

Audit and Assurance Committee

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 22 nd November 2022
Subject	Register of Compliance Obligations Update
Agenda No.	11
Prepared By	Corporate Assurance Team
Purpose	Below the Line

1. Background

- 1.1. The Corporate Assurance Team within Social Security Scotland are responsible for ensuring we meet the expectations of us as a public body and monitor the delivery of our statutory functions under the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018.
- 1.2. This is the bi-annual report on the progress of the Register of Compliance Framework.

2. Public Body Duty Updates

- 2.1 Highlighted below are specific pieces of work we wanted to bring to the Committee's attention. The full Register of Compliance Obligations is available on request.

The Equalities Act 2010 including The Equalities Act (Specific Duties Scotland) Regulations 2012

- 2.2 The progress made against our Equalities Action Plan will be published in November 2022. Social Security Scotland will publish our own Mainstreaming Equality report in April 2023 alongside Scottish Government. The report outlines our long-term, strategic approach to making sure that equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of our culture and operations. Mainstreaming is an effective way of making sure that the whole institution is meeting its public-sector equality duties. In Scotland, there is a specific duty within the legislation for public authorities to mainstream equality across their activities.

A Diversity and Inclusion Manager (B3) was been appointed in People Advice in July 2022 and has started work in aligning diversity work across the organisation as an interim measure. The Diversity post within Corporate Assurance and Risk is still vacant. Interviews are due to be held for the Diversity & Inclusion Lead (C1) in November 2022.

New Equality Impact Assessment guidance has been drafted and reviewed with relevant stakeholders consulted, including the Scottish Government Mainstreaming Equality Unit, and will be published on Saltire during November 2022. We continue to track active Equality Impact Assessments, including those with a non-requirement declaration.

Community – The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005

2.3 The latest draft Gaelic Language Plan 2021-26 from Scottish Government (Chapter 4), commits Social Security Scotland to engage with Bord na Gàighlig over this time period (running to 2026) to prepare our own plan. While no specific date for the production of the plan has been agreed and Scottish Government have commented on the positive work already underway in relation to the Gaelic language within Social Security Scotland:

- All benefit factsheets have been made available in Gaelic.
- The Agency's logo is bilingual and this is used on all marketing materials. Consideration will be given to Gaelic signage and advertising.
- Information on all current, live benefits is already proactively provided in the Gaelic language and the Agency's interpretation, translation and transcription services already include the Gaelic language so people are able to talk to us on the phone and have letters and notifications etc. translated.

The Scottish Government's plan recognises the considerable reach of Social Security Scotland with citizens and the opportunity that this provides to raise the profile of the Gaelic Language.

3. Statutory Functions

3.1 For monitoring the delivery of our statutory functions under the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018, we have mapped these out and similarly to the Register of Compliance Obligations are seeking evidence from across the organisation on delivery.

Areas we have been focused on during the last period include:

- **Duties in relation to new benefits**
The Corporate Assurance Team continue to map out obligations and gather required evidence at the introduction of each new benefit to ensure each requirement is met. This includes specific operational guidance and letters which must be in place for each benefit.
- **Duty to promote Take Up**
[A new annual publication](#) with estimated take-up rates of the benefits that we deliver has been published at the end of October for the first time. This report

helps track progress of the Scottish Government's Benefit Take-up Strategy which is a requirement of the 2018 Social Security (Scotland) Act.

The second benefit take-up strategy sets out how the Scottish Government is working to ensure people can access the support they are entitled to, and is built around our five core principles.

Since the publication of the last Strategy, actions have been taken to maximise the take-up of Scottish benefits, delivering against each of the principles including:-

- The Scottish Government has committed £20.4m over the next four years in the Social Security Independent Advocacy Service, which launched in January 2022. The service is free and supports disabled people to access and apply for Social Security Scotland assistance. The service has provided support to over 200 clients since it was launched.
- The Scottish Government is delivering on the Programme for Government commitment to explore ways to automate payment for devolved social security benefits. Subject to parliamentary approval, from 14 November the Scottish Government will introduce automatic awards of Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment and School Age Payment to eligible families in receipt of Scottish Child Payment, meaning people will not need to apply if they receive Scottish Child Payment, which could help improve take-up.
- To support the national launch of Child Disability Payment in November 2021 and Adult Disability Payment in 2022, Social Security Scotland ran paid-for marketing campaigns across radio, print, digital and out of home advertising, created resources including factsheets, posters and leaflets which were shared with stakeholders.
- A multi-media marketing campaign is running from 28 September to 22 November 2022 to encourage people to find out about all the support available during the current cost of living crisis and improve take-up.
- To maximise awareness and promote take up of Adult Disability Payment and Child Disability Payment, Social Security Scotland delivered 110 engagement events with over 6,500 stakeholders signing up to attend.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 This is our seventh progress report on the Register of Compliance Obligations and the team would welcome any comments the Committee has on format and content. The Committee are asked to note the contents of the report.
- 4.2 A copy of this paper will be shared with the Executive Advisory Body.

5. GOVERNANCE CHECKLIST

Please ensure that you detail which Corporate Plan Strategic Objective the paper contributes to. These strategic considerations should be used to assist you with the content of your paper.

Strategic Objective	Contribution
<p>Dignity, fairness and respect</p> <p>Delivering a service with dignity, fairness and respect at its core.</p>	<p>This paper has an impact to some extent on all the strategic objectives. Our compliance obligations cover a wide range of areas, and specifically target and help us achieve all of them.</p>
<p>Equality and tackling poverty</p> <p>Promoting equality and tackling poverty.</p>	<p>This paper has an impact to some extent on all the strategic objectives. Our compliance obligations cover a wide range of areas and specifically target and help us achieve all of them.</p>
<p>Efficiency and alignment</p> <p>Ensuring efficiency and aligning our activities with wider public sector for the benefit of the people we serve.</p>	<p>This paper has an impact to some extent on all the strategic objectives. Our compliance obligations cover a wide range of areas and specifically target and help us achieve all of them.</p>
<p>Economy, society and environment</p> <p>Contributing to our economy, society and protection of our environment.</p>	<p>This paper has an impact to some extent on all the strategic objectives. Our compliance obligations cover a wide range of areas and specifically target and help us achieve all of them.</p>

Strategic consideration	Impact
Environment	There are a number of public body obligations that consider the environment and we are using these to inform our wider environmental strategic approach.
Governance	The Compliance Framework is a tool for good governance enabling us to keep track and report effectively on our compliance obligations.
Data	Data will be collated as the Compliance Framework embeds and this will be fed into a number of wider reporting mechanisms.
Finance	There are a number of public obligations that consider Finance, which our Finance Unit are leading on.
Staff	Not applicable
Equalities	There are a number of public body obligations that consider equality and we are using these to inform our wider environmental strategic approach.
Estates	Environmental obligations should be considered as part of the decisions in this area. See above note on Environment.
Communications and Presentation	Not Applicable

Impact Assessment
Non applicable