



## For Information

**Title: Public Sector Equality Duty: - Update on Equality Outcomes 2021 - 2025**

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### Purpose

The Public Sector Equality Duty sets out a requirement for public bodies to publish equality data every two years. This Park Authority's Update on Equality Outcomes 2021 - 2025 Report was published, as required, by 30 April 2023. The purpose of this paper is to draw the Board's attention to the report, and to highlight the key equality achievements over the last two years.

### Recommendations

The Board are asked to:

- a) note the report. The report covers 6 chapters, up to page 60 plus 7 appendixes.

### Background

1. The 2010 Equality Act sets three General Duties at its core - public bodies must have due regard to the need to:
  - a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
  - b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and;
  - c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
2. In Scotland, the Equality Act was followed by additional duties that applied to public bodies, known as the Specific Duties, or Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED). So, in Scotland we have to demonstrate what we have been doing to take account of the General Duty by the following:
  - a) Reporting on mainstreaming the equality duty and publishing progress every two years;
  - b) Publishing equality outcomes every four years and reporting progress every two years;



- c) Assessing and reviewing our policies and practices (Equality Impact Assessment);
  - d) Gathering and using employee information;
  - e) Publishing our gender, race and disability pay gap information;
  - f) Publishing statements on equal pay;
  - g) Consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement; and
  - h) Publishing reports in a manner that is accessible.
3. The Update on Equality Outcomes 2021 - 2025 Report, attached as Appendix 1, delivers the above requirements, providing an update on our Public Sector Equality Duty over the last two years.
4. The Report outlines a number of areas of work across the Park Authority to mainstream equality, and also sets out progress towards delivering the 4 Equality Outcomes that were identified in 2021, as follows:
- a) Outcome 1: Our workforce will become more diverse. We will have more women in senior positions in the organisation and will have an increased number of minority staff working for us (specifically with relation to sexual orientation, disability and ethnicity).
  - b) Outcome 2: Promoting and celebrating a National Park for all visitors
  - c) Outcome 3: Ensuring and enhancing more inclusive access to nature.
  - d) Outcome 4: More equality groups participate in CNPA led consultations and stakeholder forums/groups to influence decisions made in relation to the management of the Cairngorms National Park.

## Main Highlights

5. Through both mainstreaming of equality and delivery of these outcomes, there have been several notable highlights, as below:
- a) **Gender Pay Gap:** as of 30 March 2023, the Park Authority's gender pay gap was 9.55% which is the lowest it has been since we have reported this information. It has been on the downward trajectory for the last 5 years, which reflects the work we have been doing on this particular area, which includes reducing the number of essential criteria in job descriptions; advertising most posts with the potential of being a part time or job share role; revamped recruitment advertising to highlight opportunities for flexible working; removal of core hours and improved remote access to IT facilities; hybrid working approaches; ongoing review of organisational structure.



- b) **Equality Advisory Groups:** the external Equality Advisory Panel (EAP), which has been operating since September 2020 comprises eleven external equalities experts and enthusiasts who volunteer their time and skills to meet monthly and provide the Park Authority with critical advice and guidance on all our equality work. They have provided essential input to many of our policies, procedures and strategies, and notably to our National Park Partnership Plan. The Internal Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advocacy Group comprises staff from across the organisation and equality characteristics, and was developed in tandem with the EAP. This group has been key to guiding our LGBT work, and has developed innovative new policies around neurodiversity and reasonable adjustments, as well as supported our revised Equality Impact Assessment forms and guidance.
- c) **Board Elections:** there were a number of new initiatives to support the local elections of board members in terms of encouraging people to put themselves forward, and to vote in the elections. This included videos showcasing a variety of residents' voices from across the Park; a doordrop to every household in the park; an article in the Cairn magazine; "explainers" on social media, all of which exploded the myths about the "type of person" who usually applies and why we're keen to broaden it out.
- d) **Cairngorms Nature Festival:** This event, showcasing the unique species and habitats of the National Park, has evolved from a day-long "village fair" -style event when it first started several years ago to a 10-day event in 2023, comprising more than 150 activities, and involving over 60 partner organisations and businesses. A number of events were specifically for inclusion groups, with approximately 50% of events being free of charge or low cost. There were also events specifically for people with disabilities, including canoeing for disabled families and adaptive biking. A new accessible website was created to serve as an information hub for the festival, which displayed information about public transport to events, as well as accessibility information about the events. This year's event showcased Cairngorms Nature on a bigger scale than ever before and was resoundingly successful.
- e) **National Park Partnership Plan Consultation:** The consultation included an informal stage which was built around a dedicated microsite using the Commonplace platform, and was supported by a variety of media, website and social media promotion. The consultation was shared through various networks like All the Elements, Boots and Beards, and the Cairngorms Youth Action team,



and via dedicated community Facebook groups. All this work boosted engagement, with a total of 1,453 responses received to both the formal and Informal consultations, via e-mail, online and by post. This compares to a total of 319 for the equivalent consultation 5 years ago. This has resulted in a Partnership Plan that has been truly Informed by Its stakeholders.

- f) **Cairngorms Green Recovery Fund:** This partnership between the Park Authority and the Cairngorms Trust aimed to support the recovery of the Cairngorms economy from the widespread Impacts of Covid-19, while protecting and enhancing the natural environment and seeking to address the ongoing Impacts of climate change. A number of projects have been supported Including a project by the charity Countryside Learning Scotland to build connections between schools, local land managers and employers to develop relevant skills amongst young people In the Park; as well as a project to deliver two "Branching Out" outdoor mental health projects In Strathspey run by the local charity Roots and Shoots.
  
- g) **Heritage Horizons Cairngorms 2030:** There has been a huge amount of work around inclusion and diversity with regards this project. Not least the Alzheimer Centre at Badaguish, which was officially opened this April. This project is part of the Cairngorms 20230 programme, and the unique centre enables people with dementia and their families to experience the benefits of green health activities. Another consideration of note was the community engagement and consultation on the variety of projects. Scotinform did a review of the Park Authority's community engagement and their report Identified that there Is significant commitment to engaging with local communities and to broadening engagement reach, and the consultant was not aware of any other locations In Scotland with such a high volume of community engagement.

Annex 1 contains 6 chapters, up to page 60:

1. Key Highlights
2. About the Cairngorms National Park Authority
3. Mainstreaming the Equality Duty
4. Staff and Leadership
5. Visitors and Community
6. Consultation and Partnership



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There are 7 appendices, which include:

1. The LGBT Charter Action Plan
2. LGBT History Month Campaign
3. Staff and Board equalities survey
4. Staff Recruitment and Retention Statistics
5. Equal Pay Audit
6. Occupational Segregation
7. Equality Outcomes Update 2021 - 2023