

Report in Mainstreaming Equality Duty in National Records of Scotland and Equality Outcome Progress Update.

October 2019

Foreword

This report sets out how we are mainstreaming equality into the work of National Records of Scotland (NRS) and summarises our progress towards fulfilling equality outcomes since our previous report, published in July 2017.

It demonstrates the progress we are making towards embedding equality in everything we do. It identifies areas where we can improve to ensure these values are upheld and practised consistently across our organisation.

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 and in other respects, and we are working to ensure greater equality in our provision of services to the public.

The work outlined in this report will support and enhance that process and I look forward to being able to report further progress in future.

Paul Lowe
Chief Executive



1. Introduction

This report describes the functions of the National Records of Scotland (NRS) and reports on the progress that we have made in mainstreaming and promoting equality in all our functions. Following a similar format to the initial one in 2013, this report provides information from all of the main business areas across NRS to demonstrate that in the exercise of our functions we have due regard to 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.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

As NRS staff have Scottish Government terms and conditions, gender pay gap information and a statement on equal pay and occupational segregation is included in the Scottish Government's Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2019 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/equality-outcomes-mainstreaming-report-2019/>

This report also provides a progress update on NRS' Equality Outcomes at Annex A.

2. About us

National Records of Scotland is part of the devolved Scottish Administration. It is headed by a Chief Executive who encompasses the non-ministerial appointments of Registrar General for Scotland (RG) and Keeper of the Records of Scotland (Keeper).

The Registrar General for Scotland is responsible for the registration of births, marriages, civil partnerships, deaths, divorces, and adoptions. NRS also runs the census on behalf of the RG and uses census and other data to publish information about population and households.

The Keeper is responsible for selecting, preserving and making available the national archives of Scotland, and administers the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011.

3. Statistical Areas

3.1 Scotland's Census 2011

Scotland's Census 2011 has left a strong legacy with many hundreds of standard tables, ad-hoc tables, special reports and commissioned outputs produced from the 2011 data, downloaded by a wide range of users. Many of these data outputs relate

to equality characteristics including ethnic group, religion, country of birth, language and national identity, with tens of thousands of tables downloaded.

We continue to highlight to users the potential use and insights offered by the 2011 data and have worked with our Scottish Government colleagues to produce evidence reports around, for example, migration, specific communities and health inequalities.

3.2 Scotland's Census 2021

Outputs

Census outputs are essential to support decision making, both nationally and locally, with billions of pounds of public funding being allocated using, directly or indirectly, Census data. This will include the allocation of funding for schools, education, hospitals and our infrastructure.

The Census already collects information relevant to a number of the protected characteristics. It includes questions relevant to the protected characteristics of sex, age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, religion, and race. It proposes to ask new questions about sexual orientation and transgender status/history in the 2021 Census. In recognition of the sensitive and personal nature of these questions, it is proposed that these new questions will be voluntary, as has been the case for the religion question.

Following a [Topic Consultation](#) in 2016, further engagement and investigation of how to improve the quality of data collected on equality characteristics continues, in order to meet identified user needs for Scotland's Census 2021. This engagement has a focus 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, National Records of Scotland set out recommendations on all of these topics in the [Plans for Scotland's Census 2021](#), accompanied by the [research findings on question development](#). It will be for Ministers and the Scottish Parliament to decide how to proceed.

Subject to research and consultation with users, we aim to move away from the traditional high volume of 'data tables' and instead will look to make data available in open formats that provide flexibility for users subject to the development of the necessary disclosure processes. As well as enabling users to design and produce their own outputs within a flexible table generator, we plan to produce a small number of pre-tabulated standard outputs. This approach will be consulted upon and will most likely cover most of the current needs for commissioned outputs. We have published an Outputs Strategy and held a range of stakeholder events seeking feedback from data users, with whom engagement is ongoing.

We have announced our intention to publish the first set of estimates from Scotland's Census 2021 within a year of census day, which will be considerably earlier than in 2011. All remaining outputs should be published over the course of the following two years.

Question Development

New questions must be thoroughly tested before they can be deemed suitable for a census. In deciding what subjects to cover and what questions to ask, we are consulting many people and organisations. In doing this we also consider:

- how acceptable the questions are to the public
- how to ask questions in a way that produces reliable answers, and
- whether other ways of collecting the information already exist.

The Scottish Parliament will make the final decision on which questions to include in Scotland's Census 2021.

Our own complementary programme of question development in Scotland uses qualitative and quantitative testing and involves a wide range of community stakeholders to inform question development.

Testing across many fronts is ongoing. This is being done to ensure we deliver the best possible Census to Scotland's households in 2021, which in turn will provide the best possible data about our country. By asking questions which reflect Scotland as it is today we will ensure the census will continue to be a vital source of information for decades to come.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for Scotland's Census 2021 has been developed to support and accompany the Census Order as it is formally laid before the Scottish Parliament in early 2020. The assessment has already been published in draft form, and will continue to develop to take account of learnings from the Census rehearsal, the development of the Census Regulations, and the further refinement of policy and design as the programme moves towards the live census in 2021.

The EQIA seeks to highlight the most significant potential impacts of the plans for Scotland's Census 2021 on those people in Scotland who hold protected characteristics, and to consider how the specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 are discharged.

The most significant proposed design features for 2021 are the move to predominantly online Census completion, and the inclusion of new voluntary questions on sexual orientation and transgender status or history.

There has also been very keen interest from stakeholders in the sex question, particularly around whether this will be asked on a self-identification/lived, legal, sex-at-birth or biological basis. The current proposal from us is to continue with the same question used in 2011 which was *'What is your sex?'* and to update the guidance used in 2011 but still continuing with a self-identified basis of response. The guidance would remain online and separate to the census questionnaire. We recognise that there are clear and opposing views on this issue and we are currently testing different versions of guidance to this question to help understand how they affect response rates and data quality. The evidence from this testing will help inform

the way forward and we will continue to work with our data users to understand their needs.

Digital first

The move to a predominantly online census is expected to have a positive impact on those who are able to use online functionality. It is recognised that those unable to go online or who may lack the necessary skills will need to be supported to access and complete a paper questionnaire. We have and will continue to engage with a wide range of groups and organisations to inform how we can best support and enable completion of the census by the people of Scotland, whether online or on paper.

3.3 Other demographic statistics

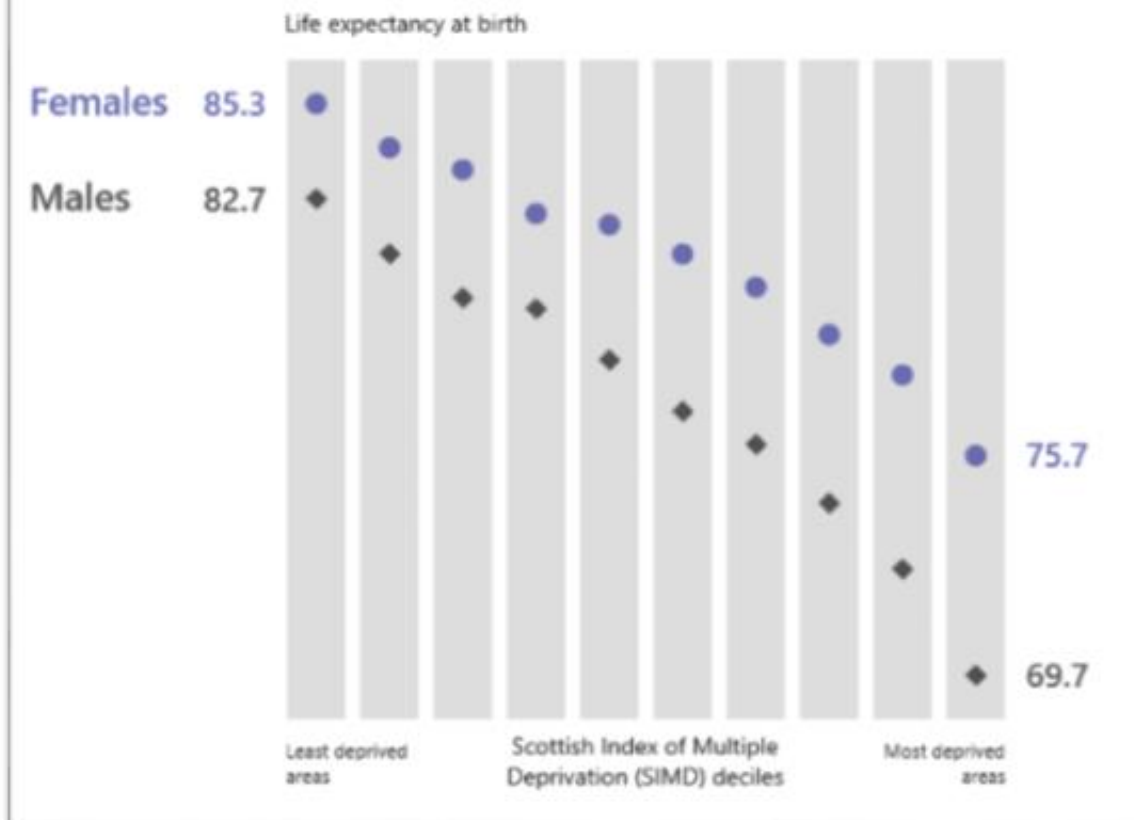
Many of our regular published statistics are broken down by equality characteristics. For example, we publish information on:

- 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 Scottish Government (SG) websites, including regular updates to the 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.

Deprivation has a strong effect on life expectancy

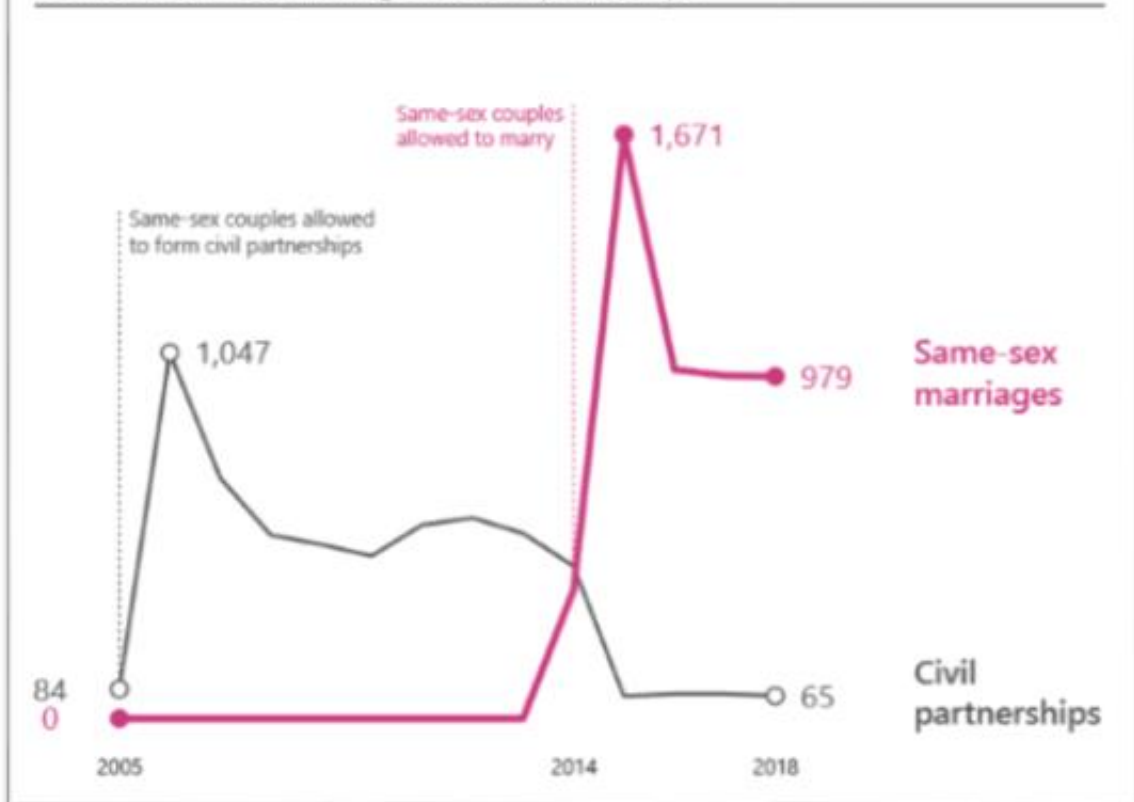
for people born between 2015 and 2017



People who live in more deprived areas of Scotland can expect to lead shorter lives than those in less deprived areas. Females born in 2015-2017 in the 10% most deprived areas of Scotland can expect to live 9.6 years fewer than those who live in the 10% least deprived areas. For males, the difference in life expectancy between the 10% most deprived and 10% least deprived areas is 13.0 years.

Civil partnerships have decreased since same-sex marriage was introduced

Number of same-sex marriages and civil partnerships



Before 2005 same-sex couples could not form legally recognised unions. In the first full year after civil partnerships were introduced, over 1,000 couples registered civil partnerships. This number then stabilised at around 500 a year until Scotland legalised same-sex marriage in December 2014. In 2015, over 1,600 same sex couples married or changed their civil partnership to marriage. Since then, the number of same-sex marriages stabilised at just under 1,000 a year and the number of civil partnerships reduced to around 60 to 70 a year.

In recent years, we have expanded the range of statistical information that is available on our website by adding several new web sections including deaths from certain causes, new tables on the numbers of births and deaths broken down in various ways, and extensive additional documentation and background information about the basis of our statistics.

Information on improvements to our Vital Events statistics, including additional equality breakdowns is available on our website (<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/data-improvements>).

3.4 Contribution to Academic Research and Policy Development

Much of our data is used by other parts of Government and by academics for research involving various equality groups. We send records of individual births, stillbirths and deaths to NHS Boards and the Information Services Division of NHS National Services Scotland, for administrative and analytical purposes. We have supplied extracts of relevant vital events data for use in many research projects, some of which have been running for many years - for example, the Childhood Cancer Study (Oxford University), the National Confidential Inquiry Into Suicide (Manchester University), and the National Programme on Substance Abuse Deaths (St George's Hospital, London University).

We are also involved in several programmes of work that cut across the statistical areas and involve external partners, including large scale data linkage projects such as the Scottish Information and Linkage Collaboration (SILC) and Scottish Longitudinal Study (SLS). The common theme of these programmes is the aim to help legally, ethically and securely maximise the use of data to further academic research and inform public policy making.

In addition, we are currently working to amend data collection practice (via the death registration process) for ethnicity. This is to improve data quality and bring it into line with the accuracy of ethnicity data collected through the Census, which once completed will allow the use of robust ethnicity data in a range of research settings.

We recognise that the data used in these research programmes often refers to people in vulnerable or disadvantaged groups and we go to the maximum lengths possible to allow important research to take place that helps combat prejudice and identify disadvantage while protecting the privacy of individuals.

We engage regularly with analytical and policy colleagues across the Scottish Government to support equality mainstreaming, particularly in areas where the demographic data produced by NRS can play an important role in informing policy action. The Scottish Government recently established a Ministerial taskforce to look at Scotland's future population challenges and develop new solutions to address demographic changes. We will provide high quality evidence and analysis to support the new taskforce as it considers how best to support work to grow Scotland's birth rate and working age population, and understand regional variations in population change across the country.

4. Records and Archives

Our organisation operates a scheme for records in the Keepers 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 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. This 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 Record (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 Equalities Impact Assessment (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 the 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 225 plans and sent invitations to 257 authorities. Many plans are agreed under improvement, so we have developed a new process for assessing improvement activities. In collaboration with stakeholders we developed a flexible tool, both to assist and support compliance and facilitate meaningful and regular dialogue between the Keeper and authorities to help us record progress. The Progress Update Review (PUR) mechanism was established in 2017 and rolled out over the course of 2018. The mechanism has proved to be very attractive to stakeholders with uptake exceeding all expectations. 114 authorities have submitted a PUR since the process was established. This is very encouraging.

Authorities use PUR principally to report on progress against those areas of their plans agreed under improvement, but in practice they take the opportunity it provides to report on new records management initiatives being undertaken by their authorities. Records management colleagues consider it helps to maintain the profile of records management and the assessment team value it as a tool to help them know more accurately where progress is being made. The encouraging uptake allows us to be confident it will contribute longer term to Scottish Ministers goal of changing the culture of records management across the Scottish public sector.

It is indicative of the success of this process that some authorities have indicated they regard PUR as a practical method of establishing when their agreed plan might have sufficiently improved and be ready for a formal submission under section 5(6)

of the Act. Two authorities have already done this and others are currently considering this option.

Since 2013 we have run three national conferences about the Act and published seven statutory annual reports which were submitted to Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Parliament. These reported that excellent progress is being made and that the Act continues to promote positive change. The clear and reasonable objective of improvement over time encourages engagement, and facilitates collaboration and joint working. We have developed and strengthened close working relationships with authorities and, as a result, they continue to deliver robust records management plans under the Act.

We maintain an active outreach programme and we have conducted many surgery events about the Act. 2018-2019 saw us deliver eight such general surgeries as well as three Stakeholder Forums specifically to help the Keeper review his Model Records Management Plan. These events have taken us the length and breadth of Scotland from Kirkwall in the north to Dumfries in the south. Such wider engagement helps us understand better the needs of all authorities and the citizens they represent.

We continue to meet with individual authorities and records management colleagues as required. Such meetings, and our range of other outreach activities, help us maintain and build upon our excellent relationship with public sector colleagues and ensure records and information management remains visible and prioritised across the sector. The Act therefore continues to build trust and helps promote a new culture around 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 Post Shaw Initiatives

The recommendations of the Historical Abuse Systemic Review (*The Shaw Report*, 2007) included the need for the Scottish Government (SG) to hear the voices of former residents of residential schools and children's homes.

We contributed to a number of initiatives stemming directly from the findings of *The Shaw Report*. These included Reclaiming Lost Childhoods (RLC), a project designed to help care experienced individuals investigate and access information and records about their time in care. Also, Talking Care Scotland (TCS), a survivor-led oral history project which sought to collect the experiences of care experienced adults. These projects have concluded, but the records and information issues raised by Shaw, and which are being further examined under the ongoing Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, mean new initiatives continue to emerge.

In 2016 we engaged with 'Back to the Future: creating and sustaining 'living archives' of children's homes in Scotland and Germany'. This is a project led by the School of Applied Social Science at Stirling University. In keeping with the aims of RLC, 'Back to the Future' seeks to assist current residents of care to trace their records and develop an archive of their experiences there. We are also currently engaged with the University College London's *Memory – Identity - Rights in Records*

– Access project, which aims to deliver practical outcomes around record keeping in the child care sector across the UK. Further we are working with the ‘Access to Records’ initiative, led by the Centre for Excellence for Children’s Care and Protection, Who Cares Scotland and Social Work Scotland, to deliver expert advice and guidance to social workers and others about the importance of the records and information they routinely create on behalf of vulnerable individuals across Scotland.

4.3 Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry was set up on the 1 October 2015. It is Scotland’s first statutory national Inquiry into the abuse of children in care and was originally due to report within four years. The period of the Inquiry was since extended. Its overall aim and purpose is to raise public awareness of the abuse of those children during the period it covers. It provides an opportunity for public acknowledgement of their suffering and a forum for validation of their experience and testimony.¹

The period covered by the Inquiry is within “living memory” of any person who suffered abuse. The definition of ‘abuse’ extends beyond the physical and the Inquiry will be entitled to consider other forms of abuse at its discretion. The Keeper is committed to assisting the work of the Inquiry.

Since 2017 we have continued to work closely with the Inquiry helping them to inspect records relevant to the terms of reference. We have identified and imaged hundreds of government files and thousands of documents which were supplied to the Inquiry. We have also continued to help authorities understand better the terms of reference and their obligations to assist the Inquiry’s investigations.

4.4 Government Records

We continue to work with over 100 public authorities operating in Scotland to ensure that essential records of enduring value are identified and transferred into our care at the appropriate time. In 2018-19 over 16,000 catalogue entries were added to reflect these new and legacy additions.

Our policy for the selection of Government Records was updated and published in 2017. <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//record-keeping/records-policies/NRSGovernmentRecordsCollectionPolicy.pdf>.

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. The themes include:

The formulation and implementation of policy on domestic issues including:

¹ <https://www.childabuseinquiry.scot/>

- 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, community development
- The interaction of the policies with individuals, communities, the Scottish nation and the physical and natural environment.

A policy of releasing historical information after 15 years was formalised by the introduction of 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 sooner to the public across all communities. Our main activity remains the proactive release of government information, in particular the release of meetings of the Scottish Cabinet papers every year. These have now been released to the year 2004. We hold annual media preview events to publicise their release from which excellent coverage and wider publicity is obtained.

All of these measures ensure important Government records are transferred and made available in support of the NRS Public Sector Equality Duty. 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.

4.5 Court and Legal Records

The records created by the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) contain information relating to all the protected characteristics. Since the last update report of July 2017, we have accepted additional records from many of the 39 local sheriff courts, as well as large annual uplifts from the Scottish Supreme Courts (The Court of Session and The High Court of Justiciary) the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. From April 2017, we led on a project with SCTS to conduct a national audit of record keeping arrangements at all 39 Scottish sheriff courts. The project is now complete and provides a solid basis on which proper record keeping arrangements can be instituted and maintained across the sheriff court network, safeguarding the ability of the court system to serve the widest possible community effectively. Also in 2017, NRS and SCTS developed and launched a revised records retention schedule for sheriff courts to make certain the correct information relating to all the protected characteristics is collected, disposed of and preserved in accordance with the correct statutory and regulatory frameworks. All of our work in this area facilitates the safeguarding of the rights of people with protected characteristics.

In 2018 the Scottish Parliament passed the Historical Sexual Offences (Pardons and Disregards) Act 2018. The new legislation was implemented from 2019. The Act pardons persons convicted in Scotland of certain historical sexual offences and provides a process for convictions for those offences to be disregarded. We have worked with SCTS to implement this new legislation for historical records.

4.6 Private Records

We collect and preserve a variety of records from private individuals and organisations, some of which deal with, or are created by, individuals with protected characteristics. We are also committed to preserving the history of a spectrum of minority communities. Since the last edition of this report, we have taken in and catalogued more Children 1st records and some additional Quaker records.

4.7 National Register of Archives for Scotland (NRAS)

The National Register of Archives for Scotland is the body which locates 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 businesses, churches, societies and clubs of all types. A major part of the NRAS' work involves supporting private owners with advice on the care and preservation of their archives and recommending appropriate places of deposit. This year, in conjunction with the Scottish Council on Archives, the NRAS has been reaching out to Community Heritage Groups all over Scotland. These groups play an important role in the rescue and preservation of Scotland's local heritage but do not necessarily have the range of skills required to look after their archives. The SCA and the NRS has toured the country, from Aberdeen to Hawick and westward to Oban, meeting representatives from heritage groups and giving talks on the issues which concern them most.

4.8 Digital Records

We are beginning to receive increasing volumes of digital records, be they Government Records, Courts and Legal Records, or Private Records. As these volumes inevitably increase, there will be both greater opportunities for access and engagement but also greater challenges in protecting the rights and privacy of individuals. All of these aspects will be actively addressed as part of our future Digital Archiving Programme.

One area of particular focus is our Web Continuity Service, which was launched to the public in January 2017, and has entered its fourth full year of digital collecting. We regularly capture "snapshots" of a wide range of public authority and private organisation websites, to ensure that their content remains as widely available as possible in perpetuity; our capture and re-presentation of these websites respects and sustains any diversity and equality outcomes that these websites set out to deliver. The websites of The Carnegie UK Trust, Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission, Police Scotland, Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator; Education Scotland; Sport Scotland; Commission for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland and Mental Welfare Commission Scotland are of particular relevance in this respect.

4.9 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 a Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) and Information Asset Owners (IAOs). The SIRO is responsible for managing strategic information risks and ensuring that operational risks are identified and managed by the 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 information 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 will 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 the Scottish Government, 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.

We use Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) to help us identify the most effective way of complying with our data protection obligations and meeting individuals' lawful expectations of privacy. Our use of DPIAs helps 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. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has made DPIAs mandatory for certain types of processing, and it is our policy to carry out DPIAs for all projects which involve the handling of personal data and which may have an

impact on privacy. An internal Privacy Group provides peer review of risks to privacy across programmes and projects.

4.10 Takedown and Reclosure

In terms of protecting the rights and privacy of individuals, in February 2017 we introduced a new takedown and reclosure policy. 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 where this may occur. Anyone can submit a request for takedown or reclosure of a record, which will be acted upon as a precaution immediately. All requests are reviewed by a reclosure panel within 30 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 web sites. During 2017 there were three reclosure cases (closing a total of 292,789 records and extending the closure of 247 records). During 2017 there was one takedown request resulting in the temporary takedown of 3320 images from our Scotland's People website². There were no reclosures or takedowns in 2018. Figures for 2019 will be published in January 2020.

5. Registration of Vital Events

Registration engages with the whole of Scottish society on the registration of key life events such as birth, marriage and civil partnership, death, adoption, change of name and a number of other key civil status functions. Respecting the needs of people with protected characteristics is vital to successful registration, and embodied in both current processes and engagement with policy thinking around meeting the needs of specific groups as they emerge in the future.

Activity across the registration service includes:

Sexuality – we are currently thinking through aspects of the language deployed in registration processes (primarily birth, marriage/civil partnership and death to ensure it is supportive, positive and reflective of the variety of families served by registrars.

Ethnicity – we are in the midst of a programme to improve the accuracy of ethnicity data recorded (on a voluntary basis) during the death registration process, in order to better match Census death registration and facilitate medical and other research.

Faith and culture – the interests of needs of cultural and faith groups continue to be reflected in many aspects of registration, including the bedded-in Advanced Registration aspects of death certification, policy discussions in and around gender

² See <https://www.nrsotland.gov.uk/record-keeping/records-policies/records-reclosure-and-takedown-policy>

recognition and non-binary issues, and work to ensure the further development of a robust framework for the operation of religious and belief marriages in Scotland.

National origin – we work with the Death Certification Review Service to ensure the needs of intra-UK and international informants to deaths in Scotland are respected and met.

Gender identity – we are currently engaged in a wide range of discussions around gender identity, recognition, non-binary issues and practical aspects of registration practice. This is intended to ensure registration practice keeps up with contemporary, developing family structures and meets the needs of all families at many of the most challenging points in their lives.

Pregnancy – we are also working with colleagues within Scottish government to think through future arrangements for the better recognition of families who have gone through a pre-24 week pregnancy loss (i.e. that falls short of the statutory definition of a still-birth, for which existing statute provides full recognition and established process) in order to help families better commemorate their loss. This work is still in progress, but should be moving towards delivery over the next period.

In addition, the registration service undertake regular awareness-raising at national events (such as the AGM of the Association of registrars of Scotland, and the NRS-hosted annual national registration seminar) and engages directly on a wide range of policy and process topics in these areas. Recent examples include strategic planning events around resilience and the challenge of additional deaths and pandemic-flu scenario planning; thinking through the specific needs of transgender people in various aspects of the registration process; and policy, process and IT work around the potential introduction of mixed-sex civil partnership.

6. Public Services

We have a statutory duty to make the indexes of the vital events like births, deaths and marriages and the open Scottish Census available to the Public upon payment of a fee agreed by the Scottish Parliament, and to allow copies to be made of these events for a prescribed charge. We have continued to increase the variety of records available on ScotlandsPeople such that it now offers access to a range of records within six categories that are indexed by personal name; the categories are: civil registers; church registers; census returns; valuation rolls; legal records; poor relief and migration records. Once registered, customers can search the indexes free of charge, and then pay for copies using credits or vouchers. The exceptions are the Highland and Island Emigration Society records and the 1881 LDS transcribed census that can be viewed for free. Access is also given to more than 2,000 images of photographs, illustrations and some of our most important and iconic documents in our image library and selections from our maps and plans collection. We continue to develop new releases including ... and we are currently working on preparation for the release of the 1921 Census at the end of the 100-year closure period in 2021, and are close to completing a transcription of the birth, death and marriage registers going back to 1855.

In the next few years, we will continue to increase the number of record sets that have been digitised and made available through its websites. More recently we released the 1940 valuation rolls and over 3,000 additional Presbyterian baptism, marriage and burial records covering the period 1752–1855 . This means that more people can view our records online.

Online access is available through our pay-per-view website at www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk, our search rooms at the ScotlandsPeople centre in Edinburgh, at local family history centres located in Glasgow, Kilmarnock, Hawick, Inverness and Alva, and to Public Bodies with a business need. We actively encourage applications from public bodies and local authorities to expand this network. The NHS National Services Scotland is one example of a Public Body with a business need and staff at the Scottish Cancer Registration unit use the access to create and validate family pedigrees, incorporating information and generations beyond the immediate knowledge of the informant. The results of the research can have a significant impact on the risk group a patient is assigned to with regards to possible future development of a familial cancer.

Since 2016 when the free index search was introduced on ScotlandsPeople, there has been a marked increase in the number of sessions for people searching online for our records.

Customers can order official certificates by a variety of methods. It is possible to order official certificates for civil registration and the open Census through the ScotlandsPeople website. Other channels such as telephone, email, post or by visiting us in person are also available. They also have the option of visiting their local registrar.

Our historical and legal search rooms provide access to our archive records in both digital format and the original documents.

Our onsite Historical search room provides free access to digitised non-indexed images and original documents including church records; criminal and civil court records; taxation records; non-indexed valuation rolls and estate records. Our onsite Legal search room includes access to the Registers of Sasines, Deeds and Sheriff court records.

We are committed to ensuring that our websites are accessible to the widest possible range of people. With this in mind, we strive for compliance with display screen standards to ensure that people with poor visibility can readily view the web pages.

Our ScotlandsPeople website conforms to Level AA of the [W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidance \(WCAG\) 2.0](#). We designed it to be compatible with recent versions of software like Jaws, Zoomtext, Non Visual Desktop Access (NVDA), Voiceover, Window Eyes, Supernova screen readers and MAGic, which is a screen magnification and screen reading solution for low vision computer users.

Our organisation administers the Scottish Register of Tartans together with its website at www.tartanregister.gov.uk. It is possible to search through the registered tartans for free and view each design.

NRS maintains both Twitter accounts and Blogs for its website at www.nrscotland.gov.uk; NRS also maintains Facebook and Twitter accounts for www.scotlandpeople.gov.uk and www.tartanregister.gov.uk and for their other websites, which allow customers to interact and post general queries. Over the past few years there has been a marked increase in the number of followers through social media platforms.

Our search rooms in Edinburgh have disabled access, parking and facilities to assist people with mobility issues. For instance, we have some search places at tables that can be raised or lowered and there is specialist software available to magnify the images on the computer screens, which can be used in conjunction with specially designed easy to view keyboards. Induction loops are available at our enquiry desks within all our search rooms. We welcome helpers or guide dogs who may assist customers with special needs. We have regular search room user group meetings attended by representatives of our customers. Our staff strive to improve the customer experience by monitoring all new customers or customers with special needs and offering them extra help, if required or requested.

Where customers to the Historical Search Room require access to original documents we offer a remote ordering service to make journeys to General Register House as productive as possible.

Our Learning Services

We support teachers, pupils and learners of all ages and stages to engage with our unique historical records. Our [services for schools](#) is designed to support teachers in delivering the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence and National Qualifications.

We help teachers and pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of the records, and provide them with the skills and confidence to access, read and interpret their content in order to connect with Scottish history, heritage and culture.

We provide a flexible service in the form of free workshops and online resources which are based on primary sources held by us. From September to March within the school year we can deliver workshops in situ at NRS for Primary 4 to sixth year in secondary school. The workshops and online resources explore a diverse range of topics including: Mary, Queen of Scots; the Victorians; the First World War; the Second World War: the Scottish Home Front and Scottish Identity. We can also deliver career long professional learning for teachers.

We also deliver a limited number of specialised talks and workshops for groups of undergraduate and postgraduate students visiting with their tutors to investigate particular topics. Similarly, we can accommodate a small number of visits each year from local history or other specialist interest groups.

We research and create content for articles and features for our online platforms and publications, as well as for other print and online publications produced by History Scotland, the National Library of Scotland, the Scottish Council on Archives and more.

Practical tuition in palaeography is provided at www.scottishhandwriting.com which has an emphasis on supporting the ability to read Scottish historical manuscripts from the 16th to 18th centuries.

Our staff also deliver an annual in-house course on Scottish handwriting, delivered in conjunction with Edinburgh University's Centre for Open Learning.

Exhibitions, talks, events and visits

We provide access to a wide range of historical records through in-house exhibitions, talks, events and external partnerships. A notable recent example is the highly successful exhibition 'Prisoners or Patients? Criminal Insanity in Victorian Scotland', created in partnership with the University of St. Andrews and held at NRS in 2019.

Our exhibitions are created to mark historic anniversaries or explore important topics, and may highlight developments in our own resources or services. Recent examples are an exhibition on women's suffrage to mark the centenary of certain women gaining the vote and an exhibition on Scottish Prisoners of War to commemorate the centenary of the end of the First World War.

Exhibition research and content are further used to create learning resources, including features on the NRS and ScotlandsPeople websites as well as educational workshops.

We also extend access by lending records to other bodies. The most recent example is for an exhibition at the V&A Dundee in 2019. Temporary loans are governed by strict conditions and begin with a formal application using the standard facilities report form available on our website: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/record-keeping/conservation/exhibition-and-loans>.

We participate in events that welcome large numbers of visitors into our buildings such as the Edinburgh and East Lothian Doors Open Days, the Christmas 24 Doors of Advent as well as other seasonal activities. In addition, we can provide tours of our historic buildings for interested groups.

We also run a talks programme during the year, featuring staff and external experts on subjects relating to our records and activities. These are advertised via our website and Eventbrite, and are free to attend.

7. Our Staff and Employment

Our staff are employees of the Scottish Ministers and have Scottish Government (SG) terms and conditions. We follow SG policies on equality and diversity and aim to ensure that our staff embed diversity and inclusion into their day to day activities and the service that they provide.

We are committed to providing a workplace free from unfair discrimination and to ensuring the fair treatment of our staff and people who work with us.

7.1 Our Staff

As at 31 March 2019, we employed 416 permanent staff and 15 staff on a fixed term appointment (FTA) basis, a total of 431 people across 4 grade ranges.

We use SG Management Information (MI) statistics to monitor our workforce against protected characteristics. The following paragraphs explain how we use this information.

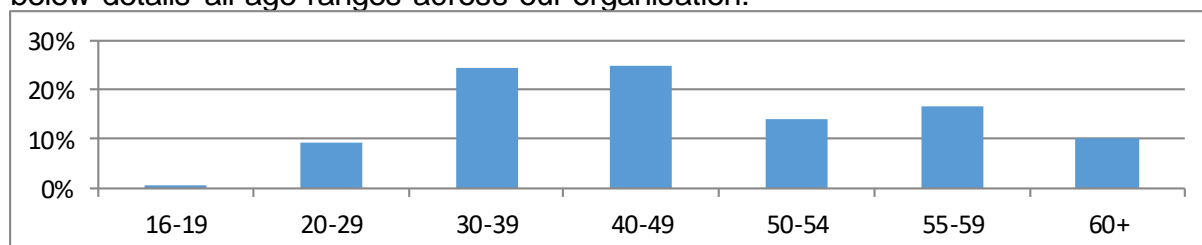
7.1.1 Gender

A total of 54% of our staff are female and 46% are male. The grade ranges split is as follows:

Grade	Female		Male	
	%	Head count	%	Head count
Band A	50%	78	50%	78
Band B	56%	131	44%	101
Band C	52%	22	48%	20

7.1.2 Age

Half of our staff are in the age ranges 30 – 39 (25%) and 40-49 (25%). The table below details all age ranges across our organisation:



By employing Modern Apprentices, we aim to better the age diversity of our staff.

7.1.3 EU National staff

We continue to value the contribution that EU national staff bring, not only to the Department, but to Scotland's economy and society.

In this uncertain time, all staff, including non EU nationals are encouraged to join the SG EU Nationals Network, whose aim is to:

- act as a channel for communicating key messages to senior management and the wider SG body.
- demonstrate the value non-UK EU nationals add to the civil service and wider society, and the value of a diverse taskforce for the work we do.
- provide support for challenges EU nationals face as a result of the EU Referendum outcome.
- act as a forum for open discussion to safely share thoughts, concerns and experiences.
- provide practical support and information around key issues such as residency and citizenship.
- engage and build ties with other SG networks, trade unions and other organisations.
- share information on issues of mutual interest with the UK Government EU national networks.

The network of over 400 members across the Scottish Government is supported by designated contacts, 2 of whom are NRS staff.

7.2 Recruitment

We follow SG recruitment practice and policy, which means that we aim to treat everyone whether staff, colleagues from other organisations or members of the public fairly, and with respect. We believe that our workforce should reflect the people of Scotland in all its diversity, character and culture.

We treat all staff equally, irrespective of sex, marital status, age, race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, working pattern, gender identity, caring responsibility or trade union membership. We employ people on the basis of their merit.

We are committed to the Disability Confident Employer Scheme and guarantee interviews to all disabled candidates who meet the minimum criteria for a post. All Lead Panel Members must undertake mandatory “Unconscious Bias” training to ensure that applicants and candidates are assessed fairly and without bias. We provide a range of employment opportunities which include:

Modern Apprenticeships – a year- long mentoring and development programme. Since 2017, four staff have successfully completed their apprenticeships and have secured permanent employment. In 2019, two former apprentices gained promotion.

IT Apprenticeships – are offered at entry level to the IT profession. On completion of the year long programme candidates are assessed for permanent employment and award of an IT allowance. In 2018, we provided two opportunities.

Work Experience - We are currently working with the “Developing the Young Workforce” Programme to provide school students with work experience to help them build their skills and assist with career choices. During 2019, we are offering 10 places, 8 in our Edinburgh offices and 2 in our Dumfries office.

Graduate Recruitment – in 2018, we attended a number of recruitment events at colleges and universities to attract candidates to a career with us as Archivists, Statisticians and IT profession staff.

Census 2021 – Previously enumeration and other temporary staff were fee paid. In recruiting the temporary staff needed to deliver the 2021 Census, the majority of staff will have Scottish Government terms and conditions for these short term appointments.

7.3 Public Appointments

In 2016, we achieved our commitment to the [Partnership for Change Pledge](#) to have a 50:50 Gender balance on our Senior Management Board (NRS Strategic Board). In 2019, this ratio remained.

7.3 Gender Pay Gap

Our staff are Scottish Government employees, information about our gender pay gap is therefore included in the [“Scottish Government Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2019”](#), which reports that the gender pay gap was 3.39%. Mirroring Scottish Government the reason for this in our organisation is also likely to be attributable to the increase in the overall proportion of women in the Department, but also, importantly, the proportion of women at more senior, and therefore higher paying, levels.

7.5 Living Wage

We maintain our accreditation as being a Living Wage Employer, ensuring that our staff are paid at least the minimum wage. We also ask that this is extended to those who are assigned to us through temporary or agency staff frameworks by ensuring that there is a clause about this in our tenders and contracts.

7.6 Employee Engagement

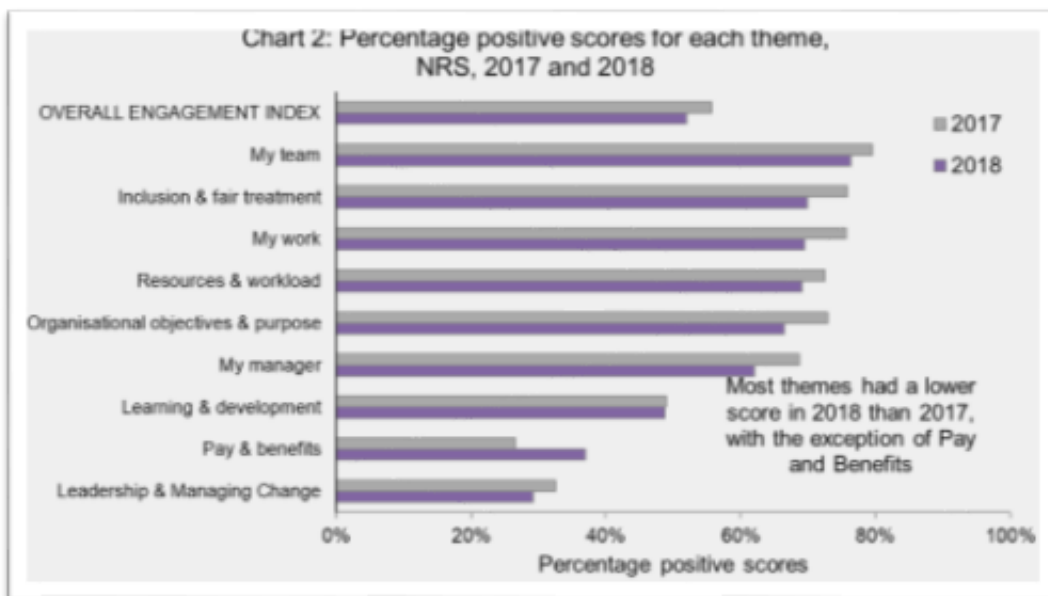
Each year all of our staff (temporary, contracted and permanent) are encouraged to complete the annual civil service wide People Survey, a survey of our employees' attitudes and experiences of working in the Civil Service/ NRS.

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):

1. my work
2. organisational objectives and purpose
3. my manager
4. my team
5. learning and development
6. inclusion and fair treatment

7. resource and workload
8. pay and benefits, and
9. leadership and managing change

Analysis of our 2018 results detailed that our Employee Engagement Index score was 52% and overall theme scores follow a similar pattern to other parts of the civil service, such as the Scottish Government, with relatively high scores for 'My team', 'inclusion and fair treatment', 'my work', 'resources and workload', 'organisational objectives and purpose' and 'my manager', and lower scores for 'pay and benefits' 'learning and development' and 'leadership and managing change'. A comparison of our 2017 and 2018 results is detailed below:



Cabinet Office introduced seven new questions to the People Survey in 2019, to help baseline the socio-economic diversity of the Civil Service workforce by 2020. The results from these questions will help with work on increasing the diversity of our workforce, and attracting people from all socio-economic backgrounds.

Our Staff Engagement Network was launched in April 2019 with the goal to increase staff engagement within our organisation and enable staff driven change and improvement. Our aim is to find out what makes a difference for us, to share ideas and create an engaged and enthused organisation. Our Executive Management Board committed to provide support and resources to take forward ideas and suggestions from its members.

Everybody is welcome to join the network and contribute. We currently have 60 members representing different areas, professions and grades. In May and June 2019 we ran staff workshops to ascertain what engagement means for staff, create a culture of collaboration, share good practice and concerns, and generate ideas for improvement. During this time we generated over 200 individual ideas which were grouped into themes and are being transformed into work packages of the Business Improvement Programme.

The improvement themes include: Communication, Diversity and Inclusion, Environmental Protection, Facilities/Estates, Governance, HR, Induction, IT, Learning and Development, Process Improvement, Social, Values, Vision and Strategy, Wellbeing and Productivity.

We already started to work with our IT colleagues and ensured that our IT related ideas for improvement are recorded on the IT candidate project register as well as with our communication, estates and HR teams to deliver quick wins.

We also work closely with Trade Unions who fully support the work done so far and activities and improvements planned for the future. Our Executive Management Board is receiving regular updates on the progress achieved by us and a representative of the network is meeting with our Chief Executive on a quarterly basis to ensure ongoing engagement.

7.7 Resilience and Wellbeing

Instead of asking local questions about our organisation in the 2019 People Survey, we have selected Cabinet Office set questions on the topics of “Wellbeing at Work”, “Presenteeism & Absenteeism” and “Support for Line Managers”. We will then be able to benchmark our results with other Government Departments and put in place support and resources needed to address the issues raised from the results.

7.8 Learning and Development

On entry to the Department, all our staff are required to undertake mandatory online training on 'Equality and Diversity'.

We have trained our own Mental Health First aiders and provided training on Mental Health Awareness to support both individuals on a personal level, and our managers.

We assist all of our staff with their continuous professional development. Previously we assisted staff in gaining professional and formal qualifications by providing partial funding for their course of study. In 2019, we changed our Lifelong Learning policy to provide full funding and up to 5 days paid special leave to study for and participate in exams. This year 2 staff are being funded for degree

8. Procurement

All of our standard and bespoke contractual terms and conditions are based on the Scottish Government (SG) terms and conditions, produced by the SG legal department and 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 (SME's), Supported Businesses and Third Sector organisations to do business with us. We are also a member of the Supplier Development Programme.

In accordance with our Procurement Strategy we use Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) to publish our regulated contract opportunities and contract award notices once the procurement is concluded, and also for Suppliers to submit their tenders to us electronically. For non-regulated contracts where the goods/services cannot be procured through a framework we use “Quick Quotes” on PCS. Where a bid is unsuccessful, NRS provides written feedback to Suppliers of the reasons why their tender or quotation was unsuccessful based on the specified evaluation criteria.

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.

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 businesses collaborative framework contract covering some goods and services which NRS contracts through and NRS continues to participate on Central Government Supported Businesses initiatives.

We ensure the requirements under Section 9 of the Public Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, which places a sustainable procurement duty on certain public sector organisations, are considered on a case by case basis and implemented in the planning and development of the individual commodity strategies for regulated procurements. Any award criteria and performance conditions which are included in the contract will be related to and proportionate to the subject matter of the contract.

The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 has required NRS to produce an annual report on our regulated procurement activities. This is the link to the latest 2018-19 Annual Procurement Report we have produced <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/about-us/procurement>. It contains details of our regulated procurements together with highlights on our performance and achievements in delivering the NRS Procurement Strategy.

9. Facilities and Estates

In the previous report, we advised on the findings of our Estates Review undertaken in 2014 and how it formed the basis of the development of our Estates Strategy. The key strategic aims are:

1. To meet current and future needs in terms of expansion, changing workload practices and storage methods, achieving archival standards and operational efficiencies.
2. To support the creation of a cohesive, joined up organisation, increasing opportunities for collaboration, an interaction between staff and reducing the number of operational buildings.
3. To improve accessibility and support the principle “customers first” and

4. To measurably improve cost-effectiveness, sustainability and energy efficiency.

Progress around improving the condition of our existing estate is ongoing and a challenging programme of improvements is underway ensuring that the historic Grade A listed buildings which form part of UNESCO World Heritage Site retain their significance and functionality. We recognise the broader importance of our built Estate and will be considering in their programme of improvements ways to enhance engagement with local communities ensuring that our buildings form an integral part of the City and more local Communities. Work has already commenced on this at West Register House on Charlotte Square (ensure the building/?) and we engage with the wider community in line with the scale, importance and location of the building.

We appoint specialist professional teams to ensure that our buildings are compliant and we undertake regular Access Audits Surveys on each of our buildings to ensure we remain compliant and consider ways of improving our accessibility. Our improvement programme will explore options to implement any recommendations across the estate to ensure the buildings are accessible where possible. We will work with wider agencies, for example, Historic Environment Scotland, to ensure the balance of accessibility for listed buildings is considered against user requirements. We will continually review the services provided, the way they are provided and if necessary, the location for which they are provided and assess what reasonable adjustments to make.

More widely we will engage with Edinburgh City council and other agencies to support their strategy to improve access in and around the City. We have a dedicated operations team to manage the supporting facilities of the buildings. The Estates staff with the support of a Facilities Management Contract ensure our buildings are compliant and sensitively meet the needs of all users. We offer work place assessments and training for employees to ensure their work station and areas of work meet with their needs. Estates work with Occupational Health to facilitate any changes to support staff back to work or make changes where possible.

We have made available free sanitary products in our buildings for the benefit of staff and visitors in line with the Scottish Governments Initiative to end Period Poverty. In line with our Estates Strategy recommendations, we are working to support flexible working arrangements for staff. A strategy for improvements to our administrative accommodation over the next two years will involve engaging with staff to identify key improvements to allow a more usable space providing comfortable and adaptable break out spaces to meet the natural changes in working practices and staffing needs.

10. Further Information

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

NRS Strategy and Planning Team

Ladywell House

Ladywell Road

Edinburgh

EH12 7TF

e-mail: strategyandplanning@nrscotland.gov.uk

Telephone: 0131 314 4625

Annex A: Equality Outcomes (update October 2019)

Strategic objective	Equality outcome	General duty	Description	Directorate	By when	Measure of achievement	Position in October 2019
To promote improvements in the management of records, including digital formats, by the public sector in Scotland in order to support good governance, accountability and efficient use of public resources	To help people and bodies who have records generated about them benefit from improved records management practice, including improved retention and disposal practices.	1,2 &3	Work with NRS stakeholders to increase the number of public authorities complying with the public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 (PRSA) each year, by ensuring the submissions of a records Management Plan (RMP) form named authorities.	Information and Records Services	Work commenced on March 2013 and is assessed and reviewed annually.	To compete the initial invitation process by 2018.	<p>The Keeper's commitment to Scottish Ministers was to have 'invited' all public authorities named under the 2011 Act to submit a Records Management Plan for his agreement within five years of the Act coming into force in 2013. There were about 250 authorities named under the Act so this meant 50 authorities per year between 2013 and 2018. We achieved this goal and last year's Report to Scottish Ministers noted this. We are therefore no longer therefore working to this target.</p> <p>The programme, since 2018, has focussed on those public bodies that have come into existence since the legislation received Royal Assent in 2011 and where not named under the original Schedule to the Act.</p> <p>We work with our stakeholders to increase the number of public authorities complying with the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 (PRSA) each year, by ensuring the submissions of a Records Management Plan (RMP) from named authorities.</p> <p>The number of bodies invited by the Keeper to submit a Records Management Plan since the last Annual Report to Ministers, i.e. April 2018-March 2019, was thirty three. In this same period the Keeper agreed thirteen Records Management Plans.</p>
To produce statistics and gather and record historical and contemporary information about Scotland and its population	People are better informed about socio-demographic position of different groups in Scotland.	1,2 &3	Consultation with stakeholders and users of our data to ensure that the question set that is developed for 2021 is fit for purpose and meets user needs	Statistical Services	Ongoing – draft question set for 2021 Census to be presented to Scottish Parliament by the end 2018 with legislation on questions to be passed late 2019/early 2020.	Stakeholder feedback as part of the ongoing discussion around the question set in Census 2021.	<p>New questions must be thoroughly tested before they can be deemed suitable for a census. In deciding what subjects to cover and what questions to ask, we are consulting many people and organisations to take full account of Scottish circumstances. We are also considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how acceptable the questions are to the public • how to ask questions in a way that produces reliable answers, and • whether other ways of collecting the information already exist. <p>The Scottish Parliament will make the final decision on which questions to include in Scotland's Census 2021.</p> <p>We work closely with the UK's other census offices to ensure that consistent UK-wide census results are available where there is user demand (subject to approval, where appropriate, of the relevant legislatures). We are working alongside the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) to gather as much evidence as possible to ensure the 2021 Census questions are clear and robust.</p> <p>Our own complementary programme of question development in Scotland uses qualitative and quantitative testing and involves a wide range of community stakeholders to inform question development. The following sections provide more information on the range of testing being carried out in advance of the 2021 Census.</p> <p>UK Harmonisation</p>

							We work closely with the census offices for England and Wales (ONS) and Northern Ireland (NISRA). A key aim for the 2021 Census is to produce consistent and coherent outputs for the UK and for each component country. The Registrars General of Scotland, England and Wales, and Northern Ireland agreed (subject to the need for approval where appropriate by the relevant legislatures) to conduct censuses simultaneously in 2021.
	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.	1,2 &3	Continuing to promote the use of equality related data	Statistical Services	ongoing	Continued high number of downloads of equality related tables from Census and demographic stats websites. Increase in output from other studies using equality related census information.	For 2021, we will seek ways of making outputs available more quickly than in 2011 whilst maintaining the high levels of quality and confidentiality of the information required.
	Customers can search and order historic records and extracts using a variety of methods that suit their personal circumstances.	1,2 &3	The catalogue can be searched on the internet or customers can telephone for advice	Operations and Customer Services	Ongoing	Feedback from customers monitored.	<p>We have continued to ensure that our service delivery model includes access to a wide variety of our records and services using a variety of channels.</p> <p>Our Access Policy describes how National Records of Scotland makes archives publicly available using a variety of channels, including onsite services, digital services, education and learning and in partnership with other organisations.</p> <p>Our ScotlandsPeople website, which is available online and in our search rooms, offers a free index search across all our indexed family history digitised records, digitised images and maps and plans.</p> <p>We carried out a customer survey during the Spring of 2019. It was promoted across all our public service websites and within our search rooms to improve our understanding - especially the equality characteristics - of the customers who use our services and those who do not by improving our engagement and customer and behavioural insight activities. We started this process when we engaged with our customers when redesigning the ScotlandsPeople website back in 2016.</p>

	Faith, cultural and other groups' needs continue to be met by death registration processes flowing from the Certification of Death (Scotland) Act 2011.	1,2 & 3	Advance registration processes are made available – with registrar support – to groups who need rapid funeral service	Operations and Customer Services	1 April 2014	Positive feedback from stakeholder groups after go-live.	The Advance Registration process is now embedded as part of usual death certification practice. Informants are made aware that where their case has been selected for review, they can apply for an AR to facilitate the swift burial of the deceased for cultural or religious reasons, and while numbers exercising this option are not large, where it occurs there have been no problems with families subjected to additional delay or stress.
	Policing of authorised marriage celebrants is sensitive to protected characteristics and vulnerability, including in relation to sham marriage ceremonies.	1 & 3	Partnership working positively balances even-handed treatment of all groups with protected characteristics with legitimate criminal activity disruption	Operations and Customer Services	Ongoing	Positive Feedback from partners.	We continue to work actively with Border Force and other immigration officials to disrupt sham and forced marriage in Scotland.
	Policing of authorised marriage celebrants is sensitive to protected characteristics and vulnerability, including in relation to sham marriage ceremonies.	2 & 3	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	Operations and Customer Services	Ongoing	Positive feedback from authorised bodies, wider marriage stakeholders.	We have undertaken a large amount of work in recent years to facilitate couples' choice of celebrants – be they civil marriages solemnised by a registrar, or religious or belief marriages solemnised by religious celebrants or celebrants from belief bodies – within a similarly robust framework of national oversight, which enforces standards of behaviour (including the prohibition of running a marriage business for profit or gain) and the promotion of each group's belief system in an appropriate manner. Groups and individual celebrants remain protected from any compulsion to participate in any form of marriage.
	Ethnicity data is collected during the death registration process in a way which is sensitive to informants' needs and	2	Ethnicity data is collected on the daily basis of consent and respect for informants with protected characteristics	Operations and Customer Services	Ongoing	Positive feedback from medical users of ethnicity data, wider stakeholders.	Work is in hand to improve death-registration ethnicity data, but at present, as this category remains voluntary rather than statutorily collected, informants remain informed as to the nature of the question and their voluntary participation.

	respects protected characteristics.						
	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..	1	Citizens who are transgender, intersex or who identify as non-binary are able to engage with civil status registration processes in a way which respects their identity	Operations and Customer Services	2017-2018	Positive engagement with, and subsequent feedback from Equalities groups, transgender/intersex/non-binary people on revised registration processes.	Significant policy work is in hand on future potential recognition of non-binary and transgender people. In the interim, we work to handle each registration case sensitively and with discretion, respecting individuals' privacy needs and amending the approach and wording of questions where necessary to solicit necessary information in an appropriate, supportive way.
To promote and extend the use of our records, data, expertise and statistical information raising awareness, understanding and enjoyment of Scotland's past, present and future.	Schools, universities and lifelong learners will have the opportunity to use the rich variety of archives and records we hold	1, 2 & 3	Support teachers in delivering the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence and National Qualifications and provide all teachers and learners the opportunity to engage with our archives and records	Operations and Customer Services	As requested by schools, universities and lifelong learners	Teachers, pupils and all learners are able to develop their knowledge and understanding of our archives and records and develop the skills and confidence to access, read and interpret their content in order to connect with Scottish history, heritage and culture	We can provide a variety of learning material that supports the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence and National Qualifications as well as for university teaching and lifelong learning.
	Customers are able to access our digitised records through the internet or a local family history centre operated by Local Authorities and managed by Local Registrar. Enable local access for Public Bodies	1, 2 & 3	Enable access to our digitised records through the internet or at local family history centres operated by Local Authorities and managed by Local registrars. Enable local	Operations and Customer Services	Ongoing, Requests from Local Authorities and Public Bodies evaluated when received and actioned if deemed appropriate.	Network of local family history centres established around Scotland. Public Bodies who have a business need are linked to the ScotlandsPeople network. Feedback from customers monitored.	We have linked up local family history centres to the ScotlandsPeople suite of family history records. Full consultation with Local Authorities took place and so far centres have opened in Glasgow, Kilmarnock and Hawick, Inverness and Alva. We hope that this will be of particular help to older and disabled customers.

	with a business need to view our records.		access for Public Bodies with a business need to view our records.				
	Customers with physical disabilities are able to access our digitised records at the ScotlandsPeople Centre.	1, 2 & 3	Install adapted access facilities and software that allow for disabled people, people with walking aids or who have poor eyesight or hearing to attend the Centre. Helpers given free access.	Operations and Customer Services	Ongoing	People with physical, sight and hearing disabilities are able to Visit ScotlandsPeople Centre. Helpers can accompany people with disabilities for free. Feedback from customers monitored.	Our search rooms in Edinburgh have disabled access, parking and facilities, and there is specialist software available to magnify the images on the computer screens, which can be used in conjunction with specially designed easy to view keyboards. Induction loops are available at our enquiry desks in our search rooms. We welcome helpers or guide dogs who may assist customers with special needs We have quarterly search room user group meetings attended by representatives of our customers. Our staff strive to improve the customer experience by monitoring all new customers or customers with special needs and offering them extra help, if required or requested.
To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our organisation	Our workforce is proportionally representative of equality communities and has relevant skills, knowledge and experience.	1, 2 & 3	Analysis of workforce data against the protected characteristics to identify areas for action.	Corporate Services	Quarterly each year	Publish analysis and detail action taken in NRS Annual Report & Accounts.	Details are provided in the mainstreaming part of this report and were also published as part of our Annual Reports and Accounts.
			To provide employment and placement opportunities in line with the Youth Employment Strategy.	Corporate Services	Each year	To provide 9 student placements and 4 modern apprenticeships.	We have met all our targets in these areas. Further details are provided in section 7.2 of this report.
			Provide all staff with an equality and diversity learning tool.	Corporate Services	Ongoing	Training to be rolled out to 100% of current staff and during induction week to all new entrants	This has been made available to all staff and is mandatory for all new starts.
To improve the effectiveness and efficiency	To be an organisation that supports and respects the protected	1, 2 & 3	Take forward and implement an action Plan devised by staff focus	Corporate Services	31 March each year	The results of the survey to have an engagement index score of not less than 70% and a	We have not achieved this in (Engagement Index 5% and Response rate 60%, more details of our 2018 staff survey results are published on our website), however there is ongoing work across the organisation to address this. Our Staff Engagement Network established in April 2019 generated over 200 individual ideas which were grouped into themes and

of our organisation	characteristics of our staff and those who use our services.		groups, from the results of the annual People Survey.			response rate of not less than 75%	are being transformed into work packages of the Business Improvement Programme. We already started to work with our business areas to deliver a number of quick wins.
			Ensure the public procurement duty is taken into consideration and included when planning and developing procurement strategies on contracts tendered.	Corporate Services	Ongoing	Increase opportunities for suppliers to tender for contracts. Tendering at least one contract a year with supported factory or business.	Our commitments form 2017 are now superseded by the legislative mandated Annual Procurement Report produced in August each year, published on the NRS website and on our Buyers page on Public Contracts Scotland (link included in the main part of this report).
			Analysis of budget Bids against any protected characteristics to identify areas for action.	Corporate Services		Seek senior management sign-off, following a range of budget bilateral to obtain compliance against all 3 duties, in addition to delivering a (balanced) budget. Branch Heads/budget managers assessed on a mandatory objective (annual appraisal) – 5% of budget.	We have established governance arrangements for the initiation, oversight and termination of major projects and programmes to ensure that we take a consistent approach to them, including carrying out EQIAs.