

## SUBMISSION FROM SCOTTISH WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT FORUM

### **The Importance of Gender Representation**

Police forces in the United Kingdom have in recent years been striving to achieve gender equality in the service. Although progress is being made research has shown that there remains an under representation of female officers, particularly within specialist roles.

The Association of Chief Police Officers of Scotland (ACPOS) and new Police Scotland Executive are committed to providing the public with a modern police service where men, women and transgender people are treated fairly and equally. As a public service provider, the police service as a whole has a responsibility to provide gender equality, rather than expecting individuals to challenge inequality.

### **Background**

The Scottish Women's Development Forum (SWDF) was established in May 2003 to take forward gender equality in employment within the Scottish Police Service as a working group of the ACPOS People, Development & Diversity Business Area. The Forum's purpose is to help the Scottish Police Service provide a positive working environment which enables everyone to reach their full potential, thereby improving the quality of service delivery to the communities.

The progress made as a result of the ACPOS Gender Agenda Scotland launched in 2004 and the subsequent Gender Agenda 2008-2011 has played a significant role in compliance by Forces regarding the Gender Equality Duty. This work was undertaken by the SWDF committee members and required a substantial amount of commitment, data collection and time to complete. A great deal of progress has been made by the SWDF since its inception in 2003.

The ACPOS Gender Agenda Scotland Action Plans were the conduit for driving activity and measuring progress in relation to the five key business areas:

- Recruitment and Selection
- Retention and fair Employment Practice
- Training and Career Development
- Work Life Balance
- Communication

In 2009 a strategic development day was held for members of the forum committee, which led to the creation of working groups to take forward key areas of business from the Gender Agenda Action Plan in relation to Performance Monitoring, Coaching & Mentoring, Communications & Marketing (in addition to the existing sub-group leading on the SWDF Personal & Professional Development Programme.

The SWDF now work to agreed objectives and a commitment to our staff.

### Our objectives 2011-2013

- Act as a consultative body on behalf of the Scottish police service in relation to gender equality issues.
- Consider equality impact issues developing within ACPOS or Force policy annually.
- Seek solutions to ensure that there are no barriers to the personal and professional development of all staff and take action to remove barriers which may prevent female police officers from entering specialist posts and promoted ranks.
- Monitor current organisational change within the Scottish police service in the context of any risk to fair and equal opportunities.

### Our commitment to our staff 2011-2013

- Provide regular reports to ACPOS and the Scottish Government on progress made.
- Provide a mentoring scheme accessible to all our people.
- Challenge performance in relation to under-representation of female in specialist posts.
- Provide personal and professional development days.

### **Achievements/Performance**

The table below shows the progress made in regards to the percentage of females in each rank/employee type

<b>Rank/Employee Type</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
Police Officers	18.8%	23.1%	26.4%	27.14%	27.8%
Promoted Posts	8%	13.2%	16.2%	17.2%	18.3%
Police Staff	65%	62%	65%	65%	65.7%
Special Constables	Not available	Not available	37.1%	35.9%	36.8%

Although there is no direct evidence to link the ongoing work of the SWDF to these figures, it would be reasonable to suggest that they have made a significant contribution to the progress, but it is also clear that further progress is required.

The business case for equality relates to getting the best people into every role to ensure we provide the best service to the public.

In 2009, Scottish Ministers agreed the designation of two priority areas for the advancement of Gender Equality in relation to the Gender Equality Duty, these being tackling occupational segregation and tackling violence against women.

Occupational segregation is the concentration of women and men in different kinds of jobs ("horizontal" segregation) or at different grades ("vertical" segregation). The findings of research entitled *'Reporting on progress towards equality of opportunity for women and men made by public authorities in Scotland: Ministerial priorities for gender equality tackling occupational segregation'* was carried out to identify progress in tackling occupational segregation in Scotland, to enable Ministers to report against the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty. The findings indicate that occupational segregation is linked to, and is a consequence of, wider gender inequality, as well as being a continuing barrier to the achievement of equality. The research also indicated that examples of initiatives and specific work to tackle occupational segregation included: measures to encourage entry to non-traditional areas; support of individuals in a variety of forms; and research and funding work. The SWDF have contributed in all of these areas through their Personal & Professional Development Programme, the mentoring pilot and the research carried out in relation to the under representation of females in identified specialist posts, which will all be referred to in this paper.

### **National Police Reform Programme**

As the eight legacy forces, SPSA and SCDEA transition into the Police Service of Scotland we do not foresee the need for our Administrator changing for the 2013-2014 financial year. As already discussed it is essential for the SWDF to be involved in the reform process as it is still highly likely that it will disproportionately affect females within the service. It is vitally important that the SWDF ensure that female staff and officers do not miss out on opportunities and development moving forwards into the future particularly as females generally have more caring responsibilities and geographical relocations or opportunities may again disproportionately disadvantage women.

Substantial progress in gender equality has been made since the SWDF was established in 2003 however there is more to do and the SWDF must ensure that the Police Service of Scotland does not take a backwards step as a result of the necessary changes required and if it becomes apparent that the reform process is having a negative effect the SWDF must be there to provide solutions to any barriers causing this.

The reform process continues to be the major priority for the Scottish Women's Development Forum currently and we continue to consult on the National Police Reform Programme and, in particular, with the development of HR Standard Operating Procedures. SWDF members continue to express concerns over the reform process including the potential impact on recruitment, promotion, selection, flexible working, redeployment and potential redundancies of police staff.

It is vitally important that the SWDF ensure that female staff and officers do not miss out on opportunities and development moving forward and that any barriers, real or perceived, are mitigated against if we are not take a backwards step in regards to gender equality within the service. It is essential therefore that the SWDF continue to

be involved in the police reform process as it is highly likely that it will disproportionately affect females within the service.

To date the SWDF have been consulted on Disciplinary Procedure; Equality Impact Assessments Toolkits; Disability in Employment; Transgender People in Employment; Promotion; Adoption, Maternity and Paternity; Flexible Working; Equality, Diversity & Dignity at Work; Pay Protection; Accelerated Career Development Programme; Attendance Management; Postings and Transfers; Relocations; Redundancy; Match-in Ring Fenced Recruitment; Recruitment of Police Officers and Special Constables; Equality & Diversity Outcomes. We have held meetings with those responsible for the reform of Police Officer and Special Constable Recruitment and attended a workshop on Officer Postings and Transfers.

### **Workforce issues**

Such as shift working and its impacts; lack of part-time working in some sectors and, more generally, the increase in the number of men taking on part-time work; employers' reactions to flexible-working requests and comparative public, private and voluntary sector approaches; impact of public and voluntary sector cuts; the double disadvantage facing disabled women in the labour market.

In general the police service in Scotland is supportive of flexible working however the level of support tends to be associated more with certain roles as some are seen to be 'not suitable' for flexible working such as CID. This can often depend on the particular culture of a department and the leader/manager in place. If the new Police Service of Scotland is going to continue efforts in increasing the numbers of females in promoted (currently at 18%) or specialist posts it has to take a positive attitude towards Flexible Working and encourage and promote staff to make use of it. It should clearly demonstrate that flexible working is an option for police staff and officer at all levels of the organisation, not just the lower-level roles. The lack of support for flexible working in certain departments further increases occupational segregation within the police service.

With 65% of police staff being female, most in lower graded/paid roles, they are likely to be the most affected by the move to one force. It appears to be the case that some staff may be forced into choosing between their role and their location. With many members of police staff having very specific knowledge/roles/qualifications this could potentially have a huge impact on a large amount of females. Centralisation of police staff posts is likely to lead to job cuts or relocations, which will have more of a detrimental impact on female staff, particularly those with caring responsibilities (which statistically more women have) who are less able to relocate for work.

The fact that more women choose to work flexibly including part-time, frequently because of caring responsibilities, means that we must try our best to ensure that they are not at a disadvantaged when being offered alternative employment/roles in the new service because of this.

Members also expressed concerns over the impact of maternity leave and officers returning to modified duties would have on the service, which is an area people seem uneasy to discuss. With more female officers entering the service (a move that is to be celebrated) there is every probability that there will be a greater number of

officers on maternity leave at any one time and therefore a greater impact on the service. The members agreed that in order for resource management to be effective this topic needed to be discussed and planned for in advance. Members expressed a desire that staff on protected duties, or those returning from maternity leave, would not simply be placed in an office somewhere and that a strategy/policy for this would need to be developed.

The need to mitigate the potential impact that restructuring could have was reflected in the partial EQIA carried out by the Scottish Government. However, the assessment did not appear to state exactly what will be done to mitigate the potential negative impact. These concerns have been raised previously but remain and it is unclear what actions have been taken or will be taken to mitigate the impact.

### **Occupational segregation**

Such as women being clustered in certain types of work – like caring, cleaning and clerical work; women taking on part-time, low-status or low-paid work because of caring responsibilities or underemployment; the impact of the glass ceiling and whether it is about more women in the boardroom or career progression more generally; the lack of evidence of measures to tackle gender inequalities, for example, meaningful work experience could be a way to challenge inequalities.

Female Police Officers are under-represented in both Specialist Posts and Promoted ranks, which generally carry more pay with them. Although officers would be transferred across to the new Police Service of Scotland on their current pay, conditions and location, the security of location will cease to exist upon promotion and possibly when accepting a specialist post. The group agreed that safeguards and restrictions required to be in place, as there is a strong likelihood that such a decision would disproportionately affect women, particularly those with caring responsibilities. In the opinion of the SWDF, this would pose a barrier to women applying for promotion or specialist posts, potentially eroding the excellent progress made in relation to these areas in recent years. The group agreed that many male officers with caring responsibilities would also see this as a barrier. We understand that Regulation, which protects/restricts officers work location, will be maintained for serving police officers. However, it is not clear whether this will apply to officers who join the Police Service of Scotland after it has been established. Members therefore had similar concerns in regards to the external and internal recruitment process, should officers be liable to be posted anywhere in Scotland, and specialist posts, should officers have to move in order to gain experience within a specialist role. If there are to be restrictions/safeguards on where a police officer can be posted this must be made clear.

The Home Office have identified in their 'Assessment of Women in Policing' (HMSO 2010), action plan that:

*“Further research is to be undertaken into female representation in specialist roles, to identify barriers to women’s entry into specialist roles, strategies that have increased female representation in CID, and opportunities to further tackle these barriers”.*

In relation to the above, members of the SWDF Performance Monitoring sub-group examined statistics regarding the gender breakdown of Road Policing Units and Authorised Firearms Officers (AFO's), these being two areas where there was general acceptance that females were under represented, in an effort to identify best practice. In this regard, Fife Constabulary instigated a short term working group in an effort to address the identified gender imbalance in some specialist posts (Firearms, Road Policing and Crime Management – CID). This research has now been completed and the SWDF are progressing an action plan to implement the reports recommendations throughout Scotland as we transition into the Police Service of Scotland. This group has also made recommendations for future equality and diversity monitoring to identify progress made in relation to specialist posts.

As a result of the research undertaken this group at a SWDF Committee meeting in May 2012 year it was proposed that the Performance Monitoring Sub-Group design an event(s) to be held during 2013 to 'showcase' females who have been successful in specialist departments with the objective of inspiring others in anticipation of the opportunities the new PSoS may offer. There is concern that specialist posts, which are already under-represented by females, will become even more so under relocations of those posts within the new PSoS. The aim of this is to be to be proactive and demonstrate what opportunities are available, remove some of the myths associated with certain specialist posts, address some of the concerns and barriers surrounding them and showcase females who are doing the roles who can tell staff what the reality of working in these posts is. The title of the event will be 'Broaden Your Horizons' and this group will be working with the National Police Reform Team and the new Police Scotland Executive on this.

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