LANARKSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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. (The Scotland Act 1998, Section L2 Part II, Schedule 5)

Summary of Policy Objectives

Legal Requirements

We will comply with legal requirements and other relevant documentation such as Codes of Practice and good practice guidelines.

Discrimination
We will tackle unfair discrimination in the following areas: age; disability; gender; race; people with caring responsibilities; sexual orientation; beliefs and opinions and trade union activity.

Best Value

We will incorporate equality matters into Best Value strategies that comprise four main aspects: Sound Governance, Performance Measuring and Monitoring, Continuous Improvement, and Three Year Budgeting.

Policy and Procedures

We will integrate equality considerations into all mainstream Joint Board activities, at both policy and procedural levels, to avoid the marginalisation of equal opportunities.

Partnerships

We will encourage active partnerships, both internally and externally, to foster the development of Equal Opportunities Policy and assist in the establishment of relevant groups, (e.g. Disabled Employees, Race Equality, Older Employees), including the development of inter-agency networks.

Employment

We will aim to ensure that the workplace is free from any discrimination or harassment, and all incidents of discrimination or harassment will be tackled promptly. To assist in achieving this aim, equal opportunity standards will be integrated into employee Job Profiles as core elements of job competency.

Service Accessibility

We will assess the extent to which public services are accessible, including the assessment of premises, facilities and methods of providing information. Appropriate remedial actions will be taken, wherever practical, to make services accessible.

Contractors

We will encourage contractors and suppliers of goods and services to adhere to this Policy; such contractors and suppliers will be requested to provide details of their equal opportunities policies as part of the agreement of contractual process.

Monitoring

We will develop a variety of means to assess the effectiveness of Equal Opportunities Policy in practice; this will include monitoring of "double discrimination," for example, where discrimination occurs on more than one ground. All equal opportunities information which is monitored will be reported to the Equal Opportunities Forum.

Communications and Publicity

We will ensure that all Joint Board communications promote images that reflect the full diversity of cultural needs and aspirations of North and South Lanarkshire communities. We shall also promote both staff and public awareness of Equal Opportunities issues through the establishment of publicity campaigns and the production of a range of publicity/information materials.

Employee Development

We will ensure that all employees receive appropriate equal opportunities training; such training will be incorporated into a broad range of training methods such as Induction, as well as both general and specific training courses.

Complaints

We will deal timeously with all complaints concerning equal opportunities and ensure that such complaints are addressed; complaints will be regularly monitored by number, type and outcome.

Policy Review

We will review the Equal Opportunities Policy on a regular basis and carry out a formal review annually. Principles of participation will apply to this process to ensure that staff, citizens and communities are consulted in this review. This review will assess how effectively the objectives of Policy are being implemented into practice.