

Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board Single Equality Scheme

2009 - 2012

Introduction

LVJB has set itself the aim of ensuring that fairness is a priority for all of the work that it does.

The Single Equality Scheme is intended to set out how this vision can be achieved. It will help Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board (LVJB) meet its legal equality duties as well as prepare for new ones proposed in the Equality Bill. The scheme sets out how LVJB will work with others to ensure that the needs of everyone are met when using a service and to eliminate discrimination and harassment and promote positive attitudes across the areas of:

- age,
- disability,
- gender,
- · gender identity,
- race,
- religion or belief; and
- sexual orientation.

LVJB's Equality and Diversity policy commits that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. This does not simply mean treating everybody the same as clearly we are all different and do have different needs. What it is about is being fair and providing equality of opportunity to everyone.

The scheme covers the period November 2009 to April 2012 and at the end of this time, a new three-year plan will be developed.

This scheme explains what LVJB is, what it does, the community it represents and how it will meet its commitments. It explains how LVJB will carry out equality and human rights impact assessments across all areas of its work and how it will be accountable to its employees and to those individuals who use its services.

Edward P Duffy
Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer

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1.1 Our Mission and Vision

Mission

As an independent Local Government organisation, Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board's mission is to deliver equitable, customer focussed, professional valuation and electoral services to all stakeholders.

Vision

Our vision is to deliver quality, efficient services to all service users, ensuring completeness and accuracy in the work which we undertake.

In order that we fulfil our Mission and achieve our Vision we will:-

- Ensure that our services are delivered in accordance with all statutory requirements
- Plan service development and delivery in accordance with the principles of efficient government and continuous improvement
- Undertake customer care surveys to assist us in improving our service delivery
- Recognise our employees as both stakeholders and our most important asset
- Take individual and collective responsibility for the services provided by LVJB
- Encourage innovation and recognise achievement within the organisation
- Monitor and report performance levels to stakeholders
- Integrate Equalities issues into all aspects of our service provision
- Build on our achievements to date

1.2 About LVJB

Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board was established as part of the 1996 reorganisation of local government in terms of The Valuation Joint Boards (Scotland) Order 1995 and is vested with the functions of the valuation authorities of North and South Lanarkshire Councils. With the agreement of the two Councils, the Board also has responsibility for the Electoral Registration function for Lanarkshire.

The Board comprises of 16 members who are appointed by the constituent Councils with each Council nominating 8 members.

1.3 Our Equal Opportunities Policy and Strategy

LVJB's policy on equal opportunities sets out its responsibilities and commitments with regard to promoting equality and diversity and combating discrimination. It covers LVJB's role both as an employer and service provider.

The policy's objectives contain the following broad commitment:

We are committed to achieving equal opportunities in all our activities and responsibilities. This means ensuring that services, facilities and employment opportunities are accessible and receptive to the values and the diversity of needs within the community.

In meeting this commitment, we shall aim to prevent - as well as eliminate - any form of discrimination that occurs in the workplace, in service delivery or within the community. We also aim to provide good quality services which users (and potential users) can access freely without prejudice, discrimination and / or harassment.'

'Equal Opportunities' means the prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between persons on the grounds of sex or marital status, or racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions such as religious beliefs or political opinions.

1.4 North and South Lanarkshire's community

The following information sets out how the community of North and South Lanarkshire is made up. This information has been taken from Population estimates and the 2001 census.

Population Estimates 2008

Council Area	All people	Females	%	Males	%
North Lanarkshire	325,520	169,004	51.92	156,516	48.08
South Lanarkshire	310,090	161,719	52.15	148,371	47.85
Total	635,610	330,723	52.03	304,887	47.97

The female population is older than the male. It is forecast that there will be a population increase by 2014, with the greatest increase in those aged over 50. The largest projected population increase for men is in the 60 - 74 age group and for women in the 50 - 59 age group.

Households

Most lone adult households are female, with over half of these being pensioners. Of lone parent households, 90% are headed by a woman.

Population by Ethnicity

The 2001 Census shows the % of the local population from the black and ethnic minority communities.

North Lanarkshire Population by Ethnic Group

Ethnic Group	Numbers	% all
White Scottish	304,784	94.9%
Other White British	6,954	2.2%
White Irish	3,188	1.0%
Other White	2,100	0.7%
Indian	527	0.2%
Pakistani	1,756	0.6%
Bangladeshi	19	0.0%
Other South Asian	213	0.1%
Chinese	607	0.2%
Black Caribbean	59	0.0%
Black African	92	0.0%
Black Scottish/Other	45	0.0%
Black		
Mixed Background	479	0.2%
Other ethnic groups	244	0.1%
Total	321,067	100%

South Lanarkshire Population by Ethnic Group

Ethnic Group	Numbers	% all
White Scottish	283,624	93.8%
Other White British	10,223	3.4%
White Irish	2,678	0.9%
Other White	2,287	0.8%
Indian	536	0.2%
Pakistani	968	0.3%
Bangladeshi	29	0.0%
Other South Asian	165	0.1%
Chinese	718	0.2%
Black Caribbean	48	0.0%
Black African	111	0.0%
Black Scottish / Other	43	0.0%
Black		
Mixed Background	482	0.2%
Other ethnic groups	304	0.1%
Total	302,216	100%

Health and Caring

The 2001 Census shows the numbers of the local population with a limiting long term illness*.

North and South Lanarkshire Population with Limiting Long-Term Illness

Council Area	All people	With a limiting long-term illness	%	Without a limiting long-term illness	%
North Lanarkshire	321,067	74,232	23.12	246,835	76.88
South Lanarkshire	302,216	65,537	21.69	236,679	78.31
Total	623,283	139,769	22.42	483,514	77.58

^{*}Limiting long-term illness covers any long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits daily activities or work a person can do, including problems that are due to old age.

In general women report greater levels of ill health than men, though this pattern is reversed for younger men.

Cancer is the main cause of death for both women and men; strokes are a more common cause of death for women and heart disease more common for men.

Life expectancy for women is 78.7 years and for men it's 73.9 years.

1.5 Our Equality Duties

The general and specific equalities duties which underpin our Single Equality Scheme are summarised on pages 14 and 15. The intention of this Scheme is to bring together the race, disability and gender duties and broaden them out to include the characteristics of age, gender identity, religion and belief and sexual orientation as introduced by the Equality Bill which was brought into the UK Parliament in April 2009 and is expected to become law in April 2010. The overall aim of the proposed new legislation is to simplify, modernise, make more effective and strengthen discrimination law. The result will be an Equality Bill that is easier to understand and which is more effective at tackling the ongoing disadvantage which exists in our communities, based on the principle of fairness.

1.6 Specific Duties in relation to race, disability and gender equality

In line with the existing equalities duties, LVJB has published its existing equality schemes which are available both in hard copy and on LVJB's website: www.lanarkshire-vjb.gov.uk. Our new Single Equality Scheme replaces our existing Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes and will be reviewed and an update published on 31st March 2011.

1.7 Equality and Human Rights Impact assessment

At the heart of our commitment to address issues relating to equality and diversity is the process of Equality and Human Rights impact assessment. As an organisation, LVJB wants all our employees to work together to deliver the best possible services. It's therefore essential that we test our policies and procedures to ensure they promote fairness and do not discriminate against any members of the public or employee.

Impact assessments ensure that we do not discriminate and that we take every opportunity to promote equality, diversity and good relations across all local communities. An impact assessment checks to see if a proposed or existing strategy, policy, function or operating procedure is fit for purpose. It ensures that equality and human rights matters are properly considered as part of its development.

The impact assessment process anticipates what the effect will be when our proposed or existing strategy, policy, function or operating procedure is put in place. It considers the effect on all communities and our employees, making sure that, as far as possible, any negative effects are minimised or eliminated and that we make the most of opportunities for promoting equality and diversity are made the most of.

The impact assessment extends to monitoring the actual effects of a strategy, policy, function or operating procedure, not just the written word. This means we can take action if the strategy, policy function or operating procedure is having or is likely to have a negative impact on any group or individual.

1.8 When should an impact assessment be carried out?

Developing new strategies, policies, functions or operating procedures:

The impact assessment is used in the initial development stage so that officers think from the start about the potential impacts on different equality groups. In line with this approach, the impact assessment process is at the heart of the planning process and should never be thought of as an add-on or used as a last-minute check. All new policies, strategies and function or operating procedures will be impact assesses as part of their development.

Reviewing existing strategies, policies, functions or operating procedures:

When using the impact assessment process to review strategies, policies, function or operating procedures, it is important that the impact assessment is used early on in the review process. This ensures equality issues are at the centre of our thinking. It is also important to consider the latest data available, as this may highlight areas where negative impact or unlawful discrimination is taking place.

Impact assessment is an ongoing process that LVJB is committed to using.

1.9 What have we done so far?

Through our Race, Disability and Gender equality schemes we have already achieved many things that have made a difference to the way in which the LVJB does its business and to the lives of those who live and work in our community. Some of these achievements are shown here under the values of fair and open; people focussed; working with and respecting others; excellent employer; accountable, effective and efficient; and tackling disadvantage and deprivation. Through this Single Equality Scheme we want to strengthen our focus and commitment to achieving equality of opportunity.

Fair and open

- Incorporated Equality and Diversity principles into our Service Plan.
- Ensured that all employees involved in interviewing are trained so that selection is made on an objective basis.
- Put policies and processes in place to ensure that the workplace is free from any discrimination or harassment.
- Tackled promptly all incidents of discrimination.
- Put in place non-discriminatory recruitment practices.
- Monitored and publicly report on complaints by number, type and outcome.
- Participate in SLC's Corporate Equality and Diversity Working Group, with representation from LVJB and each SLC Resource and joint trades unions.
- Identified an Equality and Diversity champion at senior level in LVJB to promote these issues within LVJB.
- LVJB has a named Diversity Liaison officer to look after all Equality and Diversity issues for individual employees and to act as a point of contact for advice and support to managers.

People focussed

- Participate in consultation and involvement of people from all communities in North and South Lanarkshire to help shape services, policies and practices.
- Committed to the Double Tick √√ standard of guaranteeing interviews to those that consider themselves disabled if their skills meet the essential criteria of a job.
- Customer Care questionnaires were reviewed in April 2007 to include an equality profile of service users to analyse customer satisfaction levels.
- Provided information in appropriate formats such as Braille, large print, audio tape, DVD and British Sign Language.

- Provided Interpretation, translation services including service provision standards.
- Readspeaker software was added to our website in 2007 making it more accessible and an upgrade was added in 2008.

Working with and respecting others

- Identified opportunities to ensure equality and diversity issues are promoted within the development of strategic plans.
- Ensured that front line employees understand statutory duties and are competent to deliver services in accordance with LVJB's equality and diversity commitments.

Excellent employer

- Provided all newly recruited employees with a comprehensive induction programme clearly defining the terms and conditions under which they are being employed and making them aware of their rights and responsibilities under the Equality and Diversity Policy.
- SLC incorporated equality and diversity issues as part of core learning and development programmes – to which LVJB employees at all levels have access.
- Adopted SLC's "Dignity at Work Policy", which was developed in conjunction with the trade unions.
- Incorporated equality and diversity considerations into our "Employee Code of Conduct".
- Introduced the promotion of equality and diversity as a core competence for all employees.
- Measured performance through an annual Performance Development Review process and 6 month interim review.
- Participate in SLC's "Delivering a Fairer Future" positive action programme to address the gender imbalance within Resources.
- Implemented family friendly polices allowing parents and carers to achieve a work life balance.
- Ensured that there are effective support mechanisms in place for disabled employees in LVJB.

Accountable, effective and efficient

- Provided training for managers and employees in Equality and Diversity issues to help them undertake impact assessment of polices, strategies and functions.
- Required contractors and suppliers to provide details of their equal opportunities policies as part of the agreement of contract process.

- Improved our complaints system to make sure we deal with discrimination and report our progress to the public regularly.
- Implemented an integrated Equal Opportunities and Human Rights impact assessment process.
- Incorporated Equality and Diversity as a standing item on Management Team Meeting agendas.
- Incorporated a section on Equality and Diversity in all Joint Board committee reports to ensure that members are aware of the issues.
- Monitored service uptake by equality groups to identify gaps and issues.

Tackling disadvantage and deprivation

- Produced equality schemes and action plans covering race, disability and gender.
- Extended our Equality and Diversity Policy beyond that required by statute to include a commitment to achieving equality in sexual orientation, age, religion and belief.
- Provided networking and support opportunities for disabled and minority ethnic employees as well as those who have caring responsibilities through regular employee forums.
- Provided work experience opportunities to a range of vulnerable minority groups, including asylum seekers through the "Bridges Project".
- Participated in the provision by SLC of employment training opportunities to adults with additional support needs through a range of initiatives.

1.10 How we will achieve our objectives

It is the aim of this Single Equality Scheme to build on the achievements of our previous equality schemes, and to provide new outcomes which both employees of LVJB and service users can be a part of. To do this we will focus our outcomes on the following key principles:

- Accessing provide services in ways that mean everyone can and does have the right to use them;
- **Informing** ensure that everyone has access to information, in a format that suits their needs, on LVJB services.
- Involving talk to groups and individuals on a one to one basis and use views and opinions to inform decision making and shape service delivery;
- Promoting ensure that individuals are treated equally and given the opportunity to have full access to services.

ave due regard for the need to: liminate discrimination that is unlawful under ne Disability Discrimination Act 1995 romote equality of opportunity between isabled persons and other persons	Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment Promote equality of opportunity between men
ne Disability Discrimination Act 1995 romote equality of opportunity between isabled persons and other persons	harassment
romote equality of opportunity between isabled persons and other persons	
isabled persons and other persons	Promote equality of opportunity between men
	and women
romote positive attitudes towards disabled	
eople	
liminate harassment of disabled people that is	
elated to their disabilities.	
ncourage participation by disabled people in	
ublic life	
ake steps to take account of disabled people's	
isabilities, even where that involves treating	
isabled people more favourably than other	
eople.	
met in order to fulfil the General Duty:	
nvolve disabled people in the development of a	Publish a gender equality scheme by 29 June
isability Equality Scheme (by 4 December	2007, report annually and review progress
006) which demonstrates how it intends to	every three years:
ulfil its general and specific duties and which	
cludes a statement of:	
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	Gather and use information on how our work
volved	affects women and men, boys and girls
rrangements for gathering information in	Consult employees, service users, trade unions
elation to employment, and where appropriate	and other stakeholders such as parent's group
ne delivery of education and its functions	and the local community
he methods of impact assessment for any	Assess the different impact of policies and
dverse impact on disabled people	practices on both sexes and use this
	information to inform our work
liii halia nulla liii	minate harassment of disabled people that is ated to their disabilities. Icourage participation by disabled people in blic life ke steps to take account of disabled people's sabilities, even where that involves treating sabled people more favourably than other ople. Inet in order to fulfil the General Duty: Volve disabled people in the development of a sability Equality Scheme (by 4 December 06) which demonstrates how it intends to fil its general and specific duties and which cludes a statement of: The way in which disabled people have been volved rangements for gathering information in ation to employment, and where appropriate a delivery of education and its functions to emethods of impact assessment for any

Publish the results of such assessments, consultation and monitoring		Identify priorities and set gender equality objectives
Ensure public access information which it provides is available in alternative languages upon request	The Disability Action Plan	Plan and take action to achieve those objectives
Training staff in connection with duties imposed by the Race Equality Duty	How the action plan will be reviewed and subsequent disability schemes prepares (every three years)	Report against the scheme every year and review the scheme every three years.
Monitor, by reference to racial group, the number of :	Monitor and collect statistical information on disabled staff, where possible and appropriate by impairment type:	Monitor, by reference to gender, the number of :
Staff in post; Applicants for employment; Training, retention and promotion; Persons receiving training; persons who suffer detriment or benefit as a result of performance assessment procedures; persons involved in Grievance procedures; Persons subject to disciplinary proceedings; persons who cease employment	Staff in post; Applicants for employment; Training, retention and promotion; Persons receiving training; persons who suffer detriment or benefit as a result of performance assessment procedures; persons involved in Grievance procedures; Persons subject to disciplinary proceedings; persons who cease employment	Staff in post; Applicants for employment; Training, retention and promotion; Persons receiving training; persons who suffer detriment or benefit as a result of performance assessment procedures; persons involved in Grievance procedures; Persons subject to disciplinary proceedings; persons who cease employment
	Review existing scheme and produce an updated scheme not later than three years after the publication of the scheme	

Monitoring under the Employment Duty is undertaken by LVJB however as LVJB has less than 150 employees it will not publish this data as there may be a risk that individuals could be identified by the data.

1.11 Outcomes and involvement

At the heart of producing our Single Equality Scheme has been involvement of those who both deliver our services and those who use them. In line with the above key principles, the following are outcomes that have been developed in partnership with employees, representative groups and members of the public. By setting out to achieve these aims LVJB will continue to work towards a fairer society that offers choices and chances for everyone living in our community.

The outcomes are set under 6 key areas where LVJB can make a clear impact in carrying out the equality duties. These are:

- Consultation and engagement
- Contracting and procurement
- Service delivery
- Employment issues
- Managing and monitoring our effectiveness

The following Plan covers the 3 year period from 2009-2012. Progress will be reported to Management Team annually.

Policy Commitment Consultation and engagement Diversity Areas: the following actions will cover Age, Disability, Gender, Gender identity, Race, Religion or Belief and **Sexual Orientation** Responsibility **Outcome/ Measure LVJB Value** Action Timescale 1) Seek views of all Involvement and consultation outcomes and Administration Ongoing stakeholders regularly on Manager proposed actions are published in the Annual services we provide, and tell Public Performance Report. people what we have done as a People Focused result of involving and consulting with them. 2) Involve and consult with Items raised are considered by Equality and Administration Ongoing employees and employee Diversity Working Group and Diversity Liaison Manager/Team forums to ensure Leader Audit Officers and where appropriate action taken views/aspirations of diverse and reported back to forums (items raised employee groups. minuted for feedback) All Managers Encourage attendance by LVJB employees to Ongoing the employee forums

Contracting and procurement: buying services from others

Diversity Areas: the following actions will cover Age, Disability, Gender, Gender identity, Race, Religion or Belief and **Sexual Orientation**

LVJB Value	Action	Responsibility	Outcome/ Measure	Timescale
	3) In conjunction with SLC	LVJB/SLC	Companies, businesses or individuals wishing	Ongoing
	ensure that the LVJB's equality	Corporate /	to provide goods or services to the LVJB,	
	duties are built into contract	Finance and	adhere to our policy by implementing fair	
	arrangements.	IT Resources	practices in employment and training. Evidence	
			of equality policies provided at tender stage.	
ben		SLC	Procurement Strategy and Sustainable Toolkit	August
ğ		Corporate /	to take account of equality duties.	2010
0		Finance and		
7		IT Resources		
and		SLC Finance	Access to procurement opportunities is	August
. <u>=</u>		and IT	improved via the South Lanarkshire Council	2010
o o		Resources	advertising portal integrating with the Scottish	
ш			national advertising portal.	

Service delivery

Diversity Areas: the following actions will cover Age, Disability, Gender, Gender identity, Race, Religion or Belief and Sexual Orientation

LVJB Value	Action	Responsibility	Outcome/ Measure	Timescale
sed	4) Ensure that our building which is open to the public can be accessed and used by all members of the community.	Management Team	The LVJB public areas are accessible by disabled people.	ongoing
Focus		Administration Manager	The needs of equality groups are addressed as part of our Customer Services Strategy.	ongoing
People	5) Develop an interpretation and translation policy.	Administration Manager	Policy implemented and published to enable employees and members of the community to deliver/access services in a manner that meets their individual needs.	August 2010
	6) Develop and implement an Accessible Information Strategy.	Administration Manager	In conjunction with SLC the range of channels of communication and consultation methods is increased in order to give greater access and choice to members of the community in the ways in which the can contact LVJB.	August 2010
	7) Comprehensively monitor service delivery across all	Administration Manager	Introduce equal opportunities service monitoring which includes all equality groups.	Ongoing
	equality groups.	Administration Manager	Service user profiles are developed and used to inform service changes and improvements and their use evidenced in equality and human rights impact assessments.	August 2010

Service delivery

Diversity Areas: the following actions will cover Age, Disability, Gender, Gender identity, Race, Religion or Belief and Sexual Orientation

LVJB Value	Action	Responsibility	Outcome/ Measure	Timescale
	8) Ensure that all services are	Administration	Services are reviewed and developed to	ongoing
	accessible with due regard to the	Manager	encourage take up by all communities with	
	principle of fairness.		particular focus given to groups facing	
			disadvantage and discrimination – evidenced in	
			aims of the policy.	
		Administration	Monitoring of:	ongoing
		Manager	Service uptake	
			 Satisfaction survey 	
			Complaints	
			Report published highlighting changes made	
			annually	
	9) Ensure LVJB's website is	LVJB IT	Number of users using accessible functions	ongoing
	accessible.	Group	monitored annually.	
		/SLC IT		
		LVJB IT	Accessibility features clearly highlighted on	August
		Group	website homepage e.g. font, contrast controls.	2010
			Plain English used as standard for all	
			information. Easy-read pages developed for key	
			services	

Employment issues

Diversity Areas: the following actions will cover Age, Disability, Gender, Gender identity, Race, Religion or Belief and **Sexual Orientation**

LVJB Value	Action	Responsibility	Outcome/ Measure	Timescale
Fair and Open	10) Ensure managers deal with employee complaints and concerns consistently and in line with personnel policies and procedures.	Administration Manager	 Monitoring of: Equality related complaints Outcome of complaints Number of grievances Number of violent incidents 	ongoing
Focused	11) Provide training and support to officers on performing equality and human rights impact assessments.	SLC Corporate Resources/LVJB	Nominated officers are trained and supported.	ongoing
_	12) Ensure that equality and diversity is part of all induction processes.	SLC Corporate Resources/LVJB Managers	All new staff are aware of equality and diversity strategy, policy and scheme.	ongoing
People	13) Ensure equal opportunities in employment to reflect the diversity of our community.	SLC Corporate Resources/LVJB	Recruitment monitoring to ensure fair and open process.	ongoing

Managing and monitoring our effectiveness

Diversity Areas: the following actions will cover Age, Disability, Gender, Gender identity, Race, Religion or Belief and **Sexual Orientation**

LVJB Value	Action	Responsibility	Outcome/ Measure	Timescale
	14) Publicise our equalities and	Administration	Single Equality Scheme updates published on	April 2011
	diversity performance.	Manager	our website and in hard copy in LVJB Offices.	
		Administration	The effectiveness of service provision is	ongoing
		Manager	monitored on a regular basis.	
		Administration	Equality related data is collated and published	ongoing
		Manager	in accordance with legislative requirements.	
	15) Implement a programme of	LVJB EOWG	Programme agreed by LVJB Internal Equality	April 2010 /
	equality and human rights		and Diversity Working Group.	ongoing
	impact assessments.	Administration	Percentage of impact assessments carried out	ongoing
		Manager	against those timetabled reported annually to	
			Management Team.	
		Administration	Improved information gathering relating to	ongoing
7		Manager	equality groups and service use.	
Ŏ		Administration	Benchmarking of national and local	ongoing
<u> </u>		Manager	demographic information to record performance	
ี อี			in equalities.	
Focused		LVJB EOWG	Impact assessments are undertaken	ongoing
			systematically, routinely and effectively which	
5			identify unmet need and adverse impact. These	
People			will inform strategy, policy development, funding	
9			decisions and the planning and delivery of our	
			services.	

1.12 What to do if something goes wrong?

Members of the Public:

We welcome your comments and complaints at any time. By telling us what you think and letting us know when things go wrong or go well, you can help us to improve our services to you.

You can do this:

- by writing to Administration Manager, Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board, North Stand, Cadzow Avenue, Hamilton, ML3 0LU
- **by phoning** at the number given below
- by emailing or by using our comments and complaints form to the address given at the foot of our website at www.lanarkshire-vjb.gov.uk

LVJB is committed to equality and diversity and tackling all forms of discrimination.

If you believe you have been treated less favourably because of your age, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or because you have a disability, please let us know this when you make a complaint.

For more information, or if you want this information supplied in a different format or language, please phone **01698 476000** or email assessor@southlanarkshire.gov.uk