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Consultation: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

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About the strategy We are in the process of drafting a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, and changing our approach to producing Equality Impact Assessments. We have to meet a range of obligations to ensure we promote equality, diversity and inclusion, and our strategy explains what these are and how we comply with them. But equality, diversity and inclusion are not just matters of compliance, so our strategy also sets out our aspirations to go further than our obligations. We have built our strategy around the objectives of: ensuring that everyone who is eligible is able to participate in the electoral processes, whether as a voter, campaigner or candidate, by identifying barriers, making recommendations and working with others to remove them ensuring that we embed equality, diversity and inclusion in the delivery of all of our work, treating all our stakeholders and partners fairly and with respect, and being transparent in the decisions we make ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion for everyone here and that all our staff are treated fairly and with respect Our strategy covers the whole of the UK. We are accountable to the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd, and will be sharing this strategy with them. Different legislation applies in Northern Ireland, and this strategy includes how we will fulfil our duties as required under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. We are also changing our approach to producing Equality Impact Assessments. We have new guidance, a screening form, and an updated EIA template. These assessments are important, as they help us to assess the impact of proposed changes on different groups and ensure that we are promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. What we're consulting on We're consulting on our draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, and our new Equality Impact Assessment documents. We want to make sure that our strategy demonstrates our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and that it clearly shows the actions we are going to take to meet our obligations and aspirations. Download the documents Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Download the Equality Impact Assessment documentation: Equality, Inclusion and Diversity EIA Guidance Equality, Diversity and Inclusion EIA Screening Equality, Diversity and Inclusion EIA template How to respond to this consultation How to respond to this consultation This consultation closed on 14 February 2022. We will consider the responses we received and publish our response soon. What the strategy covers Chapter 1: What we do, the electorate we serve and who we are In 'Chapter 1: What we do, the electorate we serve and who we are', we explain the role of the Commission in promoting and supporting democracy. We give an overview of the diversity of the society we serve: the electorate and of those campaigning and seeking office. And we talk about the diversity of our own workforce. Chapter 2: Our vision for a diverse Commission serving a diverse democracy In 'Chapter 2: Our vision for a diverse Commission serving a diverse democracy', we explain the importance of diversity to the democratic agenda. We know there is more to do. So we have set ourselves three objectives: to ensure that everyone who is eligible is able to participate in the democratic process - whether as a voter, a campaigner or by standing for office – by identifying barriers, making recommendations and working with others to remove them to ensure that we embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all our work, treat all our stakeholders and partners fairly and with respect, and are transparent in the decisions we make to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion

for everyone at the Commission and ensure that all our staff are treated fairly and with respect Chapter 3: Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in the democratic process 'Chapter 3: Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in the democratic process' sets out how we will deliver the first of these objectives, through:

- gathering evidence: understanding the issues through research and consultation
- accessibility: ensuring we understand the issues faced by voters, campaigners and those standing for office and ensuring we meet best practice in accessibility
- communications: ensuring that all voters are aware of their right to vote and know how to exercise it, and targeting demographics we know are least likely to be registered to vote; ensuring that we communicate across all parts of the regulated community

Chapter 4: Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in our processes and decisions 'Chapter 4: Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in our processes and decision making' sets out how we will deliver the second of these objectives through ensuring that all our processes treat stakeholders equally whether they are people we regulate, partners we work with on the administration of elections or businesses we buy services from. That means putting equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of our processes and ensuring that we follow those processes to a high standard. Chapter 5: Ensuring equality, recognition of diversity and inclusion for all those who work at the Commission 'Chapter 5: Ensuring equality, recognition of diversity and inclusion for all those who work at the Commission' sets out how we will deliver the third of these objectives through: ensuring equality and compliance with our legal responsibilities increasing the diversity of our workforce through recruitment and career progression working with our EDI Lead to look at how we further promote inclusion our learning and development offering employee performance improving our collection of data Chapter 6: Communicating our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion 'Chapter 6: Communicating our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion' explains how we will communicate our commitment and our plans to improve equality, diversity and inclusion. Chapter 7: Making it happen In 'Chapter 7: Making it happen', we explain how we will deliver and report progress on the actions set out in the Action Plan. Action plan This action plan sets out what we will do to deliver against the objectives identified in this Strategy. It reflects the priorities and objectives identified in the Corporate Plan for 2022-27. These will be reviewed annually as part of our Business Planning cycle. We will report on progress as part of our Annual Report. Action plan Objective 1: Equality, diversity and inclusion in the democratic process Action When we will do it Measure of success Who is responsible Continue to improve our research data to enhance our evidence base, ensuring we carry out screening and if appropriate an EIA for research proposals Ongoing Evidence base gives us clear data to support our aims for equality, diversity and inclusion Head of Research Continue to ensure that campaigns to raise public awareness about the electoral system are inclusive and take account of different groups Ongoing; to form part of each campaign Our messages feature in targeted media; good response from targeted groups Head of Campaigns Continue to ensure that our guidance is available in a variety of formats Ongoing Our stakeholders are supported with compliance Head of Regulatory Support Take further steps to ensure our website and our publications are as accessible as possible Ongoing: our website already meets best practice AA standards Best practice maintained and enhanced through regular testing and feedback Head of Digital Communications Build on the success of the partnership work we have already done in ensuring we continue to identify the needs of diverse groups and respond to them Continue initiatives to identify groups less likely to vote and work to find ways to

respond to their needs Good levels of awareness from specific groups Head of  
 Campaigns working with the Commission's offices in Wales, Scotland and Northern  
 Ireland Objective 2: Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in our processes and  
 decision making Action When we will do it Measure of success Who is responsible  
 Ensure that the guidance, support and challenge we provide for Electoral Registration  
 Officers supports them to encourage registration from typically under-registered  
 groups in their areas (based on their demographics Ongoing: we have laid the new  
 Standards before Parliament We provide the right guidance and support to EROs and  
 quality assure that we have done so Head of Guidance, Head of Support and  
 Improvement, Heads of Electoral Commission in Wales and Scotland Ensure that our  
 guidance, support and challenge to Returning Officers promote the provision of  
 equality of access and experience for all at the polls Ongoing: we constantly update  
 and improve our guidance We provide the right guidance and support to ROs Head of  
 Guidance; Head of Support and Improvement, Heads of Electoral Commission in Wales and  
 Scotland Introduce new processes for carrying out and reviewing Equality Impact  
 Assessments New EIA process rolled out by the end of 2021 Enhanced ability to assess  
 the impact of proposed changes on equalities Head of Planning and Performance; all  
 staff responsible for areas where screening and if necessary a full EIA may be  
 required Ensure that the Commission's procurement strategy includes clear EDI  
 outcomes for contractors, and that effective monitoring of these contractors is done  
 to ensure they comply Ongoing Contractors have equalities policies in place Financial  
 Controller Ensure through our Quality Assurance initiative that equality is embedded  
 as appropriate in all our processes Ongoing All processes pay due regard to  
 equalities Head of Projects and all managers Continue to keep our internal regulatory  
 procedures under review for best practice and to ensure that consistency, fairness  
 and quality underpin all our regulatory activities Ongoing Decisions seen to be made  
 transparently and fairly in a way which treats all stakeholders equally Head of  
 Registration and Reporting; Head of Monitoring and Enforcement Ensure that equality  
 is included as appropriate in our policies including our Enforcement Policy as they  
 are reviewed in line with our normal cycle Ongoing All policies pay due regard to  
 equalities All Heads responsible for organisational policies Implement a Welsh  
 Language Action Plan to enhance our service to Welsh speakers, building on the  
 appointment of a permanent senior adviser on Welsh language and a permanent  
 translator All parts of the organisation are aware of and meet the Welsh language  
 standards Head of Electoral Commission in Wales; all Heads Objective 3: Ensure  
 equality, recognition of diversity and inclusion for everyone at the Commission  
 Action When we will do it Measure of success Who is responsible Meet the commitments  
 and actions stated in our people strategy Ongoing Progress demonstrated (update  
 report to each RemCo) Head of HR and others We will continue using anonymous  
 recruiting for employed roles (our e-recruitment system does not share name or other  
 demographic info with recruiting) Ongoing The diversity of whom we recruit Head of HR  
 and all recruiting managers We will consider the design of our roles including  
 through the lens of being open to all Ongoing The diversity of whom we recruit  
 Recruiting managers (with support from HR) We will tender for an e-recruitment system  
 that meets our data needs 31 December 2021 Diversity data reports on job applicants  
 for employed roles HR Team We will aim to create an environment where all staff can  
 be themselves at work Ongoing Positive findings in all staff surveys and feedback  
 from staff groups Work led by Anti Bullying champion Updated Dignity at Work policy  
 for 2021/22 By 2022 Updated policy reflecting Commission needs and priorities HR,  
 DARE, EDI Group, Anti Bullying champion, PCS We will work to deliver on our

commitment to 'Zero Tolerance' of bullying and harassment. Ongoing with annual review Levels of bullying and harassment experienced and witnessed fall Anti-Bullying Champion working with Dignity and Respect Group; all managers and colleagues We will build on the learnings from relevant impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic 2020/21 – including hybrid ways of working, dependence on electronic communication; virtual leadership – to help us shape a new and inclusive workplace culture Ongoing as the pandemic recedes Continued balance of high staff engagement with delivery of business All managers and staff We will work through our Race at Work Champion and our Race at Work Taskforce to give effect to our Race at Work Charter Ongoing Actions agreed with Task Force and carried through according to plan Race at Work Champion working with the Task Force We will work with and support a new permanent EDI Lead for the Commission Summer 2021 EDI lead delivers against agreed outcomes Head of Planning and Performance We will continue to seek views and promote EDI through our EDI group Ongoing EDI considered in Commission decisions and processes All Heads Through continuing to provide induction to employees and workers, we will let them know of the EDI agenda and priorities Ongoing All new employees, temporary or permanent, understand the Commission's expectations on EDI HR, SLG and recruiting managers We will continue to discuss the results of all staff surveys and seek feedback both through teams and through the Commission's groupings such as the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group, the Staff Engagement Group and with PCS After each full all staff survey Staff feel confident to speak up and share views to enhance the all staff survey process Head of HR working with relevant groups We will encourage employees to self-declare their diversity in our HR system to improve our organisational EDI data Spring 2021 Levels of self-declaration rise Head of HR We will continue to track the diversity of applicants and of leavers Ongoing Levels of diversity rise HR and managers Communicating our commitment to diversity Action When we will do it Measure of success Who is responsible We will draw up and implement a strategy for internal communications to make sure all staff are aware of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion By the end of 2021 All staff aware of Strategy and their responsibilities under it EDI lead working with Head of Internal Communications Submit your feedback Related content Statutory consultation on guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled people Draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled voters (statutory consultation) Our response to the Assembly Commission's consultation 'Creating a Parliament for Wales' Read our response to Assembly Commission's consultation from April 2018 Cabinet Office consultation: The Wales Act 2017 (Consequential and Saving Provisions) Regulations 2018 Read our response to the Cabinet Office consultation from February 2019