



Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments in Scotland

PRESS RELEASE

LAUNCH OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STRATEGY FOR CONSULTATION

Today, Karen Carlton, the Commissioner for Public Appointments in Scotland, has published for consultation the first equal opportunities strategy for public appointments in Scotland. The strategy, entitled 'Diversity Delivers', follows a period of extensive research into the appointments, governance and equalities landscape in Scotland.

The boards of our public bodies do not reflect the diversity of the population in Scotland.

- Fifty-two per cent of the population is female, but women account for only 35% of board members and 17% of chairs.
- Latest estimates suggest that 20% of the population in Scotland has a disability or long-term illness. Yet only 2.5% of chairs and members of public bodies have a declared disability.
- The current figure for minority ethnic board members and chairs is just 2.2%, broadly similar to the 2001 Census figure, but lower than the estimated BME population in Scotland today.

The pool of applicants fares little better. Only

- thirty per cent of applicants are female
- seven per cent declare a disability
- two per cent are black or minority ethnic (BME)
- forty per cent are drawn from the 51-60 age group, which accounts for only 16% of the adult population.

In addition, during the past three years the average number of applicants for each post has fallen by 30%.

If public appointees continue to be drawn from the usual quarters the pool will continue to decrease and be ever less reflective of the population.

Conversely, if appointment opportunities are made accessible to all, we can be confident that our future boards will have the very best talent that Scotland has to offer. To achieve this, the Commissioner is proposing a major overhaul of the public appointments system. She said:

'The public bodies served by the public appointments process spend a combined 11 billion pounds of public funds. They are required to deliver ministerial policy and services to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population - effective governance at board level ensures that this happens. The link between effective service delivery and effective board appointment must not be overlooked. This strategy will ensure that the public appointments process evolves to meet the needs of 21st century Scotland and beyond.'



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Note to editors:

The consultation document is available to download from
www.publicappointments.org/consultations

The Commissioner is required to prepare and publish an equal opportunities strategy for public appointments under the terms of the Public Appointments and Public Bodies etc. (Scotland) Act 2003.

For background information and a list of the public bodies regulated by the Commissioner please see: www.publicappointments.org

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