

Race Equality Scheme Annual Report



30 November 2010

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George P MacKenzie
Keeper of the Records of Scotland

1. Foreword by George MacKenzie, Keeper of the Records for Scotland

I am pleased to present the 2010 Annual Report on the National Archives of Scotland (NAS) Race Equality Scheme.

We continue to ensure that our services are high quality and responsive to the public's needs and continually improving.

We demonstrate this by providing equality of opportunity to everyone who uses our services, whether the records to which we give access or our various exhibitions.

Looking to the future, the NAS will be merging with the General Register Office for Scotland to form a new single body. We look forward to working together in planning a Single Equality Scheme, which will consolidate how we promote our equality duties for our staff and the public that we serve.

2. NAS PRIORITIES

2.1 National Outcomes

The National Archives continues to play an important role in contributing to The Scottish Government's overarching purpose of focusing **Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth**. The purpose is expressed as a series of [15 National Outcomes](#) and the work of NAS directly and indirectly supports 5 of these. In this report we provide an update of our contribution to 3 of the National Outcomes, which best demonstrate our commitment to Race Equality.

National Outcome No 2: [We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for all our people.](#)

- **The Scottish Tartan Register**

NAS supports this outcome through its work on the Scottish Register of Tartans. The Register boosts worldwide interest in this iconic Scottish product and gives the weaving industry a focus for marketing and development. Anyone can register a tartan. In honour of Pope Benedict XVI's visit to Scotland on St Ninian's Day, 16th September 2010, a new papal tartan, officially called the St Ninian's Day tartan, has been added to the Scottish Register of Tartans at reference 10282. Further information about the Register can be found at:

www.tartanregister.gov.uk/index.aspx

National Outcome No 13: [We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity.](#)

- **Exhibitions**

Archives provide the evidence of who we are as individuals and as communities. On Friday, 2 July 2010 we exhibited some original documents to shed light on events surrounding the sinking of the SS "Arandora Star" which was torpedoed off Ireland by a German U-boat on 2 July 1940. The loss of the ship carrying hundreds of interned Italians to Canada was a very heavy blow to the Italian community in Scotland. Official files reveal the personal and material losses of the Scots Italians, and the exhibition uses previously unseen Scottish Office and other official records to tell the story of some of the Scots Italians caught up in the tragic events of 1940. Further information can be found on our website at:

<http://www.nas.gov.uk/about/100630.asp>

National Outcome No 15: [Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and response to local people's needs.](#)

- **Public Records (Scotland) Bill**

NAS is providing support to ministers on this Bill which was published on 8 October 2010. The Bill is to improve record keeping, help vulnerable people trace their records more easily and to strengthen the transparency and accountability of record keeping across the public sector. It arose out of the Historical Abuse Systemic Review (the Shaw Report of 2007), which found poor record keeping often created difficulties for former residents of residential schools and children's homes, when they attempted to trace their records for identity, family or medical reasons.

Under this proposed legislation, named public authorities across Scotland will be required to produce and implement a records management plan to be approved by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland. The Keeper will produce guidance on the form and content of plans, and will be given powers to scrutinise the implementation of these plans.

Consultation carried out earlier this year showed broad support for the proposed legislation. Most stakeholders agreed that the proposals would be a positive step towards achieving lasting improvements in the management of records by public authorities. An "easy read" version of the consultation paper is available to download here: [Easy read consultation paper - AcrobatPDF, 719KB, new window.](#)

3. NAS SERVICES

3.1 Exhibitions

To play our part in ensuring equality of opportunity for all, we mount occasional exhibitions in West Register House, Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, and at other locations in partnership with the other National Collections and other bodies. Most of these exhibitions are free of charge. We also support external exhibitors by lending documents or providing images from our extensive holdings. Exhibitions by NAS this year included:

- An Open Secret – on previously 'closed' government files
- "I have not been Idle" – on the last days of Robert Burns'

3.2 Records

We hold historical records created by businesses, landed estates, families, churches and other corporate bodies. Every year tens of thousands of people from all over the world use the NAS's services to carry out research, seek advice on record keeping, and enhance the learning and teaching of history. Some of the most recent records that have become available for the public to research include:

- The records of military appeal tribunals (www.nas.gov.uk/about/081103.asp)
- Sir William Wallace in the archives (www.nas.gov.uk/about/100607.asp)

3.3 Doors Open Day

As a way of encouraging people to use our services and our facilities, we opened our doors to the public on Saturday 25 September, as part of Edinburgh Doors Open Day 2010.

The event proved a great success with around 2,500 visits to General Register House (GRH) and nearly 1000 to neighbouring New Register House (NRH), which contains the original records of the General Register Office for Scotland. Visitors were offered guided tours of GRH, talks in the NRH seminar facility and short taster sessions of the ScotlandsPeople search system in the Reid Search Room. The shop and café facility were also open and visitors were invited to wander round the Archivists' Garden. The Garden was also featured in a recent episode of 'The Beechgrove Garden' on BBC1 Scotland.

4. NAS AS AN EMPLOYER

4.1 Terms and conditions

NAS is an Agency of the Scottish Government (SG) and our staff have the same terms and conditions of employment as SG staff and we follow all of the SG HR policies and procedures eg. Equality and Diversity. They also have access to the Race Equality Network, which is open to all staff who are from a minority ethnic background or who have an interest in race equality issues.

4.2 Volunteers

Volunteers add value, support and diversity to the work of NAS. Voluntary placements provide learning and citizenship opportunities and promote the NAS through the engagement with the wider community. In 2010 we provided 6 voluntary placement opportunities. Whilst we do not do any analysis of the volunteer workforce in terms of gender, race etc, the opportunities are open to all who possess the necessary qualifications and experience. Our volunteer policy can be found on our website at: www.nas.gov.uk/downloads/VolunteersPolicy.pdf

4.3 Fairness at Work

This is a new policy which brings together our grievance policy and the Dignity at Work policy under the same umbrella. This new policy places particular emphasis on a zero tolerance approach to unacceptable behaviour. The policy was brought to the attention of all staff and they were encouraged to attend a lunchtime briefing seminar, to find out about the details of the new arrangements.

5. CONCLUSION

We will continue to ensure that we meet our race equality duty by maintaining to work with our customers and stakeholders to identify any barriers which may exist. The NAS Management Board will also continue to consider evidence and actions on all equality issues at its quarterly meetings.