



Gender Equality Plan

Introduction

The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) is the statutory Regional Transport Partnership covering most of the Highlands and Islands (Highland Council; Moray Council; Orkney Islands Council; Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and parts of Argyll & Bute). HITRANS works in partnership with these five partner Councils, the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, and other stakeholders to improve transport services and infrastructure in the north of Scotland and on routes to the Highlands and Islands.

Gender Equality Plan

This Gender Equality Plan sets out how equality becomes part of the structures, behaviours, and cultures of HITRANS and demonstrates how, in carrying out its functions, we are promoting equality.

The plan addresses the following issues:

- Dedicated resources
- Data collection and monitoring
- Training
- Work-life balance and organisational culture
- Gender balance in leadership and decision-making
- Gender equality in recruitment and career progression
- Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content
- Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

Signature:

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Date: *30.09.21*

Gender Equality Plan

Resources and Data Collection

Dedicated resources

HITRANS is assisted in carrying out its functions by the provision of Human Resources and Legal Services by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Finance Services by The Highland Council. These services were agreed by resolution of the HITRANS Board and in effect form service agreements with the Councils concerned.

Data collection and monitoring

The implementation of equalities policies is an ongoing process rather than simply the requirement to publish a specific scheme. Equal opportunities are at the heart of the HITRANS ethos, and we intend to meet our statutory duties in this regard. It must be recognised that we are also a small public authority with limited resources and influence and the scope of any scheme should reflect this.

Built into the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) is a monitoring plan associated with specific targets. A monitoring report is reported to our Board on an annual basis within our Annual Report. All Board reports require comments to be made on equalities impacts to ensure Board members are aware of any equality issues.

Training

HITRANS has developed, approved, published, and applied a Training policy and procedure.

Organisational Culture

Work-life balance and organisational culture

Advice on Human Resource issues is provided to us by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar who have developed their own comprehensive Equality Scheme. Therefore, any advice supplied is compliant with our equality requirements.

As a result, we have made significant progress on several fronts and have developed, approved, published, and applied policies and procedures on:

- Capability
- Data Protection
- Disciplinary Procedures
- Equal Opportunities Statement and Policy
- Family Leave
- Flexible Working
- Grievance
- Sickness and Absence Procedure
- Violence and Aggression Policy
- Training
- Terms and conditions of Employment
- Stress Prevention Policy

- Smoke Free Policy
- Severance
- Retirement
- Relocation
- Recruitment
- Public Interest Disclosure
- Public interest (Whistle Blowing)
- Mobile and Landline Communications Policy
- Policy on Media Contact
- Performance Appraisal
- Information Management Policy
- Home Working
- Fraud and Corruption Policy
- Fire action plan
- Emergency Action
- Drug and Alcohol
- Diversity and Equality
- Anti-Bribery
- Adverse Weather Guidance
- Accidents and Incidents at work
- Health and Safety
- Grievance Policy and Procedures
- Recruitment
- Risk Management Policy
- Code of Conduct

Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Several actions are taken to address gender balance. For example:

- Where service delivery allows, vacancies will be advertised as "*suitable for flexible working hours up to 35 per week*" to encourage applications from candidates who wish to work on a part time basis.
- Job Descriptions and Person Specifications will be regularly reviewed to ensure that they contain no gender bias.
- Workplace facilities will be regularly reviewed to ensure that both genders are adequately catered for.
- Significant areas of gender segregation will be reviewed to identify and address any barriers to employment.
- Review and further promote flexible working arrangements that support women to progress their careers.

In terms of the Order which established HITRANS, Partnership Board members consist of a total of 5 Councillor members from the constituent councils, The Highland Council, Moray Council, Argyll & Bute Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, and Orkney Islands Council. In addition, HITRANS is entitled to have between 2 and 3 other (non-Councillor) members (paragraph 1(2) of Schedule 2 of the Order) which, during the period ending with the ordinary elections for Councillors in 2007, were appointed by the Scottish Ministers and have subsequently been appointed by the Partnership with the agreement of Scottish Ministers. The current Chair, Councillor Allan Henderson, and Vice Chair, Councillor John

Cowe, were appointed on 23 June 2017. The Partnership has a full quota of 5 Councillor members and currently has 3 other (non-Councillor) members.

Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

In applying equal opportunities in our recruitment procedures, we carry out monitoring of the candidates and have provided a web-based application documentation that allows applications electronically and large print access. This allows us to identify any bias in the selection process and enables those with disabilities to apply more easily.

Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content

HITRANS considers gender balance of researchers when procuring research work, such as strategy and business case development.

Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

We are committed to making sure that in HITRANS:

- People are, and feel, free to live their lives without harassment and discrimination, and can take part in community life
- There is an organisational culture where everyone is treated with dignity and respect

The Equality Act also introduced a new Public Sector Equality Duty. This duty requires that in carrying out its work HITRANS gives due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
- Advance equality
- Foster good relations between different groups