



Appendix 1 - Final Equality Mainstreaming Report for Equality Outcomes 2021-2025 and our new Equality Outcomes for 2025 - 2029

Agenda Item 7

National Park Authority Board Meeting

10 March 2025

To be published: April 2025

Alternative language and formats

This document is available in large print, alternative languages and formats on request. To arrange this, please contact us by calling 01389 722 600 or by email:

ParkforAll@lochlomond-trossachs.org



Contact us through an online
sign language interpreter
contact [SCOTLAND-BSL](https://www.contactscotland-bsl.org)

BSL users can contact us via contact SCOTLAND-BSL, the online British Sign Language interpreting service. Find out more on the [contactSCOTLAND](https://www.contactscotland-bsl.org) website.

Contacts

For more information on our equalities work please contact:

Alison Cush, Education and Inclusion Adviser

Telephone: (01389) 722 125

Email: ParkforAll@lochlomond-trossachs.org

Previous reports & progress updates can be found on our website on our Equalities & Diversity page, <https://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/park-authority/what-we-do/equalities-diversity/>

Contents

1. Executive Summary	3
2. Background	4
3. Our People and Governance	5
4. Serving the public	11
5. Decision-making.....	21
6. Our Equality Outcomes for 2025 – 2029	26
7. Appendices	30

1. Executive Summary

Setting Equality Outcomes and reporting on both these and our mainstreaming activity is part of our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the specific Public Sector Equality Duty.

This report shares the progress we have made to mainstream equalities and achieve the Equality Outcomes we set for 2021-2025. The updates focus on the latter half of that period, May 2023 – April 2025, following on from the [interim report we published in April 2023](#).

These Outcomes were:

- Outcome 1: At all levels of the organisation, our staff, volunteers, and Board better reflect the diversity of Scotland.
- Outcome 2: The National Park is an inviting place for people of all backgrounds.
- Outcome 3: Our policy and external funding decisions improve equality for individuals and groups with protected characteristics.

We have continued to make progress against all Outcomes and integrate equalities into everything we do. Notable examples that are explored in more detail in the report are: the Boardroom Apprentice programme increasing diversity in our Board; the Trossachs Explorer shuttle bus integrating accessibility into pilot sustainable transport initiatives; and the inclusive consultation carried out on our National Park Partnership Plan. The report also shares a range of other activities from across the organisation against each of these 3 main areas of focus.

This report also outlines our new Equality Outcomes for 2025 – 2029:

- Outcome 1: At all levels of the organisation, our staff, volunteers and Board better reflect the diversity of Scotland.
- Outcome 2: The National Park is a place for everyone, and we are supporting diversity and inclusion by removing barriers and improving services to meet the needs of all users.
- Outcome 3: We have embedded the needs of more diverse groups into our work through increased engagement and consultation.

These Outcomes have been developed following a period of reflection and engagement internally and externally, considering the progress and evidence related to the 2021-2025 Outcomes, closely aligned to arising priorities within our new National Park Partnership Plan and Corporate Plan, and wider best practice on enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion. We believe that there is ongoing work

and opportunity to increase our organisational diversity and to support accessibility and inclusion across the National Park, so have retained these Outcomes to maintain these foundations for 2 significant areas of our work. The third Outcome builds upon our inclusive engagement to date, raising it to an Outcome to focus on a positive opportunity to inform and improve equality and diversity across multiple aspects of our work and decision making.

We are looking forward to continuing to proactively work towards increasing equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in everything we do. These new Outcomes, alongside our new National Park Partnership Plan and Corporate Plan, act as refreshed focal points to guide us in this important work.

2. Background

a. The National Park Authority

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority was established to protect and enhance natural and cultural heritage, promote sustainable resource use, encourage recreation and education, and support the economic and social development of communities within the Park.

As a non-departmental public body, we have a range of specific duties to uphold but in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. We must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, covering the protected characteristics. Simply put, we should be considering and integrating equalities in everything we do, which is also known as mainstreaming.

One of the specific responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty is to publish a set of Equality Outcomes on a 4-year cycle and report every 2 years, alongside publishing other relevant information, such as equal pay policy statements. This report plays a critical role in meeting these requirements and is part of our integrated strategic work to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion is woven into everything we do.

b. The National Park Partnership Plan

The National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) is our overarching plan for everything we as a Park Authority do, as well as guiding the work of our partners. We have recently refreshed our NPPP for 2024-2029, which provides further strategic framing for this report. Within the NPPP, we have highlighted equality and a just transition as part of our work to achieving our long-term vision of the National Park as a thriving place, that is nature positive and carbon negative. We have a role to play in connecting everyone with nature and climate, developing shared benefits for people

and the Park. Specifically, developing a focused objective within the NPPP to support diversity and inclusion (NPPP section 2.1.2) demonstrates our commitment to this work. The engagement and consultation work that went into making the development of the NPPP inclusive is explained in section 5.

c. Our Corporate Plan and way of working

A second strategic document that was refreshed within this cycle of Equality Outcomes is our Corporate Plan, which was approved by our Board in December 2024 and is currently awaiting Scottish Government approval. This Plan specifically focuses on the Park Authority as an organisation and how we deliver our work. Similarly to the NPPP, this organisational strategy for 2025 - 2030 now also explicitly reflects our focus on EDI in making the Park Authority more inclusive. Objective 2.3 shares that we will 'continue to champion and work towards increased equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do'.

Having this clear and direct read of equality across all our Plans now reinforces the proposed Outcomes for 2025-2029 and adds further priority to the actions that will contribute to us achieving them. The interlinks are further explained within section 6.

Internally, our Park For All working group oversees the development and implementation of actions on matters relating to EDI. It is chaired by our Head of People and Assets from the Executive team and members are from many different teams and roles. The purpose of Park For All is to support the organisation to achieve our Equality Outcomes and work with staff to mainstream equalities into all work areas. Responsibility and delivery of actions that contribute to our equalities work are spread across the organisation.

3. Our People and Governance

We believe that having a diverse workforce will lead to better outcomes for our organisation, better decision making in exercising our functions, and delivering a better service to the public.

Our first Equality Outcome for 2021-2025 was focused on our people and organisation:

- At all levels of the organisation, our staff, volunteers, and Board better reflect the diversity of Scotland.

In setting this outcome, we also set specific activities we would undertake to achieve it. The Outcome also aligns with the efforts we have been making to mainstream equalities within our people and governance processes, as further described below.

- a. Activity 1: Improve our data collection to better understand the existing characteristics of our people and those who apply to work with us.

Previously we reported that we were moving a new e-recruitment system that would automatically pull data directly from successful job applicants into their record on PeopleHR. Implementation was delayed, but it is now live and we should see the increase in data that we had anticipated. In the meantime, completion rates are at an all-time high of 68% following a successful initiative to improve completion rates.

- b. Activity 2: Build our knowledge and implement best practice in inclusive recruitment, including through diversity networks and other external expertise.

The most significant step that we have taken in this area is to advertise all our vacancies internally and externally at the same time. As a result of this we have seen a slight increase in the number of applications we have received from underrepresented groups.

We continue to promote our vacancies through social media to attract a wider and more diverse audience, and continue to engage with various groups and networks to encourage applications from underrepresented groups.

- Hybrid working continues and is referenced in recruitment campaigns, where appropriate.
- Virtual recruitment continues to be our default position for interviews.
- We have successfully secured funding to support the development of our Young Workforce and recruited a Planning Internship.

Additionally, our recruitment for a Ministerial Appointee to our Board – conducted through the Scottish Government – centred experience of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as a key recruitment criterion. The promotion of the opportunity included the particular welcome of applications from women, LGBTQ+ people, young people, disabled people and those from minority ethnic communities who are currently underrepresented on the board. This recruitment process resulted in a candidate from a minority ethnic community being appointed to the Board in November 2023.

We have continued to prioritise action to make our volunteer programme more inclusive. This has involved trialling options to welcome more young people to volunteering, including two drop-in days for any young person to get a taster of volunteering, and more successfully embedding our fast-track process for them into the full programme. This has successfully resulted in 10 new young volunteers in 2024-25, with more applications coming in weekly. We've also taken a more coordinated approach to providing volunteering information to participants of our summer inclusion programme, including direct communications with them to notify

them of the annual recruitment opening. In addition, offering hybrid recruitment chats has allowed potential volunteers to pick the option that best suits them. We will continue to develop our approach to inclusive volunteering by expanding our fast-track process to include other underrepresented groups, hosting drop-in sessions and open days to allow people from these groups to explore volunteering without commitment, and strengthen our partnerships to enhance and diversify our programmes. We will also build new EDI focused partnerships to create more inclusive volunteering pathways, ensuring underrepresented groups feel comfortable, supported and secure while volunteering with the National Park Authority.

- c. Activity 3: Ensure our HR, volunteering, and governance policies and procedures give us the best opportunities to attract, develop, and retain diverse talent, including as we update these to address our net zero carbon objectives.

Our current Board composition is five females (29%) and twelve males (71%), with no members identifying their sex outside of these two categories. We consider that there is still work to be done to diversify the gender representation at Board level.

The balance of our current Ministerial appointees is 50/50, with three females and three males.

The six Local Authority nominated members are put forward by the Council administrators of each of the four local authorities. While the National Park Authority can express preference in terms of the background, skills and experience of nominees, this is the extent of our influence. [National statistics](#) for Scotland's Councillors suggest a challenge in the diversity of the pool of potential Board nominees, as 98% of Scotland's Councillors are White; 65.7% are male; 67% are over 50. The current balance of the Local Authority nominated Members is currently two female (33.4%) and four male (66.6%). This does not go as far as we would like in achieving a balanced representation.

The third grouping of members are directly elected to the Board through local elections held across five wards within the National Park. The CEO of Stirling Council is the responsible Returning Officer who organises and promotes these elections. The current directly elected Members remain 100% male.

We have worked to increase the accessibility of our governance structures and have seen an increase in the number of Board Members with declared disabilities and caring responsibilities. Through the introduction of hybrid meeting capacity for some meetings and access to IT hardware and software as required, we aim to continue to develop the accessibility of our governance structures.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is explicitly set out as a key responsibility for the Board, its Members and those in the elected leadership roles of our governance

structure. Of the five main leadership roles of the Board (Convener, Depute Convener, Chair of Planning and Access Committee, Chair of Audit and Risk Committee and Chair of Futures Group), 60% are female and 40% male.

In 2023/24, the National Park Authority operated two Board development opportunities – both aimed at increasing the diversity of the Board – one an internally organised Board Shadowing opportunity and the other the UK Government's Boardroom Apprentice Programme. Both resulted in an enhancement to the diversity of the Board, albeit on a temporary basis.

d. Other actions to mainstream equalities for our people

Over the full reporting period, our Estates team have continued to make ongoing mainstreaming improvements to both our staff and visitor facing facilities. This has included:

- Updating the layout of our HQ building, adding in more breakout, discussion and quiet spaces, making it more flexible to meet more people's needs.
- Improving our emergency and access signage to better assist visually impaired people.
- Supplying free period products in our staff and public toilets in all of the toilets regardless of whether they are male, female or accessible, aiming to reduce period poverty for all.
- Installing ramps and handrails to improve access, following updates to the building at our Loch Chon campsite toilets.

In addition, we have made several other improvements for our people, mainstreaming equalities and supporting their wellbeing:

- Reviewed our staff induction process to include equality and diversity training.
- Revised our Equal Opportunities policy to capture EDI.
- Continuing to increase pay to meet increases in the Scottish Living Wage.
- To support staff's physical and mental health we have engaged the services of a wellness coach which includes access to a wellness portal as well as in person sessions on self-care and self-development.
- Implemented a Right to Disconnect policy which ensures staff can disconnect outside of their normal working hours.
- Continued to participate in the Career Ready programme, supporting a second local High School pupil with a 4-week paid internship and year-round mentoring.
- Carried out a recruitment campaign for our Youth Committee, welcoming 14 new members. This saw an increase in the age range and backgrounds represented. Youth Committee members have been increasingly active with

our Board, with members attending and speaking at Board and Futures Group meetings.

DRAFT

The Boardroom Apprentice project and Navid's success



Image: the Boardroom Apprentice project logo which shows the title against a pale purple background.

The National Park Authority sought to help diversify and develop our Board through participation in the UK Government's Boardroom Apprentice project.

The Boardroom Apprentice is a UK-wide programme providing practical boardroom experience to individuals from diverse backgrounds who want to learn about board service.

Navid Foroutan joined the National Park Authority Board through the Boardroom Apprentice programme in January 2024. Navid is a passionate advocate for equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). He has championed BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) leadership roles, advocating for better representation in key decision-making positions within the organisations he has served.

Navid has been a driving force for positive change through his work in health improvement and community engagement across a wide range of health issues for over 17 years. Having worked in diverse communities globally, including Scotland and Aotearoa New Zealand, Navid brings a unique perspective to EDI discussions, translating complex health concepts into practical solutions for more inclusivity and equity.

Navid said:

"I joined because I'm passionate about governance and increasing diversity in leadership roles. The mentoring and support from the Board Convenor and other Board Members have been extremely valuable, helping me understand boardroom complexities and preparing me for future board positions. The National Park staff and Board Members have been incredibly welcoming, making me feel part of the team, which has made this experience even more rewarding.

My time with the National Park board has been a fantastic learning opportunity, especially in seeing how governance balances environmental goals with community needs. It's deepened my understanding of strategic planning and decision-making, and as a result of this experience, I've now secured a board position as a trustee in a third-sector organisation."

4. Serving the public

The National Park is an asset for the whole of Scotland and beyond so should be a place that is welcoming and accessible to all. Our second Equality Outcome for 2021-2025 covered how we encourage and create equality and diversity within the National Park and with those who interact with us.

- The National Park is an inviting place for people of all backgrounds

Since the interim Equality Mainstreaming report in April 2023, significant progress has been made toward Equality Outcomes that improve accessibility and inclusivity across the National Park. Progress has included infrastructure and service improvements ranging from design and construction, transport and path networks to ongoing inclusive camping and summer inclusion opportunities, to continued networking to share best practice and promote equality across the Park.

- a. Activity 4: Undertake visitor infrastructure and service improvements (including in transport, recreation, camping, and access) that enable more diverse groups to have valuable experiences in the National Park.

National Park Place Programme

The [National Park Place Programme](#), introduced in 2022 and updated in June 2023, is our multi-year, place-based programme that sets out capital investment priorities for visitor management infrastructure within the National Park. It aligns with the [National Park Partnership Plan](#) published in 2024.

Central to the Place Programme is a place-based approach to designing visitor infrastructure. This approach prioritises solutions that respect and enhance the natural, cultural, and social context of the area while meeting the accessibility and inclusivity needs of diverse communities and visitors. In practice this means doing the right thing, in the right place, with the right people; for example, a place-based approach might involve designing pathways and signage to be accessible and inclusive to benefit all users.

As part of the place-based approach, our Place Programme work is guided by a set of thematic priorities achieving benefits for People, Place, Climate and Nature, and they underpin the whole programme. A key principle is that of 'supporting inclusion and improved accessibility to the National Park'. This means identifying and facilitating actions that support equality and diversity, and which help us to secure barrier-free and inclusive access for all visitors.

There are a number of examples where the Place Programme has made site improvements across the National Park. One of these is the Bracklinn Falls Bridge. Construction of the bridge was previously featured in the April 2023 Equality Mainstreaming update, where we detailed design features that incorporated the needs of all abilities including redesign of approach paths, improved signage and

wayfinding, and enhanced landings. Since the last report, the Bridge was announced as Winner of the Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge category at the International Association for Bridge and Structural Engineering (IABSE) Awards 2024, Highly Commended at the 2024 Civic Trust Awards and a Gold Award (Architecture under £200K) winner at the Scottish Design Awards 2023.

A Design Guide has been created to ensure a consistent approach to design and accessibility standards. More information is available in the case study in section 5.

Tarbet Visitor Site



Tarbet Visitor Site is one of the largest visitor sites owned by the National Park Authority. It is an open, terraced green space, with expansive views across Loch Lomond to the iconic peak of Ben Lomond. It is very popular, attracting a significant number of visitors. The site is an ideal inclusive car-free destination as it can be reached by cycle, bus and train.

Through the Place Programme, it was identified as a high priority site for infrastructure improvements in 2022 as part of a wider review of the area, due to the infrastructure no longer coping with peak demand and not being able to support the diverse range of people who visit the site.

A masterplan for the site was developed in 2023. Accessibility was incorporated into this from the start: it was informed by our own Design Guide principles for accessible and inclusive outdoor spaces; it included the advice of external access specialists, and was reviewed in an internal, cross-disciplinary design review in relation to accessibility and inclusion.

The construction, which was completed in February 2025, delivered a range of practical improvements:

- Provision of a new step free access at the principal entrance to the site which connects to the train station and links to the village.
- Provision of a new, more accessible, route to the loch shore and pier, with a gentler gradient from the car park for pedestrians.
- Redesign of main entrance to site with widened pavement, dropped kerbs, hazard warning paving and obstructions removed.
- Enhanced lighting and access to the 24hr toilet and facilities.
- Internal pedestrian crossings and dropped kerbs, including tactile paving.
- Introduction of new benches and seats at key resting points around the site.
- Outdoor cooking facilities to support large family groups.
- A shared pedestrian and cycle route with a width extended to five metres to accommodate pedestrian flows during peak season.
- Signage and wayfinding that advises of directions and distances to local facilities, as well as those facilities on site, which supports people to make decisions about where they can go and what they can do that suits their own needs or requirements.

Future phases of construction at Tarbet are planned and will deliver additional accessibility and inclusion benefits.

The National Park Inclusion Programme

Our National Park inclusion programme aims to ensure people from a wide range of backgrounds are enjoying, valuing, and helping us look after the National Park. In 2023 we took a proactive approach at promoting our engagement services to target audiences during the summer months. The aim was to increase the number of communities using our service as well as raise awareness of the support we can offer.

During July and August, the programme engaged 12 groups, totalling 96 adults and 147 children and young people to have a Ranger supported visit to the National Park, focussed on nature connections, and the health and wellbeing outcomes of being in nature.

We wish to ensure our engagement is as inclusive as possible and understand that there are many different barriers to engaging with the National Park and the outdoors in general for many groups. We try and provide resources and support to help overcome those barriers, so we asked what the key barriers were for their group. This ranged from access to outdoor 'gear' like waterproofs, costs of travelling to the National Park, language barriers, to mobility and accessibility requirements. We continually seek to integrate these insights into how we improve our support

offering. An example of this is the travel grant, which is featured as a case study later in the report in section 6.

Inclusive Camping

Our group application process, which provides special authorisation from our Camping Management Byelaws for organised groups to camp within our Camping Management Zones or at campsites without charge has continued to see a continuous increase in use. Many different groups can take advantage of the offer, with Duke of Edinburgh participants, uniformed youth groups, youth organisations, and social inclusion groups all being involved.

In 2023, we processed 74 group applications; 51 were for Duke of Edinburgh groups, along with 23 other applications, which included uniformed youth groups, school groups and social inclusion groups.

We saw an increase in group applications again in 2024 where we processed 92 applications; 65 of these were Duke of Edinburgh groups applications along with 27 other applications which included uniformed youth groups, school groups and social inclusion groups.

Barrier Reduction National Cycle Network 7: Callander to Ben Ledi



Image: a photo of the improved entrance to NCN7 at the Ben Ledi carpark showing a smooth tarred surface with wooden posts, yellow floor markings and boulders separating the path from the carpark.

The National Cycle Network 7 (NCN7) is a popular route traveling north to south through the National Park, as part of a longer route from Sunderland to Inverness. Following an audit by Sustrans, who manage the whole route, we successfully bid through their Barrier Reduction Fund fund to allow us to make some identified accessibility improvements. Within 2023-24 we transformed the Callander to Ben Ledi carpark stretch of the route.

At the south, the Kilmahog work involved removing barriers for adaptive and recumbent bikes, and wheelchairs on either side of the crossing of the A821. A tight turn was removed from one side and on the other side a combination of horse stile, field gate and very narrow chicane was removed and replaced with a shallow bollard chicane.

At the north, the access point to the NCN7 into Ben Ledi car park was redesigned, as previously cars could park right up against it and block access for adaptive and recumbent bikes and wheelchairs. Reconfiguring this means there is now always a gap for any NCN7 user.

We had some recent positive feedback from the Adaptive Riders Collective route on this work:

"This crossing has recently been updated and has been a fantastic development. The new crossing makes it so much easier for adaptive cyclists as there is ample room for passing either side of the bollards and no longer a gate to contend with on one side. This is a very commendable improvement as, as a result, has seen many more adaptive users take to the path."

Further barrier reduction work on the NCN7 is planned for 2025 onward, with ambitions to redesign narrow cycle grids at Bochastle and widening a bridge to meet current Cycle by Design standards.

As well as cycle routes, additional efforts to improve lowland paths are exemplified by work completed in Arrochar in 2023. A path linking the village of Succoth to Arrochar via the A83, used by residents including elderly villagers, had become significantly degraded and uneven. Approximately 250m of path was resurfaced to provide a much more level and accessible surface, improving and maintaining this vital link for residents.

- b. Activity 5: In planning our transition to net zero, assess the impact of change on those with protected characteristics and diverse socio-economic backgrounds, and implement mitigating measures to promote equality.

Our new [National Park Partnership Plan 2024-29](#) has been Ministerially approved and adopted with a vision that by 2045 the National Park is a thriving place that is nature positive and carbon negative. The vision of the Plan makes clear the key commitments to a just transition to net zero:

- A thriving place: communities and businesses are more resilient and sustainable through greener ways of living and working. There are more local jobs, homes and transport services supporting young and working aged people of all backgrounds to live and work here. The economy is more diverse and prospering, with tourism and rural businesses having adapted to become more resilient.
- Nature positive: The loss of nature has been halted and reversed so that landscapes thrive, native wildlife is more abundant and important habitats such as woodlands, peatlands and waterbodies are healthier and more resilient to change. Land is managed, and funded, in innovative new ways that strike a balance between production and protection.
- Carbon negative: We have gone beyond net zero so that the National Park is a natural carbon sink, absorbing more carbon than it emits. Visitors and local people enjoying the Park using a network of well-connected and affordable transport and active travel options and there is a thriving sustainable tourism sector.

The Plan commits us to being a net zero National Park by 2035 and embeds ambitious emission mitigation and sequestration at the highest level of strategic planning. Specifically, the Plan includes a science-based, Paris agreement-aligned pathway to net zero, strong links to net zero across all our outcomes, objectives and actions, and alignment of the measures of success with the pace and scale set out in our [GHG Assessment](#). The Plan includes six guiding principles to guide all work delivered, one of these is dedicated to the just transition: 'We want to bring everyone who lives and works in the National Park or visits it with us – as part of a just transition towards a fairer, greener future.' The engagement undertaken for the development of the Plan focused on ensuring that more diverse people had the opportunity to input into our strategy and inform our priorities (see the update under 'Activity 8' for more detail).

We are also [now members of the UN-backed 'Race to Zero' initiative](#) (the UK 15 National Parks are the first National Parks in the world to join) committing us to highest levels of transparency and leadership in tackling the climate emergency.

- c. Activity 6: Update our visitor information across our communications platforms to ensure it is accessible and that our imagery better reflects the diversity of Scotland.

When commissioning imagery, where possible, we always consider and include a more diverse representation. For example, our recently commissioned photoshoots have represented age, ability, and Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. This approach to adding to our photo library is now our standard practice. We have since used this imagery on our social media platforms, and to update our website.

The Trossachs Explorer pilot bus service has been a key campaign for us in 2024, and when commissioning influencers to support the campaign, we included a travel and disability blogger to be more representative of the audience who may wish to use the service. We also created an all-abilities itinerary of things to experience on the bus route to encourage more people with this protected characteristic to access nature using the bus service.

When supporting diverse groups to access and enjoy the National Park, we have actively collaborated with them on joint communications, such as:

- Musicians in Exile
- Black Scottish Adventurers
- Boots & Beards/Bonnie Boots

As part of our social media monitoring, we share and comment on posts from people or organisations that represent or support protected characteristics, such as all abilities biking events, and walks that welcome underrepresented groups.

In 2024 we began the tender process to develop a new website, with accessibility being a key focus, and we hope to continue with the development of a more accessible website in 2025.

Activity 7: Build our understanding of the constraints and barriers that diverse groups face in accessing the benefits of the National Park, and use this to inform future work plans.

We continue to work closely with businesses, partnership forums and networks to promote equity, diversity and inclusivity for visitors to the National Park, building collective understanding of the barriers facing diverse groups, and sharing and supporting best practice to mitigate these.

National Parks UK Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group

We have taken an active role within the National Parks UK Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group, which was initiated in 2022-23, where all National Park Authorities are working collectively to decrease inequality in accessing these protected landscapes. In 2024-25, we took part in a consultant-led project that aimed to better understand and create principles for all Park Authorities to adopt on increasing

'belonging' in the Parks. Workshops were held across the UK for members of underserved communities we all work with to have their voices heard, and for Loch Lomond & The Trossachs, we held an online workshop with participants from LGBTQ+ and Black outdoor community groups. This work was presented at the NPUK conference in Northumberland titled: '75 years of landscapes for everyone' which focused on hearing from diverse speakers and understanding better how to reduce barriers of access to National Parks. The report from the consults and learnings from this event will be shared internally and lessons directly incorporated into the development of our new equality focused work.

Our National Park Destination Group and promoting accessibility in Park businesses and tourism events

Our National Park Destination Group continues to be the key forum for local business engagement and direction for delivery on the business-related tourism elements of the NPPP, and an opportunity for businesses to share best practice.

A meeting in September 2024 included a presentation by a business owner updating on the development of the Tyndrum Changing Places Toilet (CPT), due for completion in spring 2025, which we supported the development of. A CPT provides sanitary accommodation for people with multiple and complex disabilities who have one or two assistants with them. Direct support to secure funding and guide project development was given to the Tyndrum Infrastructure Group – a local business and community group who had the vision of building this type of facility in Tyndrum. The National Park Authority also promoted the CPT which opened in Aberfoyle in summer 2024, which was the first CPT facility to be built within the National Park.

We have provided advice and promoted national and regional programmes for businesses to improve their approach to welcoming all visitors. This has included supporting VisitScotland's national partnership with AccessAble, signposting to VisitScotland's online resources, and a business toolkit published on the National Park website '[An Accessible Destination](#)'. This aims to improve information for visitors and to support greater inclusion within recruitment and retention of employees across businesses based within the National Park.

The National Park Authority contributed to the development of the funded 'Access Forth Valley' partnership project (with Stirling, Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Councils) to promote accessible visitor attractions and services across the Forth Valley area. A [website](#) was built and is maintained to showcase themed itineraries (heritage, family fun and outdoor) and provides useful links to assist visitors to obtain information to plan ahead. Businesses within the National Park contributed to this content as an excellent way of showcasing adapted services on offer.

A West Highland Way storymap was created to provide an interactive, virtual tour of the long-distance route, providing an accessible, virtual experience for anyone who

may be unable to walk the long-distance route and to discover more about the natural environment and wildlife you may see along the Way.

We have also been in direct discussions with [Green Tourism](#) with a view to a partnership approach to encourage more businesses to work through the assessment criteria for clear guidance and practical actions for improvements, and to gain certification. The award criteria includes a set of 'People' goals, one of which focuses on EDI. Through the network of UK National Parks, a collaborative approach is being progressed to run joint or simultaneous projects. Further discussions between Green Tourism and the UK National Parks' Sustainable Tourism Officers group to progress in early 2025.

Our guidance to anyone planning to hold an event in the National Park has been updated to include EDI information and to encourage external organisations to conduct an EqIA assessment. We have also worked closely with major events including the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships event to incorporate EDI objectives within the event delivery and through our partnership with the delivery of the annual Go Swim event (Scotland's largest open water swimming event) to enable greater access and to respond to individual enquiries.

Trossachs Explorer: shuttle bus

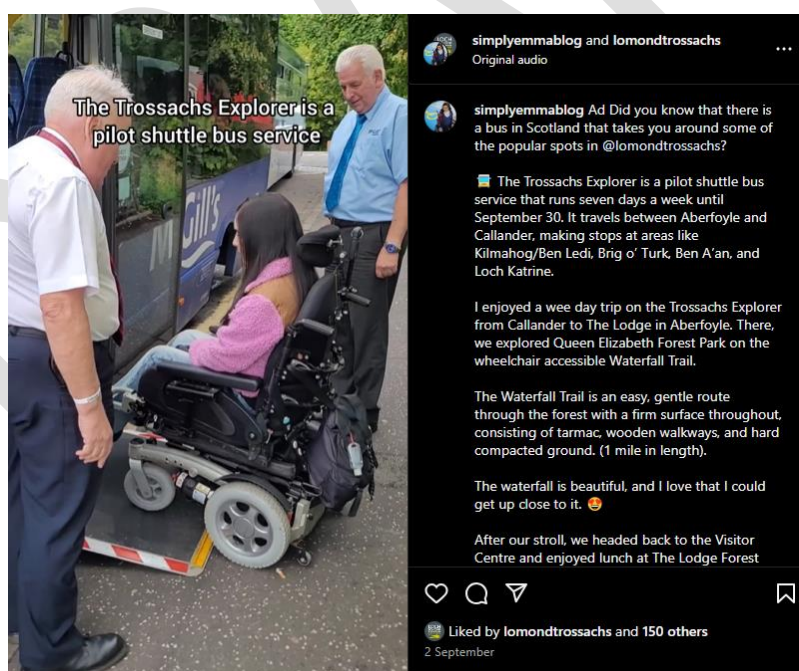


Image: a screenshot showing @SimplyEmmaBlog Instagram post featuring her trip on the Trossachs Explorer Shuttle Bus. The image shows Emma in her wheelchair being aided as she boards the bus using a ramp, accompanied by text describing her itinerary.

In summer 2024 we piloted the Trossachs Explorer, a seasonal shuttle bus service to connect popular parts of The Trossachs normally only accessible by car. A key ambition for the pilot was ensuring that the service was as inclusive as possible, empowering visitors, particularly those who rely on public transportation, to experience the Trossachs independently. Actions fell largely into two themes: physical adjustments, to ensure that as many barriers to use were removed; and inclusive communications, to ensure that marketing and messaging reached the widest range of possible users and gave them confidence to use the service.

From a practical perspective, buses operating on the route were specified with ramp access combined with floor lowering (“kneeling”) mechanisms to be fully accessible. Reasonable adjustments including groundwork and matting were made at key stops to ensure safe boarding from flat, dry surfaces. In addition, the sixteen bus drivers serving the route were trained to recognise and support the Thistle Assistance Scheme, a card and app that lets transport staff know in an easy and subtle way what extra support might be needed. The Trossachs Explorer service was supplemented with a cohort of National Park Volunteer Rangers who offered visitor information, advice and additional support where required.

From a communications perspective, information was shared digitally and physically and was hosted on our website with a suite of standardised accessibility tools. A dedicated page of "Frequently Asked Questions" featured accessibility information, with content evolving throughout the pilot. It included essential information such as bus specifications and wheelchair capacity, interchange information and restrictions, and a live bus tracker that provided additional reassurance. Our proactive engagement with local businesses and community organisations ensured the service was promoted through locally established networks.

To further promote the inclusive service, the National Park invited disabled travel blogger Emma Muldoon to experience the Trossachs Explorer first-hand. Her [insights](#) highlighted the accessible adventures enabled by the shuttle bus, reaching a wide audience and encouraging those with similar needs to explore the Trossachs confidently.

Impressively, of the 5,137 passengers who travelled on the service, 52% travelled for free under the National Concession Card schemes, including young people under 22 and those over 60, highlighting the bus’s success in opening up the Trossachs to a diverse range of audiences.

5. Decision-making

A key way for us to improve equality in the National Park is to embed it into our decision-making. Our third Equality Outcome for 2021-2025 was:

- Our policy and external funding decisions improve equality for individuals and groups.
 - a. Activity 8: Collect diverse views by running our consultations and engagement events in an accessible manner, including in-person meetings as well as where we use digital methods.

In 2023-24 we undertook significant engagement activity on the new National Park Partnership Plan. The Plan was launched in May 2024 following engagement with stakeholders and a 12-week public consultation on the draft Plan in Spring 2023.

Ahead of the consultation period, we commissioned independent user research with key stakeholder groups we regularly work with and with people whose voices are heard less often during consultations, to codesign our approach to engagement. This user research involved representatives from groups supporting different disabilities, races, sexes, religions and beliefs, ages and cross-sectional groups from the local community.

Our research highlighted the importance of making it easier for people to get involved by providing more informal, 'light-touch' opportunities for them to engage in discussion, share ideas and experiences. It also emphasised the value of using existing events, channels and networks rather than asking people to give up time to attend specific events or activities solely focused on the draft Plan.

As a result, a multi-strand approach was developed to go beyond traditional consultation approaches and provide a range of opportunities for people and organisations to get involved in ways that best suited their needs and role in the draft Plan.

The primary channel for consultation was the digital platform Commonplace, complemented by a range of online and in-person events, activities and meetings and an overarching social media and media campaign to promote engagement.

Commonplace was designed to provide a range of options for people to get involved:

- A detailed survey responding to the full draft Plan
- A Quick Survey to share their experiences of and ideas for the National Park.
- An interactive map to share their comments on how specific places in the National Park make them feel, their experiences and if anything could be changed or improved.
- Or comment underneath any of the three key sections of the Draft Plan.

Our in-person engagement included attending a mix of existing events, such as local highland games, health walk groups and the UCI Cycling Championships. In addition, bespoke activities included Rangers talking to pupils as part of their outdoor learning visit, a focus day with the Youth Committee and National Park staff engaging people in the visitor information centre, libraries, post offices and cafes. Board members were also provided with engagement packs to support them in facilitating a discussion with their networks.

As a result of this approach, the National Park saw a 60% increase in consultation responses when compared to the previous Park Plan and a 59% increase in responses from individuals as opposed to stakeholder organisations. Demographic information was collected from the individual responses. 80% of responses came from working age groups (18-64), 3% Black and Asian (including Black/African/Caribbean/Black British, Asian British – Indian and Pakistani) 1% mixed/multiple ethnic groups and 94% white ethnicities (including British/Scottish/Welsh/Northern Irish, Irish and other white). 24% considered themselves as having a constraint to access, including physical/mobility, mental health, long term illness and learning disabilities. Demographic information for the group / organisation responses was not collected.

Having considered the feedback from the public consultation and from the consultation authorities, several changes were made to the final Partnership Plan in terms of clarity, topics covered, tone and style.

- b. Activity 9: Ensure we adequately assess the equalities impacts of our policy and funding decisions.

We have a comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form that we continue to utilise when developing or renewing a policy, as well as being a required part of our project initiation process. The EqIA allows officers to consider the impacts of the planned work or policy through a structured format, reflecting on each of the protected characteristics in turn before identifying required mitigating actions. We have begun to review the EqIA form and guidance to make improvements, seeking to make it more user friendly for staff to support effective completion of these.

We have now issued guidance to staff when they are offering funding arrangements to third parties. This guidance includes the recognition and consideration of the impacts of equalities and Fair Work First. The guidance considers the value of funding being offered, the purpose of the funding, and balances the need for measuring and monitoring any impacts on equalities that the grant purpose may have. Staff have to actively consider whether specific conditions around equalities and Fair Work First should be included within a funding offer.

Within all our relevant procurement activity, which is advertised via Public Contracts Scotland, we now include a bidder assessment on how they meet or exceed the requirements of Fair Work First. This assessment along with other award criteria determines which bidder offers the best value for money. Furthermore, for all relevant contracts (dependant on value, length of contract and commodity being acquired) we will work with the appointed supplier to ensure enhancement of their working practices with regards to Fair Work First and to ensure their continued compliance for the duration of the contract. For certain contracts of high risk and or high value, we consider a minimum required that a bidder must demonstrate with regards to equalities and Fair Work First before they will be considered for a contract award. With greater use of Government framework agreements as defined in our updated procurement strategy / policy will ensure that there will increased consideration on equalities and its impacts.

Training will be offered to staff during financial year 2025/26 to improve equalities and Fair Work First bidder assessments on low value contracts to ensure that staff undertaking low value activities understand the importance of consideration these topics.

Guidance on Fair Work First and equalities within procurement activity is issued to relevant staff on an ongoing basis.

Our Travel Grant



Image: a group of cyclists pedalling down a path with ferns and other plants on either side.

The National Park Travel Grant is one example of how providing a small fund can contribute to overcoming the significant barrier of cost of travelling to and around the National Park.

The grant intends to enable access to the Park for learning and engagement, including supporting schools from SIMD 1-4 and those groups supporting additional support needs pupils. We have a robust and equitable decision-making process to allow us to provide funds to those who would benefit from it most.

Between 2021 to 2025 the National Park has awarded £13,682 to schools and groups to contribute to the transport costs. This includes £1,625 for inclusion groups who face multiple barriers to accessing the National Park.

One group told us: 'It meant we could visit Inchcailloch offering an opportunity to get out of the city for many people who are socially isolated, may be living with mental and / or physical ill health, addictions, poverty.'

One school who received the travel grant told us: 'It relieved financial pressures on parents and carers in a poverty-stricken area. Had we not received the grant, £20 from each parent and carer would have been too much to ask and therefore learners would not have been able to go on a school trip or visit the National Park.'

The National Park Design Guide



Image: a screenshot showing the top half of the front cover of the Design Guide, with the title 'Our Visitor Infrastructure: a design guide' against a blue background.

Whilst not a policy, the Place Programme's Design Guide is a great example of a document that we use to ensure that our visitor site improvements assess, and take accessibility and inclusion into account right at the start of all work. This is in line with our wider strategic plans and policy, including the National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029 ("Improving Popular Places", p. 95).

The Guide supports raising the standards of visitor infrastructure within the National Park, for sites owned and/ or managed by the National Park Authority and influences the work of other public sector partners within the National Park. It aims to foster visitor sites that are inclusive, environmentally conscious, and capable of accommodating diverse needs. It does this by providing comprehensive strategies for creating welcoming spaces for visitors of all abilities and, by integrating inclusive design principles, paves the way for improved visitor experiences.

The Guide was developed through a collaborative process with multiple topic-focused workshops bringing together key colleagues from across the organisation, resulting in over thirty-two group review sessions and 725 recorded feedback comments.

The Guide has also been informed by many external publications and guidance which aim to standardise accessible and inclusive outdoor spaces including Signage Guidance for Outdoor Access (2018); Outdoor Accessibility Guidance (2023); BS8300-1:2018, Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment (2018); Safer Parks: Improving Access for Women and Girls (2023).

In addition to broad recommendations around landscape considerations, the Guide presents a series of recommendations for specific design features and principles, and outlines the optimal inclusion and accessibility requirements for features including: pathways and surfaces, furniture and resting points, signage and wayfinding, boardwalks and bridge paths.

Inclusive and accessible design improves the experience for *all* visitors, from families with strollers and young children to elderly visitors. The Design Guide underscores Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park's commitment to embedding accessibility into infrastructure, helping to maintain the Park's natural beauty while enhancing inclusion.

For an example of practical application of the Guide, please refer to Tarbet Visitor Site case study earlier in this report.

6. Our Equality Outcomes for 2025 – 2029

This report has demonstrated some of the progress we have made towards improving equality, diversity and inclusion across our work, but there remains more to do.

Over the past 6 months we have been in a period of review and reflection to develop our new set of Equality Outcomes for 2025-2029. A series of internal workshops and discussions have been held, reflecting on the progress we have made against our current set of Outcomes, arising priorities in our new National Park Partnership Plan and Corporate Plan, and wider evidence and best practice. This development work started with our Park for All group, before reaching out to relevant Operational Managers and Executive team to draft new Outcomes. Following this, all staff updates and surveys were delivered, allowing people from across the organisation to be able to influence the new Outcomes as well as suggest actions to help us achieve these over the coming 4 years.

Following drafting of the Outcomes, we reached out to relevant organisations who support people with various protected characteristics and / or might be experiencing intersectional barriers to accessing the National Park. This culminated in us running a workshop with Boots and Beards, DeafBlind Scotland and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Countryside Trust, allowing us to discuss the drafted Outcomes. The intention of the workshop was to hear directly from people whom the Outcomes are designed to support, gathering insights to allow us to refine our work related to these. A follow-on survey was sent to other organisations we have previously worked with who were not able to attend the workshop to allow them to see our work and provide feedback on it too.

In addition to this workshop, we hosted a specific session with our volunteers to gather their feedback and suggestions on how EDI can be further embedded into our volunteer programme. Another session is scheduled with our Youth Committee, where we will discuss and hear their reflections on this area of work in relation to young people.

The insights we have gathered through all this engagement, and the working relationships these discussions help us to build, are critical in ensuring the work we do directly reflects the needs of those who may benefit from it.

In addition, the work to review our Equality Outcomes has come at a great time in terms of our wider strategic development, with the recent publication of the National Park Partnership Plan and our Corporate Plan being approved by our Board in December 2024 (currently awaiting Scottish Government approval). Throughout the development of these Plans, we maintained a focal point on equalities work, knowing we would be refreshing our Outcomes soon after their publication. This has allowed us to have a strong strategic connection between all the documents; raising the visibility of equality work within both Plans, reinforcing the Plans' objectives through

the Equality Outcomes we have set, and where possible, sharing indicators of success.

In addition to this stronger strategic connection, as part of our review of our Outcomes we have also considered how we further mainstream equalities in relation to how we manage regular review and reporting of progress against our Outcomes. As a result, we have made a commitment to increasing the frequency of reporting on our progress to annually, instead of every other year. Internal work will continue in 2025-26 to develop our approach to this, alongside other planned improvements, such as updating our Equality Impact Assessment process and delivering refresher training to staff on this. Bringing this report to the Board in draft in March, prior to its publication in April, is also another adjustment to mainstream equality work at all levels of our organisation.

Our Equality Outcomes and supporting objectives for 2025 – 2029 are:

- a. At all levels of the organisation, our staff, volunteers and Board better reflect the diversity of Scotland.
 - Continue to broaden our network and knowledge to champion EDI in the environment sector and attract new and diverse talent to join us.
 - Continue to build an inclusive culture and our staff and Board's capacity to champion equity, diversity and inclusion in all we do
 - Improve our internal policies and processes to more effectively monitor, review and enhance EDI action across our work.

We have retained this Outcome from our previous set as we want to continue to focus on diversifying our organisation and building our inclusive culture. This need to work within the organisation is reflected across the environmental sector, as there is wider evidence to show it is one of the least diverse, particularly in [relation to ethnicity](#).

This Outcome is aligned to our [Corporate Plan](#) objectives and actions in section 2.3 'continue to champion and work towards increased equity, diversity and inclusion in all we do'. The overall indicator of success for this Outcome is that demographic information for our staff, Board and volunteers shows increasing diversity, moving towards the 2022 census data as the benchmark. This is a shared indicator of success with the Corporate Plan's EDI objective.

- b. The National Park is a place for everyone, and we are supporting diversity and inclusion by removing barriers and improving services to meet the needs of all users.

- Undertake visitor infrastructure and service improvements (including recreation, camping, and access) that enable more diverse groups to have valuable experiences in the National Park.
- Review and update content available for Park users across the NPA communications platforms ensuring it is easy to engage with for all and facilitates inclusive access to Park experiences.
- Continue to offer targeted outreach activities, support and resources to underrepresented and groups that have experienced marginalisation, to experience the National Park.
- Work towards formalising a National Park Mobility Partnership that offers integrated, inclusive and affordable low-carbon transport options for everyone.

This Outcome retains the same focus as the second of the last set, which is our work to make the Park a place for all. There is ongoing work across our National Park UK network, sparked by Glover review recommendations that more needed to be done to increase the diversity of visitors to Parks, with many Parks reaffirming their commitment to this work through the NPUK EDI focused conference in September 2024. Previous visitor surveys from the Park have shown our visitors do not fully reflect Scotland's diversity, and wider Scottish research from [NatureScot](#) show there remains inequity in accessing greenspaces.

This Outcome is aligned to our [National Park Partnership Plan](#) objective in section 2.1.2 to support diversity and inclusion across the Park. It will share the same overall indicator of success, which is tracking how representative domestic visitors are of Scottish society.

- c. We have embedded the needs of more diverse groups into our work through increased engagement and consultation.
- Design inclusive engagement and consultation opportunities for people to input into delivery plans for National Park priorities.
- Continue to build our understanding of the barriers faced by, and the needs of diverse groups, and embed this in our policy and practice.
- Ensure National Park Authority communications channels and outputs are fully representative and easy for all users to understand and engage with.

This Outcome reflects our desire to build upon our previous inclusive engagement and consultation, recognising that if we can understand the needs of diverse groups, we will be able to mainstream an inclusive approach into even more aspects of our work and decision making. It does not have a specific strategic tie like the other two but rather seeks to underpin all relevant work that is outlined in those Plans. A

tangible example of this is the way we approach the preparation of our Local Development Plan. Success will be tracked through the delivery of actions that will be shared in annual updates.

We have continued to make progress against our Equality Outcomes and in how we have mainstreamed equalities in everything we do. Our refreshed Outcomes for 2025 – 2029, interwoven with our NPPP and Corporate Plan, recommit us to this vital work, and we look forward to sharing our progress over the coming years.

DRAFT

7. Appendices

The following appendices will be added to the final report prior to publication in April 2025.

- Employee Information/Workforce Composition
- Equal Pay Policy Statement
- Staff Monitoring Data

Appendix 1: Volunteer Monitoring Data

In June 2024 we asked our volunteers to complete an anonymous equality monitoring survey to allow us to improve our understanding of the protected characteristics of our volunteer cohort. This was the fifth year that this survey was undertaken, and the responses are outlined below, alongside the comparative responses from previous years. The language and questions for this survey were updated compared to previous years to bring it in line with the most recent Scottish Government language regarding [collecting equality data](#), with the question structure modified to prevent multiple responses to individual questions and prevent people from skipping questions entirely, with an option of 'Prefer not to say' being added to replace this.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Response Count</i>
2015	86
2017	65
2019	75
2021	55
2024	45

This is the lowest number of responses we have received for an equality survey and continues a general downwards trend. While we cannot be sure why the number of responses is decreasing, one of the suspected contributing factors is that many of our long-standing volunteers may have previously completed multiple versions of the survey and therefore do not see the need to update us again. In addition, as we run the demographic survey as a one-off survey with a limited time period to complete the survey to allow us to manage responses, it is likely some were not able to complete within the response window. Additionally, our total volunteer cohort is lower than previous years, at around 180 at the time of the survey, potentially contributing to less responses. We will continue to look for improvements in how we carry out our demographic surveying to improve responses.

The percentage of volunteers identifying as male has risen to 64% which is the highest we have ever recorded, bypassing the 2015 levels of 62%. We received 0 responses from the 16-24 age bracket which is a decrease of 9.1% from 2021. There has been a continued increase in the percentage of volunteers aged 65+ rising to 44% which corresponds with a decrease in the 55-64 age bracket (down of 12% to

21%), suggesting an aging volunteer cohort.

We have seen a significant increase in those considering themselves to have a disability, rising from 7% to 27% (an increase of more than 19% in 2.5 years). Ethnicity has remained essentially the same with 98% identifying as white, and subsequently 76% and 22% identifying as White Scottish and White British respectively.

We have removed the question regarding employment status based on Scottish government guidance and have implemented a question regarding caring responsibility, with 22% of respondents indicating they have some level of caring responsibility.

Summary of results from Equalities surveys 2015 – 2024

All numbers are given as percentages. Please note, numbers are rounded so in some cases this will result in slight variances to 100%.

What is your sex?

	2015	2017	2019	2021	2024
Male	63	57	52	55	64
Female	37	42	48	42	36
In another way	0	0	0	<5	0
Prefer not to say	0	<5	0	0	0

Age

	2015*	2017	2019	2021	2024
16 - 24	<5	0	8	9	0
25 - 34	<5	<5	6	<5	<5
35 - 44	11	14	<5	6	9
45 - 54	22	20	21	11	16
55 - 64	22	30	34	33	21
65+	<5	30	27	36	44
Prefer not to say	0	<5	<5	<5	<5

* 2015 slightly different categorisation adjusted for comparison with future years.

Religious Belief

	2015	2017	2019	2021	2024
--	------	------	------	------	------

Church of Scotland	34	27	24	20	20
Roman Catholic	6	5	5	<5	<5
Muslim	0	0	0	0	0
Hindu	0	0	0	0	0
Buddhist	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Sikh	0	0	0	0	0
Jewish	0	0	0	0	0
Pagan	0	0	0	0	<5
None	51	52	48	58	53
Prefer not to say	0	6	5	<5	<5
Other Christian	8	6	13	15	7
Agnostic	0	0	0	0	<5
Other	0	0	0	0	<5
Skipped	0	0	<5	0	0

Sexual Orientation

	2015	2017	2019	2021	2024
Bisexual	0	0	<5	0	<5
Gay man	<5	<5	<5	<5	-
Gay woman	<5	<5	0	<5	-
Gay or Lesbian	-	-	-	-	<5
Heterosexual/straight	87	88	90	91	89
Other	0	0	<5	0	<5
Prefer not to say	10	9	<5	<5	<5

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

	2015	2017	2019	2021	2024
Yes	<5	0	<5	7	27
No	93	97	97	91	69
Prefer not to say	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5

Which ethnic group do you most identify with?

	2015	2017	2019	2021	2024
White	100	99	99	98	98
Mixed or multiple	0	0	0	<5	0
Asian, Scottish Asian or British Asian	0	0	0	0	0
African, Scottish African or British African	0	0	0	0	0
Caribbean or Black	0	0	0	0	0
Other ethnic group	0	<5	<5	0	0

Prefer not to say	0	0	0	0	<5
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	----

Which of these options most accurately describes your ethnicity?

	2015	2017	2019	2021	2024
Scottish	70	67	72	76	76
Other British	26	26	24	22	22
Irish	0	<5	<5	0	0
Gypsy/Traveller	0	0	0	0	0
Polish	0	0	0	0	0
Other	<5	6	<5	<5	0
Prefer not to say	0	0	0	0	<5

Appendix 2: Report in accordance the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018

The Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 (“the Act”) imposes a duty upon public authorities and those responsible for appointing public board members to take action to achieve the “gender representation objective” specified in the Act which is that 50% of non-executive members of public boards are women.

As a public authority specified in Schedule 1 of the Act the National Park Authority has a duty to report to the Scottish Ministers under Section 8(5) of the Act.

Six of the National Park Authority’s 17 Board members are directly appointed by the Scottish Ministers and therefore fall within the remit of the Act.

With regard to the Board members appointed by the Scottish Ministers the National Park Authority is required to publish reports on the carrying out of its functions under Section 5 (Encouragement of applications by women) and Section 6 (Duty to take steps towards achieving objective) of the Act in accordance with the provisions made in the regulations.

The regulations are The Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 (Reports) Regulations 2020 (“the Regulation’s”) which came into force on 29th May 2020.

Five of the ministerial appointments to the National Park Authority Board are appointed from 1 November 2022 until the 31 October 2026. The sixth appointment runs from 1st November 2023 until 31st October 2027. The six board members appointed by the Scottish Ministers currently comprise three men and three women.

Report in Terms of Section 8 of the Act

1. Section 5 - Encouragement of applications by women

The National Park Authority worked with the Scottish Government to promote the Board vacancy of May 2023 to women, including the production of promotional material particularly welcoming applications from women, as they are currently underrepresented on the Board as a whole.

2. Section 6 - Duty to take steps towards achieving objective

At the date of this report the National Park Authority's Board meets the gender representation objective for a public board in so far as 50% of the non-executive members are women. The reappointment of three female members for a second four-year term in October 2022 was key in achieving this objective.