



General Register Office for Scotland
Information about Scotland's people

Disability Equality Scheme
ANNUAL REPORT

December 2009

Foreword by Duncan Macniven, Registrar General for Scotland

I am pleased to introduce the 2009 Disability Equality Annual Report for the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS).

We first published our Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan on 4 December 2006. The Scheme is published on our website <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/files1/about-us/disability-equality-schemev4.pdf>.

Our continued commitment to disability equality is best demonstrated by:

- The preparatory work for the 2011 Census; and
- The legislative changes to allow births and deaths to be registered at any Scottish registration office.

This report will therefore focus on these two areas.

1. Census

1.1 In preparation for the 2009 Census Rehearsal we tested an online census questionnaire to ensure it could be easily accessed and completed by users with different accessibility needs. Further testing and consultation will be carried out ahead of the census in 2011.

1.2 After consultation with the Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID) we produced a British Sign Language (BSL) video clips of the Census questions. The BSL video clips were available on our website for the Rehearsal this year and will also be available on our website for the Census in 2011.

1.3 After consultation with the Royal Institute for the Blind (RNIB) we have agreed to produce a large print questionnaire for people with visual impairment. In addition we are putting in place Telephone Data Capture where an Advisor at the Census Helpline will assist with completion of the questionnaire over the telephone.

1.4 Following analysis of the 2006 Census Test and the 2009 Census Rehearsal, we have chosen to include a question on types of disability (long-term health conditions) in our proposed question set for the census in 2011. This question will, for the first time, provide information on the prevalence of certain conditions in the population.

1.5 The Scotland's Census website has been designed to comply with the international web accessibility standards issued by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) as part of their Web Accessibility Initiative. As well as providing access to help, news and information about the census, questionnaires could be completed online through the website during the 2009 rehearsal. This facility will be available again for the 2011 Census and has been designed to cater for web users with visual, motor or other impairments. Further details can be found on the website at: www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/en/usability.html

1.6 We have submitted our Census Proposals, including the Census Questionnaire, in the form of the Census Order, before the Scottish Parliament for approval.

1.7 We are currently undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment of the Census the results of which will be published on our website.

1.8 Further information about the Census can be found on the dedicated web site at: www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk.

2. Registration of births and deaths

2.1 Before the LEARS Act 2006¹, people had the limited choice of registering a birth or death in the region in which the birth or death occurred. A change effected by the

¹ Local Electoral Administration & Registration Services (Scotland) Act 2006. The text of the Act is at: www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2006/asp_20060014_en_1

LEARS Act (from January 2007), plus a new computerised registration system now allows registration to be carried out in any Scottish registration district.

Statistics show that people registering a birth or death are taking advantage of the new flexibility provided through the LEARS Act. It may be that the family has links with a particular area of Scotland and wishes to have the event registered there. Or it may simply be more convenient to call at a particular registration office.

These can be found in the [Registrar General's Annual Review of Demographic Trends \(154th Edition\)](#)

2.2 Whilst these changes have improved convenience, work continues on the e-Registration system to also improve accessibility. A localised pilot of birth e-Registration will run from January 2011 with a view to a full implementation country-wide thereafter.

3. Conclusion

3.1 We continue to make progress with the Key Objectives of our Disability Equality Scheme. We see opportunities to do more, and will continue to work towards ensuring that we offer an accessible and equitable service to all.