

# **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025**

# Introduction

**Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL) plays a vital role in Scotland's transport network, operating across a large geographical area, with regional airports located at Barra, Benbecula, Campbeltown, Dundee, Inverness, Islay, Kirkwall, Stornoway, Sumburgh, Tiree and Wick John O'Groats.**

Through our staff the airports provide crucial connectivity and ensure lifeline and essential air services operate for some of Scotland's more remote communities. Our people are geographically and culturally diverse. Through this strategy and underpinning action plans our goal is to develop an environment which supports diversity at every level.

This strategy focuses on both HIAL as an employer and HIAL as a key provider of transport services to the general public. It will support the delivery of the People Plan and help towards ensuring that the HIAL Group delivers world class customer service to local residents, businesses, visitors, and others using our airports.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy contains four pillars. These pillars build on the detail contained within the HIAL Strategy which sets our people priorities

and is supported by our commitment to the Investors in People (IIP) framework and achieving the highest possible standards in people management.

The HIAL Strategy also sets out our priorities to deliver world class customer service and operations. This includes benchmarking through the Airports Council International's Airport Service Quality (ASQ) scheme, a world-renowned and globally established programme measuring passengers' satisfaction whilst they are travelling through an airport.



*A. Sillars*

**Andrea Sillars**  
Director of Human Resources

## Strategic Pillars

### 1. Attracting and Selecting a Diverse Workforce

- We will work with specialist teams to encourage a diverse range of applicants and use our recruitment data to ensure our approach to attraction and selection eliminate any bias.
- We will ensure any complaints of discrimination are dealt with speedily and fairly.

### 2. Being an Employer of Choice for all staff

- We will encourage all staff to have a strong sense of belonging and to engage with our values of openness, respect and innovation.
- We are committed to ensuring that all staff receive equal pay for work of equal value and progressing initiatives that support reductions in our Gender Pay Gap.
- We will promote a positive work culture and continue to encourage constructive relationships through supportive employee policies and practices and progress accreditation schemes.
- We will celebrate diversity and support colleagues to feel confident about being themselves at work.

### 3. Ensuring Quality Experiences for all our Passengers

- We will ensure all our staff have the skills to deliver excellent customer care and that they are confident and knowledgeable when talking about equalities with our customers.

- We will assess our facilities and services for their potential to impact on people in relation to their protected characteristics so that these can be understood, and mitigating actions taken to improve accessibility and enhance our infrastructure and support for passengers with additional needs.
- We will ensure everyone can access services, communication, and information from HIAL in ways or methods that best suit their needs.

### 4. Engaging people from Protected Groups to improve our Services

- We will work with our Airport Consultative Committees to build collaborative relationships with communities based on trust and respect so that their voices help shape local airport services.
- We will establish strong qualitative and quantitative equality and inclusion data to give us a robust understanding of the different experiences faced by our customers. We will use this data and our customer feedback to identify and remove barriers which may deny or limit access to our services.
- We will engage local groups representing those with additional needs when redesigning or improving facilities to ensure our services are provided in ways that are appropriate to their needs.

# Our Values

Our values underpin everything we do and how we do it. They define who we are, our expectations of each other and ourselves, how we interact with each other and how we interact with our customers, communities, and other stakeholders.



HIAL is committed to achieving a company culture where all staff feel respected and believe the company shares information in an open way that promotes individual ownership of work and encourages innovation and excellence.

## Our equality, diversity, and inclusion context

### The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It brings together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into one single Act and provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all.

The aim of the Equality Act is to protect individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

### The nine main pieces of legislation that have merged into the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2006, Part 2
- Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

HIAL is committed to developing a workplace environment where everyone feels respected and supported and equal opportunities are demonstrated in principle and in practice.



# Our equality, diversity, and inclusion context

## 1. Employment

### Scottish Government

In 2019, the Scottish Government published its Equalities Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report. This report commits Scotland to be a world leading Fair Work Nation by 2025 where everyone has a right to equality of opportunity and is able to fulfil their potential free from the barriers that limit ambition.

### Scottish Government Fair Work

The Scottish Government developed a Fair Work Action Plan in 2019. This framework identifies Effective Voice, Opportunity, Security, Fulfilment and Respect as key pillars of Fair Work and HIAL is committed to these fair work principles.

### Effective Voice

HIAL is committed to achieving a company culture where all staff feel respected and believe the company shares information in an open way that promotes individual ownership of work and encourages innovation and excellence.

HIAL recognises three trade unions (Prospect, PCS and Unite). Trade union membership is high, with approximately 75% of staff being a member of one of the recognised unions.

The Company is an Investors in People accredited organisation and undertakes an annual staff survey. The results of this are published for all staff to see and a rolling action plan is in place to address issues identified in the staff survey. The results of the staff survey are bench marked against the previous year to identify areas of improvement.

### Opportunity

HIAL is committed to innovation and excellence and has an agenda to promote continuous improvement. Digital transformation is a priority with improved data management a key priority to allow us to improve our decision making. This includes equality monitoring to remove barriers to recruitment, development, and career progression.

### Security

HIAL has a suite of HR policies and procedures aimed at supporting employees through their employment journey. These include a range of flexible and hybrid working options.

The Company is a recognised Living Wage employer and limits the use of zero hours-based contracts.

Where these are used in a limited capacity those staff are given priority when fixed hour contracts are advertised.

The Company has also achieved accreditation as a Disability Confident Employer and a Carer Positive Employer.

### Fulfilment

People have a wide variety of needs and aspirations at work and derive meaning from different things. Fulfilment can arise from positive and supportive workplace relationships that promote a sense of belonging and the impact can go beyond the workplace by benefiting the economy and society as a whole.

Our staff are aligned to our mission and go the extra mile in support of the lifeline service delivered to our remote communities.

### Respect

Respect is a key Company value. In an organisation where safety is at the heart of what we do there are clear expectations about the behaviour and conduct of all staff. We have a Competency Framework which sets out the key competence areas as well as the behaviours expected of all staff to ensure everyone provides an appropriate and informed response to our customers and stakeholders.

These Fair Work Principles are also reflected in the HIAL Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy.

### Equal Pay

Under the Equality Act 2010, both women and men have the right to equal pay for work of equal value; this applies to all employees regardless of full or part-time status, temporary contract, or length of service.

HIAL has published an Equal Pay statement that recognises the importance of equality and valuing diversity. The Company is committed to ensuring that all staff are treated equitably regardless of their age, race (including nationality, ethnic or national origin), disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender reassignment), marital status or religion or belief. Our approach to reward is in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and that we fulfil our obligations under Gender Pay Gap Reporting.

We will also ensure compliance with Scottish Government 'Living Wage' salary commitments.

# Our equality, diversity, and inclusion context

## 2. Service Delivery

### Our Customers and Service Delivery

HIAL strives to deliver world class customer service where our customers are respected and supported when travelling through our airports or when interacting with our teams.

### Department for Transport

In 2019 the Department for Transport published 'Transport for Everyone': an action plan to promote equality. This document acknowledges that transport affects all our lives and although focused on bus and rail travel it recognises the key contribution all forms of public transport makes to economic growth.

As the diversity of our society grows, transport services need to evolve to reflect all our differing needs.

### Civil Aviation Authority

HIAL is regulated by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). The CAA are conscious of the effect their policies and decisions might have, in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty and how they are able to use their role as the regulator to effect positive change in a wide range of areas.



While undertaking their role as the civil aviation regulator for the UK, the Public Sector Equality Duty requires the CAA to have due regard to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The CAA expects organisations that they regulate to consider how they contribute to the equality duties and to be proactive in achieving these objectives.

## Scottish Government

### Gaelic language

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 was passed by the Scottish Parliament with a view to securing the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language. Scottish Government is committed to supporting the Gaelic language and aims to ensure that those who wish to live their lives through the language are afforded the opportunities to do so.

HIAL has a Gaelic Language Plan in place to support the Scottish government commitment to the Gaelic language.

### Support for island communities

The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 introduces measures to support and help meet the unique needs of Scotland's islands now and in the future. The Act aims to help create the right environment for sustainable growth and empowered communities.

HIAL provides airport facilities at seven island locations: Barra, Benbecula, Islay, Lewis, Orkney, Shetland and Tiree and understands the importance of supporting lifeline services to these remote communities.

HIAL understands the role it plays as a significant employer within each of these communities and the importance of providing well paid and secure employment in what can be fragile communities.



# Strategy aims and objectives

**This strategy sets out our plan to support the achievement of the HIAL strategy and focuses on our goals.**

**Our goals are:**

- To deliver world class customer service, offering a uniquely professional but personal experience for local residents, local businesses, visitors, and others.
- To attract and retain a high-quality workforce whilst providing a positive working culture and supportive employee policies and practices.

**Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion approach will adhere to the following principles, which align to HIAL's values.**

## **Open and transparent**

We provide our employees with a range of equality and diversity related policies, providing them with the most comprehensive information about our organisation and our approach to managing situations, where they may require additional support for specific wellbeing challenges they may be facing.

## **Two way**

Equality, diversity and inclusion is everyone's responsibility.

All decisions will be made through the lens of equality, diversity and inclusion and our policies, procedures and services will be adapted as required to mitigate any negative impacts identified.

All employees and managers must commit to undertaking appropriate training and follow Company policy and guidance on equality, diversity and inclusion matters. Everyone should feel knowledgeable and confident when faced with equality and diversity issues.

## **Delivered in Partnership**

We are committed to the highest levels of customer service. We will work in partnership with local communities undertaking regular dialogue and using a variety of methods of engagement tailored to meet the needs of diverse communities. We will hold regular conversations where we listen and act upon feedback. As a result, our services will be adapted to meet the needs of our diverse communities.

We will celebrate the diversity of our different airport locations, promoting community initiatives, marking local events, and promoting uniqueness.

HIAL works in partnership with its three recognised trade unions; Prospect, PCS and Unite. HIAL works closely with the trade unions to support employees in relation to all employment matters including specific issues relating to equality and diversity.

Trade union representatives are appointed to represent the interests and concerns of their colleagues on specific matters that will affect the equality, diversity and inclusion of employees.

## **Proactive and responsible**

We recognise the importance of customer feedback in helping us to deliver the best possible customer experience. By collating, monitoring and taking action on our customer feedback, we can design, develop and deliver our products and services based on customer experiences, and their needs and expectations.

We will use the feedback we receive to monitor our performance to continually improve our service. Where service delivery exceeds expectations, we will share good practice and we will take early action to correct any service delivery that is below expectations.



# Our Strategic Priorities

## Our people lie at the heart of HIAL and are responsible for ensuring we operate a safe, welcoming airport network to the very highest professional standards.

Our goal is to create a positive working environment with supportive employment practices and packages that match the aspirations of our future workforce. We want our positive work culture to be reflected in a positive passenger journey and our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion to be at the heart of the service we provide to all our customers and clients.

### Our strategy will focus on:

#### Promoting equality and diversity in the workplace

Our aim is to create:

- a diverse workforce by recruiting a diverse range of candidates.
- workplaces where barriers are removed and where an inclusive culture results in staff feeling well supported.
- a workforce with an inclusive culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility and fairness and allows staff to contribute their full potential.

Critical to success are leaders who clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and accept ownership and full accountability for equality, diversity, and inclusion matters.

Confident leadership of equality and diversity will confirm to employees and others who engage with us that this is a top priority and is a vital component in enriching a positive and inclusive culture.

Well trained people at every level of the Company will ensure that everyone understands the equality and diversity responsibilities placed upon them and that they act consistently, professionally, and respectfully in all situations.

#### Promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in our service provision

Our aim is to create:

- an informed passenger experience, with our website providing details on the full range of services available to passengers with additional needs, learning difficulties and reduced mobility.
- a welcoming airport environment where barriers are removed and the passenger journey is as seamless as possible.
- an inclusive environment for everyone by developing facilities for disabled passengers and those with additional needs to enhance dignity and privacy at all our airports.

Critical to success is our focus on customer care which encourages all staff to be sensitive to customer and client needs and perceptions by providing prompt, efficient and equitable service and resolution of problems that affect them.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

### Monitoring and evaluating our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy will help improve the effectiveness of our policies, practices and services.

This allows us to tailor interventions and initiatives to support particular groups. We will review all the information available including:

#### Quantitative Data

Employee turnover  
Employee Grievance cases  
Customer Compliments and Complaints

#### Qualitative Assessment

Results of the annual staff survey  
Feedback and engagement from staff through the staff intranet  
Feedback from Airport Consultative Committees  
Data from the customer Feedback Now system

We will continue to benchmark ourselves against other organisations that work with the Investors in People framework and standard and strive for increasing recognition by the scheme.

Completion of the Fair Work Employer Support Tool.

