Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Template

Section 1: Details of the policy/practice/project

| **Information required** | **Enter information below** |
| --- | --- |
| Department/Team responsible | People team |
| Name of Policy, Practice or Project being assessed | Reverse mentoring programme |
| Purpose and anticipated outcomes | The programme connects senior leaders in FLS with staff with protected characteristics which are not well-represented in FLS, to improve the awareness and confidence of leaders on diversity and inclusion topics.  This project contributes to the following Forestry and Land Scotland equality outcomes:   1. Staff from and across all protected characteristics feel increasingly safe and included. 2. Our policies, processes and practices continue to have a positive impact on equality and people from and across protected characteristics. |
| Is this a new or existing Policy, Practice or Project? | New practice based on a successful pilot programme |
| List of participants in Equality Impact Assessment process | Ella Hashemi – Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Manager  Doug Mitchell – Mentoring Lead |
| Date Assessment started | 12.03.2024 |
| Completion date | 10.06.2024 |
| Who is likely to be affected?  *E.g. employees, visitors, contractors, women, men, young people, older people, people with disabilities etc.* | Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) employees. In particular:   * colleagues with protected characteristics which are under-represented * senior staff, primarily PB2 and above |

Section 2: Collecting information

What evidence is available about the needs of relevant groups? Please consider demographic data, including census information, research, consultation and survey reports, feedback and complaints, case law, others knowledge and experience. Please refer to the list of evidence on the EqIA page of the intranet.

| **Details** | **Source of evidence** |
| --- | --- |
| **Sex**  female 34%  male 66%    **Age**  aged 39 years and under 36%  aged 40 and over 64%    **Sexual Orientation**  Heterosexual 52%  LGBT+ 3%  Prefer not to share 45%    **Race**  White 92%  Minority ethnicity 1%  Prefer not to share 7%    **Gender reassignment**  Yes \*  No 63%  Prefer not to share 37%    **Disability**  Yes 6%  No 88%  Prefer not to share 6%    **Marital Status**  Single 31%  Partner 13%  Married or Civil Partnership 47%  Widowed \*  Divorced 4%  Separated 2%  Prefer not to share 2%    **Religion**  Religious 15%  Agnostic 4%  Atheist 8%  Prefer not to share 73%  \* figure is <1% and has therefore been suppressed to protect anonymity. | FLS Workforce Equality Data, March 2024 |
| Trial data: disabled, LGBT+ and ethnic minority staff were involved in trial as reverse mentors, and they mentored senior leaders in pay band 2 and above.  Mentors reported that participating in the programme helped to:   * + Gain insight into the perspective of senior leaders   + Receive input on career development   + Develop new skills as a mentor   + Share lived experience   Mentees perspective:   * 100% of mentees strongly agreed that they gained greater awareness of issues faced by staff with protected characteristics which aren’t well represented at FLS * 100% of mentees agreed or strongly agreed they have developed a broader understanding of inclusion * 100% of mentees have started to apply their learning into their work   Mentees commented that:   * “I can see much more clearly now what leaders need to do in FLS to improve aspects of ED&I” * “The most tangible thing I am taking away is to find out more about how best to work with a team member with ADHD” * “invaluable” * “powerful, thought-provoking” | Reverse mentoring trial – evaluation focus groups and surveys for mentors and mentees, February 2024 |

| **Detail below if there are any other groups to be consulted** |
| --- |
| Consultation and feedback has focused on the learning from the reverse mentoring trial programme. This has given us confidence that we are creating a space where staff with minority protected characteristics feel comfortable to share their lived experiences, and senior staff feel safe to learn and be challenged. |

Section 3: Impacts

Has the research and consultation identified any potential for impacts on those with the following protected characteristics:

| **Protected Characteristic** | **Potential Impact (yes or no)** | **Explain** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Age**  *E.g. older people, children including looked after children, young people including care leavers* | No | Our age distribution is 36% of our staff are 39 years and under, 64% are 40 years and over. Though we aren’t focusing on age as a protected characteristic within the reverse mentoring programme, we’ve included the following statement in the comms: “If you are interested but have a protected characteristic that isn’t on the list, just let us know and we will do our best to accommodate you”. This ensures that older or younger staff who would like to share about age in the workplace are not excluded. |
| **Disability**  *E.g. long term mental health conditions, neurodiversity, physical impairments* | Yes - positive | In FLS, 5% of our staff have declared as having one or more disability. The reverse mentoring programme gives disabled staff, including those who are neurodivergent, the opportunity to share their lived experiences and how disability affects their day to day life. Sharing this with senior leaders will support greater disability awareness in the organisation.  In the programme’s application form we will ask participants if they have any reasonable adjustments for the programme and will either implement locally or work with HR to implement them. This is also noted in the programme’s risk register. |
| **Gender reassignment**  *Where a person is living as a different gender to that at birth* | Yes - positive | Though there are no staff who have currently declared as undergoing or having undergone gender reassignment, the reverse mentoring programme creates a clear structure for staff from minority protected characteristics such as gender reassignment to share their lived experience with senior leaders, in order to support senior leaders to work and manage more inclusively.  In the programme application form, we will ask participants for their pronouns and preferred name |
| **Pregnancy and maternity**  *Including breastfeeding* | No | We are not focusing on recruiting staff with experience of pregnancy and maternity in the reverse mentoring programme. If a staff member participating in the programme went on maternity leave during the programme, we would pause their participation in the programme and on their return to work we’d review their interest to return to the programme. This has worked successfully in the FLS technical mentoring programme.  Though we aren’t focusing on this protected characteristic within the reverse mentoring programme, we’ve included the following statement in the comms: “If you are interested but have a protected characteristic that isn’t on the list, just let us know and we will do our best to accommodate you”. |
| **Race, ethnicity, colour, nationality or national origins**  *Including gypsies or travellers, refugees or asylum seekers* | Yes - positive | Minority ethnic staff make up 1% of the FLS workforce. The programme provides a forum for mentors from ethnic minority backgrounds to talk about race and how it impacts on their day-to-day working life. This can support senior leaders to become more racially aware, and thereby encourage greater literacy and confidence in talking about race within the organisation.  We require all programme participants to have completed their Engaging the Bystander programme before applying to the programme – so that if programme participants feel uncomfortable or harmed by the words or actions of another participant, they feel empowered with the Bystander toolkit to address this by sharing with the programme coordinators, addressing the harm-doer or seeking support from peers/allies. This is also detailed in the programme risk register. |
| **Religion or belief**  *Including non-belief* | Yes - positive | Though we aren’t focusing on religion or belief as a protected characteristic within the reverse mentoring programme, we’ve included the following statement in the comms: “If you are interested but have a protected characteristic that isn’t on the list, just let us know and we will do our best to accommodate you”. This ensures that staff with a religion or belief who would like to share about that within the programme are not excluded. To prevent discrimination against religious staff who become mentors/mentees on the programme, the application form asks participants about any adjustments they need. |
| **Sex/Gender** | Yes - positive | Female staff make up 34% of the workforce, whilst male staff comprise 66% of FLS.  The programme provides a forum for mentors who are female or from gender minorities to talk about gender and how it impacts on their day-to-day working life. This can support senior leaders to become more aware of gender issues, and thereby encourage greater literacy and confidence in talking about gender within the organisation. A risk with the programme is staff disclose harmful behaviour within their mentoring partnership or they themselves experience harmful behaviour on the programme. Participating in the programme requires successful completion of the Engaging the Bystander training, as well as participating in the induction sessions on emotional intelligence. |
| **Marriage and civil partnership** | No | The reverse mentoring programme does not specifically look at marriage and civil partnership, though this theme may be addressed by LGBT+ mentors. |
| **Sexual Orientation** | Yes - positive | Research (Frost, 2006) finds that LGB staff are more than double as likely to be harassed or bullied compared to staff as a whole.  The reverse mentoring programme will provide a forum for mentors to talk about their sexual orientation and how it impacts on their day-to-day working life and beyond. This can support senior leaders to become more aware of LGBT+ issues, and thereby encourage greater literacy and confidence in talking about sexual orientation and LGBT+ issues within the organisation. |

Is there any evidence that the policy may result in any less favourable treatment, discrimination, harassment or victimization as detailed below:

| **Potential outcome of the policy** | **Delete as appropriate** | **If yes, give details of the potential outcome and any project modifications to mitigate the risk** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Result in less favourable treatment for particular groups | No evidence |  |
| Give rise to direct or indirect discrimination | No evidence |  |
| Give rise to unlawful harassment or victimisation | No evidence |  |

Section 4: Meeting our General Equality Duty

| **Enter below which aspects of the Policy, Practice or Project seek to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation** |
| --- |
| The main aim of the reverse mentoring programme is improving the literacy of senior leaders around diversity and inclusion topics, and supporting them to lead and manage more inclusively and with confidence. Discrimination can appear in many forms and sometimes be unintended. The programme will support staff from the most under-represented groups in the organisation to have access to senior leaders and share about their lived experience, to make the needs of under-represented groups more known about and accessible.   All participants within the reverse mentoring programme will have completed Engaging the Bystander training before beginning a mentoring partnership. This means that if any inappropriate language or behaviour arise within the reverse mentoring programme, mentors and mentees will be trained in how to intervene and address this, with support from programme coordinators and HR as needed.  The reverse mentoring agreement also includes a section on confidentiality to protect the identities of staff participating in the programme. |

| **Enter below which aspects of the Policy, Practice or Project seek to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not** |
| --- |
| Through the application form, we will identify staff with workplace adjustments to ensure their adjustments are implemented within the programme.  It is an intended aim of the reverse mentoring programme that the mentoring partnerships improve the confidence and awareness of senior leaders around diversity and inclusion. The evaluation of the trial programme showed a positive impact here:   * 100% of mentees strongly agreed that they gained greater awareness of issues faced by staff with protected characteristics which aren’t well represented at FLS * 100% of mentees agreed or strongly agreed they have developed a broader understanding of inclusion * 100% of mentees have started to apply their learning into their work   We are encouraged by the results from the trial and anticipate that the full programme will also improve diversity and inclusion literacy within senior leaders, which will support senior leaders to act more confidently in removing barriers for staff with protected characteristics, which in turn will help to advance equality of opportunity between staff with minority protected characteristics and other staff. |

| **Enter below which aspects of the Policy, Practice or Project seek to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not** |
| --- |
| The reverse mentoring programme provides a confidential partnership for staff with minority protected characteristics to talk openly about different situations, backgrounds and impairments with senior leaders – and thereby improve relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The reverse mentoring trial showed that the programme creates a safe space to facilitate these conversations and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. |

Section 5: Outcome of the assessment

| **Outcome of the assessment on the Policy, Practice or Project** | **Enter detail below** |
| --- | --- |
| No major change | X |
| Adjust the Policy, Practice or Project |  |
| Continue to Policy, Practice or Project |  |
| Stop and remove the Policy, Practice or Project |  |

| **Detail below recommendations, including action required, to address any negative impacts identified** |
| --- |
|  |

Section 6: Monitoring

| **Describe below how you will monitor the impact of this Policy, Practice or Project**  *E.g. performance indicators used, other monitoring arrangements, who will monitor progress, criteria used to measure achievement of outcomes etc.* |
| --- |
| Each iteration of the programme will include a mid-way check in with the mentors and mentees (in two groups) and an end-of-programme evaluation. Midway check ins will focus on mentoring partnership rapport, safety, confidentiality and any issues arising. Evaluations will look at drawing out learning and any final reflections, comments or issues.  For each reverse mentoring programme:  - mid-way check ins with the mentors and mentees to see how the programme is going, is it achieving its intended aims, and a wellbeing check in  - end of programme check ins, looking at similar themes |

| **When and how is the Policy, Practice or Project due to be reviewed?** |
| --- |
| Annually: lessons learned session between coordinators and any interested staff who have participated in the programme  Every three years: formal review of the programme |

Section 7: Sign off

| **Required information** | **Enter information below** |
| --- | --- |
| Date sent to Equality and Diversity Manager | 27/5/24 |
| Comments from Equality and Diversity Manager | Not applicable, part of the project team |
| Date signed off by Equality and Diversity Manager | 03/06/2024 |

| **Details of Senior Manager who has signed off this Equality Impact Assessment** | **Enter information below** |
| --- | --- |
| Name | Julie Fitzpatrick |
| Title | Head of People & OD |
| Date approved | 11/6/24 |