

A photograph of three people enjoying a meal outdoors at dusk. In the foreground, a man in a green jacket is partially visible, reaching for food on a grill. In the middle ground, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue plaid jacket and a red top, is smiling and looking down at the grill. To her right, a woman with dark curly hair, wearing a white and red knit beanie and a yellow and white plaid shirt, is also smiling and looking at the grill. They are gathered around a grill with skewers of food and corn. The background shows a wooden structure and a view of a landscape under a twilight sky.

**VISITSCOTLAND'S EQUALITY AND  
DIVERSITY MAINSTREAMING REPORT**  
2025

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# FORWARD

**I am proud to present our Equality Mainstreaming Report, showcasing our commitment to promoting an inclusive environment for our employees at VisitScotland, in our work with tourism businesses and communities across Scotland and for the visitors who spend time experiencing all that our country has to offer.**

At VisitScotland we recognise that the world is increasingly interconnected and diverse, and that our focus on prioritising diversity and inclusion in our workforce is fundamental to success in our aim to be an inclusive organisation, committed to providing equal opportunities for our staff throughout their employment.

Following the pandemic, our way of working has changed, and we now have a diverse range of talent working in a hybrid manner across Scotland. So now more than ever it is important for us to ensure our approach fosters a sense of belonging for our employees, regardless of where they are based or how often they see colleagues face to face.

This report outlines our approach to integrating equality considerations in all our ways of working at VisitScotland. We believe that by mainstreaming equality we can enhance our services, engage with a broader audience and help to make the tourism experience more inclusive across the country.

This report details our progress in achieving our three equality outcomes, highlighting key achievements and identifying areas for improvement.



**Vicki Miller,  
Chief Executive**



# OUR LEGAL DUTIES

## **VisitScotland (VS) as a public body is bound by the Equality Act 2010 to comply with the Equality Duties, both the General Duty and the Specific Duties 2012.**

These are contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the public sector equality duty), and The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 as amended.

The General Equality Duty that these Equality Outcomes are intended to support is:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The previous Public Sector Equality Duties shifted the onus away from an individual having to seek redress after suffering discrimination onto public authorities being required to take a proactive and organised approach to tackling ‘institutional discrimination’. These duties aimed to mainstream equality into public sector culture in practical and demonstrable ways, which VisitScotland has achieved over the last fifteen years, set out in our previous Equality Mainstreaming Reports every four years, with an update every two years. Previous VisitScotland Equality Reports can be found [here](#).

## **The Specific Duties 2012**

The Specific Duties were created by secondary legislation in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. These Specific Duties came into force on 27 May 2012 and were subsequently amended by:

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2015, and The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2016.

As a listed authority, VisitScotland is required to:

- report on mainstreaming the equality duty
- publish equality outcomes and report progress
- assess and review policies and practices
- gather and use employee information
- use information on members or board members gathered by the Scottish Ministers
- publish gender pay gap information (where they have at least 20 employees)
- publish statements on equal pay (where they have at least 20 employees)
- consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement
- publish in a manner that is accessible

# OUR EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OBJECTIVES

At VisitScotland, we have fostered an inclusive work environment. At the heart of our approach we aim to:

- Nurture a culture in which all employees can be open and respectful of one another, promoting positive working relationships and constructive dialogue reflecting our values as an organisation.
- In meeting our Public Sector Equality Duties, we set stretching Equality Outcomes for ourselves, outcomes that reflect our ambition as an employer of choice in Scotland .

Our first Equality Mainstreaming Report was published in 2013. The last four-year report was published in April 2021. An Interim report was published in April 2023, with revised equality outcomes.



# OUR EQUALITY OUTCOMES

- 1. VisitScotland will increase the number of black and ethnic minority staff who work in our organisation from 1% to 4% by 2025.**
- 2. VisitScotland will work to increase the diversity of our Board, specifically increasing representation from black and ethnic minorities and disabled people by 2025.**
- 3. VisitScotland will work with the tourism and events industry to ensure that disabled visitors and older visitors are better informed about the accessibility of tourism venues in Scotland.**

## Where we are

As the national agency for tourism and events, VisitScotland works to benefit Scotland by driving the visitor economy, growing its value to Scotland.

Originally the Scottish Tourist Board, we were established over 55 years ago with a remit to promote the development of tourism.

In recent years the tourism and events landscape has changed fundamentally, and we have continuously evolved to maximise our impact and respond to the changes in visitor behaviour and business needs.

Our expertise in sales and marketing has been central to enhancing Scotland's global reputation as a must visit destination for decades, however as the sector has become increasingly competitive, we have continued to evolve to meet these challenges. We have spent the past 18 months undergoing a comprehensive Strategic Change Programme, designed to reshape the organisation for the future. As a key partner in Team Scotland, our renewed focus is on the interwoven functions that are essential to drive sustainable growth for our economy - place development, business and experience development, and market development. All underpinned by the right skills, technology, data and insight.

These focus areas are designed to stimulate and manage responsible demand, ensure a world-class portfolio of events, grow local visitor economies, and help develop profitable businesses and internationalisation opportunities.

Within these areas of work, we continue to adapt, using insight along with our skills and expertise to identify and implement the strategies that will grow the value of the visitor economy.

We have already made bold decisions to focus our expertise and resources on the areas we know we can make the greatest impact. This includes evolving our business support model to reach more businesses, sharing our knowledge both online and in person to help businesses grow, and reach new audiences and markets. Similarly, our approach to information means we are now reaching visitors at that pre-arrival stage of their journey, inspiring and influencing them to plan and book their trips before they travel. By doing this we can influence where, when and how long they visit.

These changes to the way we work are crucial if we are to maximise the impact we make with the funding and resources that we have.

## Where We Are Going

Our role has evolved as the world around us has changed. Our future focus remains on economic growth, using our people, data and insight to evolve our approach to ensure we are reaching the right audiences with the right messages, offering the right support to businesses, and prioritising the markets that are core to driving sustainable growth now and in the future.

By focusing our resources and harnessing our skills and expertise around our revised strategic priorities we can attract investment into Scotland, help businesses to grow, and leverage tourism and events as a force for good for all of Scotland's people and places. This ultimately builds Scotland's international profile as a leading place to visit, live, work, study and do business.

However, this is not something we can do in isolation, we will continue to develop innovative partnerships with like-minded private and public organisations who put responsible tourism and climate action at their centre. Our partnership work is designed to ensure we are as efficient as possible, amplifying the impact and reach of our own budgets and enabling us to reach new audiences, influence more responsible travel behaviours and maximise the value of every visit.

Our new Strategic Framework sets out how we will deliver value for the visitor economy, informed by the industry strategies for tourism and events – Scotland Outlook 2030 and Scotland the Perfect Stage 2024-2035.

VisitScotland's activities directly support the interwoven ambitions and outcomes of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG), Scottish Government's National Performance Framework (NPF) and Scottish Government's National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET).



# OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



## Place Development

Support regional economic strategies and develop our destinations by leveraging the opportunities of public and private sector investment across tourism and events.



## Business and Experience Development

Deliver sector-specific advice and support including helping tourism and events businesses to develop new products and visitor experiences, reaching new audiences and markets.



## Market Development

Attract inbound leisure, association conferences, business and corporate travel, and major events, through a mix of strategic marketing, intermediary, partner and media relations activities.



## Organisation Development

Enhance our organisation insight, capability, planning and compliance, set up with the right roles, skills, technology and data to maximise opportunity.

**Organisation Development** is a key pillar of our Framework. In attracting and retaining a skilled workforce we seek diversity and a range of skills, talent and experience that blend to deliver our role as an economic growth agency.



# EQUALITY OUTCOME ONE

VisitScotland will increase the number of black and ethnic minority staff who work in our organisation from 1% to 4% by 2025.

## We aimed to:

- Promote the range and depth of employment opportunities and career pathways available at VisitScotland to greater numbers of black and ethnic minority candidates.
- Increase the number of black and ethnic minority young people applying for Modern Apprenticeship and Graduate placements.

## What we have achieved:

- we have increased employees who have declared they are from a black or ethnic minority background to 2.8%.
- 17% of our Graduates have declared they are from a black or ethnic minority background.

## Situation/Evidence:

- Only 1% of our workforce declared themselves from a black or ethnic minority background when we analysed our workforce data in 2021.
- None of our graduates or modern apprentices were from a black or ethnic minority background in 2021.
- While the 2022 Census indicates that 7.1% of the Scottish population are from a black or ethnic minority background, this decreases to 2.1% in more rural areas when analysing data by geographic spread. VisitScotland specifically promotes job opportunities across the whole country, with 41% of current our workforce based outside the central belt and/or city locations further decreasing the diversity in recruitment candidate pools.

## What we said we would do:

- We would create a new resourcing policy that would promote inclusivity and fairness in attracting and recruiting candidates.
- We would update our flexible working policy to give flexibility from day one of employment ahead of any legislative changes.
- We would retain our hybrid working policy, offering greater levels of flexibility in terms of work location and work style.
- We would work in partnership with external organisations to promote opportunities.
- We would work with academia to promote Graduate/ youth employment opportunities.
- We would utilise our own channels to better promote the variety, breadth and depth of job opportunities within the organisation.
- We would work with our hiring managers to ensure fairness at all stages of the attraction and recruitment process.

## The context in which we have worked to meet these targets:

VisitScotland continues to undergo significant change, re-shaping the organisation. Our resourcing processes have been operating within this context since early 2024. External recruitment has been very limited as we work to restructure and redeploy existing employees. In addition to this, the Scottish Government has placed a pause on public sector external recruitment.

## What we have achieved:

### Attraction and recruitment

- We have utilised online job channels and our corporate website ([visitscotland.org](https://visitscotland.org)) to promote job roles, highlighting the breadth and depth of job roles and opportunities across the business.
- We have provided Human Resources Business Partner advice and support to all recruiting managers to ensure fairness and equality throughout the recruitment process.
- We have continued, to offer flexibility in our recruitment processes, ensuring both in-person and video interviews were available dependent upon candidate needs. Our recruitment process is aligned to the criteria set out in the 'Disability Confident' Level 2 award.
- We have consulted with partner organisations e.g., Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations (CEMVO) to advise on our recruitment strategy.
- We updated our flexible working policy ahead of the legislative change and offered flexible working from day one of employment.
- We updated our hybrid working policy, offering a range of office-based locations across Scotland. Our vacancies are now advertised Scotland-wide to attract the widest pool of candidates from across the country.

- We have created a new resourcing policy, inclusive by its very nature, supporting our 'Disability Confident' Level 2 award. This policy focuses on recruitment, secondment opportunities and redeployment.
- We have worked with our website project team to redesign the 'working for us' pages on [visitscotland.org](https://visitscotland.org), ensuring the user experience is greatly improved. This included improved content, reflecting existing and aspirational levels of diversity within VisitScotland, with a separate page dedicated to equality and diversity.
- We have developed our policies to reflect the priorities in the Scottish Government Ethnic Minority toolkit.

### Youth employment

- We created Graduate and Modern Apprentice opportunities in areas of the business that have a strong alignment to specific academic institutions in Scotland, focusing specifically on digital marketing and technical jobs roles. We have adopted a biennial approach, where we prioritise digital/technical roles in one year and roles that lead to professional specialism, such as Accountancy and HR, in the alternative year.
- We trialled our participation at 'The Scottish Graduate Jobs Fair'. By participating in this event, we were able to engage with key Scottish academic institutions in a bid to increase the diversity of our candidate pool and raise awareness levels of VisitScotland as an employer. As a result, 36% of the candidates we interviewed were from black or ethnic minority communities. This figure will be used as a benchmark for the 2025 Equality report; we will compare the 2024/5 figures, and measure our success rate, both for those interviewed and those appointed.

- We worked with partnership with a variety of organisations, including academia and QA Apprenticeships to communicate and promote our Youth Employment Programme opportunities for 2023-2025.
- We promoted opportunities via LinkedIn and other corporate channels and the success of our youth employment programme. We developed content including graduate stories, testimonials, and HR blogs.
- We continue to consult with black and ethnic minority organisations including CEMVO and Black Professionals Scotland, as we develop and progress with our youth programme.
- We adjusted the format of our interview process, allowing candidates the opportunity to prepare in advance by providing them with interview tips and additional information about the interview format.

These changes lead to a 300% increase in the number of applications for 2023 compared to 2022. 36% of the candidates we interviewed were from black or ethnic minority communities.

## Our future commitments:

- We are in process of implementing a new recruitment system, 'Oracle Recruit'. This will introduce functionality to make it easier and more intuitive for internal and external candidates applying for job roles. During the implementation of the system, we will investigate the option of 'anonymous recruiting', removing candidate personal data as a tool to diversify candidate short-lists. The system will provide enhanced analytics and reporting capabilities, enabling us to track and measure our inclusive recruitment process more effectively. The system will also provide an improved candidate experience with a user-friendly more accessible interface from application stage to on-boarding.
- We will continue to promote job opportunities across Scotland using a variety of channels and networks to attract a diverse range of candidates.
- We will continue to train and educate hiring managers, ensuring that recruitment decisions are made without bias and that job roles are designed to attract a diverse candidate pool.
- We will continue to develop progress policies that will promote and enable flexibility in the workplace.



# EQUALITY OUTCOME TWO

We will work to increase the diversity of our Board, increasing our representation from both ethnic minorities and disabled people by 2025.

## We aimed to:

- Diversify the make-up of the Board with representation from black and ethnic minority people and disabled people.
- Embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our decision-making and to champion equality and inclusion at Board level.

## What we have achieved:

- Despite active promotion of Board Member vacancies through a range of channels and networks, no Board Members were appointed from a black or ethnic minority background. No data has been declared by Board members to determine whether any are disabled. VisitScotland has gender balance on the Board.
- Increased numbers of black and ethnic minority candidates did apply for VisitScotland Board Member vacancies advertised by Scottish Government in the last three years.

## Situation/Evidence:

- In 2021 the VisitScotland Board had gender balance but had no representation from black or ethnic minority communities. Analysis published in 2021 by the Ethical Standards Commissioner revealed that 3.7% of Non-Executive Board Members in Scotland identified as black or from a ‘visible’ ethnic minority.
- VisitScotland had no data to confirm whether any Board Member had a disability.

## What we said we would do:

- We would work proactively with the Scottish Government Public Appointments team to promote Board vacancies as they arose.
- We would connect with a range of organisations who could help promote Board Member vacancies.
- We would provide information to make the recruitment process more accessible to potential candidates from a range of backgrounds.

## The context in which we have worked to meet these targets:

As a Non-Departmental Public Body, VisitScotland Board Member recruitment is led by the Scottish Governments Public Appointments team. We work closely with Scottish Government when vacancies arise.

Two Non-Executive Board Member vacancies were advertised in 2022. In 2023, a further two vacancies were advertised along with a recruitment campaign to appoint a new Chair.

## What we achieved:

- Delivery of a seminar in partnership with 'Changing the Chemistry'. Accompanied by a representative from the black and ethnic community with Non-Executive Board Member experience, the seminar panel included the VisitScotland Chair, Chief Executive and Head of Human Resources and focused on the benefits of being on a public sector board – specifically the VisitScotland Board. The webinar had over 190 views and was aimed at encouraging candidates from a range of backgrounds. Changing the Chemistry shared this recording with their 500 members. The webinar was also shared via VisitScotland' corporate channels. A link to the recording can be found [here](#).
- A robust communication plan was created and implemented by VisitScotland to promote Board Member and Chairperson vacancies via a range of channels and to a diverse audience. This included online content and videos with former and current Board Members and direct communication from the Chairman to a range of organisations with a diverse membership.

As a result of our activities the following data was collected and provided by the Scottish Government Public Appointments team.

## 2022 recruitment campaign

### Applications received

- number of applicants for 2 vacancies – 35 applications
- gender breakdown of applicants – 43% of applications were women
- ethnicity breakdown of applicants – if declared. Data unavailable
- disability/no disability status of applicants – if declared. Data unavailable

### Short-listed candidates

- number of candidates interviewed for vacant roles – 12 applicants
- gender breakdown of candidates – 43% of those interviewed were women
- ethnicity of candidates – if declared, data unavailable
- disability/no disability status of candidates – if declared, data unavailable



## 2023 recruitment campaign

### Non-Executive Board Members, applications received

- number of applicants for 2 vacancies – 72 applications
- gender breakdown of applicants: 43% of applications were from women
- ethnicity breakdown of applicants – 7% of applications declared they were from an ethnic minority
- disability/no disability status of applicants – 10% of applications declared they were disabled

### Shortlisted candidates

- number of candidates interviewed for vacant roles – 15 applicants
- gender breakdown of candidates – 47% of those interviewed were women
- ethnicity of candidates – if declared – None of the candidates interviewed were black or ethnic minority
- disability/no disability status of candidates – if declared – 20% of those interviewed declared they were disabled

### Chairperson, applications received

- number of applicants – 8 applications
- gender breakdown of applicants – 63% of applications were women
- ethnicity breakdown of applicants – if declared – data not available
- disability/no disability status of applicants – if declared: data not available

### Shortlisted candidates

- number of candidates interviewed – 3 applicants
- gender breakdown of candidates – 33% of those interviewed were women
- ethnicity of candidates – if declared: data not available
- disability/no disability status of candidates – if declared: data not available

When comparing the data from 2022 to 2023, there is an increase in applications from black and ethnic candidates and candidates that declared they had a disability.

Non-Executive Board Appointments are made based on merit, an approach we fully support.

### Our future commitments

- we will continue to achieve a gender balance on our Board
- we will continue to work closely with the Scottish Governments Public Appointments team to promote vacancies as they arise to achieve greater levels of diversity
- we will continue to take a planned approach to communicating and promoting Non-Executive Board Member vacancies through our own channels and networks as they arise
- we will give due consideration to options to co-opt Non-Executive Board Members for a fixed period, providing an opportunity to diversify the Board

# EQUALITY OUTCOME THREE

Protected characteristics – disability and age

## Outcome:

Disabled visitors and older visitors are better informed about the accessibility of tourism venues in Scotland and will have access to accurate and relevant accessibility information for a minimum of 100 visitor attraction and accommodation businesses in 6 regions of Scotland, increasing opportunities for them to participate in Scottish tourism and cultural heritage activities by 2025.

## We aimed to:

To create a selection of itineraries highlighting tourism venues with specific access facilities and services and ensuring accurate and relevant descriptions of the facilities are available by:

- Work with a recognised disability support organisation – AccessAble, to address the difficulties many disabled people have in identifying tourism products which meet their access requirements.
- Commission AccessAble auditors to conduct access surveys of each venue which would form the basis of a detailed access guide for each venue.
- Work with tourism businesses and encourage them to undertake disability customer care training by using our free training tool.

## The General Duty that this outcome is intended to support:

- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

## Inequality problem we are trying to address :

From evidence gathered, disabled people, including people with cognitive impairments such as dementia, experience barriers to accessing holidays in Scotland.

- We aim to connect disabled people, families with disabled children and older people with accessible accommodation and tourism experiences by publishing on our website, detailed itineraries for six regions of Scotland with links to venue access guides.
- We will also seek to help improve the standard of customer care offered by the venues featured, providing them with advice and tips on welcoming disabled visitors.

## Situation/Evidence:

- VisitBritain's Accessibility – Non-participation report, May 2018 stated 306,000 British adults with an impairment did not take a domestic trip in the last 12 months due to the lack of accessibility information and/or facilities. This represented a loss of £83 million to UK the economy. Our industry engagement programme is focused on supporting tourism businesses to address two of the key barriers faced by disabled people; poor customer service and the lack of venue accessibility information, by offering support and training materials to help them understand the market and provide improved customer service. We have created a free to use online portal to assist tourism venues and events in creating a tailored accessibility guide detailing their facilities and services to published on their website.
- IPSOS – Tracking the Coronavirus Report, Scotland has found that older people (over 55) are more anxious about returning to events than younger people (under 35). Our activity focuses on promoting the use of accessibility guides, produced by tourism venues and events to articulate the accessibility facilities and services they provide, together with specific information on the business's Coronavirus safety measures.

- Euans Guide Survey - EuansGuide.com is the disabled access review website where disabled people, their family, friends and carers can find and share reviews on the accessibility of places around the UK and beyond. Since 2014 they have been asking disabled people their opinions on accessibility in public places. The survey was created for anybody who has ever had to consider disabled access before going somewhere, whether that be a restaurant, shop, theatre, hotel or anywhere else. It is the longest running survey of its kind here in the UK. Key findings from their last survey in 2019:
  - the vast majority (93%) of disabled people try to find information on a place's accessibility before visiting somewhere new
  - It is not uncommon for this information to be inaccurate (77%) or hard to find (70% of people are using two or more sources)
  - 79% have experienced a disappointing trip or had to change plans at the last minute because of poor accessibility
  - more than half (53%) of disabled people don't feel confident about visiting new places
  - 83% are more likely to visit somewhere new if they can find access information about it beforehand
- The most common barriers identified in the survey were:
  - not being able to get in and around the building
  - not being able to participate in the same ways as others
  - not having access to a toilet that suits their requirements

The responses to the 2019 Access Survey suggest that some progress is being made, but there is still a lot more that could be done to improve access.

### What we said we would do:

AccessAble would produce digital access guides for approximately 200 venues across seven regions of Scotland, which exceeds the number set in our equality objective above, and to do this each venue had to have either an onsite access audit or a guided assessment, via video call, conducted by one of AccessAble's surveyors. These assessments were scheduled to take place in February and March 2023 and Autumn 2024.

Once the access audit or assessment took place, the information would be collated and quality checked, the access guides would then be published onto [visitscotland.com](https://visitscotland.com), and the venues would be featured in an Accessible Highlights in Scotland regional guide. The venue's detailed access guide would be published on AccessAble's website and mobile app. Featured venues will also be encouraged to add a link to their own access guide on their website and social media channels.

Once the guides are published, we would work with AccessAble to obtain feedback from their Ambassadors' Network, which was set up in 2018. The ambassadors represent a variety of impairment groups, ages, and backgrounds and ten members of the network are included on the Shaw Trust Disability Power 100 List.

### What we have achieved:

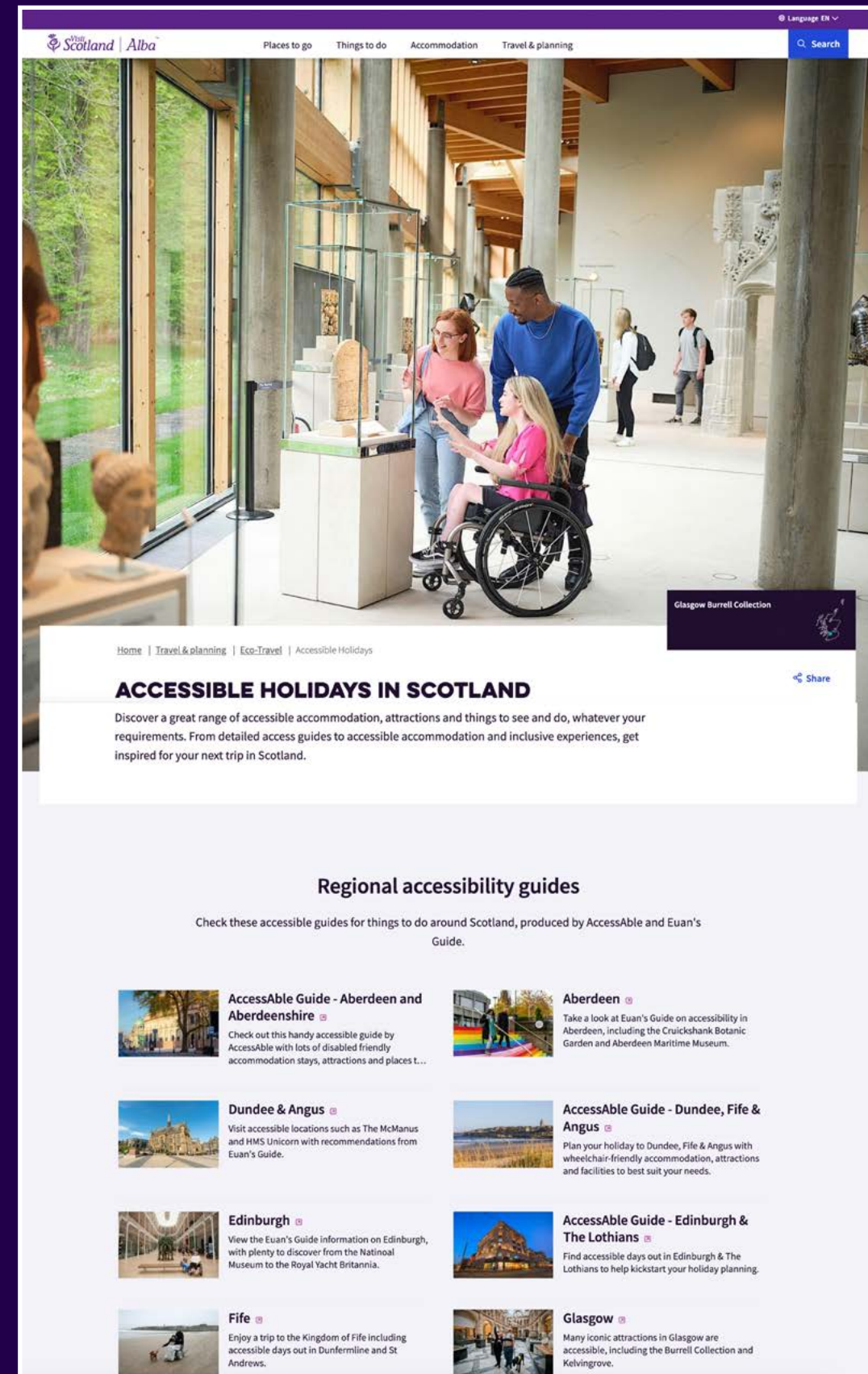
Since setting the equality outcome in 2022 we have been continuing to highlight a selection of accessible venues in seven regions of Scotland by creating a series of regional guides and linking to detailed accessibility information in the form of individual venue access guides. The project aims to inspire, and help disabled and older customers to plan an overnight visit or day trip and connect with accessible venues in these regions.

A tendering process was undertaken to appoint an accessibility specialist in October 2022. AccessAble, the largest provider of quality-assured accessibility information in the UK, was appointed in December 2022 to work with us over the next 24 months to conduct access audits/assessments and provide detailed access guides for over 200 businesses. Shortly before the tendering process began, the project was communicated to relevant accommodation, attraction and restaurant tourism businesses in the following regions:

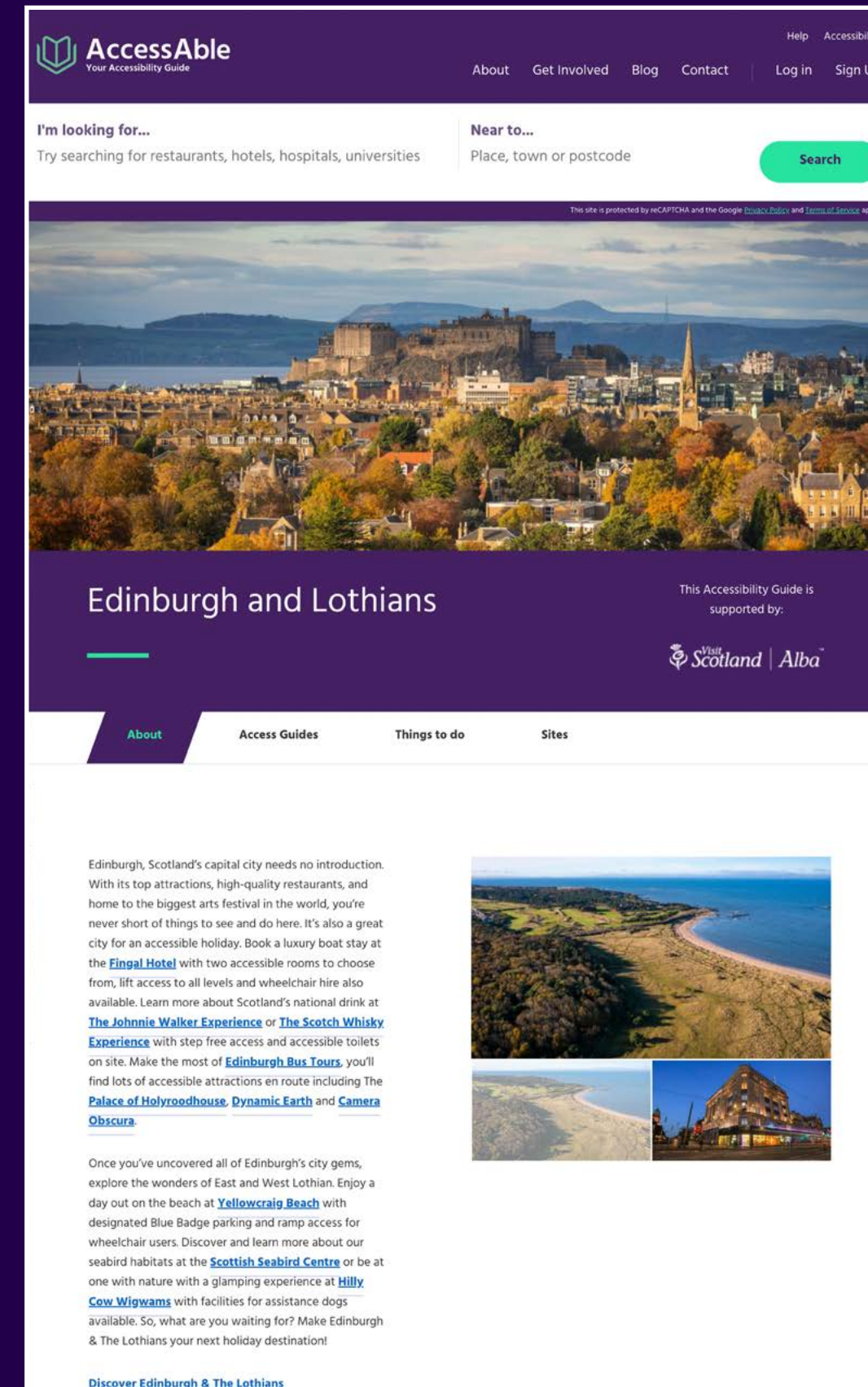
1. Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire
2. Edinburgh and Lothians
3. Fife, Dundee and Angus
4. Perthshire
5. Highlands
6. Loch Lomond, Trossachs, Stirling and the Forth Valley
7. South of Scotland

As inclusion in the project was restricted to venues who had accessible facilities or services, minimum access criteria were developed in discussion with key stakeholder groups. Interested venues had to meet the minimum criteria to be eligible for inclusion in the project. Over 150 businesses responded declaring an interest to be part of the project.

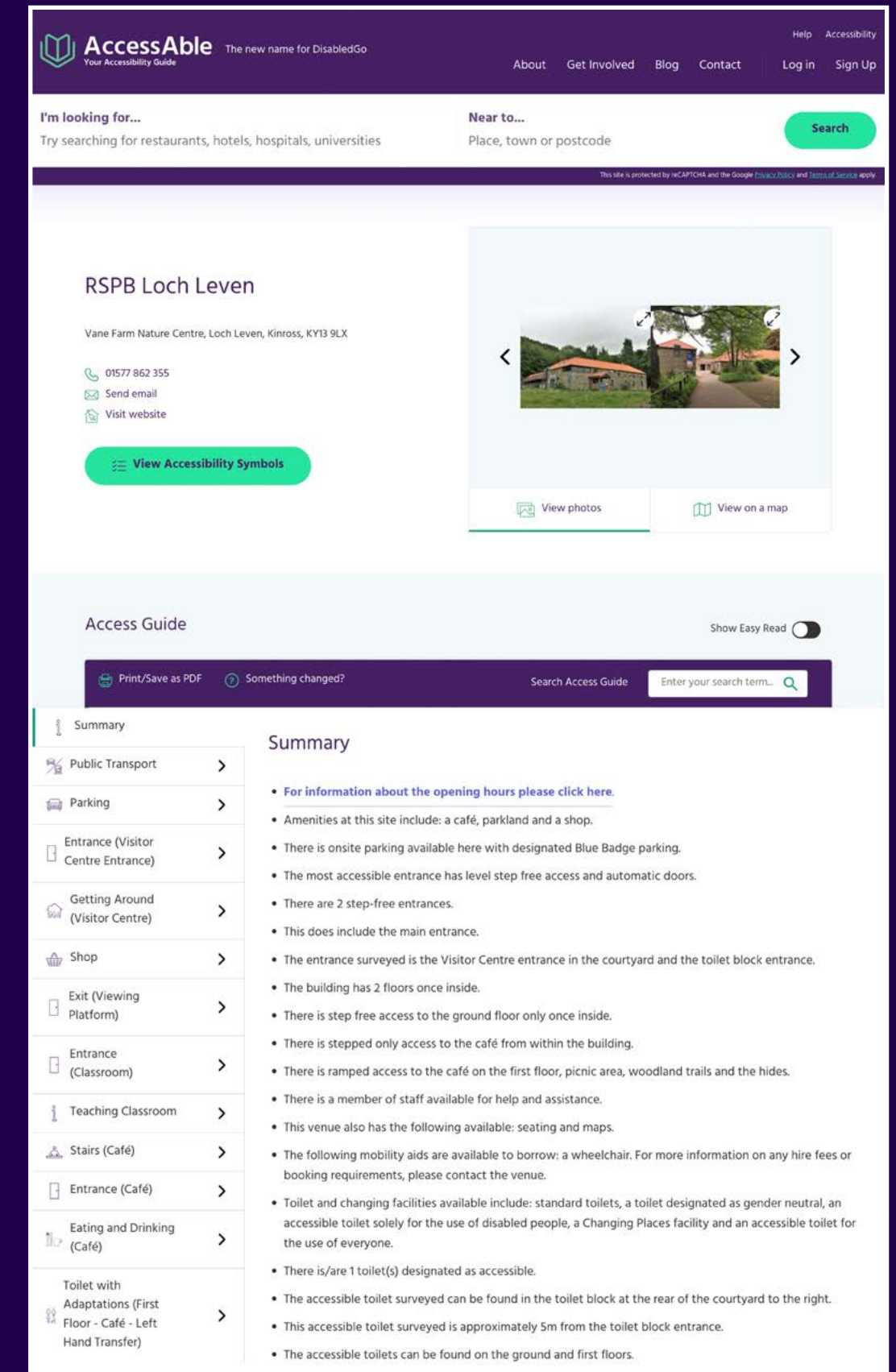
**Over 150 guides have already been produced and have been published onto AccessAble's website, which is used by over six million people each year.** Featured venues are also encouraged to add a link to their own access guide on their website and to use it on their social media channels. The venue's detailed access guide will also feature on the businesses' visitScotland.com web listing, allowing users of our tourism site the ability to search for venues with an access guide. Examples of the regional guides and an individual access guide are shown here:



[Accessible Holidays in Scotland | VisitScotland](#)



[Edinburgh and Lothians | AccessAble](#)



[RSPB Loch Leven | AccessAble](#)

## Impact of the project

Working in partnership with an established tourism training consultancy called Welcome to Excellence, VisitScotland developed a specific tourism-related customer service course, Welcoming All Customers. The class-room style course was first introduced in 2023. All participants of the Accessible Highlights project were invited to attend either Welcoming All Customers training or use an online Disability Essential course to train their customer services staff as an added benefit of the project. As part of VisitScotland's Purple 365 membership, businesses also benefited from free access to a training webinar series. Webinars cover a broad range of topics, including ADHD, accessibility, mental health in the workplace, and inclusive marketing and communications training. Sessions were recorded and could be accessed by viewers at a time convenient to them. The series was also promoted on our industry website, LinkedIn and in our industry newsletter.

Approximately 30 of the Accessible Highlights businesses accessed at least one of training courses offered.

The Scotch Whisky Experience and Archerfield Walled Garden are examples of businesses who have undertaken accessibility work since being part of the Accessible Highlights project.

### The Scotch Whisky Experience

- They have enhanced their existing written access statement by creating a video access guide.
- Through a partnership with Deaf Action Scotland, added international sign language to their most popular tour, in addition to BSL, ASL and 18 international languages.
- Created a front-line team of accessibility ambassadors who can help recommend ongoing improvements based on real-time customer feedback.

### Archerfield Walled Garden

- Improved parking and access with four bays for blue badge holders close to the main entrance gates and a newly resurfaced car park.
- AccessAble Detailed Access Guide gives visitors a clear understanding of what to expect.
- Wide doorways and good spacing between café tables and in-store displays allows ease of access while many of the estate paths have fine gravel and can be travelled on without issue.



At the end of 2023, AccessAble launched the Accessibility and You survey to gather insights on the accessibility needs and experiences of disabled people when visiting new venues. Open to the public until mid-2024, the survey received 1,000+ responses, with participants answering multiple-choice questions and sharing open-ended feedback. Most respondents (81%) were disabled people, while the remaining respondents were carers, family members, or professionals working in the NHS, care, or disability sectors. Some of the key findings of the survey, in relation to the importance and availability of access information, is given below along with testimonials from three of AccessAble's Access Champions:

- 95% check accessibility in advance of going to a new place
- 87% expect accessibility information to be on a venue's website
- 90% said it was important or extremely important to know about accessibility before visiting a place for the first time

Charlie Randell has cerebral palsy which means he uses a wheelchair most of the time and he is constantly having to check out the accessibility of a venue or location he's going to visit. Charlie said, *"An Access Guide completely takes away social anxieties I have knowing that my needs are going to be met and I'm going to be able to enjoy the environment completely."*

Sassy Wyatt is blind and finds travelling stressful and daunting but thanks to the AccessAble Access Guides for hotels and attractions, *"I am able to be independent and enjoy the luxuries of what the venues have to offer."*

Holly Greader has a condition called hypermobility syndrome and is a wheelchair user. Holly said that *"Access Guides are the difference between me going out, having fun, making new memories and gaining experiences."*

## Conclusion:

External outcome three was achieved and has clearly demonstrated VisitScotland's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion creating an inclusive Scotland for all our visitors, both domestic and those from abroad, plus work on access has really supported those living in the local community.

This outcome also supports our vision, mission and purpose as set out in our new Strategic Framework:

- Our vision is that we contribute to a vibrant and dynamic visitor economy, creating better places for people to live, work, and visit.

# OUR PEOPLE POLICIES AND WORK PRACTICES

As an employer committed to creating a progressive and compliant workplace where employees can perform and thrive, we continue to update our policies and procedures not only in line with legislation but to support an inclusive working culture that cares and considers its workforce and places our people at the heart of what we do.

Here is a summary of our people policies that have been updated or created since the last reporting period.

## **Menopause Policy (new)**

This policy was created to support our workforce and the approach we take to support employees at various stages of menopause. This policy is now owned by the Women's Health Support Group who share live experiences, help shape policy changes and related internal communication activities.

## **Trans Policy (updated)**

This policy was developed in 2021 in partnership with the LGBTQ+ Staff Support Network Group. It has been revised and updated with special reference to the new sexual harassment legislation.

## **Flexible Working (updated) and Hybrid Working (updated)**

Combined, our flexible working and hybrid working policies offer employees a range of working options from part-time working to compressed hours. Flexible working was offered from day one of employment prior to legislative changes. This policy, combined with the ability to work in a hybrid manner offers maximum flexibility to all employees when considering their days and hours of work, work location and work environment and/or facilities provided to them. Both policies create and promote an inclusive workplace environment.

## **Right to Disconnect (new)**

This policy advocates for good and responsible work practices, including the management of working hours, work breaks and out of hours contact. This policy was written in partnership with PCS, the trade union voluntarily recognised by VisitScotland.

## **Domestic Abuse (updated)**

This policy reinforces our objectives as a socially responsible organisation, actively involved in supporting employee health and well-being, by demonstrating that we value, and are prepared to support all staff during difficult periods. The policy supports individuals experiencing domestic abuse and provides a pathway for resolution.

## **Bullying and Harassment (updated)**

The overriding principle of this policy is that VisitScotland will not permit or condone any form of bullying, harassment, or discrimination. This policy encompasses bullying or harassment that occurs in the workplace, online and out of the workplace, such as on business trips or at work-related social events. This policy also recognises the new sexual harassment legislation introduced as of 26 October 2024.

## Volunteering (updated)

The new Volunteering Policy represents a more structured volunteering programme and seeks to support individual staff, and teams, to develop their skills, whilst also supporting communities and charities based in Scotland. This policy has been developed to align to the Scottish Government's new formal Volunteering Framework. It is intended to support, encourage, develop and facilitate our involvement with a wide range of charities and social enterprises.

## Resourcing (new)

Bringing together our recruitment and secondment policies, our new resourcing policy provides a framework and range of tools to recruit talent, internally and externally as well as move existing talent for fixed periods of time to where they can develop and grow. This policy supports our workforce planning activities along with talent development.

## Special Leave (updated)

This policy accommodates and supports a range of leave requirements ranging from paid carers leave to leave for IVF treatment or bereavement. By the very nature of the term, special leave, it is inclusive in nature and design.



# PROCUREMENT PRACTICES AND FAIR WORK

The VisitScotland Procurement Strategy and Policy Framework includes a section entitled Fair Work First, including the Living Wage and Real Living Wage. This states:

## Purpose:

As a public body, we are expected to implement and promote Fair Work First in all relevant procurement processes. We expect suppliers delivering public contracts to adopt and demonstrate appropriate fair work practices, for all workers engaged in delivering a public contract.

## How do we manage this?

Before undertaking a procurement exercise, we consider whether it is relevant and proportionate to include questions on Fair Work First, including the real Living Wage. Where they are included, the Fair Work First questions are evaluated along with other relevant criteria, to ensure there is an appropriate balance between quality and cost of the contract.

VisitScotland report on Fair Work First activities in our annual procurement reports that are published on [www.visitscotland.org](http://www.visitscotland.org). In accordance with best practice, VisitScotland applies Fair Work First criteria in appropriate regulated procurements that commenced after 1 April 2021. Examples for 2023-24 contracts include:

- Connect 24 and 25
- Office Furniture and Associated Services
- Accessibility Guide Service (concession)
- Bus Transport Services
- AV and Translation Services



# SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE

## Employee Support Groups

VisitScotland facilitates six key staff groups, they are:

1. The VisitScotland Staff Consultation Group
2. The Inclusive Network Alliance Group
3. LGBTQ+ Group
4. Women's Health Group
5. Parents Group
6. NewGen Network Group

These groups play a very important role for consultation and support of employees when we are setting equality outcomes and developing new policies and practices.



## 1. The VisitScotland Staff Consultation Group

This group, which meets monthly, was set up to provide a forum for staff from across VisitScotland including representation from PCS, our voluntarily recognised union, providing an opportunity for staff to contribute ideas, feedback to key senior staff and input to new policies and procedures. Recent examples of the contribution made by the group include input to a revised travel and subsistence policy and contribution towards the revision of the new People and Culture. The make-up of the group ensures there is representation from across every department and work location.

## 2. The Inclusive Network Alliance (INA)

This group is a support group for employees who have a disability either visible or hidden, neurodiverse employees, or employees who have children or family with a disability and those who care for them. Previously we had a separate Carers Group but the benefit of joining both groups was trialled for three months, and it was viewed by all as a great source of support, enabling staff to speak to others in a similar situation.

## 3. LGBTQ+ Group

This group is for all employees who identify as LGBTQ+ and/or have friends or family who identify as LGBTQ+. The group also welcomes allies who supportive the work of the group. Employees are not required to share their sexuality or reasons for participating in the group. Participation enables allies to reach out, learn more and be a positive part of equality and diversity. It is important that the group represents the diverse workforce at VisitScotland and becomes a “safe space.” In addition to providing a forum for sharing relevant and appropriate information and coordinating activities e.g., Pride Month, this group also works with marketing colleagues to explore the addition of LGBTQ+ visitor information and itinerary planning.

## 4. Women’s Health Group

The purpose of the group is to promote equality and inclusion for female employees by sharing and discussing information about all health-related issues specifically relating to women. Supporting each other and raising awareness. The group also focus on career development.

## 5. Parents Group

VisitScotland established a support group for Parents in 2020 during the pandemic. We wanted to support staff with children at home during lockdown, who were trying to balance home and work life. This group gives parents a safe space to share ideas and speak to like-minded people who understand some of the challenges faced by parenting and juggling working life.

## 6. NewGen Network Group

Our NewGen Network Group is a dynamic forum designed for young professionals at VisitScotland. The group aims to support employees who may be navigating the early stages of their career and serves as a safe space for discussion and networking amongst peers. This was set up to predominantly to provide a peer support system for our younger members of staff to ensure that there is still opportunity for networking and sharing best practice whilst working in a hybrid approach.

## Employee Learning and Development

This Framework is in place to help foster an inclusive and equitable workplace, the EDI framework operates at multiple levels of knowledge and skills. This is a core objective of our overall learning and development portfolio, and a mandatory requirement for all of our employees to complete.

Actions and ongoing commitments to achieve the EDI goals above:

- Training and education through EDI mandatory learning for all employees at a foundation level this provides the fundamentals on EDI as well as the opportunity for staff to join a support/ network group, they provide networks for employees to share experiences and seek guidance.
- Creating bespoke learning pathways for line managers for EDI, introducing mandatory unconscious bias training for all staff as well as managers.
- VS internal learning platform as a wide range of equality and diversity modules that can be allocated out to staff which would expand on the EDI mandatory learning that's rolled out yearly.
- Leadership Commitment - ensuring that leadership is visibly committed to EDI, through proactive communications within the organisation.
- Monitoring and Evaluation - continue to monitor EDI progress to reflect the best practices and legal requirements through out monitoring of our EDI mandatory learning module.

## Employee Learning and Development

Level	Knowledge and skill
Foundation	All staff to understand EDI in the workplace, VS policy and how it relates to us and our equality duty as a public body, our EDI ambitions and support groups that staff can join.
Skilled	Staff at a skilled level will understand EDI and how it relates to the role of a manager, e.g., performance, recruitment, talent, and Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) and Human Rights (EQHRIA), to deliver a manager's role in line with the VS policy. This includes the ACER group, coaches and mentors and employees in advisory roles for external businesses. i.e., Responsible Tourism within the framework of Accessibility.
Advanced	Staff at an enhanced level will have a greater understanding and the skills to able to advise on EDI questions and matters and drive forward the VS EDI ambitions. This would include, HR colleagues, the departmental Heads of Department (HoDs) and Directors to drive the culture of the People Strategy.
Expert	Staff at expert level will have a deep understand and knowledge of EDI and be responsible for organisational EDI policy, EDI compliance with the Equality Act and EDI strategy development. This would typically be the Equality, Diversity and Wellbeing Specialist Role.

## EDI Learning

Level	Topic	Delivery Method / Comments	Mandatory
Foundation	EDI for employees	E-learning All new staff to have a local induction checklist with the manager where EDI is discussed	Yes
		Virtual classroom - induction	Yes
		Softskill (new supplier)	No
	The Meaning of EDI	Podcast – recommended learning	No
	Unconscious bias & implicit bias	Podcast – recommended learning	No
	Banter and bullying	Podcast – recommended learning	No
	Accessibility Training	Delivery Method - TBC - recommended learning	No
Positive Attitude and Behaviours	E-learning - recommended learning	No	
Sexual harassment in the workplace for employees	E-learning - updated to mandatory in 2024	Yes	
Skilled	EDi for managers	E-learning - managers learning framework	Yes
	Bullying and harassment in the workplace	E-learning - managers learning framework	Yes
	Unconscious Bias	E-learning - managers learning framework	Yes

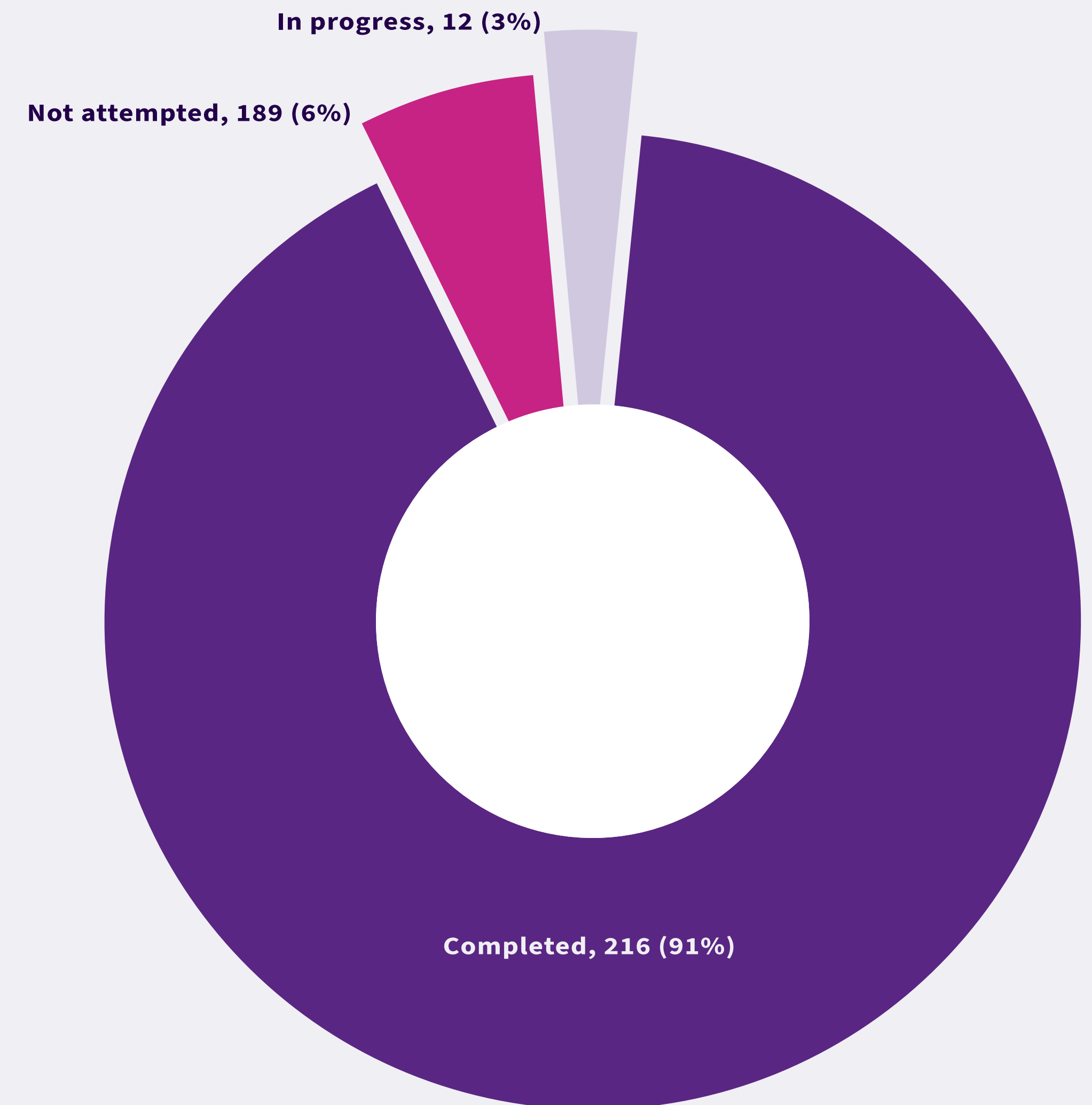
## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training 2024 Completion

### Sexual harassment mandatory learning

When changes to the sexual harassment law came into effect on 26 October 2024, we introduced a sexual harassment training module for all employees to complete. All employees have been allocated a fixed mandatory module rolled each year to ensure we're taking proactive steps to prevent it from happening in the workplace.

The following 2025 stats show the completion rate for the sexual harassment module with 52% completed for 2025 with 45% still to complete and 3% In progress. The completion deadline is 30 May 2025.

We will report on the completion rates and take an active approach to follow up with employees throughout the time frame as well as active communications to ensure our people are completing the learning materials for the May deadline which was set by the business.

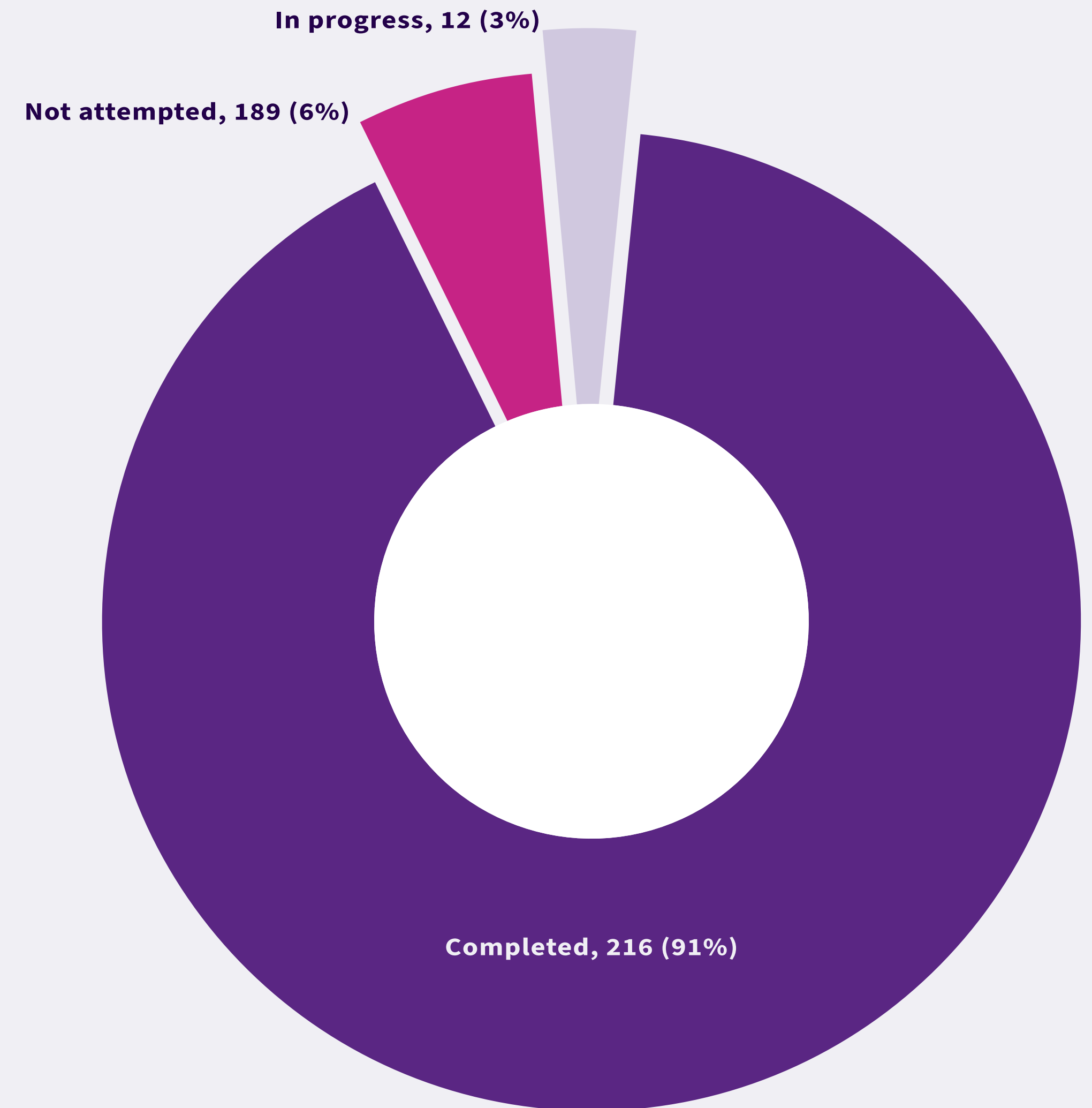


## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion mandatory Learning

VisitScotland introduced Equality, Diversity and Inclusion module as a mandatory learning for all staff in 2024. This also remains a fixed mandatory module each year.

The following statistics show the completion rates for 2024 with a 91% completion rate at year end. Since launching the module in 2025, we have a total of 26% completed to-date having launched the training December 2024 with a deadline date of May 2025.

We will report on the completion rates and take an active approach to follow up with employees throughout the time frame as well as active communications to ensure our people are completing the leaning materials for the May deadline which was set by the business.



# EQUALITY OUTCOMES 2025-2029

## Equality Outcome One

In line with proposed Employment Right Bills 2026 amendments, we will create a menopause action plan for VisitScotland.

### Evidence

- VisitScotland's gender split is 69% female and 31% male. The average age of our female workforce is 43. In assessing our absence cases and via feedback from our Women's Health Group, we know that further action would be beneficial to support the whole workforce understanding and supporting the various stages of the menopause.
- Around 80% of females report experiencing menopausal symptoms typically between the age of 45 and 55.
- A survey completed by Menopause charity found that over 25% of women said that their menopause symptoms had a negative impact on their work.
- Fawcett Society report found that one in ten women have left their job because of menopause symptoms, and one in four have considered resigning.
- A BUPA survey found that only 15% of employers have specific policies or support structures to assist employees going through the menopause.
- YouGov survey found that over 50% of women felt their workplaces do not adequately understand or support the challenges of menopause.
- With an increasingly aging workforce, the number of women going through menopause is expected to rise, making it critical for employers to have the appropriate support in place.
- In October 2024, the UK Government announced proposals to amend the Employment Rights Bill. These proposals include measures for employers with a workforce greater than 250 employees to support the workforce through the creation of menopause action plans.

### Our commitment

We will create and launch a Menopause Plan by March 2026, promoting and communicating this plan to our workforce, delivering and embedding, over the next four years, the tangible actions associated with this plan.

### What success looks like

Introduce menopause as a specific absence reason on our HR system which will allow us to monitor menopause related absences and ensure our managers have knowledge of the support available.

This will be a contributing factor to an increase in our levels of overall staff engagement (currently 74% with a target to increase this to 76%).

### How we will measure our success

We will measure the success of our Menopause Plan by implementing regular pulse staff surveys.

We will assess the reasons for absence, specifically those associated with menopause related absence, tracking levels post the implementation of this plan.

Levels of participation in the Women's Health Support Group.

Completion of training relating to menopause awareness.

## Equality outcome two

We will introduce a new learning programme for all hiring managers to reduce the likelihood of unconscious bias in the recruitment process thereby supporting the continuing growth in the diversity of our workforce.

### Our commitment:

By the end of March 2026, we will introduce a range of learning solutions aligned to the recruitment process for all hiring managers, existing and new.

### Evidence:

- According to recent surveys unconscious bias is still one of the biggest challenges that are faced in recruitment processes.
- BrightTalk have detailed that 79% of HR Professionals agree that unconscious bias exists in both recruitment and succession planning decisions.
- A study of 2000 UK residents, conducted by IFA in 2024, found that 30% of these individuals had experienced bias in their working career. 39% stated that the bias was from senior management. Gender bias was identified as the top reason for bias, followed by ageism and then racial bias.

### How we will measure our success:

- Upon the introduction of a new recruitment system in 2025, we will measure the levels of diversity in candidates short-listed for interview over the next four years.
- We will assess the diversity levels within the organisation in line with the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act.
- Completion rates of learning by hiring managers.

### What will success look like:

- An increase in the diversity levels of candidates short-listed for interview.
- An increase in the diversity of our workforce (see current diversity levels in appendix).
- All hiring managers will have completed the learning programme.



## Equality outcome three

We will introduce new procedures and guidance for staff (and their line managers) who have been absent due to maternity, shared parental leave or adoption leave ensuring, upon return to the workplace, they are provided with additional support including a re-induction programme.

### Evidence:

- According to a report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, and various studies completed by the CIPD, a significant number of women do not return to employment following maternity leave.
- Studies have shown that one in four females chose not to return after maternity leave, stating reasons such as workplace culture, lack of flexible working and support for working parents.
- The Office for National Statistics has reported on trends that whilst many women return to the workplace, other face barriers which leads them to leave the workforce entirely.
- At VisitScotland, following our strategic change programme we have identified that returning to work following a lengthy absence is particularly challenging due to the amount of change that has occurred.

### How we will measure our success:

- Re-induction programme completion rates.
- Parents Group participation level.
- Pulse survey - annual staff survey indicating positive response to the programme.

### What will success look like:

- Positive engagement levels/scores in response to the programme.
- Increased awareness and engagement with the Parents Group.
- Positive feedback received from the participants of the programme following their re-induction into the workplace.
- Retention levels for those returning to VisitScotland following a long period of leave.



A photograph of two men sitting at a table in a cafe or bar. The man on the right is smiling broadly, wearing a white hoodie and blue jeans. The man on the left is seen from the back, wearing a tan jacket. On the table are two coffee cups and a small container of snacks. In the background, there is a bar counter with various items and other people in the cafe.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1 – Equal Pay Statement

VisitScotland recruits and promote the right people to meet its business needs and objectives. It endeavours to make use of the skills and talents available to it from the society in which it operates and also further afield.

VisitScotland fully supports the principle that all employees should receive equal pay for the same or like work or work held to be equivalent or of equal value.

The organisation sets pay rates for staff that are derived from job evaluation, performance, experience, the internal and external job market, and on a basis that is absent from bias against or towards any individual and specifically in relation to protected characteristics.

VisitScotland uses job evaluation to measure the size of job roles in relation to responsibility, expertise, experience etc. and uses the outcome to determine an employee's grade, and subsequently their salary.

### Objectives

Our equal pay and reward objectives are to:

- promote and implement fair, just and lawful practices with regards to pay and reward
- promote equality of opportunity and the principles of equal pay throughout the workforce
- promote good relations between people sharing different protected characteristics in the implementation of equal pay

- eliminate any unfair, unjust or unlawful practices that impact on pay and reward
- investigate promptly any potential instances of inequality that may arise and take appropriate remedial action where required

### To achieve these objectives VisitScotland will:

- regularly monitor and review the application and impact of pay policies and practices
- conduct regular equal pay reviews of the pay and reward system to ensure we meet equal pay obligations and that it is consistent with our corporate equality objectives and values
- provide guidance and advice to those involved in determining staff salaries in line with VisitScotland's Pay Procedures
- provide information and guidance to staff as to how the pay system operates and how their own pay is calculated
- ensure staff are aware that they can enquire about their pay and grading (including salary progression), providing prompt responses to enquiries, together with advice on VisitScotland's grievance procedures where staff are not satisfied
- respond to grievances and other concerns on equal pay as a priority
- discuss and agree changes to pay and reward policy with trade union representatives, where appropriate

## Gender Pay Gap

For the purposes of the report when we refer to gender within the report we are referring to the legal definition. We will amend any future reporting requirements in line with EHRC guidance. The gender pay gap for the organisation as a whole stands at 5.1% (down from 15.4 in 2021) based on the average total female Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Pay. On a grade by grade basis with the exception of Grade L, the pay gap does not exceed 4% in any other grade, with females earning more in five of these grades. For Grade L, as detailed in the table commentary, we expect the differential to be closed over time. Given there are some 200 distinct roles within grades A – L it does not appear that there is specific occupational segregation within certain levels of the organisation.

VisitScotland remains a popular employer for women and flexible and agile working arrangement with enhanced maternity leave benefits appear to be a factor in this, providing an attractive working environment for those staff caring for young children, disabled children or elderly parents and family.

VisitScotland is pleased to report that we now have a gender balance at Grade L, our Director level, with the appointment of two new female Directors. VisitScotland believes passionately that employees can be appointed to, and progress within, the organisation without any barriers in relation to their protected characteristics.

## Appendix 2 – Equality Reporting, Supporting Tables

### Occupational Segregation

**Table 1: Count of Employees by Gender and Pay Grade**

VisitScotland gender split is 69% female and 31% male. This remains fairly consistent across our different grades with the exception of Grade H (52%), Grade I (59%) and Grade L (50%). our Grade H is a technical job group which attracts a more balanced gender mix.

Pay Grade	Female	Male
Grade A	46	22
Grade B	9	2
Grade C	29	14
Grade D	16	8
Grade E	42	21
Grade F	21	11
Grade G	47	17
Grade H	22	20
Grade I	35	24
Grade J	3	1
Grade K	9	6
Grade L	2	2
Non-graded	6	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>151</b>

## Summary of Employee Dataset

**Table 2: Count of Employees by Pay Grade**

VisitScotland has had a significant period of change with our iCentre closure programme and the retiral of our Quality Assurance scheme. This has resulted in a change to our employee make up with less individuals at our lower grades as a result of our voluntary redundancy scheme and due to internal moves. The number of individuals in Grade I has increased in line with new specialist roles which are required for our evolving organisation.

Pay Grade	Employee Count	2025 % Share of Total	2021 % Share of Total
Grade A	68	15.5%	22.3%
Grade B	11	2.5%	4.5%
Grade C	43	9.8%	8.7%
Grade D	24	5.5%	7.1%
Grade E	63	14.4%	15.6%
Grade F	32	7.3%	7.2%
Grade G	64	14.6%	12.7%
Grade H	42	9.6%	6.2%
Grade I	59	13.5%	9.4%
Grade J	4	0.9%	0.5%
Grade K	15	3.4%	3.3%
Grade L	4	0.9%	0.9%
Non-graded	9	2.1%	1.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Summary of Employee Dataset

**Table 3: Count of Employees by Directorate and Department**

(page 1 of 3)

Table 3 highlights the changes to our organisation with a reduction in our number of employees in our Information department which directly relates to our iCentre closure programme. And the introduction of a number of new departments and also our new Directorate of Industry and Events. These changes to our structure will enable us to take us forward into our new approach of working within VisitScotland.

Directorate	Department	Employee count	2025 % Share of Total	2021 % Share of Total
Chief Executives Office	Tasks and Projects	19	4.3%	N/D
Chief Executives Office	Information	71	16.2%	28.4%
Chief Executives Office	Chief Executive Office	5	1.1%	0.9%
Chief Executives Office	Human Resources	15	3.4%	2.4%
<b>Directorate Total</b>		<b>110</b>	<b>25.1%</b>	<b>9.4%</b>
Corporate Services	Procurement	6	1.4%	1.1%
Corporate Services	Finance	13	3.0%	2.4%
Corporate Services	Facilities	12	2.7%	2.7%
Corporate Services	IT	22	5.0%	4.9%
Corporate Services	Corporate Services	1	0.2%	1.6%
Corporate Services	Corporate Governance & Performance	15	3.4%	N/D
Corporate Services	Legal	6	1.4%	N/D
<b>Directorate Total</b>		<b>75</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>13.2%</b>

## Summary of Employee Dataset

**Table 3:** continues

(page 2 of 3)

Directorate	Department	Employee count	2025 % Share of Total	2021 % Share of Total
Industry and Events	Destination Development – Highlands and Islands	7	1.6%	N/D
Industry and Events	Destination Development – South of Scotland	1	0.2%	N/D
Industry and Events	EventScotland	13	3.0%	3.4%
Industry and Events	Destination Development	8	1.8%	N/D
Industry and Event	Industry Development	9	2.1%	N/D
Industry and Events	Industry Engagement	15	3.4%	N/D
Industry and Events	Industry and Events	1	0.2%	N/D
Industry and Events	Destination Development – Central, NE and SW	10	2.3%	N/D
<b>Directorate Total</b>		<b>64</b>	<b>14.6%</b>	<b>42.6%</b>

## Summary of Employee Dataset

**Table 3:** continues

(page 3 of 3)

Directorate	Department	Employee count	2025 % Share of Total	2021 % Share of Total
Marketing & Digital	Performance Marketing	51	11.6%	4.0%
Marketing & Digital	Brand & Global Marketing	26	5.9%	N/D
Marketing & Digital	Digital Delivery	30	6.8%	4.0%
Marketing & Digital	Business Events	11	2.5%	2.4%
Marketing & Digital	Business Development and Intermediary Marketing	30	6.8%	N/D
Mmarketing & Digital	Marketing & Digital	1	0.2%	0.4%
<b>Directorate Total</b>		<b>149</b>	<b>34.0%</b>	<b>23.4%</b>
Strategy and Competitive Intelligence	Insight	13	3.0%	2.4%
Strategy and Competitive Intelligence	Strategy	3	0.7%	N/D
Strategy and Competitive Intelligence	Strategy and Competitive Intelligence	1	0.2%	N/D
Strategy and Competitive Intelligence	Corporate Communications	23	5.3%	3.8%
<b>Directorate Total</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>
<b>All Directorates Total</b>		<b>438</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 4: Employee Count by Age Bracket**

Age distribution of our employees shows the majority of our employees are in the 35-49 age group (46.1%) an increase from 42.4% in 2021. This reflects a general maturing of the workforce. The number of employees in the higher age brackets has decreased since 2021, this is due to a high number of our leavers through voluntary redundancy being nearer retirement age.

Age Bracket	Employee Count	2025 % Share of Total	2021 % Share of Total
16-24	8	1.8%	1.3%
25-34	88	20.1%	15.8%
35-49	202	46.1%	42.4%
50-64	127	29.0%	31.5%
65+	13	3.0%	9.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Pay Analysis – Gender**

**Table 5: Employee Count by Gender and Employment Hours**

This table shows a consistent total split between males and females in our workforce when compared to 2021 data. The number of part-time workers has reduced in both genders, again this is due to leavers through our voluntary redundancy scheme and through internal moves. There continues to be a higher population of part-time female workers compared to male but this reflects the wider employment market. In addition, there is a large proportion of employees who work compressed hours (for example, working 9 out of 10 days), rather than opting for part-time hours, as this enables them to have the flexibility whilst maintaining higher salary.

Gender	Full/Part Time	Employee Count	2025 % Share of Total	2021 % Share of Total
Female	Full time	231	52.7%	44.4%
Female	Part time	56	12.8%	21.2%
<b>Female Total</b>		<b>287</b>	<b>65.5%</b>	<b>65.6%</b>
Male	Full time	141	32.2%	29.0%
Male	Part time	10	2.3%	5.4%
<b>Male Total</b>		<b>151</b>	<b>34.5%</b>	<b>34.4%</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>438</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 6: Average Full Time Equivalent Pay by Gender and Pay Grade**

Of our graded roles, we have 6 grades in which females are paid higher, 4 where males are paid higher and 2 that are comparable. In our pay grade L we have two long tenured male employees who have progressed through the pay points over the years and two new to role females who will have moved into role on the lower end of the pay scale but will move through progression on an annual basis. We anticipate this differential to be removed over time. Our gender average pay has improved significantly from 15.4% in 2021 to 5.1%.

NOTE: Average Full Time Equivalent Pay has been omitted for Grades B, J, and L to prevent identification of individual salaries. The final two columns in this table show the percentage difference in the average male and the average female salary in that grade and year. Where a minus percentage is shown it highlights that the average female salary is higher than that of the average male salary.

Pay Grade	Female [F]	Male [M]	% Females in Grade	% Difference M/F in 2025	% Difference M/F in 2021
Grade A	£ 25199	£ 25173	67.6%	-0.1%	-0.8%
Grade B			81.8%	3.3%	1.8%
Grade C	£ 30167	£ 30675	67.4%	1.7%	-0.8%
Grade D	£ 33188	£ 34233	66.7%	3.1%	-1.2%
Grade E	£ 36825	£ 36816	66.7%	0.0%	-0.1%
Grade F	£ 42381	£ 41551	65.6%	-2.0%	-2.7%
Grade G	£ 46276	£ 46295	73.4%	0.0%	1.2%
Grade H	£ 50990	£ 51137	52.4%	0.3%	0.8%
Grade I	£ 63244	£ 62994	59.3%	-0.4%	2.4%
Grade J			75.0%	4.0%	13.6%
Grade K	£ 86104	£ 85035	60.0%	-1.2%	2.3%
Grade L			50.0%	11.6%	3.5%
Non-Graded	£ 47420	£ 27289	66.7%	-42.5%	-6.6%
Gender Average	£ 42735	£ 44916	65.5%	5.1%	15.4%

**Table 7: Minimum and Maximum FTE Pay by Grade and Gender**

Looking at the distribution of pay by grade we can see that all of the grades with the exception of two grades (H and K) show female salary distribution is greater than that of males for the same pay grade. This may be a result of greater number of female staff in the grades shown and differing length of service resulting in wider ranges of minimum and maximum pay. It will also have an effect on the average salary analysis by gender and pay grade. Following our strategic change programme we have a small number of employees who have been redeployed to a lower grade with salary protection for three years which will have a slight impact on some of the figures above.

NOTE: FTE Pay has been omitted for Grades B, J, and L to prevent identification of individual salaries

Pay Grade	Female Min FTE Pay	Female Max FTE Pay	Female FTE Pay % Diff	Male Min FTE Pay	Male Max FTE Pay	Male FTE Pay % Diff	Gender Diff (PP)
Grade A	£ 24259	£ 28417	17.1%	£ 24259	£ 26765	10.3%	-6.8%
Grade B	£ 25900	£ 31053	19.9%			12.0%	-7.9%
Grade C	£ 28804	£ 33038	14.7%	£ 28804	£ 32831	14.0%	-0.7%
Grade D	£ 31638	£ 39122	23.7%	£ 33044	£ 38359	16.1%	-7.6%
Grade E	£ 34014	£ 41441	21.8%	£ 34014	£ 40023	17.7%	-4.1%
Grade F	£ 39882	£ 63497	59.2%	£ 38125	£ 44299	16.2%	-43.0%
Grade G	£ 42081	£ 60755	44.4%	£ 42081	£ 56987	35.4%	-9.0%
Grade H	£ 47095	£ 53647	13.9%	£ 47095	£ 58661	24.6%	10.7%
Grade I	£ 54707	£ 73597	34.5%	£ 54707	£ 66143	20.9%	-13.6%
Grade J			9.5%			0.0%	-9.5%
Grade K	£ 81703	£ 90209	10.4%	£ 79480	£ 88369	11.2%	0.8%
Grade L			0.0%			0.0%	0.0%
Non-Graded	£ 28804	£ 140000	386.0%	£ 24259	£ 28804	18.7%	-367.3%

## Pay Analysis - Ethnicity

**Table 8: Employee Count by Ethnicity**

The majority of our workforce continues to be predominantly white, comprising of 77.2%. However, this reflects a decrease from 88% white ethnicity in 2021.

As detailed in our report we have increased employees who have declared they are from a black or ethnic minority background from 1% to 2.8% since our previous report.

It is not a mandatory requirement for our workforce to disclose this information to us and 20.1% of our employees have decided not to disclose this information.

Ethnicity	Employee Count	2025 % Share of Total
Any Other	3	0.7%
Asian - Any other Asian background	2	0.5%
Bangladeshi	1	0.2%
Chinese	3	0.7%
Indian	1	0.2%
Mixed - White and Asian	2	0.5%
Not disclosed	88	20.1%
White	296	67.6%
White - Any other White background	7	1.6%
White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	35	8.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 9: Ethnicity by Pay Grade**

A small number of employees have chosen to disclose their ethnicity. This is not a mandatory requirement so it is not a fully representative picture of VisitScotland employees.

Pay Grade	Non-white ethnicity groups	White	Not disclosed
Grade A	4	39	25
Grade B	0	9	2
Grade C	1	37	5
Grade D	1	18	5
Grade E	1	56	6
Grade F	2	24	6
Grade G	3	53	8
Grade H	0	34	8
Grade I	0	50	9
Grade J	0	4	0
Grade K	0	11	4
Grade L	0	2	2
Non-Graded	0	1	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>88</b>

**Table 10: Average Annual FTE Salary by Grade and Ethnicity**

Looking at average pay where comparison by ethnicity group is possible, we can see that there is parity across grade and ethnicity group against the organisational average salary for that grade. Our pay progression approach means that individuals pay grade point is based on their length of service, with progression taking place on an annual basis until they reach the top point of the band. The largest disparity is grade G where average salary for the non-white ethnicity group is £3144 greater than the organisational average salary for Grade G and exceeds that of the other ethnicity categories.

NOTE: FTE Pay has been omitted for Grades C, D, E, and Non-Graded to prevent identification of individual salaries. The percentage pay difference in 2025, measures the percentage difference between the average non-white ethnicity group salary and the average white salary. This calculation does not consider those in the non-disclosed group.

Pay Grade					Non-white Ethnicity Group		
	Non-white Ethnicity Group	Not Disclosed	White	Average Salary	% in Grade	% Pay Difference in 2025	% Pay Difference in 2021
Grade A	£ 25291	£ 24771	£ 25448	£ 25190	5.9%	0.6%	-0.6%
Grade B		£ 26787	£ 28964	£ 28568	0.0%		
Grade C				£ 30333	2.3%	-3.4%	0.0%
Grade D				£ 33537	4.2%	-1.3%	-1.6%
Grade E				£ 36822	1.6%	1.2%	7.7%
Grade F	£ 42969	£ 44770	£ 41355	£ 42096	6.2%	-3.8%	-4.1%
Grade G	£ 49425	£ 44083	£ 46434	£ 46281	4.7%	-6.1%	-9.9%
Grade H		£ 51074	£ 51057	£ 51060	0.0%		
Grade I		£ 60530	£ 63613	£ 63142	0.0%		
Grade J			£ 72729	£ 72729	0.0%		
Grade K		£ 84385	£ 86146	£ 85677	0.0%		
Grade L		£ 117458	£ 117458	£ 117458	0.0%		
Non-Graded				£ 40710	0.0%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 36426</b>	<b>£ 40746</b>	<b>£ 44452</b>	<b>£ 43487</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>22.0%</b>	<b>20.2%</b>

## Pay Analysis - Disability

**Table 11: Count of Employees Declaring a Disability by Pay Grade**

Of our 438 employees, 28 employees declared that they have a disability. The remaining 410 employees that chose to not disclose are, for the majority considered not to have a disability as the category is an opt in if you have a disability rather than a choice to declare no disability or consciously choose to not provide this information i.e. prefer not to say.

It is not a mandatory requirement for our workforce to disclose this information to us and 20.1% of our employees have decided not to disclose this information.

Pay Grade	Not disclosed	Yes	Total
Grade A	64	4	68
Grade B	10	1	11
Grade C	36	7	43
Grade D	22	2	24
Grade E	59	4	63
Grade F	31	1	32
Grade G	58	6	64
Grade H	41	1	42
Grade I	57	2	59
Grade J	4	0	4
Grade K	15	0	15
Grade L	4	0	4
Non-Graded	9	0	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>438</b>

**Table 12: Average Annual FTE Salary by Grade and Declared Disability**

We note that are some differences showing at a grade and overall level, based on a fairly low level of disclosure. This will continue to be monitored and we will continue to encourage our employees to disclose this information.

NOTE: FTE Pay has been omitted for Grades B, F, and H to prevent identification of individual salaries

Pay Grade	Not Disclosed	Disclosed disability	Average Salary	% Yes in Grade	% Difference in 2025	% Difference in 2021
Grade A	£ 25187	£ 25237	£ 25190	5.9%	-0.2%	-0.5%
Grade B			£ 28568	9.1%	8.1%	8.9%
Grade C	£ 30265	£ 30681	£ 30333	16.3%	-1.4%	0.8%
Grade D	£ 33624	£ 32575	£ 33537	8.3%	3.2%	-0.5%
Grade E	£ 36919	£ 35389	£ 36822	6.3%	4.3%	-3.3%
Grade F			£ 42096	3.1%	5.7%	
Grade G	£ 46297	£ 46125	£ 46281	9.4%	0.4%	-2.3%
Grade H			£ 51060	2.4%	-2.3%	
Grade I	£ 63191	£ 61762	£ 63142	3.4%	2.3%	
Grade J	£ 72729	£ 72729		0.0%		
Grade K	£ 85677	£ 85677		0.0%		
Grade L	£ 117458	£ 117458		0.0%		
Non-Graded	£ 40710	£ 40710		0.0%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 43917</b>	<b>£ 37194</b>	<b>£ 43487</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>18.1%</b>	<b>43.2%</b>

## Employee Analysis – Religion

**Table 13: Count of Employee Identified Religious Preference**

The employee’s response for choice of religion is self-determined rather selected from a predetermined drop-down list, therefore there are duplications in type, such as “Catholicism” and “Roman Catholicism”. The largest group to identify a religious preference, Christianity may contain members of religious groups specifically identified in the table. 29% of our employees selected a religious preference with Christianity being the main religion stated. Again this is not a mandatory requirement to provide this information.

Religion	Employee Count
Atheist	10
Catholicism	3
Christian catholic	1
Christianity	104
Greek Orthodox	1
Islam	1
None	186
Not disclosed	86
Not stated	29
Other	6
Protestant	7
Roman catholic	3
Sikhism	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>438</b>

## Employee Analysis – Sexual Orientation

**Table 14: Count of Employee Declared Sexual Orientation**

In 2021 we added sexual orientation to our employee profile and in our 2021 report only 10% of our employees chose to disclose their sexual orientation. This number has increased to 36.7% of our current employees. This is not a mandatory requirement to provide this information and therefore will not accurately reflect our overall employee profile as 63% of our employees have decided not to share this information.

Sexual Orientation	Employee Count
Bisexual	1
Heterosexual	153
Lesbian or Gay	6
Not disclosed	263
Other	1
Prefer not to answer	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>438</b>

## Analysis – New Starts

**Table 15: Count of New Employees by Directorate and Gender**

This table shows our new starts by directorate and gender. This number is significantly lower than our previous report in 2021, which showed a total of 89 new starts. The reason for this is due to our workforce planning approach following our strategic change and the Scottish Government recruitment freeze. For the majority of our roles we have looked to resource vacancies internally and reskill individuals who have been displaced through the change programme. Our use of external recruitment has been focused on roles which require a specific skill set/ knowledge, for example, Senior HR Business Partner and Solicitor.

Directorate	Female	Male	Total	Female %	Male %	Total %
Chief Executives Office	10	2	12	83.3%	16.7%	66.7%
Corporate Services	2	0	2	100.0%	0.0%	11.1%
Marketing & Digital	3	1	4	75.0%	25.0%	22.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>83.3%</b>	<b>16.7%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Appendix 3 – Research Acknowledgments

Throughout the report we have referenced data from a variety of sources to provide rationale for our focus areas of our 2025-2029 equality outcomes. These sources have been listed below with hyperlinks:

[Agency Central - 96% of recruiters think unconscious bias is a problem, but can it be avoided?](#)

[Equality Human Rights Pregnancy and maternity discrimination research findings | EHRC](#)

[Fawcett Society - is the UK's leading membership charity campaigning for gender equality and women's rights at work, at home and in public life.](#)

[IFA Magazine New study finds that just under a third of working Brits have experienced or witnessed some form of bias in the workplace -](#)

[Salt recruitment The Elephant In The Room: Unconscious Bias In Hiring](#)

[The Menopause Charity](#)

[We are the City 'Careers After Babies report highlights alarming statistics for women returning to work after having children'](#)

[YouGov survey conducted in line with CIPD Menopause in the workplace: Employee experiences in 2023](#)