

# Equality Impact Assessment Summary

<p><b>Name of policy, function or service</b></p> <p>Working with communities policy</p>
<p><b>Purpose and aim(s) of the policy, function or service</b></p> <p>The policy outlines the commitment to work with the full range of communities and stakeholders in ways that help deliver shared objectives. The public commitment is published on the FCS website: <a href="http://www.forestry.gov.uk/communitiesscotland">http://www.forestry.gov.uk/communitiesscotland</a></p>
<p><b>Who will benefit mainly from this policy, function or service?</b></p> <p>Those people and communities living or working close to woodlands and from under-represented groups.</p>
<p><b>Information and Data (evidence) used</b></p> <p>The Scottish Government's Scottish Forestry Strategy principles of social inclusion and forestry for and with people are embodied in the FCS's Working with Communities Policy.</p> <p>Data from the 2001 Census has been used for the equality strands: age; gender; race and religion and belief. Data for disability is derived from the Scottish Household Survey 2003/04. Data on membership of community woodland groups derived from a survey undertaken by Forest Research in 2007.</p> <p><b>Equality &amp; Diversity considerations for forestry</b></p> <p>Forest Research has undertaken a literature review identifying the information available on the different equality strands and the positive impacts of using woodland and the real and perceived barriers they experience in accessing and using woodland.</p>
<p><b>Summary of Impact</b></p> <p>The assessment indicates that the Working with Communities policy will have a positive impact on all groups. However, there will be a need for further work, at the next revision of the policy, to review and develop good practice guidance ensuring any barriers to groups accessing woodland are addressed. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical actions such as providing transport and FCS staff led-activities;</li> <li>• a targeted programme of engagement for Black and Minority Ethnic groups in Central Scotland;</li> <li>• appointment of a Central Scotland Engagement Officer to deliver a programme to actively engage under-represented groups; and</li> <li>• establishment of a reference group of representatives from under-represented groups to work collaboratively on identifying and addressing barriers.</li> </ul>

**Monitoring/Evaluation**

FCS will monitor the policy against its outcomes and objectives. Information will be collated for each delivery mechanism and where necessary data will be recorded on the profile of the public that are involved in specific community projects and activities. For example, forestry challenge funds will require an annual report from applicants on the profile of people involved in their projects to include the equality strands (including social deprivation). This information will be complemented by the Public Opinion Survey of Forestry 2009 that will identify people's background in relation to the different equality groups and their opinions of, and involvement in woodlands.

FCS will review this data annually to determine the impact of the policy on the equality strands and if necessary will review and amend specific delivery mechanisms.

**Further Information**

Membership of community woodland groups in Scotland is less diverse than Scotland's population - except for people over 60 years of age (refer to Annex 2). Having a specific policy to develop and promote the benefits of woods to local people and members of the different equality groups provides an opportunity to actively engage the full diversity of Scotland's population and for example, increase the diversity of community woodland group membership.