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# Race Equality Scheme



**General Register Office**  
*for*  
**SCOTLAND**  
*information about Scotland's people*

(Published November 2002)

## **Foreword by John Randall, Registrar General for Scotland**

I am pleased to present the General Register Office for Scotland's (GROS) Race Equality Scheme.

Our fundamental aim is to collect, process, safeguard and make available information about Scotland's people in a useful, responsible and efficient way.

GROS produces reliable information which central and local government use to support the planning and provision of improved public services for local communities throughout Scotland, including health care, housing, education and transport. We also have an important role to play with local authorities in overseeing the Registration Service in Scotland.

It is essential that these and other services take full account of the needs of different ethnic groups, and that there is no discrimination in access to the services. The statistics that GROS produce play a major part in bringing this about. We will ensure that we continue to carry out our functions with the utmost integrity in terms of race equality.

Our Race Equality Scheme provides us with a useful mechanism to consider what more we need to do to reinforce our commitment to equality for all the people of Scotland. I see the GROS Scheme as a living document, which we will review and update as our services develop.

**JOHN RANDALL**  
**Registrar General for Scotland**

November 2002

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 Section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, places general and specific duties on all UK public bodies. The **general duty** obliges us to do three separate things:

- **to work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination**
- **to promote equality of opportunity**
- **to promote good relations between people of all racial groups**

1.2 The General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) and a number of other bodies are also subject to specific duties which require us to assess all our policies and functions for their impact on race equality. We must publish a Race Equality Scheme setting out our arrangements for meeting the duty by:

- **monitoring our policies for any adverse impact on race equality**
- **assessing and consulting on the likely impact of our proposed policies**
- **publishing the results of our assessments, consultation and monitoring**
- **making sure the public have access to information and services**
- **training our staff on the general duty**

1.3 There is a further specific duty on employment under which we must monitor and analyse, by racial group, a variety of recruitment and Human Resource (HR) systems. **As the Scottish Executive carries out these employment responsibilities on our behalf, we are included in the Scottish Executive Race Equality Scheme for this particular duty. A link to the Scottish Executive Scheme can be found at : <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/society/wtre-00.asp>**

## 2. Background to the General Register Office for Scotland

2.1 The General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) is a Government Department established by Act of Parliament in 1854. We are an Associated Department of The Scottish Executive and we form part of the Scottish Administration. Our statistical operations form part of the Government Statistical Service and we prepare our main statistical products in line with National Statistics procedures.

2.2 The fundamental **aim** of GROS is to work with Scottish Ministers to improve the well-being of Scotland and its people by collecting, processing, safeguarding and

making available information about Scotland's people in a useful, responsible and efficient way.

## Objectives

2.3 In pursuit of this our **strategic objectives** are to:

- ensure that all information collected is relevant, accurate, complete and updated as required, in such a way as to maintain public confidence
- produce, and publish timeously, accurate statistics relevant to the needs of government and other public sector organisations and the private sector
- preserve certain public records permanently and store them securely
- give ready access to open public records to customers
- continue to improve the efficiency and effectiveness with which these objectives are delivered and the quality of service provided by the Department

## Business Functions

2.4 The main **functions** of GROS are set out in our Management and Business Plan as follows:

- To make arrangements for taking periodic censuses of Scotland's population, and to prepare and publish demographic and other statistics
- To administer civil registration of vital events – births and deaths, plus marriages, divorces and adoptions and the statutes relating to the formalities of marriage and the conduct of civil marriage
- To make available public records about individuals to customers (for example, genealogists)
- To maintain the National Health Service Central Register (NHSCR) of patients in Scotland for the Scottish Executive

## 2. The Context for our Race Equality Scheme

3.1 This Scheme sets out how we in GROS will achieve our objectives for race equality as defined in the Race Relations Act.

- 3.2 GROS has an important and challenging role to play in promoting race equality. Many of the statistics we provide inform policies designed to tackle inequalities in society, by providing a benchmark against which inequalities can be measured and policies developed and monitored. Our work also takes us into recording some of the most significant events of people's lives – births, marriages and deaths.
- 3.3 We want the information we produce, and the services we provide, to be relevant and available to all the people who require them. Of course, this aim takes us much further afield than Scotland. With the development of web-based technology, the opportunities are there for us to reach an ever-widening set of customers. We have an on-going task in determining exactly who our customers are and what they want.

### **The 2001 Census**

- 3.4 We included a question on ethnicity in the 2001 Census at the request of users. The Census can provide a baseline count of the population by ethnicity in particular areas, which can be used to compare against the take up of services by particular groups. Census statistics can also assist with measuring relative disadvantage of particular ethnic groups by comparing different characteristics of the population – such as education qualifications and employment; age and general health; and indicators of social deprivation including housing characteristics. The question was: “*What is your ethnic group?*” and people were asked to choose one of a number of tick-box options. They were also given the opportunity to record their ethnicity in their own words on the Census form, if they felt that none of the tick-boxes were appropriate to them.

A copy of the main 2001 Census form can be found at:

[http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/grosweb/grosweb.nsf/pages/file2/\\$file/hseform.pdf](http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/grosweb/grosweb.nsf/pages/file2/$file/hseform.pdf)

- 3.5 We also asked two questions about religion, following views expressed by the Scottish Parliament that such information should be gathered. Because, to some people, religion is a particularly sensitive issue, it was accepted that it should not be compulsory for people to answer the religion questions. They were as follows:
- “*What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong to?*”
  - “*What religion, religious denomination or body were you brought up in?*”
- 3.6 Responses to the questions on religion can supplement those to the ethnic group question and provide valuable information on ethnic minority sub-groups, most notably from the Indian sub-continent.
- 3.7 Statistics from the responses to the ethnic group and religious questions will be included in the detailed results from the 2001 Census due by March 2003. Information on output from the 2001 Census can be found at:
- <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/grosweb/grosweb.nsf/pages/Censushm>

## Registration

- 3.8 While GROS oversees the system of civil registration of events (births, marriages and deaths), Registrars employed by local authorities carry out the registration function. Consequently, Registrars operate in line with their own local authority's race equality scheme. It is essential that all events in Scotland are registered, covering all ethnic groups. GROS works in partnership with the local registration service and has assisted in a number of ways to ensure that information about the registration service is available to everyone. For instance, we have provided a leaflet on marriage in Scotland in a number of languages. We have also produced a multi-lingual memorandum and wall-poster for the guidance of religious marriage celebrants. Local authorities can also provide translation facilities when required, such as for a civil marriage.
- 3.9 Birth, death and marriage registers are public documents accessible to all under statute. Customer surveys are currently underway (or are in preparation) in New Register House, Edinburgh, to determine how we might improve our front-line services for people who wish copies of birth, marriage or death certificates or who wish to trace their family tree. One of the survey questions relates specifically to ethnicity, aimed at uncovering any concerns about access to the records by ethnic minority groups.

## NHSCR

- 3.10 We maintain the National Health Service Central Register (NHSCR) on behalf of the Health Department of the Scottish Executive. The information held on the Register is very limited (name; date of birth; sex; a history of moves between health authorities; and health survey participation). The information is used mainly to facilitate the correct transfer of patients' records between health authorities, for medical research, and to provide information on migration.

## 4. Meeting our General and Specific Duties – Assessment of our Functions for relevance

- 4.1 At Section 2.4 we set out our main business functions. The Race Relations Act requires us to identify "functions" that are potentially relevant to the discharging of our general duty and to assess their significance for race equality (using a marking of **High**, **Medium** and **Low**). In addition to our four prime functions we consider that we have two supporting functions that are relevant. In summary these are:

### Prime Function:

Producing Census and other statistics  
Registering events  
Making the public records we hold available  
Maintaining a Register of NHS patients

### Significance:

High  
Medium  
Medium  
Low



### **Supporting Function:**

Purchasing goods and services	Low
Arranging learning opportunities for staff <sup>1</sup>	Medium

- 4.2 In order to assess the significance of each function we have looked at the processes we have in place to carry out these functions. **Annex A** contains a synopsis of these functions, and **Annex B** lists the processes, together with the actions that we currently take, and those we plan to take, to meet our duties. To provide an insight into how we currently deal with race equality issues, below are some examples showing what we have done, what we are doing and what we will do relating to the prime functions that we have assessed as having “Medium” or “High” significance.

### **Examples of meeting the general duty**

#### **Census 2001**

##### *What we have done*

- 4.3 We responded to comments on the 2001 Census form by the Parliament’s Equal Opportunities Committee by expanding the detail in the question on ethnic group, and by including two questions on religion.
- 4.4 To raise awareness of the Census, we set up a Community Liaison Initiative to identify and build contacts with groups within the community. This included particular arrangements for ethnic minority groups who might have been apprehensive about the Census, needed reassurance about its purpose or might have had difficulty completing the form. In pursuit of this initiative we consulted ethnic group representatives from the Commission for Racial Equality, the six Race Equality Councils plus some specific groups recommended by the Scottish Executive. Key measures we put in place were:
- A publicity leaflet about the Census designed to raise awareness amongst ethnic minority groups
  - Interpreter services
  - Translation leaflets
  - Helpline for people whose first language was not English

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<sup>1</sup> Responsibility for the employment duty rests with the Scottish Executive, to whom we delegate our responsibilities in this area.

### What we are doing

- 4.5 The Scottish Census Results Output Library (SCROL) will provide easy, free and user friendly web-based access to detailed Census statistics for users throughout the public sector (central and local government) as well as more widely to communities and individuals. One of the project's key aims is to improve the use of Census data to promote informed decision making for the benefit of service delivery, particularly services to the socially excluded.

### What we will do

- 4.6 We are reviewing the experience of running the 2001 Census so that lessons can be learnt for the future. Results of the review are published on our website as they become available. The general view from our Census managers in the field for the 2001 Census was that it was often difficult to arrange meetings with ethnic minority groups. They also reported that key messages were not being passed on within the community. Refugees were sometimes difficult to contact and to convince of the requirement to complete a Census form - they tended not to see the Census as relevant to them. More and earlier work will have to be done in this area in future. This will include a careful review of our strategy for raising awareness and alleviating anxieties in these communities.

## **Registration of events**

### What we have done

- 4.7 There was a change in the law in 2002 to enable civil marriages to take place in a wider range of locations outwith registration offices. When bringing forward the Marriage (Scotland) Bill and Regulations in early 2002 we involved a range of bodies and consulted with the Parliament's Equal Opportunities Committee to ensure we had included everyone who had an interest. We also had a helpful meeting with a number of different communities in Glasgow to raise awareness about the legal preliminaries to marriage in Scotland. This resulted in a poster being designed in a range of languages to assist the communities in Glasgow. Registrars will make interpreters available when required, and provide tailored services where a particular need exists, e.g. translation leaflets.

## **Making the Public Records we hold available**

### What we are doing

- 4.8 We have a statutory duty to make available many of the records held by the Registrar General. We charge customers for searching registers in line with statute. We are aware that we need to market our information more effectively and to increase customer awareness of the various resources available. To help with this, we are currently undertaking (or preparing) surveys of our customers in New Register House, Edinburgh to determine how we might improve these front-line services. One survey will include a question on ethnicity and what we do will depend on the answers we get.

## **5. Meeting our General and Specific Duties – Assessment of how we undertake our Duties**

### **Assessing and consulting on the likely impact of proposed policies**

5.1 The main policies of GROS over the next five years will relate to:

- playing our part in joined-up and modernising government
- focussing on improving our processes and procedures
- finding out more about who our customers are and what they want

The underpinning theme of these policies is a better delivery of all our services to all the people of Scotland and beyond.

### **Monitoring our policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality**

5.2 Our employment responsibilities are monitored as a part of the Scottish Executive Race Equality Scheme. More generally, one of the aims of the 2001 Census is to provide statistics to promote race equality. We have also promoted the need for agreed classifications of ethnicity for use in measurement and have passed on to the Office for National Statistics comments received in the course of taking the Census.

### **Publishing the results of our assessments, consultation and monitoring**

5.3 We consult with our customers regularly with a view to improving services and introducing new services or processes. For example, we undertook a wide consultation on “*Civil Registration in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*” in 2000. Both the consultation paper and the results were published on our website. Our evaluation of the procedures used in the 2001 Census is also available on our website.

5.4 In the future, our annual review of our Race Equality Scheme will include a summary of the results of such consultations, where they relate to race equality.

### **Making sure the public has access to our information and services**

5.5 This is one of the main aspects of the work we do in GROS. Under statute, we must make available most of the information we hold. It should be borne in mind that personal Census information remains confidential for 100 years. The main vehicle for providing the public with information about our services is our website (<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk>). Libraries and other local public service providers also hold details of our services. Our Race Equality Scheme is published on our website.

### **Training our staff on the general duty**

- 5.6 We have an in-house training and development team who are well placed to deliver the training required for GROS staff to be clear on their responsibilities under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act.
- 5.7 In May 2002 we ran 2 seminars for staff on diversity. We will ensure that all our training and induction material reflects our commitment to equality.

## Summary of our Functions

### General

We are an Associated Department of the Scottish Executive. Our job in relation to population statistics is to set out the facts and describe the trends. It is for others (the Scottish Executive, local authorities, and a host of other organisations and individuals) to take decisions in response to the trends and projections. We have taken advantage of opportunities to share our data with other Government Departments e.g. the Student Awards Agency in Scotland and the UK Passport Service. We also oversee and co-operate with local authority Registrars throughout Scotland.

### Producing Census and other statistics (High significance to Race Equality)

Our statistical output provides information that helps those who form policies and distribute resources. Central and local government, health authorities, businesses and community groups all benefit from the availability of this information.

The decennial Census is the biggest data gathering and processing operation that takes place in Scotland. For the 2001 Census, 7,000 enumerators delivered over 2.3 million Census forms to all households in Scotland.

### Registering events (Medium significance to Race Equality)

We administer the registration of births, deaths and marriages, plus stillbirths, divorces and adoptions. Registration is carried out in the 340 registration districts in Scotland and the Registrars are appointed by local authorities. We also administer the statutes relating to the formalities of marriage and the conduct of civil marriage.

In 2001 we processed information covering 52,000 births, 57,000 deaths, 30,000 marriages and 11,000 divorces.

### Making the public records we hold available (Medium significance to Race Equality)

We make available public records about individuals to customers – ranging from other Government Departments to professional and other genealogists.

Approximately 18,000 people visited New Register House during 2001-2002 to research records on birth, marriage and death, accessing more than 650,000 records. Over 83,000 extracts of birth, marriage or death certificates were sold to customers during 2001-2002, either in person, by post or over the Internet.

### Maintaining a Register of NHS patients (Low significance to Race Equality)

The National Health Service Central Register (NHSCR) holds a basic record for every patient registered with a general medical practitioner in Scotland.

### **Purchasing goods and services (Low significance to Race Equality)**

In 2002/3 our operating expenditure will be around £6 million (excluding wage costs), and a significant part of this relates to the purchase of goods and services. Our expenditure ranges from major contracts, such as the one awarded for the processing of the 2001 Census forms, to small contracts awarded to small local businesses.

### **Arranging learning opportunities for staff (Medium significance to Race Equality)**

We have a small in-house team who help support the achievement of our business objectives by ensuring that all our staff are given the training and development opportunities they need to carry out their duties and meet their goals.

## Action Plan

### Producing Census and other statistics (High significance to Race Equality)

Our function of taking the decennial Census of Scotland's population and producing other demographic statistics involves the following high-level processes.

<b>Process</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Recruit Census enumerators and other field staff	Medium
Design Census questions and Census form	High
Publicise the Census for maximum coverage	Medium
Produce and release Census results	High
Prepare detailed statistics about the population annually and project the population every second year	Low

The following table sets out our existing and intended actions in relation to each high-level process. The actions relating to the Census need to be understood in the context of it taking place every ten years, although statistical information from the Census is available to our customers at all times.

Process	Background /how we measure race equality outcomes	Planned improvements	Timing
<p>CENSUS</p> <p>Recruit Census enumerators and other field staff</p>	<p>We monitor the number of field staff by grade from ethnic minorities in total and relative to the number of applications</p>	<p>For the 2001 Census we attempted to recruit from local ethnic minorities to improve the enumeration of such groups</p> <p>For the next Census we plan to follow broadly the same approach, but will establish contacts earlier</p> <p>We plan to increase the proportion of applications from racial minorities with the required skills, at least in line with the composition of the local population</p> <p>We will review job application forms, our recruitment strategy and processes, consulting relevant race equality groups</p> <p>We will ensure all staff involved in recruitment are properly trained and equipped</p>	<p>2006</p>



<b>Process</b>	<b>Background /how we measure race equality outcomes</b>	<b>Planned improvements</b>	<b>Timing</b>
CENSUS			
Produce and release Census results	We will seek feedback on the usefulness of the Census 2001 results and this will include assessments of the ethnicity statistics	We will use the feedback in the process of devising questions for the next Census and for improving the classifications (including the ethnicity classification)	Start March 2003
Prepare detailed statistics about the population annually and project the population every second year	<p>The information we use to produce our population statistics is generally set by statute (the main source being Registration details)</p> <p>Each year we produce an Annual Report, supplemented with other in-year statistics. We seek feedback on the usefulness of these statistics</p>	We will use the feedback to determine the content of our statistical reports	Annually

## Registering events (Medium significance to Race Equality)

Our function of administering the registration of births, deaths and marriages and dealing with adoption involves the following high-level processes.

<b>Process</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Administer the law on the registration of vital events; review and implement policies and legislative change; deal with cases related to adoption and corrections of registrations; and maintain a register of Divorce Decrees	Medium
Administer marriage law and register all marriages in Scotland	Medium

The following table sets out our existing and intended actions in relation to each high-level process:

Process	Background and how we measure race equality outcomes	Planned improvements	Timing
REGISTRATION			
Administer the law on the registration of vital events; review and implement policies and legislative change; deal with cases related to adoption and corrections of registrations; and maintain a register of Divorce Decrees	<p>These processes are governed by statute and all births and deaths must be registered. The same information is gathered during registration for all</p> <p>The day-to-day running of the registration service, including the employment of Registrars, is undertaken by local authorities following our guidelines. The local registration offices are subject to the policies set by their local authority (including race relations). In accordance with these policies, some local authorities provide tailored services where a particular need exists (e.g. translation leaflets)</p>	Given our role in overseeing the registration service we will encourage, where appropriate, Registrars to be aware of their responsibilities under their local authority's race equality scheme	Starting January 2003
Administer marriage law and register all marriages in Scotland	These processes are governed by statute and all marriages must be registered. The same information is gathered during registration for all	The Memorandum for the Guidance of Celebrants and posters providing guidance on marriage are currently being translated into a number of languages	Available January 2003

Process	Background and how we measure race equality outcomes	Planned improvements	Timing
REGISTRATION	<p>Civil marriages are carried out by Registrars who are employed by local authorities. These local Registrars are subject to the policies (including race relations) set by their local authority. In accordance with these policies, some local authorities provide tailored services where a particular need exists (e.g. translation leaflets)</p> <p>A leaflet on Marriage in Scotland is made available in a number of languages</p> <p>Religious marriages are carried out by celebrants approved by the Registrar General. Approved celebrants are ministers, clergymen, pastors or priests of religious bodies or others who are affiliated to religious bodies. There is also provision for others who wish to conduct marriages (e.g. a minister from another country) to apply for temporary approval</p>		





## **Making the public records we hold available (Medium significance to Race Equality)**

Our function of making the open records we hold available to the public and other organisations involves the following high-level process.

<b>Process</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Give access to records held by the Registrar General	Medium

The following table sets out our existing and intended actions in relation to this high-level process:

Process	Background and how we measure race equality outcomes	Planned improvements	Timing
<p>RECORD ACCESS</p> <p>Give access to records held by the Registrar General</p>	<p>Access to our open records is available to the public at New Register House, at local registration offices and over the Internet</p> <p>We carry out customer surveys and seek feedback via our Internet service. We have never received any comment or criticism relating to race equality</p> <p>We market our genealogy services around the world, focusing mainly on regions where Scottish ancestry would be of particular interest</p>	<p>A comprehensive customer survey is planned and this will include a specific question on ethnicity</p>	<p>December 2002</p>



## Maintaining a Register of NHS patients (Low significance to Race Equality)

Our function of maintaining a register of NHS patients involves the following high-level process:

<b>Process</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Updating the register with births and deaths and recording movements between health authorities. Flagging records where the patient is on a medical survey and notifying survey sponsors of deaths	Low

The following table sets out our existing and intended actions in relation to this high-level process:

<b>Process</b>	<b>Background and how we measure race equality outcomes</b>	<b>Planned improvements</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<p>NHSCR</p> <p>Updating the register with births and deaths and recording movements between health authorities. Flagging records where the patient is on a medical survey and notifying survey sponsors of deaths</p>	<p>We maintain the NHSCR on behalf of the Health Department of the Scottish Executive. Our responsibilities relate to updating for births and deaths and recording movements between areas.</p>	<p>A review of the uses made of NHSCR will be carried out during 2003 and we will take account of the findings</p>	<p>December 2003</p>

## **Purchasing goods and services (Low significance to Race Equality)**

We follow the Scottish Executive procurement policy and the general UK Government purchasing rules. While the policy does not specifically address Race Equality it nevertheless is founded on the fundamental principle of fair and open processes across the board.

<b>Process</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Purchase all goods and services for the Department	Low

The following table sets out our existing and intended actions in relation to this high-level process:

Process	Background and how we measure race equality outcomes	Planned improvements	Timing
PURCHASING			
Purchase all goods and services for the department	We follow government procurement guidelines which ensure that all purchases are undertaken on a fair and value for money basis (therefore there must be no discrimination on racial grounds)	None	Not applicable

## **To arrange learning opportunities for staff (Medium significance to Race Equality)**

We have an in-house training team who are well placed to ensure that our training and induction material makes reference as appropriate to our duties under the Race Relations Act.

<b>Process</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Arrange learning opportunities for all staff	Medium
Arrange induction for all new staff	Medium

The following table sets out our existing and intended actions in relation to these high-level processes:

<b>Process</b>	<b>Background and how we measure race equality outcomes</b>	<b>Planned improvements</b>	<b>Timing</b>
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT			
Arrange learning opportunities for all staff	For every training opportunity we arrange or provide, we seek feedback from those who attended	We ensure all our training material contains appropriate reference to equal opportunities. After the publication of the GROS Race Equality Scheme we will ensure all training material, where appropriate, refers to it specifically and to the Race Relations Act	30 November 2002
Arrange induction for all new staff	We seek feedback from all new staff on the induction programme	We ensure the induction material contains appropriate reference to equal opportunities. After the publication of the GROS Race Equality Scheme we will ensure all induction material, where appropriate, refers to it specifically and to the Race Relations Act	30 November 2002