

National Records of Scotland
Equality Mainstreaming Duty Report 2021

Foreword

This report sets out how we are mainstreaming equality into the work of National Records of Scotland (NRS) and summarises our progress in achieving our equality outcomes since the publication of our previous report in October 2019. The work of NRS is about Scotland's People. We are tasked to preserve our past, record the present and inform the future. To do so meaningfully it is vital that we are able to understand and within our organisation also reflect the rich diversity of our nation.

Our mainstreaming report shows the progress we are making in embedding equality in everything we do. It also identifies areas where we will continue to improve, ensuring these values are upheld, are part of our culture and practised consistently across our organisation.

Since the publication of our last report, we have all faced the significant challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout, the safety and wellbeing of our staff and customers has been our priority. Regardless of working location, NRS has provided tools and guidance to ensure our people have access to wellbeing and mental health support. We continue to offer flexible working arrangements and recent feedback indicated the majority of our staff feel well supported in balancing their work and caring responsibilities.

We are fortunate in NRS that women are well represented, working at all grades, including at senior leadership levels. However, there is more we can do to become a more diverse and inclusive employer in this but also in other respects. Our work to ensure greater equality and accessibility in our service provision continues, as we re-shape services and put additional support in place where required. This includes using digital technology where appropriate and inclusive, accessible language to progress our corporate plans.

This report captures where we are but also signals our ambitions for the organisation we will become. I look forward to the full refresh of our equality outcomes planned over the next year. These will align with our long-term strategy, strategic commitments and business priorities. They will ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are a core part of our decision making processes moving forward. I look forward to being able to report further progress in the future.



Paul Lowe

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1. Introduction

This report describes the progress that National Records of Scotland (NRS) has made in mainstreaming and promoting equality in all our functions since the publication of our previous Equality Mainstreaming Duty Report in 2019.

Following a similar format to that used in 2019, this report provides information from all of the main business areas across NRS to demonstrate our progress in achieving our 2017-2021 NRS Equality Outcomes ([Annex A](#)). This information also demonstrates how, in the exercise of all our functions, we have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This is the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This report further lays out NRS' short-term Equality Outcomes for the period 2022-2023, and provides information on our plans for a full refresh of our Equality Outcomes to be published in 2023, linking in with work on our NRS long-term strategy, strategic plans and priorities.

2. About us

NRS is a non-ministerial department of the Scottish Government (SG). It is headed by a Chief Executive, who fulfils the role of two non-ministerial office-holders, the Registrar General for Scotland (RGS) and the Keeper of the Records of Scotland (Keeper).

NRS performs the registration and statistical functions of the RGS and the archival and public records functions of the Keeper, including maintaining the archives as one of Scotland's five National Collections. We hold UK Accredited Archive status.

NRS collects, preserves and produces information about Scotland's people and history, and makes it available to inform current and future generations.

The organisation holds records spanning the 12th to the 21st centuries which touch on virtually every aspect of Scottish life and is the repository for the public and legal records of Scotland but we also have many local and private archives.

NRS holds and makes available one of the most varied collections of records in Britain. The organisation provides a leadership role for archive and record professionals, and requires 250 named public authorities to submit records management plans for agreement by the Keeper.

The organisation oversees the registration of life events including births, marriages, deaths, civil partnerships, divorces and adoptions. NRS is also responsible for the statutes relating to the formalities of marriage and civil partnership, and the conduct of civil marriage, and for overall leadership of the registration service in Scotland.

The organisation takes the census of Scotland's population, prepares and publishes regular demographic statistics revealing the size and characteristics of the population and households of Scotland.

NRS has a global audience for its work, with people all over the world researching their Scots ancestry, accessing NRS records online or as part of a visit to Scotland, and the Scottish Register of Tartans attracts worldwide interest.

Strategic Objectives and Goals

Vision: To preserve the past, record the present and inform the future.

Mission: Increase our reach and impact and be recognised as a trusted, expert and professional organisation.

Ethos: We put people at the heart of what we do and deliver in accordance with our values.

Values:

- Professional: Collaborating to share our professional skills and knowledge whilst increasing our skills and expertise.
- Respectful: Listening to and respecting different views, learning from others to expand our knowledge and grow together.
- Accountable: Being responsible for what we do, delivering with transparency and clarity of purpose.
- Customer-Focused: Knowing our customers to understand their needs, delivering a positive experience and encouraging feedback to improve what we do.

3. Statistical Areas

3.1 Scotland's Census 2022

The census is the official count of every person and household in Scotland. It is usually held every 10 years and provides the most complete statistical picture of the nation available. It also provides information that central and local government need, in order to develop policies and to plan, fund and run public services.

The census is for and about everyone in Scotland and our design has to take account of these diverse needs. These needs may be influenced, for example, by individuals having one or more of the protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010. A key reason for requiring census data on a range of topics is to be able to fulfil the PSED. For example, census data assists public authorities in carrying out equality monitoring and in conducting Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) when they assess and review policies and practices.

3.1.1 Question development

The census already collects information relevant to a number of the protected characteristics, including: sex, age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, religion and race.

Testing has been undertaken of all new, or altered, census questions, to understand the implications of posing these to all individuals, or targeting to relevant age groups. This demonstrates how different age groups may respond to questions and whether the questions are publicly acceptable to all age groups. For the online questionnaire, the response used to the date of birth question will be used to calculate a person's age to ensure they are not asked specific questions that are not relevant to them. This is called age routing. The paper questionnaire will provide guidance about which questions should be answered by people of particular ages.

User demand has been identified from the 2015 Topic Consultation for the collection of information on 'sexual orientation' and 'trans status or history' in the 2022 Census. Research and development carried out across UK census offices found that the questions (asked of those aged 16 or over) were generally acceptable to the public and the majority of respondents would provide a valid response. In recognition of the sensitive and personal nature of the questions, the Census (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2019 allows for this question to be asked on a voluntary basis. These questions will only be asked of those aged 16 and older.

In response to the identification of user need, and following consultation and discussion, a 'Roma' tick box will be included under the 'White' category for Census 2022, as will a 'Showman/Show-woman' tick box. The 'African' category for ethnicity has also been changed to be a write-in response to improve data quality. The category heading has also been changed from 'African' to 'African, Scottish African or British African' to improve acceptability and parity. The design for the 'Caribbean or Black' category has also been changed to be a write-in response to improve parity and data quality.

Two changes will be made to the religion question in the 2022 Census. A user need has been expressed for more detailed information on branches or schools of Islam to be captured through the census religion question, in a similar way to how data on Christian denominations is captured. Following testing, a write-in box to collect additional information on denomination or school for Muslim respondents has been included for 2022. Following identification of user need and subsequent testing, a tick box for 'Pagan' has also been included for Census 2022.

We have never asked a specific question around pregnancy or maternity in the Census and will not do so in 2022. Question development work included consideration around altering the term 'maternity leave'. This has been changed to 'maternity or paternity leave' in the labour market questions to provide more information to our users to understand the impact of policies.

All question development work has sought to ensure that the language used in questions and guidance is inclusive, acceptable and aids people of different ages, backgrounds and abilities in answering questions confidentially and accurately. This includes guidance for those who are completing returns on behalf of others.

Further information and details on the question development process and consultation and engagement activities underpinning the question development process can be found in the [Scotland's Census 2022 Equality Impact Assessment](#).

3.1.2 Digital First

The 2022 Census has been designed under the principle of 'Digital First' with a target online completion rate of at least 70%. This approach has been taken with a full understanding of factors influencing internet use in Scotland, including a lack of access or skills (resulting in 'Digital Exclusion') and a lack of motivation or trust, meaning individuals may choose not to complete an online census ('Digital Choice'). In order to address the potential for 'Digital Exclusion' and 'Digital Choice' to impact participation and response rates for Census 2022, work has been undertaken to promote online services through a number of different routes, including community engagement activity, publicity initiatives, websites, contact materials and information leaflets.

The Scotland's Census 2022 Online Collection Instrument will be made up of three public-facing systems: the online questionnaire, a website and a request system for ordering products. To inform the design and iterative development of the online experience, user research and testing has been undertaken, including accessibility testing. A further accessibility audit was conducted on the online system in November 2021, which identified further refinements needed to ensure the online experience is as accessible as possible.

NRS have also developed a new [website](#) to host census results and supporting information. This was developed using the Digital First Service Standard, a core part of the SG assurance framework. NRS successfully completed an assessment against the Digital First Service Standard criteria before the website was launched in May 2021. Throughout the development of the website we completed a number of

user testing sessions to ensure the service was useable and accessible. An example of some of the user-centred features we included are:

- dark mode: users with dyslexia said they preferred the inverted colours of dark mode and found it easier to focus on longer paragraphs of text on a dark background;
- Gaelic content: we identified a user need for Gaelic content on the website. We have discussed this with stakeholders and the feedback received will inform how we present Gaelic on the website, particularly for Census Outputs; and
- British Sign Language (BSL): following feedback from stakeholders, we have identified some potential development work to the website that will help us integrate BSL content.

We are aware that the move to a primarily online census will reduce the direct contact between householders and field staff. Public assistance channels and services, together with publicity and marketing, will therefore have a critical role in compensating for this and encouraging maximum response. This will be complemented by deployment of a field force who will seek to ensure every household and communal establishment is able to participate in census.

We have worked with our digital delivery partner(s) to ensure that the online census questionnaire is a modern, useable and accessible digital platform that meets people's expectations of a government service. We continue to work with public sector organisations across Scotland to understand what else can be done to support those audiences who are digitally excluded.

3.1.3 Delivering Scotland's Census 2022

NRS are engaging with key stakeholders, including SG, local authorities and key organisations and partners across the Third Sector, to ensure messaging about the census and its value reaches those most at risk of non-participation. This engagement will be supported by a 'field and partnerships' campaign to develop in-depth partnerships with stakeholders with reach to our key groups. These partnerships will play a key role in explaining what the census is and what the benefits are as well as the available help and support in census completion.

Under the banner of "Public Assistance" the census programme has developed a number of help and support strategies for affected audiences. In particular, we are investing in our language and accessibility support products, optimising the capacity of our contact centre operation, and leveraging our stakeholder networks and community engagement activity.

The programme has had to adapt its original Public Assistance delivery model and plans on account of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result our support offering will focus on providing:

- central services and support, including Contact Centre with helpline;
- decentralised services and support;
- language and accessibility products;
- translated guidance;

- language support line;
- Gaelic option for completing census online;
- British Sign Language support;
- large print;
- Braille;
- Easy read, and
- audio CD version of the household paper questionnaire.

All guidance and information for Scotland's Census 2022 has been created with a target reading age of 9 years old. This is the average reading age of adults in the UK and will ensure as many people as possible can access help and support to complete the census.

More details on our Public Assistance delivery model, including our approach to support participation from key protected characteristics, can be found in the [Scotland's Census 2022 Equality Impact Assessment](#).

3.1.4 Outputs

Following a [Topic Consultation in 2015](#), further engagement and investigation of how to improve the quality of data collected on equality characteristics has continued. This engagement focuses on outputs and how census data can be more accessible to users for equality monitoring. Following a programme of research, stakeholder engagement and question testing, NRS set out recommendations on all of these topics in the [Plans for Scotland's Census 2021](#) (published pre-pandemic).

An innovation for Scotland's Census 2022 will be the availability of a flexible table builder tool, allowing users to create their own tables from census data. The table builder will use a method called key perturbation to protect the confidentiality of data. It ensures that, when a user creates a table, any information that may identify an individual or household will not be available in the table builder tool.

NRS are planning a Statistical Disclosure Control (SDC) and Outputs consultation as part of our wider engagement plan and will build on our previous topic consultation. This SDC and Outputs consultation will seek users' views on a number of areas to better understand user needs and ensure that the outputs we produce maximise the value of the census for all of Scotland's population.

The census outputs [website](#) has been designed to meet the Public Sector Web and Mobile Accessibility Regulations (2018). The website has been through an accessibility audit and accessibility testing with users to ensure it performs well with common assistive technologies.

Alongside the website we are developing a plan to provide assisted digital support to users who require assistance accessing the census results offline. The period between launch of the website (May 2021) and new data being released is being used to iterate and continuously improve the offline support provided by NRS.

3.2 Demographic statistics

3.2.1 Population and migration statistics

We publish statistics on the population of Scotland, broken down by age, sex, country of birth and nationality. These population statistics are also incorporated into most other government statistics. We also publish statistics on people moving to and from Scotland, by age and sex. And we publish statistics on the population by age and sex, and migration, by the level of deprivation in the area (using the [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation](#)).

We have made it easier for people to see the age profile of an area, by publishing a new [interactive map](#). This lets you see easily the proportion of people in different age groups in different neighbourhoods. An example is given below in image 1.

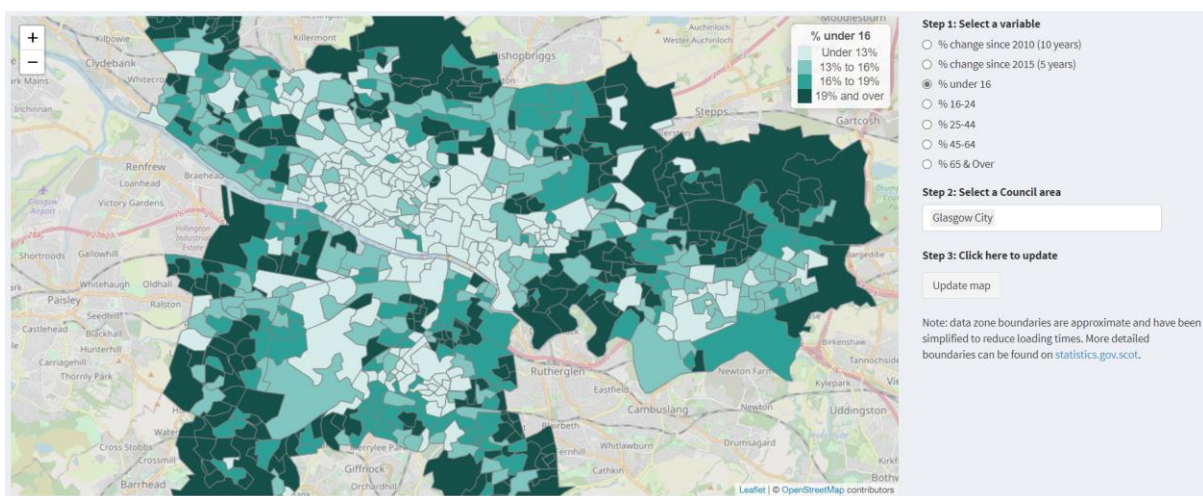


Image 1: Percentage of people aged under 16, in each neighbourhood in Glasgow City

3.2.2 Statistical promotion and analysis

NRS is undertaking ongoing work on plain English and usability. We revamped [Scotland's Population 2020](#) to be easier to understand for different users, including those with disabilities. This was partly in response to guidance from [SG](#), who have stated that “[a] lot of what the Scottish and UK governments publish, either online or in print, is too complex for at least half of our readers. This is mirrored across agencies, services and the general public sector”.

Changes made to Scotland's Population 2020 include:

- communicating the analysis using context and themes;
- reducing the word count by 75%;
- reducing the reading age from about 16 years to about 8 years;
- creating a more accessible spreadsheet format; and
- using Statistician's quotes to make our staff more visible and to make it easier for journalists to quote us in the media (therefore reaching many more people who would not normally visit our website)

This project got mostly positive feedback from a range of users and won the Communication category of the Analysis in Government Awards 2021. We plan to build on this success by applying these lessons to other statistics publications we produce.

3.2.3 Data Access

NRS contribute to research on the status of groups with protected characteristics, through sharing data. This typically involves Census records from 2001 and 2011, and Vital Events records. Often, projects involve linking NRS data to other public sector administrative data. We share Vital Events records (births, deaths and stillbirths) with Public Health Scotland (PHS), which are used for analytical purposes. Both Vital Events records and Census records are available for use in academic research projects, subject to scrutiny and approval of the privacy, security and ethical implications of the projects. A full list of live projects involving Census data linkage is available from the Scotland's Census [website](#).

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to better understand factors relating to infection and outcomes from illness. Information on people's protected characteristics is vital to efforts to understanding the impact of the pandemic. NRS have supplied Census and Vital Events data for projects looking at: COVID-19 health inequalities for people with learning disabilities, the relationship between ethnicity and COVID-19 infection and outcomes, and socioeconomic and household risk factors for COVID-19.

Additionally, NRS collaborated with public sector partners such as PHS and SG to create a COVID-19 Research Data Holding. This includes protected characteristics data from the 2011 census. This data holding allows NRS protected characteristics information to be supplied for use in COVID-19 related priority research more swiftly.

We are also involved in several programmes of work that cut across statistical areas and involve external partners in the provision of large-scale data linkage projects. These projects often focus on describing groups of people within Scotland defined by their protected characteristics. NRS are a key partner in Admin Data Research Scotland (ADR-S) and the Scottish Longitudinal Study (SLS). The common theme of these programmes is the aim to transform how public sector data in Scotland is curated, accessed and explored so that it can deliver its full potential for policy makers and for the public.

3.2.4 Published census data on protected characteristics

NRS continue to make publicly available a wide range of published census tables, including many with information on Scotland's population broken down by protected characteristics. These are now available on the refreshed Scotland's Census [website](#). In addition to this extensive source of publicly-available information, NRS continue to provide bespoke tables of census data on request, where the information anyone requires is not available in the published tables. Such requests often include requests for information including breakdowns of protected characteristics.

3.2.5 Other demographic statistics

Many of our regular published statistics are broken down by equality characteristics. For example, we publish information on:

- Overall population by age, sex, country of birth and nationality
- Births, including the numbers broken down by the mother's age, area of residence and country of birth, the father's age and country of birth, and the parents' marital status
- Stillbirths, including the numbers broken down by the mother's age and area of residence, the parents' marital status, and the cause of death
- Infant deaths, including the numbers broken down by the infant's sex and the cause of death
- Deaths by age and sex
- Same sex marriages
- Household composition by age and sex
- Life expectancy by age and sex
- People moving to and from Scotland (migration) by age and sex

All of this information is published on our [website](#) and feeds into SG websites, including regular updates to SG's [Equality Evidence Finder](#). We have also developed infographics and data visualisations to help improve the effectiveness of our dissemination and increase the reach and impact of statistics broken down by equality characteristics.

4. Information, Records and Archives

The archive collections in the custody of the Keeper represent the stories and histories of all the peoples and communities of Scotland, and their activities both at home and abroad. NRS is committed to ensuring that these unique and vital archival records continue to represent all the peoples of Scotland as we develop new methods of access to ensure increasing and wider access to existing and new audiences. The potential of the national archival collection offers NRS a unique resource which can be developed to assist in the elimination of discrimination, the advancement of equality and opportunity and significantly, by wider access to all the stories of the peoples of Scotland, for the fostering of improved good relations between protected characteristic groups. Over the reporting period, a working group has begun investigatory work into developing and embedding inclusive practice in our archive function specifically in relation to our people, our collections and our archival practices.

Our organisation operates a scheme for records in the Keeper's custody, which have significant local interest, to be stored and accessed in suitable local repositories. Where an archive service meets the proper arrangements for the storage and access of archival records, archives of a particularly local nature are devolved to the locality under the charge and superintendence of the Keeper. This scheme supports wider access to records to those who are unable to visit the historical search room in Edinburgh. The scheme currently has public records devolved and accessible in eighteen archive services across Scotland from Shetland to Dumfries and Galloway. The scheme underpins our commitment to widening access to the history of Scotland, to all the people of Scotland, regardless of physical, geographical or social constraints.

4.1 Public Records (Scotland) Act

The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 was implemented on 1 January 2013. Under the Act, public authorities must submit records management plans for the Keeper's agreement and, once agreed, they must implement their agreed plans and keep them under review. As most plans are agreed subject to improvement activities, we are devoting more attention to the review aspects and to ensuring that agreed plans remain relevant. Private and voluntary organisations which deliver functions on behalf of public authorities are also involved as the records relating to the public functions they deliver must be managed in line with a commissioning authority's plan.

Previous work when preparing the Act, especially the EQIA for the Bill, identified that better management of records leads to more effective information retrieval. The Act therefore has a particularly positive impact across those equality groups who are likely to have more records generated about them by public authorities. Examples include many vulnerable groups such as the elderly and disabled and those receiving social care or young people who have been in the care system. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, and people of different race, religion and belief, also benefit from these improvements. It should be emphasised that the policy is not about specifying what records should be created, rather about how the records which exist should be better managed.

Since 2013, we have agreed 246 plans and sent invitations to 277 authorities. The Progress Update Review (PUR) mechanism was established in 2017 and has proved a very useful monitoring tool for both stakeholders and the assessment team alike. 268 authorities have submitted a PUR since the process was established, which is very encouraging.

Although we have moved to virtual engagement as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have continued to maintain and grow an active outreach programme hosting surgeries and events throughout the period. Utilising remote conferencing technology, we have continued to engage with colleagues across the length and breadth of Scotland and internationally. Such wider engagement helped us understand better the needs of all authorities and the citizens they represent.

The Act therefore continues to build trust and helps promote a good culture of record keeping, one which values public records and ensures that records created about people and the services they rely on remain authentic, accurate and true.

4.2 Public Inquiries

We continue to help public inquiries to discover evidence held within historical records at NRS. In particular, we are working to support the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI), which was set up in 2015. SCAI's purpose is to investigate the abuse of children in care in Scotland within living memory, the effects of this abuse on these children and their families, and whether there were failings by organisations responsible for children in care. SCAI will also create a national public record and commentary on abuse of children within this timeframe, and make recommendations to Scottish Ministers.

Since 2015 we have worked with our record depositors to identify relevant records, and to create digital images so that this information can be shared with SCAI. We have now imaged nearly 1,200 Scottish Government records for consideration as evidence by SCAI. This figure does not include records which had already been imaged or were part of wider proactive imaging, which stands at around 300 government files.

We are also actively working to support the UK Infected Blood Inquiry (IBI), which was established in 2018 to investigate the circumstances in which people were treated with infected blood products by the NHS across the UK. We have provided IBI with access to records of the Penrose Inquiry, which considered this topic in Scotland at an earlier date, as well as SG files, and we continue to provide images of records as required.

NRS also plays a crucial role in preserving the records of statutory public inquiries once they have completed their work, as required by s.16 of the Inquiries (Scotland) Rules 2007. Securing a full and proper record of public inquiries ensures that public trust in their findings and recommendations can be maintained over time. We are actively engaging with the four statutory inquiries currently operating in Scotland – SCAI, the Edinburgh Trams Inquiry, the Scottish Hospitals Inquiry, and the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry. This engagement will allow us to ensure that proper archival records

of each inquiry's business – across all digital formats – is captured and transferred to NRS to ensure the legacy of this critical work.

4.3 Government Records

We work closely with over 100 public authorities in Scotland to ensure that records of enduring value are identified and transferred into our care at the appropriate time. [Our policy](#) for the selection of government records was updated and published in November 2021.

This policy emphasises the importance of government records as they 'record the origins of individual rights and obligations and provide accountability and transparency to the citizen. Collection of these records is expected to reflect changes in Scottish economic, political and cultural life, wider Scottish society, and the changing nature and structure of the Scottish Government itself'. Broad themes for the collection of Government records are defined by the Selection Policy. These include the formulation and implementation of policy on domestic issues including:

- civil and criminal law, legal rights, the administration of justice and penal policies;
- social issues (education, child care, health, housing, policing and social policy);
- the environment and green issues;
- cultural policy in the broadest sense and including community development; and
- the interaction of the policies with individuals, communities, the Scottish nation and the physical and natural environment.

A policy of releasing historical Scottish Government information after 15 years was formalised by the introduction of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (Historical Periods) Order 2013, which came into force on 1 April 2014. The Order formally reduces the lifespan of several exemptions from 30 to 15 years, making more information available to the public across all communities. We support this annual proactive release of government records by providing public access to this information, including the records of the Scottish Cabinet, which are now available up to the year 2006. The Scottish Cabinet records for the years 2005 and 2006 have also been published online, free of charge, on the [ScotlandsPeople website](#), as part of our commitment to making more of our collections accessible online to a much wider audience. The Scottish Cabinet records in particular provide citizens with details about the workings of our democracy at the highest level, and allows them to see how decisions which may continue to affect their lives today were made.

All of these measures ensure important Government records are transferred and made available in support of the PSED. The records contain information relating to all the protected characteristics and reflect the diversity of Scottish society. Access to them provides a wider understanding of different groups and communities throughout Scotland.

4.4 Court and Legal Records

Records created by courts and legal bodies, including the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), are selected for preservation. Although the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a temporary pause in transfers in March 2020, NRS normally receives transmissions of paper records from these bodies for preservation on a regular basis. These records contain information about individuals and cover all of the main protected characteristics.

All of the above records are covered by retention and disposal schedules. Record schedules for the Sheriff Courts are regularly reviewed while those of other depositors are currently being reviewed or are in line for review. All of the criminal and many of the civil court records are closed to public access in line with data protection legislation requirements. Access can be applied for under Data Protection and Freedom of Information procedures. Freedom of Information requests are administered by NRS for archived records and are reviewed by the data controller (the record-creator rather than NRS). This ensures accountability and upholds the rights of citizens to access appropriate information in court records whilst assuring confidentiality of the personal content of the information that many contain.

The Financial Redress Scheme for survivors of historical abuse has used Court and Legal records held by NRS to help identify records about vulnerable and elderly adults and to provide evidence of having been in care where other official sources have not survived. Similarly, we anticipate the Scottish Government's Scheme for Pardons for Miners convicted of offences during the Miners' Strike in 1984-85 will require NRS to provide evidence of convictions from local sheriff courts.

4.5 Private Records

We collect and preserve records from a variety of private individuals and organisations, some of which deal with, or are created by, individuals with protected characteristics.

Since 2019 we have facilitated access to records within our archive collections for those who may have suffered abuse while in care, in connection with the ongoing Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry.

We have also purchased a collection of early 20th century letters which shed light on contemporary societal attitudes towards the Jewish community in Scotland.

4.6 National Register of Archives for Scotland (NRAS)

The National Register of Archives for Scotland is the body which locate and surveys historical papers held in private hands in Scotland: these can range from the papers of landed families and private individuals with interesting historical papers, to the records of business, churches, societies and clubs of all types.

A major part of the NRAS' preservation work involves supporting private owners with advice on the care and preservation of their archives and recommending appropriate places of deposit. During this period, in conjunction with the Scottish Council on

Archives, the NRAS has continued to reach out to Community and Heritage Groups all over Scotland, and internationally. These groups play an important role in the rescue and care of Scotland's local and community heritage but have not always had access to information which would enable them to ensure that their archives can be preserved in the long term.

Utilising virtual conferencing technology, NRAS delivered advice on all aspects of record keeping to groups from across the length and breadth of Scotland and internationally. This work empowers community heritage groups to select, preserve and secure records of their communities of interest within their own communities.

4.7 Digital Records

Over the past two years we have continued to receive increasingly more complex amounts of archival digital records. Depositor engagement required for this enterprise – and prototype processes being created as a result – are developing better, more robust mechanisms for the transfer and preservation of, and access to, these national digital resources.

This is providing greater transparency to our depositors that records held by NRS on their behalf – often containing highly sensitive and personal information – are securely managed and protected at all times. The online release of the [2006 Scottish Cabinet records](#) is one example of this work, and indicates how born-digital record access is becoming part of our standard service offer to the Scottish citizen. These aspects will continue to be addressed as part of our forthcoming Digital Archiving Initiative.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the operations of our Web Continuity Service significantly expanded from May 2020, in order to capture a much higher volume of public sector web content relating to this national emergency. Selection decisions were carefully configured and revised during the course of this work, and the resulting web archive will constitute a substantial public resource for understanding 'what happened' during this unprecedented period. In October 2020, NRS also launched a new service to capture pandemic-related content from selected public authority Twitter accounts.

On the one hand, these new digital archiving services are providing our depositors with assurance that various parts of their archival digital record – in all its forms – are being collected. On the other, the preservation of these new forms of public information represent new pathways in NRS' overall mission to capture, preserve and make available a national archive which is open, of relevance, and of utility to all citizens.

Lastly, NRS have sought to share our expertise with others during the pandemic, to help the archival community develop the necessary skills to preserve digital records. This has included presentations to international conferences, webinar training to community groups, and by acting as mentor in a national digital skills mentorship programme. Such knowledge exchange supports the aim of empowering archives to preserve records created by all segments of society – not just those collected by large institutions like NRS.

4.8 Information Governance

We apply robust information governance and security controls to ensure the safeguarding and appropriate use of our information assets. Our information governance framework enables strategic direction and key decision-making to be taken with due consideration for the various standards and legal rules that apply to information handling. Our Chief Executive, who is ultimately accountable for the information we hold, delegates the management of information risks to Information Asset Owners (IAOs). The IAOs are senior individuals involved in running the business and their role is to understand what information is held, what is added and what is removed, how information is moved, and who has access and why. As a result, they are able to understand and address risks to the information, and ensure that it is fully used within the law for the public good.

We comply with our obligations under data protection law and seek to ensure that all uses of information involving personal data are fair, lawful, and transparent. We only process or share data where a clear public benefit has been established. The social needs, aims and benefits of data sharing must be obvious and the data sharing a proportionate response. We document and keep records of our processing activities. Any data sharing we carry out is controlled by agreements which identify the lawful basis for processing, detail the information assurance and security arrangements, and place limitations on the use, retention and disclosure of data. We regularly review data sharing arrangements to confirm that they are achieving the set objectives, that the sharing is still appropriate, and that the safeguards still mitigate the risks.

Requests for access to census data are considered by the Statistics Public Benefit and Privacy Panel, and requests to link to health data by the Public Benefit and Privacy Panel for Health and Social Care. The panels provide transparent, consistent, and proportionate information governance for these type of data requests. Panel members include statisticians, information governance specialists, and health professionals, drawn from SG, NRS, the NHS, and the wider public sector, as well as public representatives.

Individuals have the right to be informed about the collection and processing of their personal data and we seek to be transparent about information use. We achieve this by providing privacy information both at the time when data is first collected and again when it is further processed. By providing explanatory information in concise, intelligible, and easily-accessible formats, we aim to strengthen public trust in the work we do.

It is our policy to carry out Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) for all projects which involve the handling of personal data and which may have an impact on privacy. We use DPIAs to help us identify the most effective way of complying with our data protection obligations and meeting individuals' lawful expectations of privacy. Our DPIAs help us to follow an approach of privacy by design and to resolve any issues that may affect the privacy of individuals at an early stage. The methodology enables the design of more efficient and effective processes for the handling of personal data, and helps to address any risks or potential negative effects, such as an erosion of personal privacy, or the likelihood of damage, distress,

or embarrassment being caused to individuals. An internal Privacy Group provides peer review of risks to privacy across NRS programmes and projects.

4.9 Takedown and Reclosure

NRS have a Reclosure and Takedown policy to protect individuals from harm arising from disclosure or publication. The policy outlines how records that are held, preserved, and made available in NRS may need to be closed to further public access. It is uncommon for an open record to be subsequently reclosed, but there are legitimate circumstances when this may occur. Takedown or reclosure requests are acted upon immediately as a precaution, and reviewed within thirty working days to determine the final action. This enables us to respond promptly, efficiently and proportionately to any concerns raised about records that should not be accessed by the public or to any other concerns raised in respect of our online records and websites.

5. Operations and Customer Services

NRS Operations and Customer Services aim to design and deliver services, processes and policies that seek to improve access, promotion and inclusion across protected characteristics. We also provide additional targeted measures that allow us to meet all of our users' needs in a way that meets the PSED requirements to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

In order to achieve this we listen to feedback from our customers and other stakeholders and act upon this appropriately. We recently engaged with a diverse and broad group of users as part of our audience research project. This involved 48 audience research sessions aimed at exploring how our customers currently engage with us both online and face-to-face. We wanted to find out about the different type of customers we support and what their needs are.

The results of this project led to the creation of our Framework of 13 Customer Personas. This is now available for use across NRS. These personas are grouped into the type of service user, from novice to expert – from budding researchers to expert analysts – and cover customers of both our online and onsite services.

We have also recently launched our 2022 [Customer Survey](#), which seeks customer views on our services and products. This online survey covers a wide range of public-facing services offered by NRS, from Statistics and Extracts services to our Historical Search Room and ScotlandsPeople centre and website. The results of this survey will be used to improve our public-facing services for all people who want to access them.

5.1 Registration of Vital Events

The death registration process continues to centralise the needs of faith and belief communities, with advance registration remaining available to allow for swift burial or cremation within the terms of the review process.

NRS continue to work with stakeholders in various sectors, beyond the Registration service itself, to ensure marriage and civil partnership is delivered in a safe, respectful and legal way. This includes ongoing work to disrupt sham and forced marriage.

We have also worked with colleagues in SG to introduce a new category of civil union – mixed sex civil partnership – from 20 June 2021. Mixed sex civil partnerships correct an existing inequality (following introduction of same sex marriage to Scotland in 2014, same sex couples have been able to choose to marry or civilly partner, whereas mixed sex couples have until this year only been able to marry) and broadens the range of options for legal union to couples in any gender combination.

NRS worked closely with SG and local government to implement significant changes to the registration system in response to COVID-19. These have included the

implementation of emergency provisions in the UK Coronavirus Act 2020, ensuring the prioritisation of death registration and the use of remote registration of deaths to protect citizens and registration staff, whilst respecting the needs of faith and other communities.

Collection of ethnicity on a non-statutory basis within the death registration process continues, and was key to helping shape and understand the COVID-19 experience of different groups within the pandemic period. Over 90% of registrations included the Ethnicity monitoring data, which contributed to research to understand how COVID-19 impacted on different ethnic groups in Scotland.

Work is also in hand with SG Family Law colleagues on preparation for the introduction in 2022 of the Gender Recognition Bill, which aims to facilitate a less onerous means of obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) through an administrative approach overseen by the RGS.

5.2 Customer Services

We currently deliver a variety of methods designed to ensure that customers can search and order historical records and extracts in ways that suit their personal circumstances. We seek to improve these methods on an ongoing basis.

The following methods are currently available for our customers to search and order historical records:

- online via the ScotlandsPeople website, our catalogue and other NRS websites. Indexes and some images are freely available to online visitors. Where payment is required it is on a 'pay as you go' basis, with no subscriptions required;
- onsite at the ScotlandsPeople Centre, the Historical Search Room, the Maps and Plans Search Room, and at five local history centres in Glasgow, Kilmarnock, Hawick, Alloa and Inverness. Access is normally based on a daily fee. However, the Historical Search Room is free to use; and
- online extract orders through the Extract Services Team based in New Register House in Edinburgh.

Adoption records can be accessed via the Adoptions Unit, a small, specialist team based in General Register House, Edinburgh. This team assists individuals (or their appointed representatives) aged 16 or over who have been adopted in Scotland to identify their birth parents, using statutory registers and closed court records. The sensitive and confidential nature of these records means that access is confined to the adopted persons (or their representatives). Access is free and is usually by appointment only.

Different material is available via different routes depending on particular constraints associated with the individual records (e.g. formats, conservation, and privacy and other constraints). We hold over 70 linear kilometres of archived hard copy material and it is not possible to make all of this available online in a digital format. However, we are working on an ongoing basis to increase the amount of content available

online as an important way of breaking down physical barriers to accessing our records. As a result, we add to our online offering on an ongoing basis.

We are able to answer general enquiries via our phone lines as a means of support for customers who do not have access to email, or for those who have urgent enquiries. Our helpline is open from Monday to Friday, 10:00 to 12:00 (noon), excluding public holidays.

5.2.1 Digital access to records

NRS provides online access to digitised records primarily through the [ScotlandsPeople.gov.uk](https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk) website. This is our primary genealogical, family and local history resource and includes:

- the post-1855 statutory registers of births, marriages and deaths;
- the records of Scottish open censuses, 1841 to 1911;
- Old Parish Registers (OPRs) of baptisms, marriages and burials pre-1865;
- pre-1900 Kirk Session and other church records;
- Roman Catholic registers from 1703 (by agreement with the Scottish Catholic Archives);
- other church registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, 1733-1855;
- wills and testaments from 1513 to 1925;
- soldiers' and airmen's wills, 1857-1965;
- military service appeal tribunal records, 1916-1918;
- valuation rolls for various years from 1855 onwards;
- Coats of Arms from 1672 (by agreement with the Court of the Lord Lyon King of Arms);
- Scottish Cabinet Records, 2005-2006;
- photographs and illustrations; and
- a variety of other indexed record series known to be of use to genealogists and historians.

The [ScotlandsPeople](https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk) website also offers access to our 'Virtual Volumes' system and service. This was launched in March 2021 and has been a great success. Online engagement and feedback was extremely widespread and positive, and emphasised the importance of providing remote access as a means to deliver improved equity of access. Reviewing the feedback we were struck by the sense of community within our user group as they supported each other to learn the new system. This was not an entirely unexpected consequence of the move to take these records online but was certainly a positive aspect in reducing barriers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other positive aspects of this launch were that it resulted in an invitation to virtually present as part of the Tartan Week Celebrations in the United States, helping our engagement with overseas users and it stimulated an extremely positive response from one user who has experienced issues accessing our records in the past.

Additionally, the following NRS websites provide supplementary online resources to access and tour digitised records and to provide additional help with this:

- NRS Online Catalogue: provides direct access to the main NRS archive catalogue including both digital and hard copy material;
- ScotlandsPlaces (in partnership with Historic Environment Scotland (HES)): provides access to geographically focused records from both NRS and HES;
- Scottish Archives for Schools: provides additional resources for teachers and learners to help understand and interpret NRS archives; and
- Scottish Handwriting: provides online tuition in palaeography to help researchers read 16th, 17th and 18th century manuscript records.

Two online mini-websites have been made available via the NRS website that provide access to a selection of records digitally to anyone with an internet connection. These are '[Malicious Mischief? Women's Suffrage in Scotland](#)', which has images of complete files for the majority of criminal cases related to the suffragettes stored within the archives and '[Prisoners or Patients? Criminal Insanity in Victorian Scotland](#)', which has a curated selection of images relating to criminal cases.

In addition to traditional text-based content, we have also developed audio visual resources, including a virtual introduction to our New Register House building and its history. This is available on our [YouTube channel](#). We have also produced a series of videos introducing how to use the archive catalogue, the research guides and National Register of Archives for Scotland.

We are diversifying our online content by increasing our use of audio visual material to provide information and guidance about NRS and the records we hold. These are available on our YouTube channel. We also make wide use of social media channels to communicate about our records.

In order to improve the delivery of public services, NRS shares data with other public bodies. Since 2016, when [ScotlandsPeople](#) was created, 16 public bodies have been given direct access for the purpose of assisting them to deliver their public duties and services. This includes help to improve the administration and delivery of benefits, to support students and to support bereaved families.

5.2.2 Physical access to records

In order to reduce geographical and physical barriers to accessing our records, as part of our support for local authority archives and to contribute to the Scottish ancestral tourism industry, NRS has, since 2007, encouraged the development of local family history centres. Local authorities that can demonstrate to NRS that they meet the required criteria (including around the physical environment they provide) may receive access to the same records offered through the ScotlandsPeople centre in Edinburgh and establish onsite access, bringing their own records and expertise together with the ScotlandsPeople records.

Local family history centres provide access for different types of family history research. The majority of users will be traditional genealogists, but the centres are also used by – amongst others – adoption charities and by Local Authority Social Work departments to support their work. During the COVID-19 “lockdowns” NRS

provided direct assistance to adoption agencies and Social Work departments to continue their work while access to onsite services was restricted.

We provide accessible facilities in our search rooms in Edinburgh. The accessible entrances to General Register House and New Register House are accessed via ramp through the [Archivists' Garden](#). The ScotlandsPeople Centre Dundas search room, the Historical Search Room within the Reid search room and our visitor facilities are on the ground floor of both buildings. To access the Dundas Room customers can use the ramped entrance (a one in 12 gradient) from the Archivists' Garden which leads to an automatic door on the east side of New Register House.

To access the Reid Room, where the Historical Search Room is located, customers use the ramped entrance from the Archivists' Garden to the west side of General Register House where staff allow access through an intercom system.

Customers who feel that they will require assistance can bring a friend or helper along on their visit. Helpers are admitted free of charge to the ScotlandsPeople Centre search room and are given a second seat at the terminal beside the person requiring assistance. For the Historical Search Room, helpers are issued with a reader's ticket if accompanying someone who is using the archives.

Guide and assistance dogs are welcome. We are committed to supporting access to our collections for people with sight loss and will make reasonable adjustments to assist our customers on request. Accessible toilets are available in both New Register House and General Register House.

The ScotlandsPeople Centre provides two screens in every search room with software installed which allows the monitor to take on a "negative appearance". The text size can be enlarged on all computers and large print keyboards are available upon request.

The Historical Search Room does provide a large print keyboard or a magnifying glass on request. The microfilm readers there can magnify images between 10 to 24 times the original size.

There is one height-adjustable table suitable for people who use wheelchairs or walking aids in the ScotlandsPeople Centre, Dundas search room and in the Historical Search Room located in the Reid search room. All enquiry desks and counters are designed for wheelchair users and have been fitted with induction loops.

There are two disabled parking bays in the court-yard in front of New Register House, which are booked in advance. There are two further disabled parking bays nearby in West Register Street.

5.2.3 Learning and Outreach

NRS have a number of arrangements in place to support learners and researchers. We aim to make records that are of interest to a spectrum of users through our online services. For example, in 2021 we added over one million new images from the kirk session records to our ancestry research service ScotlandsPeople. Free online access to this invaluable record set is the culmination of a decade-long project, now potentially enabling release of many further collections.

We have also made more of our educational resources available online than ever before. Our Outreach service actively sets out to connect and engage teachers and pupils with Scotland's history, heritage and culture. We deliver in-person schools workshops and we maintain the [Scottish Archives for Schools](#) (SAfS), the education service of NRS, which provides online resources for schools.

Documents from our archives, dating from the 12th to the 21st centuries, provide insights into the growth of a nation through good times and bad. We draw on these written records, created by people from every walk of life, from kings and queens, lawyers, businessmen and ministers to teachers and children, to reveal Scotland's history. Our resources support a Broad General Education, Nationals 3, 4 and 5, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications.

The mini-website '[Prisoners or Patients? Criminal Insanity in Victorian Scotland](#)' not only provides access to a curated selection of related records, but a free, downloadable version of the original exhibition it is based on is available on the website. This can be printed off. The website was also adapted and made accessible to prisons for use by prisoners.

We deliver a programme of accessible public talks. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, public talks were in person and a trial offering BSL interpretation was about to commence. This has been postponed. The NRS public talks programme has since launched an online series and talks are recorded and made freely available afterwards. To increase accessibility for recorded talks, we are currently exploring the creation of full transcriptions of each.

Although our in-person workshops and the schools programme have been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have provided a small number of recorded and live talks for family history conferences, university students and special interest groups. We have also given expert advice and online resources to primary school teachers on request.

In February 2021, over 450 print copies of the 'Declaration of Arbroath' illustrated activity booklet and teachers' notes were sent to primary schools in Arbroath and the Angus region in collaboration with Historic Environment Scotland as part of our joint learning offer to commemorate the 701st anniversary of this important historical document. This included 240 copies to Hayshead Primary School in Arbroath to distribute to families from their school to address digital access issues.

We provide access to original material in our search rooms to all learners as required. We also work directly in partnership with many academic researchers and

projects to share records and expertise. We understand the particular challenges faced by undergraduate, postgraduate and early career academics and welcome partnerships with researchers in these groups.

During the lockdown period we continued to provide access to records where possible and in particular provided access to MSc students to support them to complete time-limited research on their dissertations. NRS jointly sponsor a collaborative doctoral candidate who is currently working with us to study “Gender and Justice in the Eighteenth-Century Scottish Highlands”.

In other areas we have recently been developing entries for NRS website’s ‘Hall of Fame’ to improve gender balance of the list, and as a by-product of that research, have developed two articles on specific women in Scottish history accepted to History Scotland magazine. We have also spent time working with the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre researching and writing display panels for an exhibition on the historic Jewish community in and around Garnethill in Glasgow for the opening of the new Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic we have worked with Digital Services to produce new guides on Occupations and Designations, Ships and Shipbuilding, the Radical Rising of 1820, Scottish Cabinet Records and using Virtual Volumes.

6. Our Staff, Recruitment and Employment

NRS invoked its business continuity arrangements and activated our Incident Management Team (IMT) on Friday 13 March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Led by the Chief Executive, all NRS Directors and other senior staff, IMT is responsible for the leadership of the organisation response to COVID-19. Steps were taken to ensure the safety, security and wellbeing of staff, and the safe delivery of NRS essential services. IMT are advised by various other groups, including the NRS COVID-19 Secure Working Group, the COVID-19 Response Team, the Service Restart and Delivery Team, the Building Management Team and the Ventilation Group.

IMT agreed changes to various HR and people related policies and have utilised email, teleconferencing, Skype, Microsoft Teams and similar solutions to keep engaged with all staff over the course of the pandemic. NRS developed guidelines in relation to working from home that covered wellbeing, sourcing equipment, creating a comfortable working environment, communication and flexible working. We also have offered increased flexible working arrangements as part of our COVID-19 response.

Under the current Flexible Working Policy staff have the right to apply to work flexibly, either formally or informally. Formal flexible working would be part-time hours, working from home or term-time working. Informal arrangements could be alternative working patterns, including working compressed hours. As at 31 March 2021, 20% of staff had a part-time formal working contract.

NRS' [British Sign Language \(BSL\) Plan 2018-24](#) sets out how the organisation promotes and supports BSL in accordance with the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015. The plan follows SG's BSL National Plan, published in October 2017, which was developed through extensive engagement with Deaf and Deafblind BSL users and those who work with them. A [BSL video version](#) of this plan is also available.

Currently NRS have six Mental Health First Aiders who are on hand to provide direct support to staff and managers and can also signpost to relevant resources. Many of the resources and sources of support are provided through SG and include confidential counselling and wellbeing services, and a confidential employee assistance service. The Charity of Civil Servants also provides a wellbeing hub with resources for dealing with anxiety, stress and building resilience.

All NRS staff can access a variety of staff networks, including SG staff networks. These include LGBTI+, race equality and disability networks.

The NRS Delivery Director is the current NRS Equality Champion and acts as a Director champion for promoting and progressing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work across NRS.

6.1 Recruitment

All NRS staff have Scottish Government (SG) terms and conditions. NRS is committed to building a more inclusive and diverse workforce.

We recruit permanent staff up to pay Band C in line with SG equal opportunity policy and the Civil Service Commission's Recruitment Principles. We do not regard sex, marital status, age, race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, working patterns, employment status, gender identity (transgender), caring responsibility or trade union membership as a bar to employment, training or advancement. We recruit staff solely on their ability to do the job.

We are part of the wider SG commitment to the Disability Confident Employer Scheme and guarantee interviews to all disabled candidates who meet the minimum criteria for a post.

Managers, new to recruitment, are required to complete an Inclusive Leadership and Culture webinar before participating in interviews.

We provide a range of employment opportunities, which include:

Modern Apprenticeships – This is a year-long mentoring and development programme where Apprentices work alongside experienced staff, building up knowledge, skills and responsibility, whilst gaining a qualification. Since 2019, a total of 6 staff have successfully completed their Apprenticeships and were retained as permanent employees.

IT Student Placements – NRS works in partnership with Napier University to provide paid 42-week student placements to help inform and develop students' career horizons and help with their employability. A total of 4 places have been provided since 2019.

Work Experience – We work with Midlothian Council to provide Secondary School pupils with a week's work experience to help them experience life in the workplace through direct observation and hands-on experience. We offer up to 10 places each year.

Volunteers – Our volunteers undertake agreed activities on behalf our organisation without expectation of financial remuneration or a contract of employment. Volunteers add value, support and diversity to the work of NRS. Voluntary placements provide learning opportunities and promote our work through engagement with the wider community. NRS currently has 2 volunteers.

6.2 Public Appointment

Historically, women have been under-represented in public and corporate leadership. The Scottish Government's Programme for Government has encouraged public, private and third sector organisations to sign up to the Partnership for Change and to set a voluntary commitment for gender balance on their boards of 50/50 by 2020. NRS exceeded this target and now has 4 (57%) female and 3 (43%) male Non-Executive Directors.

6.3 Our Staff

As at 31 March 2021, we employed 476 members of staff. Only the Chief Executive is a member of the Senior Civil Service.

6.3.1 Protected characteristics

SG collects and publishes information about the diversity composition of the NRS workforce. This information is therefore included in their [Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2021: Data Annex](#) (pp. 32-78).

As SG explains in the Data Annex of their Mainstreaming Report ([2021: 4](#)), the information on protected characteristics is provided to them by employees on a voluntary basis. This means that the information held for some characteristics is less well populated than for others. For the protected characteristics of age and sex the information held is either complete or very nearly complete.

SG reports the following information about our workforce by protected characteristic for the years 2017 to 2020:

Composition by age ("Prefer not to say" responses excluded):

	16-29		30-39		40-49		50-59		60+		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2017	36	8.6	103	24.7	104	24.9	133	31.9	41	9.8	417	100
2018	38	9.0	100	23.8	103	24.5	134	31.9	45	10.7	420	100
2019	45	10.4	98	22.6	107	24.7	139	32.0	45	10.4	434	100
2020	44	10.1	92	21.1	106	24.4	136	31.3	57	13.1	435	100

Composition by sex:

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
2017	225	54.0	192	46.0	417	100
2018	232	55.2	188	44.8	420	100
2019	235	54.1	199	45.9	434	100
2020	235	54.0	200	46.0	435	100

Composition by ethnicity:

	Ethnic Minority		White		Prefer not to say		Unknown		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2017	7	1.7	344	82.5	8	1.9	58	13.9	417	100
2018	8	1.9	345	82.1	6	1.4	61	14.5	420	100
2019	8	1.8	349	80.4	6	1.4	71	16.4	434	100
2020	7	1.6	341	78.4	7	1.6	80	18.4	435	100

Composition by sexual orientation:

	LGBO		Heterosexual/ Straight		Prefer not to say		Unknown		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2017	14	3.4	174	41.7	20	4.8	209	50.1	417	100
2018	14	3.3	186	44.3	19	4.5	201	47.9	420	100
2019	21	4.8	198	45.6	16	3.7	199	45.9	434	100
2020	20	4.6	196	45.1	17	3.9	202	46.4	435	100

Composition by disability status:

	Disabled		Not disabled		Prefer not to say		Unknown		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2017	42	10.1	213	51.1	2	0.5	160	38.4	417	100
2018	42	10.0	206	49.1	3	0.7	169	40.2	420	100
2019	47	10.8	208	47.9	6	1.4	173	39.9	434	100
2020	43	9.9	206	47.4	6	1.4	180	41.4	435	100

Composition by marital status:

	Married/Civil Partnership		Single		Divorced		Prefer not to say		Unknown		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2017	175	42.0	67	16.1	26	6.2	12	2.9	137	32.9	417	100
2018	174	41.4	65	15.5	22	5.2	12	2.9	147	35.0	420	100
2019	173	39.9	61	14.1	21	4.8	12	2.8	167	38.5	434	100
2020	173	39.8	61	14.0	18	4.1	11	2.5	172	39.5	435	100

Composition by religion:

	None		Christian		Other religion		Prefer not to say		Unknown		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2017	115	27.6	64	15.4	13	3.1	17	4.1	208	49.9	417	100
2018	127	30.2	68	16.2	10	2.4	14	3.3	201	47.9	420	100
2019	139	32.0	74	17.1	9	2.1	13	3.0	199	45.9	434	100
2020	138	31.7	73	16.8	8	1.8	15	3.4	201	46.2	435	100

6.4 Equal Pay Statement and Pay Gap Information

Our staff are SG employees. NRS Pay Gap Information is therefore included as part of SG Pay Gap Information and reporting. This reporting is included in SG's [Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2021](#).

Our Equal Pay Statement also reflects that of SG, which can be found in the SG Mainstreaming Report ([2021: 53](#)).

SG have reported the following pay gap information for the protected characteristics of Gender, Ethnicity and Disability for 2020:

Gender:

	Female		Male		Pay Gap	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
2020	£40,265	£35,110	£41,561	£36,138	3.12%	2.84%

Ethnicity:

	Ethnic Minority		White		Pay Gap	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
2020	£38,335	£34,652	£41,793	£37,367	8.27%	7.27%

Disability:

	Disabled		Not Disabled		Pay Gap	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
2020	£37,946	£33,266	£42,364	£38,541	10.43%	13.69%

6.5 Living Wage

NRS is accredited by the Poverty Alliance as a Scottish Living Wage employer. This officially recognises our on-going commitment to paying our staff, and our contracted staff, at least the Scottish Living Wage.

6.6 Employee Engagement

Each year all NRS staff (temporary, contracted and permanent) are encouraged to complete the annual civil service-wide People Survey, a survey of employees' attitudes and experiences working in the Civil Service/NRS. A total of 57% of staff participated in the 2021 Survey.

A key element of the People Survey is the 'Employee Engagement Index'. This is based on evidence of a link between highly-engaged staff, high levels of health and wellbeing, and organisational performance. Employee engagement is measured by nine themes (drivers of engagement):

- my work;
- organisational objectives and purpose;
- my manager;
- my team;
- learning and development;
- inclusion and fair treatment;
- resources and workload;
- pay and benefits; and
- leadership and change.

Analysis of our 2021 results detailed that our Employee Engagement Index score was 61%, a drop of 1% from the previous year, although 5% higher than our 2019 score of 56% and 9% higher than our 2018 score of 52%.

Our overall theme scores follow a similar pattern to other parts of the Civil Service, such as SG, with relatively high scores for 'My work' (78%), 'Organisational objectives and purpose' (79%), 'My manager' (72%), 'My team' (82%), and lower scores for 'Pay and benefits' (48%), 'Learning and development' (44%) and 'Leadership and managing change' (44%).

Whilst we recognise that there is still much work to do to ensure that everyone who works at NRS feels included, supported and respected, we were especially encouraged to see that the NRS 2021 'Inclusion and fair treatment' score remained high at 80%, with a relatively high proportion of staff reporting that they felt respected by the people they work with, treated fairly at work, valued for they work they do, and that NRS respects individual differences. We were also encouraged that 78% of our staff felt supported by their manager to balance their work and caring responsibilities, particularly given the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people's lives at work and at home.

Our NRS Staff Engagement Network (SEN) was launched in April 2019 with the goal to increase staff engagement within our organisation and enable staff driven change and improvement. The network aim is to find out what makes a difference for staff, to share ideas and create an engaged and enthused organisation. Everybody is welcome to join the network and contribute. Our Executive Management Board (EMB) committed to provide support and resources to take forward ideas and suggestions from its members. Representatives of the network meet with our Chief Executive on a quarterly basis to ensure ongoing engagement.

Through suggestions from the network, NRS displayed its rainbow logo throughout June 2021 as a visible sign of support for the LGBTI+ community. Recent staff engagement work has also included promoting awareness of and sharing information about the various SG staff networks.

Following the results of our 2020 People Survey, and the results of a COVID-19 Pulse survey, NRS made a commitment to ensure better communication to staff about our ongoing COVID-19 response and future working. Information and sources of support for staff throughout the pandemic have been made available on our NRS intranet. Work is underway to streamline this information with additional content on future ways of working, accessible through a revamped COVID-19 landing page available to staff on our intranet. Through this page, staff can find specific information on COVID-19 related practical advice and guidance, requirements for gaining access to NRS buildings where necessary and COVID-19 related wellbeing support. This page has become one of the most visited on our intranet.

In 2021, a new Health and Safety landing page was developed for the first time on our intranet with links to refreshed NRS Health and Safety Policies and guidance and links to external resources for health, safety and wellbeing.

The NRS EMB remains committed to our People Action Plan, which is based on the results of our NRS 2020 and 2021 People Surveys, as well as work packages created from 2019 staff workshops and engagement with SEN. The People Action Plan will continue to evolve with emerging insights and focus on the short, medium and long-term actions required to address the points raised by staff. This will support NRS ambitions to transform the organisation and our culture and continue to make NRS a great place to work, particularly as we transition through COVID-19 pandemic restrictions to embrace future working arrangements.

Since our last mainstreaming report, and in line with actions underpinning the People Action Plan, we have developed a Delivery Directorate to support and manage a consistent NRS-wide approach to managing change. We have also put in place governance arrangements to initiate and prioritise change activity, as well as to ensure that continuous improvement becomes “everyone’s business” at NRS through taking a people-centred approach to our work environment. As part of this, we have committed to creating a formal NRS-wide leadership team network and development programme. In 2021, NRS launched our internal ‘NRS Leadership Forum’ using the Microsoft Teams and Yammer platforms. The Leadership Forum acts as platform for engagement for staff at all levels.

Significantly, the lessons we have learned from taking a flexible, adaptable and people-driven approach to our COVID-19 response have led us to begin work on a long-term strategy that will continue to focus our organisational response to change and improve our business planning for the future. This will help us achieve our future Equality Outcomes, and ensure that mainstreaming work remains closely connected to our strategic plans and priorities.

We work closely with Trade Unions who fully support the work done so far on our People Action Plan and activities and improvements planned for the future. The NRS

EMB receives regular updates on the progress achieved so far. This is complemented by work taken forward to establish NRS needs for Future Ways of Working. NRS will continue to engage staff and seek their views and feedback as part of the ongoing development of this area of work. This will ensure that any potential impacts on persons with protected characteristics are well understood and planned for as the work continues to progress.

6.7 Staff Wellbeing

A corporate focus on staff wellbeing is part of our strategic commitment to grow and invest in our people, developing our organisation to enhance the way we operate through investing in skills, knowledge management, leadership and the capacity of our organisation. We recognise that this focus is more important than ever, given the particular challenges posed to mental health and wellbeing by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions.

Since March 2020, NRS has continued to develop our Wellbeing Programme and ensured that resources are available and accessible to support staff working from home during the pandemic, but also to staff who returned early on to our buildings to ensure the continuation of our essential services. Staff can access information, training and on-demand online support for mindfulness, mental health awareness, mental health in the workplace and home working, both through the NRS intranet and through SG's internal online learning platform. NRS staff also have access to the UK Civil Service Learning platform and support via the Civil Service Charity and Trade Unions, both of whom host regular webinars on wellbeing and mental health specific topics.

During 2021, NRS also introduced the following to our Wellbeing Programme:

- a Mental Health and Wellbeing section in our developing eLibrary EmpowerED, available through the NRS intranet;
- access to a virtually linked eSeries of four eBooks on 'working well from home' and a Resilience Speakeasy Check-in guide for managers, both available through the SG online learning platform; and
- (pilot) Team Leader Resilience coaching, hosted by 'The Resilience Engine'.

We have put formal management support for staff wellbeing in place through use of SG's Wellbeing Conversations Template and a managers toolkit for supporting wellbeing. Early on in the pandemic, a Wellbeing Working Group was convened. This working group led on ensuring the wellbeing needs of staff were met in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and on the development of online resources to help in this.

With Wellbeing resources and a framework for management now in place, the work of this group, including the ongoing development of the NRS Wellbeing Programme, will be taken forward by our Head of People and Talent, in collaboration with the NRS Equalities Champion.

6.8 Learning and Development

NRS continues to have mandatory equality and diversity training completion for all new members of staff when they join NRS. In addition, we have adopted the SG Inclusive Culture learning programme as mandatory for all staff to complete annually. This includes mandatory training for our recruiting managers on inclusive recruiting.

As a commitment to understanding the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training needs of our staff, in a recent stocktake audit we found from the reporting returns that a majority of our staff (85%) undertook mandatory Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training either less than a year ago (58%), or between one and two years ago (27%). A relatively high number of staff (77%) felt confident that, when working with others in their teams, across other services and with the public, their practice is inclusive.

Our staff and managers have access to SG development tools via Saltire, such as the Diversity & Inclusion digital curriculum launched in March 2021. In addition to our corporate learning, development and support, NRS provides corporate funding to selected staff on related topics.

NRS has recently provided a series of #IamRemarkable workshops aimed at underrepresented groups and provides on-going support via a 'shout-about' private online community.

To support staff interests, learning and development, NRS staff have on-going access to SG's Staff Networks. These are self-supporting peer groups related to particular interest areas defined by staff themselves. NRS promotes the fact that our staff's mandatory diversity and inclusion objective can be active participation in and contribution to SG Staff Networks.

Moving forward, NRS will look at options to make EDI training even more accessible to staff, as well as more focussed opportunities for active participation via our staff engagement network.

7. Procurement

NRS have a centralised Procurement Team which is responsible for procurement activities in NRS including implementing procurement policy and for providing procurement and contractual advice and support. All of our standard and bespoke contractual terms and conditions are based on SG standard sets and model terms and conditions, produced by the SG legal department. These contain specific clauses relating to the Equality Act 2010.

Our key procurement principles are founded on openness, fairness, transparency and equal treatment. We remain an inclusive organisation which encourages a diverse range of suppliers including Small and Medium sized-Enterprises (SMEs), Supported Businesses and Third Sector organisations to do business with us. We are also a member of the Supplier Development Programme.

Public Procurement is a key driver of policy development and service delivery which supports sustainable economic growth. As such NRS is aligned with SG's commitment to sustainable procurement practices that deliver positive outcomes.

NRS, in line with SG policy, believe that employers whose staff are treated fairly, who are well rewarded, well-motivated, well led, have access to appropriate opportunities for training and skills development, and who are a diverse workforce are likely to deliver a higher quality of service. Further, we hold that good relationships between employers and their workforce contribute to productivity and ultimately sustainable economic growth.

NRS continue to contribute towards improving the social wellbeing element of our sustainable procurement duty by adopting a policy to promote fair work practices in relevant public contracts. We also seek to maximise social considerations which can be delivered through the performance of our services and our contracted services, through the promotion and inclusion of Community Benefits in regulated contracts which are relevant and proportionate to the contract. These measures will ensure we remain an inclusive organisation which both promotes and encourages a diverse range of suppliers including SME's, Supported Businesses and Third Sector organisations.

NRS consider the payment of the Living Wage to be a good indicator of an employer's commitment to fair work practices and that payment of the Living Wage is one of the clearest ways that an employer can demonstrate that it takes a positive approach to its workforce. NRS are accredited by the Poverty Alliance as a Scottish Living Wage employer. This officially recognises our on-going commitment to paying our staff, and our contracted staff, at least the Scottish Living Wage. We encourage others to do the same.

We expect Suppliers who deliver public contracts to adopt policies which demonstrate how they comply with relevant employment, equality, health and safety law, human rights standards and adhere to relevant collective arrangements. We further expect Suppliers to have policies which describe how they adopt fair work practices for all workers engaged on delivering the public contract.

Supported businesses have an important contribution to make to the Scottish economy, not only through the goods and services they deliver, but also by providing meaningful employment, training and support for those who may otherwise be excluded from the workplace. SG has a supported business collaborative framework contract covering some goods and services which NRS contract through and NRS continue to participate in Central Government Supported Businesses initiatives.

NRS continue its membership of the Supplier Development Programme (SDP) which provides a range of specialist business support activities, including the provision of advice, information and training support with the aim of assisting businesses to become more capable of accessing and competing for public sector contracts.

There are a number of SG collaborative frameworks for public sector organisations to procure goods and associated services through. These particular frameworks have some fair and ethical trading considerations included in their requirements, in line with section 15 of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014. These ensure all goods supplied under the framework are produced in accordance with International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions ratified by the country of their origin, in particular, labour standards, working conditions and the use of child labour. A large number of the frameworks we procure services through also contain community benefits to be delivered by the supplier.

Our policy is to procure goods and services from SG and Crown Commercial Services (CCS) collaborative framework contracts where specified requirements can be fully met by one of the available frameworks.

A summary of NRS expenditure with supported businesses, fair trade goods (and any associated services) and all procurement activities during the period of this report can be found in our NRS annual procurement reports, available [here](#).

We continue to promote and use the Scottish Government Supported Businesses collaborative framework contract.

8. Facilities and Estates

The use of the NRS Estate and its management have been dominated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic since early 2020. The focus has been to ensure the protection of all users who have a requirement to attend our buildings to allow NRS to deliver our services. Key priorities were to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all staff, visitors and customers to our buildings. The following key actions were taken:

- developing risk assessments and mitigating risks;
- engaging with users and adapting the buildings and processes we required;
- supporting staff to deliver their work safely from home; and
- reviewing hybrid working options and engaging with staff.

In addition to the immediate changes required to the estate to protect users in the wake of the pandemic, NRS have progressed longer term improvements in line with our Estates Strategy.

We appoint specialist professional teams to support in the management of the estate and we undertake regular Access Audit Surveys on each of our buildings to ensure we consider ways of improving accessibility in addition to remaining compliant. Forward Maintenance and Improvement Plans have been developed across the estate which will be implemented over a 5 year period. Our improvement programme will explore options to implement any recommendations across the estate to ensure buildings are accessible.

We continue work on improving the condition of our estate, with critical work planned on the Grade A listed buildings that form part of a UNESCO World Heritage site. The completion of the external stone repair at West Register House on Charlotte Square has ensured the protection of this integral part of Edinburgh's built heritage. New enhanced lighting has allowed NRS to mark local and nationally important events through sustainable and appropriate lighting up of this highly visible part of the Edinburgh built landscape. As we continue to find ways to recognise the broader significance of our built Estate, we will identify ways to enhance our engagement with local communities to ensure our buildings reflect these and their important role as part of the City and its history.

More widely, we will engage with Edinburgh City Council and other agencies to support their strategy to improve access in and around the city. Adaptations to our estate and fleet are planned to allow NRS to support climate change policies and embed the Climate Duty effectively in our work. We have a dedicated operations team who manage the supporting facilities of our buildings. With the support of a Facilities Management Contract, the Estates staff ensure our buildings are compliant and meet the needs of all users. We also offer work place assessments and training for employees to ensure their work station and areas of work meet their needs. Estates work closely with Occupational Health to facilitate any changes to support staff back to work or make changes where possible and where needed. We have also worked remotely in this respect during the pandemic, to ensure staff working from home are fully supported.

We continue to make free sanitary products available in our buildings for the benefit of staff and visitors in line with the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 and the Scottish Government's initiative to end Period Poverty.

Over the coming year Estates will be planning and implementing changes to the use of our estate to provide accommodation that meets the needs of both the business and the changing expectations of staff and visitors. Through engagement with our staff, spaces will be designed to ensure the best and most healthy working conditions, as well as to maximise the use of space equitably.

9. IT

NRS IT carried out a rigorous and thorough Web Accessibility audit of our corporate website in 2021 to improve the accessibility of our services. The vast majority of issues identified through this audit have been successfully remediated with only a small number of issues remaining. IT colleagues are working collaboratively with colleagues across NRS to address these. The redevelopment of the [Census Outputs website](#) has also provided a far more accessible and intuitive offering and will significantly improve the way we make information available to the wider community across Scotland.

IT continue to support our NRS staff through COVID-19. All staff have been equipped with laptops and peripheral equipment to support their individual needs. Our colleagues in iTECs also continue to improve and expand collaboration services, helping staff feel engaged and connected while working from home.

10. Equality Outcomes

A number of the Equality Outcomes set for the period 2017-2021 ([Annex A](#)) remain relevant for NRS work and plans up to and including April 30 2023. As a result, we have consolidated these and updated them for the short-term, supported by an initial analysis of relevant evidence.

Not unexpectedly, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the roll out of Census 2022 have impacted the timeline of various NRS activities during the period since the publication of our last mainstreaming report, meaning the publication of our 2021 report and Equalities Outcomes was delayed. The decision to publish short-term Equality Outcomes has therefore also been taken to allow NRS the time needed to undertake further consultation and engagement work on our Equality Outcomes, as well as to ensure that these tie-in with and reflect NRS' long-term strategy, strategic plans and priorities. We will publish details of this engagement work and our refreshed Equality Outcomes with our 2023 mainstreaming report.

Equality Outcomes:

- **Our Culture:**

Our organisation promotes an inclusive and accessible workplace culture in which employees from all backgrounds feel listened to and valued and are empowered to engage with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues. Our strategic plans and priorities reinforce and provide a framework for us to deliver and act on our ambition to embed the consideration of equality across all that we do.

- **Our Purpose:**

People are better informed about groups with protected characteristics as a result of our work gathering, managing and publishing statistical data. In the exercise of our statutory functions we understand and are sensitive to the needs of people who share a protected characteristic.

- **Our Services:**

NRS will continue to hold information and archives securely, and use them appropriately and transparently for public benefit. By acting on engagement and feedback, NRS services will remain accessible to everyone, especially as we re-shape services and put additional supports in place where required, through the use of digital technology and inclusive, accessible language. Our archives and information are used to reflect and promote understanding of the experiences and histories of people across Scotland including those with protected characteristics.

11. Further Information

Can be obtained from the Strategy and Planning Team, who can be contacted at:

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Annex A: Equality Outcomes 2017-2021

	Equality Outcome	Actions (2019 update)	Directorate
1	To help people and bodies who have records generated about them benefit from improved records management practice, including improved retention and disposal practices.	Work with NRS stakeholders to increase the number of public authorities complying with the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 each year, by ensuring the submission of a Record Management Plan (RMP) for named authorities.	Information and Records Services
2	People are better informed about the socio-demographic position of different groups in Scotland.	Consult with stakeholders and users of our data to ensure that the question set that is developed for Census is fit for purpose and meets user needs.	Statistical Services
3	People are better informed about groups with protected characteristics as a result of our continued publishing of equality information from the 2011 census, our regular demographic statistics and our increased work with partners to use census information	Continue to promote the use of equality related data.	Statistical Services
4	Customers can search and order historic records and extracts using a variety of methods that suit their personal circumstances.	The catalogue can be searched on the internet or customers can telephone for advice.	Operations and Customer Services
5	Faith, cultural and other groups' needs continue to be met by death registration processes flowing from the Certification of Death (Scotland) Act 2011.	Advance registration processes are made available – with registrar support – to groups who need rapid funeral service.	Operations and Customer Services
6	Policing of authorised marriage celebrants is sensitive to protected characteristics and vulnerability, including in relation to sham marriage ceremonies.	Work with partners to ensure a positive balance between and even-handed treatment of all groups with protected characteristics with legitimate criminal activity disruption.	Operations and Customer Services

		Ensure the activities of all religious and belief celebrants are overseen with equal attention and even-handedness, including equal protection from any compulsion to participate in same sex marriage on religious grounds.	
7	Ethnicity data is collected during the death registration process in a way which is sensitive to informants' needs and respects protected characteristics.	Ethnicity data is collected on the basis of consent and respect for informants with protected characteristics.	Operations and Customer Services
8	We contribute to development of new policy (and any downstream processes and structural changes) on gender recognition and the future of civil partnerships in a way which respects, and meets the needs of those with a protected characteristic.	Citizens who are transgender, intersex or who identify as non-binary are able to engage with civil status registration processes in a way that respects their identity.	Operations and Customer Services
9	Schools, universities and lifelong learners will have the opportunity to use the rich variety of archives and records we hold.	NRS Outreach and Learning supports teachers in delivering the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence and National Qualifications and provides all teachers and learners the opportunity to engage with our archives and records.	Operations and Customer Services
10	Customers are able to access our digitised records through the internet or a local family history centre operated by Local Authorities and managed by a Local Registrar. Local access will be enabled for Public Bodies with a business need to view our records.	We will enable access to our digitised records through the internet or at local family history centres operated by Local Authorities and managed by local registrars. We will enable local access for Public Bodies with a business need to view our records.	Operations and Customer Services
11	Customers with physical disabilities are able to access our digitised records at the ScotlandsPeople Centre.	We will install adapted access facilities and software that allows for disabled people, people with walking aids or who have poor eyesight or hearing to attend the Centre.	Operations and Customer Services

		Helpers will also be given free access.	
12	Our workforce is proportionally representative of equality communities and has relevant skills, knowledge and experience.	<p>We will analyse our workforce data against the protected characteristics to identify areas for action. We will provide employment and placement opportunities in line with the Youth Employment Strategy.</p> <p>We will provide all staff with an equality and diversity learning tool.</p>	Corporate Services
13	To be an organisation that supports and respects the protected characteristics of our staff and those who use our services.	<p>We will take forward and implement an Action Plan devised by staff focus groups from the results of the annual People Survey.</p> <p>We will ensure the public procurement duty is taken into consideration and included when planning and developing procurement strategies on contracts tendered, and we will analyse budget bids against any protected characteristics to identify areas for action.</p>	Corporate Services