality and Diversity Action Plan for employment issues, in partnership with Trade Union Side
- Achievement of the two tick symbol in May 2006
- A report commissioned by SNH on "Deaf Visitors to the Countryside". This report describes a research project investigating access for deaf visitors to the countryside. In particular it considers examples of good practice and potential barriers to engagement. A number of disability groups were involved in the production of the report
- A National Nature Reserve (NNR) Disability Access Audit. The aim of the audit is to improve access generally to NNRs for a wider cross section of people and, by so doing, increase opportunities for visiting reserves by disabled people. A number of recommendations are now being taken forward as a result.
- Workshops for staff working on NNRs to raise awareness of accessibility issues and attended by members of the Disabled Ramblers Group
- A contributing member of Countryside for All, the Outdoor Access for Scotland Group and the National Advisory Group
- An audit of all SNH properties has been conducted throughout 2006 looking at accessibility issues and a programme of improvement has been drawn up based on an evaluation of the audit findings
- A number of developments in the production of SNH publications have been made to help meet the needs of disabled people including: using RNIB "See It Right" guidelines; provision of large print and on-line versions of publications; development of the SNH website to meet Web Accessibility Standards and; initiated development of audio versions of SNH publications
- Inclusion of diversity awareness training within the Corporate Management Development Programme

So What Next?

SNH has a lot of work to do over the next three years (and beyond) and in order to successfully achieve equality for disabled people we need to prioritise our activities and resources to maximise our achievements. Taking account of the guidance produced by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) and SNH's organisational priorities we have identified the priorities within this Equality Scheme as:

- Establishing sufficient resources (staff and financial) to take forward the actions identified in the Equality Scheme.
- Developing the involvement of disabled people (and other equality groups) in the prioritising, producing and assessment of corporate policies and procedures. Our intention is to expand our contacts with external disability groups and work with them in partnership in the development of our policies. Internally, we propose setting up an employee Diversity User Group (that will include the involvement of disabled people) to look at all aspects of equality and diversity work. The Diversity User Group will include representation from Trade Union Side. In developing these groups and relationships emphasis will be placed on involvement rather than simply consultation.
- Develop a programme for completing impact assessments for all existing and new policies. We will also produce guidance, to be used internally, based on information provided by the DRC.
- Undertake a further audit of our functions to ensure we have identified all areas of our work and services that are relevant to the DED. We will ensure that this audit encompasses our functions at a corporate level right through to examining the activities we are involved in at a local level.
- Initiate an awareness raising programme across the organisation. There is a need within the organisation to improve employee understanding of, and skills in, dealing with equality and diversity issues. This process will be initiated by issuing guidance on the Disability Public Sector Duty followed by the development of an Awareness Raising and Diversity Training Programme.
- Develop a programme for gathering and analysing evidence. We will identify areas for analysis that will allow us to measure our progress towards achieving equality for disabled people (and other equality groups) to ensure that change is being made. The implementation of a new HR Database and the development of our "People Report" (a quarterly report provided to SNH's Management Team on staffing, health and welfare statistics and issues) will allow development of analysis in relation to recruitment, development and retention. We will also use future Staff and Customer surveys to gather data in relation to equality issues.

The Action Plan

The priorities identified have led to the development of the tasks identified in the attached DED Action Plan. The Action Plan has been divided into 7 key areas:

1. Implementing & Promoting the Disability Equality Scheme and the Equality and Diversity Programme
2. Involvement

3. Strategic & Policy Development
4. SNH Functions & Services
5. Employment
6. Awareness Raising & Training
7. Monitoring & Evaluation

We acknowledge that the Action Plan does not identify a target date or outcome for all the tasks listed, however, we propose to have a revised Action Plan with these included published by June 2007. Further development of the Action Plan will be done with the involvement of disabled people/groups.

In producing this first Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan SNH is committed to a programme of continual improvement to meet the needs of disabled people in Scotland and to increasing their potential in helping us care for and enjoy the natural heritage. This commitment is fully supported by SNH's Chairman, Chief Executive, Management Team and Trade Union Side.

Any queries regarding SNH's Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan should be addressed to:

enquiries@snh.gov.uk

Action Plan

1. Implementing & Promoting the Disability Equality Scheme & Equality and Diversity Programme				
Task	Responsibility	Target Date	Progress	Outcome
Publish SNH's Disability Equality Scheme	HR (Human Resources)	December 2006		
Further develop responsibilities, target dates and outcomes within Equality Scheme	All Units	June 2007		
Gain further commitment from senior management by identifying a member of the Management Team to be SNH's Diversity Champion/Sponsor	HR	February 2007		
Identify dedicated resources (staff and financial) to take forward action plan	HR	February 2007		
Continue Development of Equality and Diversity Programme including development of overall Diversity Strategy	TBD (To be determined) (All Units)	TBD		
Review and revise scheme on a three yearly basis with an interim review for the 1 st scheme conducted within the first 18 months	TBD (Publishing)	June 2008 December 2009		Scheme published every 3 years (1st scheme to be re-published June 2007)
Review and issue statement on progress in SNH's Annual Report	TBD (Corporate Planning and	April 2007 April 2008		Statement of progress incl. In annual report

	Information Unit (CPIU))	April 2009		
Launch Diversity page on corporate website. To include statement of commitment from Diversity Champion/Sponsor. Consider inclusion of feedback facility	HR (initially)	April 2007		Regular monitoring of website feedback
2. Involvement				
Task	Responsibility	Target Date	Progress	Outcome
Develop an overall approach/strategy to the involvement of people with disabilities (and other equality groups)	HR (initially)	May 2007		
Establish relationships and partnerships with equality and diversity groups (such as Highland and Islands/Scottish Equality Forum and Highland Well-being Alliance)	TBD (All Units)	Ongoing		Development of better means of communication, build knowledge of issues and consultation in matters of developing policy and practice and to publicise current and future accessibility to NNR/site plan
Establish a Diversity User Group made up of a cross section of SNH employees including Trade Union Representation	HR (initially) (All Units)	May 2007		

3.Strategic and Policy Development				
Task	Responsibility	Target Date	Progress	Outcome
Review inclusion of equality and diversity statement and targets within the SNH's Corporate Plan and Operational Plans	Management Team (CPIU)	November 2007		
Develop a programme across SNH for prioritising and producing impact assessments for existing and new policies	All Units	TBD		Policies equality proofed for disability
Develop guidance on production of impact assessments for use across the organisation	TBD	TBD		
4. SNH Functions & Services				
Task	Responsibility	Target Date	Progress	Outcome
Conduct a further audit of SNH's functions to ensure all areas relevant to the DED are identified	TBD	TBD		
Grants				
Ensure DED legislation to be considered when assessing projects for SNH grant assistance	Grants Team	TBD		Increase in number of disabled groups /individuals applying to SNH for grants
Websites & Intranet				
Continued compliance with Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) accessibility	Publications	On going	WAI standards at specific level adopted as	

standards			SNH standard External website accessible to disabled staff and customers	
Publications				
Establish mechanisms by which information can be made as accessible as possible and available in alternative formats	Publications	TBD		Good practice guidelines adopted, disseminated and in use across SNH. Increase in number of requests for alternative formats
Awareness & Involvement				
Improve communications at Visitor Centres for deaf visitors	Awareness & Involvement Publications Site Managers	TBD		
Recreation & Access				
Implementation of recommendations identified within Access Audits 04-06 to bring Spotlight NNRs up to best practice standards	Recreation & Access Publications Site Managers Designated Areas and Sites Unit (DASU)	2009		

Extend information and interpretation provision for people with a sensory impairment or learning difficulty	Recreation & Access Publications Site Managers Designated Areas and Sites Unit (DASU)	TBD		Increase in number of disabled groups /individuals visiting NNR's
Raise awareness of opportunities for visiting NNRs & improve disabled peoples confidence in the accuracy of information about, and standards of, services and facilities	Recreation & Access Publications Site Managers DASU	By 2009 on spotlight NNR's		
Improvement of facilities across owned and managed SNH NNRs/sites to take account of the needs of disabled people	Access & Recreation Site Managers DASU	TBD		
For SNH events and SNH walks consider what amount of accessibility information goes into advance publicity and how and where they are publicised	Recreation & Access Publications	TBD		Increase in number of disabled groups /individuals attending organised SNH events
Property Maintenance				
Continue audit of SNH property throughout 2006/2007 to determine reasonable adjustments to be made to SNH buildings	Property Section	March 2007	Programmes of improvements at majority of property have been drawn up based on an evaluation of the audit findings	

Completion of rolling programme of improvements to SNH buildings identified through audit of SNH property	Property Section	March 2008	Programme of improvements initiated	
5. Employment				
Task	Responsibility	Target Date	Progress	Outcome
Review Managing Equality and Diversity Employment Action Plan (agreed with TUS) and identify relationship with DED action plan	HR	February 2007		
Conduct impact assessments for all new HR led policies and initiatives identified within the People Strategy Portfolio and ensure each project is compliant with the DED	HR	March 2008 & ongoing		Requirements of double tick are complied with
Ensure the current review of existing employment policies and practices takes account of the DED and impact assessments are conducted as appropriate	HR	October 2007		
Ensure next Equal Pay Audit addresses disability issues	HR	2009		

Ensure consideration is given to the needs of disabled employees in the implementation of the new HR Database	HR	In line with Implementation Project Plan		
Review the introduction of a general diversity competency (incorporating disability, race, gender, etc) for all managers and employees	HR Training	End of 2007		Managers appraised against diversity competency. Annual monitoring of appraisal trends
Recruitment and selection				
Review and monitor quality and consistency of the application of the double tick symbol	HR	May 2007		Requirements of double tick are complied with
Review positive action taken to encourage applications from disabled people for SNH positions	HR	October 2007		More disabled applicants apply for SNH positions
Review recruitment guidance for managers and HR staff to ensure they understand the needs of disabled people in the recruitment process	HR (Line Managers)	March 2007		As above
Retention				
Review policy and procedure to support reasonable adjustment in the workplace	HR (Line managers)	October 2007		Disabled people feel that SNH have made any reasonable adjustments required to work effectively Increase use of Welfare

				Service
6. Equality and Diversity Awareness Raising and Training				
Task	Responsibility	Target Date	Progress	Outcomes
Initiate a programme to raise awareness of the DED (and other equality issues) ensuring SNH employees aware of obligations and responsibilities	HR (initially)	January 2007		
Further build Diversity into Corporate Training Programme to increase employee awareness and understanding of disability (and other diversity) issues	HR Training	TBD		Promote awareness, equality and a positive attitude by providing training on Diversity
Identify relevant employees and additional training for disabled employees where necessary	HR Training	TBD		Targeted Diversity training
Ensure all training programs and events are equality proofed for disability issues	HR Training	TBD		All training programmes equality proofed for DED. All courses offered by Training have disability access messages built in as appropriate
7. Monitoring and Evaluation				
Task	Responsibility	Target Date	Progress	Outcome
Identify areas/functions for monitoring and develop a equality and diversity monitoring programme across SNH to	All Units	Post audit of Functions and Services		

allow us to measure progress towards equality for disabled people				
Take account of DED (and other Equality issues) in developing the Inclusion Survey (Customer Survey) to be conducted in 2008	CPIU	July 2008		Assess gaps in current service requirements in relation to disabled customers
Conduct employee survey with specific questions relating to equality and diversity. Review annually	HR	December 2006 December 2007 December 2008		To establish current level of awareness of diversity issues (including disability) across SNH Measure achievements since establishment of DED
Review use of website to gather data and feedback on disability (and other equality) issues	TBD	To be determined		Ability to measure improvements in services since establishment of DED
Develop "The People Report" to ensure analysis of equality issues (including disability) in relation to recruitment, development and retention	HR	December 2007		Data produced annually to specified time frame