



Social Security Scotland  
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

# Social Security Scotland Equality Impact Assessment Record Talent Management Framework

Dignity,  
fairness,  
respect.

## Description of Activity

**Title of Activity** – Talent Management Framework

**Activity Lead** – Jennifer Williams, Assistant HR Business Partner

**Officials involved in the Equality Impact Assessment** – Emma Phillips, HR Business Partner

**Is this a new activity or a change to an existing activity** - This is a new activity. The development of the Talent Management Framework supports the aims set out in [our people plan](#) by helping colleagues grow and develop, and identifying our talent pipeline through succession planning.

### 1. Screening

**What is the aim of the proposed activity?**

The Talent Management Framework will help attract, develop and retain skilled colleagues. The framework will support the aims set out in our People Plan. The framework will support colleagues to grow and develop. It will also identify through succession planning what our talent pipeline looks like.

[Our Charter](#) not only sets out our responsibility in the services that we deliver, but also how we will do that. Our Talent Management Framework will support how we will do that through:

- creating an environment that will help colleagues grow and develop
- focusing on making sure we have the right leadership, behaviours and skills in place, whilst building layer of resilience at all levels
- building a culture of diversity and inclusion

We are seeking to:

- promote an inclusive and continuous approach to talent management and development
- ensure that everyone can access regular career conversations to help aid their development
- equip leaders and line managers with the skills to carry out these conversation
- through succession planning build and enhance our organisational capacity and leadership pipeline
- provide development offerings that are inclusive and supportive at all levels
- help out people flourish and maximise their full potential through development opportunities

## **Who will it affect?**

The proposed activity is new within Social Security Scotland. We seek to provide a framework which will support our talent management ambitions. The framework will support our people to reach their full potential. The Talent Management Framework may affect anyone working here now or in the future. We will consider the needs of our workforce wider than the protected characteristic.

The talent management approach will help support our people understand their career aspirations. Development interventions will support them to fulfil this potential, whether that be by developing within their current role/grade, or ensuring that they are ready to progress when opportunities are available. The aim of the Talent Management Framework is to improve our colleagues experience. Colleagues will be able to have discussions which support their career goals.

The framework should consider that different people will have different needs. Equality legislation covers the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, gender including pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, and sexual orientation. The purpose of undertaking this Equality Impact Assessment is to satisfy the three needs of the Equality Duty: To eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

## **What might affect the success of the proposed activity?**

The introduction of, and effectiveness of, the Talent Management Framework will be dependent on buy-in from senior leadership. This buy-in will also be required within localised divisional senior leadership teams across the organisation. It will be important for them to understand what the framework seeks to achieve.

Success of the approach to talent management will also need colleagues to act. Individuals placing importance on their own career journey will be key. It is important people can openly discuss their aspirations and potential. They will then need to proactively seek out development opportunities.

Ongoing operational requirements and time constraints, along with lack of line manager support could prevent the desired outcomes being achieved. We will mitigate this by ensuring that the approach to talent has senior stakeholder commitment, along with training line managers to effectively support colleagues through their career conversations.

## **2. Exploratory workshop results**

An exploratory workshop was held on 4 February 2022 via Microsoft Teams. This included 10 colleagues from across Social Security Scotland including the Corporate Assurance Team Lead, plus an interested colleague from the Director-General for Education and Justice.

A further exploratory workshop was held on 27 July 2022 via Microsoft Teams. This workshop was held following a pilot of Career Conversations with our C-band population of colleagues. This pilot was used to inform our approach to talent

management by assessing the suitability of our processes and to allow lessons to be learnt to ensure a robust experience for all our people across the organisation. This exploratory workshop included 10 colleagues from across Social Security Scotland as well as one colleague from the Director General for Net Zero. The majority, although not exclusively, of those who attended were C-band colleagues who had taken part in the pilot and could consider equality considerations in respect of the pilot.

Attendees at each workshop discussed each protected characteristic in relation to our proposed Talent Management Framework, looking at the introduction of Career Conversations; Talent Identification and Succession Planning activities and identifying where there were any potential impacts or barriers. Results from the exploratory workshops were collated and stakeholders were given the opportunity to provide any further comment following the session.

Through the exploratory workshop, we identified that any potential impacts or barriers to those with protected characteristics may arise from how we introduce and communicate our approach, as well as through any assumptions and biases held by those responsible for carrying out career conversations and succession planning activities. We aim to mitigate these impacts and barriers through an effective communications plan; along with clear training for line managers and supporting materials. This will be supplemented by HR Business Partners proactively supporting their divisions and Senior Leadership teams, helping to embed the Talent Management Framework and to provide robust challenge when needed.

### 3. Data and evidence gathered

The Talent Management Framework will affect all our colleagues, so relevant data on our workforce was gathered from the [Social Security Scotland Workforce Information Statistics – September 2022](#). Information around Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy & Maternity and Care Experience is not captured in the Workforce Information Statistics. Further information was gathered in relation to Sexual Orientation (Source: [LGBT in Britain work report](#)) and Care Experience (Source: [Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2020/21](#); and [Work and resilience: Care leavers’ experiences of navigating towards employment and independence](#)).

#### Age

At September 2022 the organisational breakdown by age was:

Age group	% breakdown at September 2022
16-19	0.5%
20-29	22.5%
30-39	30.2%
40-49	23.6%
50-59	19.7%
60-64	2.8%
65+	0.6%

## Disability

At September 2022 the organisational breakdown by disability was:

	% breakdown at September 2022
Disabled	9.4%
Not disabled	41.4%
Prefer not to say	1.6%
Unknown	47.6%

## Gender reassignment

No information is held within the Workforce Information Statistics around gender reassignment.

## Pregnancy & maternity

No information is held within the Workforce Information Statistics around pregnancy and maternity.

## Race

At September 2022 the organisational breakdown by race was:

	% breakdown at September 2022
Ethnic Minority *	3.8%
Unknown	40.7%
White	54.8%
Prefer not to say	0.7%

\* Minority ethnic groups includes: African, Caribbean or Black; Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British; Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Group; Other Ethnic Group.

## Religion or belief

At September 2022 the organisational breakdown by religion or belief was:

	% breakdown at September 2022
None	34.2%
Church of Scotland	6.5%
Roman Catholic	9.7%
Other Christian	3.2%
Other religion or belief	3.2%
Prefer not to say	2.7%
Unknown	40.7%

\* Other religion or belief includes: Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, Jewish, Hindu, Pagan, and Other.

## Sex

At September 2022 the organisational breakdown by sex was:

	% breakdown at September 2022
Female	60.6%
Male	39.4%

## Sexual orientation

At September 2022 the organisational breakdown by sexual orientation was:

	% breakdown at September 2022
Lesbian, gay, bisexual or other	6.3%
Heterosexual / Straight	51%
Prefer not to say	2.1%
Unknown	40.6%

In relation to barriers at work, a Stonewall report in 2018 (Source: [LGBT in Britain work report](#)) found that ten percent of LGBT employees say they did not get a promotion they were up for at work in the past year because they are LGBT. This number rises to twenty four percent of trans people, compared to seven percent of LGB people who are not trans. It was also found that 35 percent of LGBT people have hidden or disguised that they are LGBT at work in the last year because they were afraid of discrimination.

## Care Experience

No detail is held within the Workforce Information Statistics around people with care experience.

Looked after school leavers are less likely to go onto positive destinations than school leavers in general. 12% of looked after school leavers went into employment within 3 months after leaving school, compared to 23% of school leavers in general (Source: [Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2020/21](#)). Supportive work-based relationships can build confidence and nurture talent of care leavers (Source: [Work and resilience: Care leavers' experiences of navigating towards employment and independence](#)).

## 4. Assessing the impacts and identifying opportunities to promote equality

In view of the data gathered and the discussion points from the exploratory workshop, it was identified that any potential impacts or barriers to those with protected characteristics may arise from how we introduce and communicate our approach, as well as through any assumptions and biases held by those responsible for carrying out career conversations and succession planning activities. Potential

impacts and barriers as well as mitigations are noted below. Further detail is outlined in the attached action plan.

## **Age**

### **Impact:**

- A view that there may be a lack of interest regarding career development or having a career conversation from older colleagues based on the presumption they are close to retirement. Or if an indication of when someone may retire is expressed then there is potential for less focus on development interventions to be given.
- Key comments around assumptions that are made about where people are in terms of their career based on their age, in particular assumptions associated with:
  - Younger colleagues not having the experience, knowledge and skills to take the next step in their career.
  - Older colleagues finding it more difficult to retain information in comparison to younger colleagues.
- Concern that those over 50 and going through the menopause can be overlooked, or may have menopausal symptoms such as brain fog which will impact their progression and opportunities.

### **Action:**

The Talent Management Framework will be applied equally to all employees regardless of their age. The framework encourages career conversations which are led by colleagues where they can discuss their aspirations, readiness and potential, along with any development interventions that may support them. By having these career conversations, which should be from a managers perspective a coaching conversation, this helps avoid unconscious bias from the line manager as outcomes are based on the colleagues views rather than the line managers assumptions of aspiration.

Talent Management Framework should address changing career aspirations as the workforce ages. Training line managers to have effective career conversations will help address the need to understand an individual's aspirations at any given stage of their career. Ensure as part of the training and the toolkits developed that any bias is challenged – i.e. an assumption about older/younger workforce and their aspirations and experience, skills and knowledge. In relation to menopause, bias would be covered as above, however there is also menopause guidance on Saltire for managers and colleagues regarding reasonable adjustments that may be required and can be supported by use of the employee passport to support individuals.



Development interventions that are established should be considerate to all demographics within an intergenerational organisation.

### **Public Sector Equality assessment:**

Assessing the potential impacts in implementing a Talent Management Framework shows that:

- Unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation will be eliminated by ensuring career conversations and development opportunities are offered to all colleagues, no matter where they are in their career and regardless of age.
- Equality of opportunity will be advanced by training line managers to focus on open, honest coaching conversations with all, and promoting and showcasing development opportunities to all those in their team.
- Good relations among and between different groups will be promoted by ensuring opportunities are communicated to all.

### **Disability**

#### **Impact:**

- Consideration around the accessibility of development tools/ materials for colleagues who require additional support such as digital accessibility, screen readers, visual impairments, not using colours etc.
- Consideration must be given around inclusive communications so as not to exclude sections of our workforce.
- Concern around a lack of understanding or knowledge relating to someone's disability and how to support them.
- Concern that there would be implications for those who work less hours because of a disability and as part of a reasonable adjustment.
- Advance sight of materials before career conversations may help support disabled employees.

#### **Action:**

Materials will be developed which are accessible, as well as ensuring that we are following inclusive communications guidance.

Pathways tile will be developed hosting toolkits for line managers and colleagues, along with supporting resources. This will allow colleagues to access information in advance of career conversations in order to help them prepare and best make use of the resources available.

Training is to be provided to line managers to ensure that they understand that career conversations are about holding open, honest coaching conversations. By



holding these conversations and focusing on a coaching approach it is hoped that those with disabilities may feel more able to speak to their manager about their disability and what support they may need from their line manager/the organisation to allow them to reach their full potential.

During the initial pilot with C-band, colleagues completed a career conversation summary document where they indicated where they would place their own aspirations, readiness and potential. The outputs from this summary will feed into succession planning forum discussions, and therefore inputs are driven by the individual assessment and with line manager agreement.

Development interventions will be varied, and should be adaptable to support differing working patterns that may be in place as part of a reasonable adjustment. This may include opportunities such as mentoring, work shadowing etc. which can be arranged as per the needs of the individual. We will continue to monitor and evaluate how development interventions are being developed to ensure they can support all colleagues and not just those who work full time/standard hours.

Social Security Scotland is committed to attracting, retaining and developing a workforce reflective of the Scottish population. Through continued evaluation following the C-band pilot we will continue to make our process more accessible to different groups. We will support people with additional needs, making sure that appropriate adjustments are in place and that there are equal opportunities for all staff with disabilities to progress and develop their career.

### **Public Sector Equality assessment:**

Assessing the potential impacts in implementing a Talent Management Framework shows that:

- Unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation will be eliminated by ensuring communications are accessible for all and language used is inclusive.
- Equality of opportunity will be advanced by consideration of individuals with disabilities to ensure development opportunities promoted are appropriate for all colleagues.
- Good relations among and between different groups will be promoted by ensuring activities promoted are suitable for all and ensuring language is inclusive and accessible.

## **Gender reassignment**

### **Impact:**

Concern raised that gender reassignment could be ongoing at the same time as career conversations and succession planning activities and therefore individuals may feel that this impacts their opportunities.

### **Action:**

The trans and non binary equality and inclusion policy provides details of how we will support all colleagues to ensure that trans staff experience both equality of opportunity, and equitable, respectful and dignified treatment in the workplace. This policy also sets out how the organisation will support a colleague in the workplace during their transition.

HR Business Partners will facilitate succession planning activities with divisions and will therefore ensure that no colleague is overlooked due to gender reassignment. HR Business Partners will support and provide guidance to leadership in terms of the succession planning process. HR Business Partners will signpost to relevant guidance, ensuring that managers know what support is available and how to access it.

### **Public Sector Equality assessment:**

Assessing the potential impacts in implementing a Talent Management Framework shows that:

- Unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation will be eliminated by use of inclusive language in all communications and materials to promote understanding.
- Equality of opportunity will be advanced by training line managers to recognise where they may hold assumptions and biases, ensuring that they approach career conversations in an open and honest way which is led by the colleague rather than the manager.
- Good relations among and between different groups will be promoted by the sharing of development opportunities with all colleagues.

## **Pregnancy and maternity**

### **Impact:**

- Concern that those on maternity leave could have a significant gap between career conversations and that this may impact progression and development opportunities.
- Concern that those who are pregnant or on maternity leave may be discounted from Succession Planning activities.
- Concern about how communications would be managed to ensure those on maternity leave have access to the same opportunities as others.

### **Action:**

The Talent Management Framework plans to build in career check-in conversations therefore timing should not be a concern. Those who wish a career conversation can initiate this at any time during the year.

HR Business Partners will facilitate succession planning activities with divisions and will therefore ensure that no colleague is overlooked due to being on maternity leave. HR Business Partners will support and provide guidance to leadership in terms of the succession planning process.

Guidance is available on Saltire in terms of how to manage keeping in touch whilst someone is on maternity leave. Before an individual goes on maternity leave, their manager should discuss with them and document arrangements for keeping in touch and how this will be shared with any relevant parties. In terms of talent management this could include how they would wish to be kept in touch in relation to talent management process, approach and any opportunities that arise.

### **Public Sector Equality assessment:**

Assessing the potential impacts in implementing a Talent Management Framework shows that:

- Unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation will be eliminated by HR Business Partners providing robust challenge to their divisions to ensure no colleague is overlooked.
- Equality of opportunity will be advanced by ensuring communications are inclusive, accessible, and that line managers keep in touch with those who are out of the business about opportunities for development and progression.
- Good relations among and between different groups will be promoted by the sharing of development opportunities with all colleagues.

## **Race**

### **Impact:**

- Assumptions relating to career progression and development can be made about people based on appearances.
- Career conversations can positively impact those who may otherwise be overlooked by giving them a voice.

### **Action:**

At an agency level ethnicity data is not provided by pay band, therefore we can only see overall percentage of headcount and not the make-up of this through our population. This is due to numbers suppressed for reporting reasons to protect anonymity. Nonetheless development opportunities will be explored and developed which help support under-represented groups reach their full potential. Managers will have access to supporting resources including the career conversation toolkit, and will be further supported through bespoke manager learning sessions, both of which will challenge unconscious bias.

### **Public Sector Equality assessment:**

Assessing the potential impacts in implementing a Talent Management Framework shows that:

- Unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation will be eliminated using inclusive and accessible language in training materials and communications.
- Equality of opportunity will be advanced by consideration of individuals of all races by exploring and developing opportunities for development which help support under-represented groups reach their full potential.
- Good relations among and between different groups will be promoted by the sharing of development opportunities with all colleagues.

## **Religion or belief**

### **Impact:**

Implications for those who practice religious beliefs around working hours.

### **Action:**

The Talent Management Framework and approach is designed to accommodate all colleagues and therefore altered working patterns should not be negatively impacted. Any potential bias around presentism/working hours would be challenged during succession planning discussions by relevant HR Business Partners.

## **Public Sector Equality assessment:**

Assessing the potential impacts in implementing a Talent Management Framework shows that:

- Unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation will be eliminated by HR Business Partners providing robust challenge to their divisions to ensure no colleague is overlooked.
- Equality of opportunity will be advanced by ensuring timescales for career conversations take into account working hours/patterns which may be in place to accommodate religion or belief.
- Good relations among and between different groups will be promoted by the sharing of development opportunities with all colleagues.

### **Sex**

#### **Impact:**

- Concern that there could be assumptions made towards women such as:
  - when women are newly married that they will be giving up work soon to care for/have a family.
  - is now a “Working Mum” therefore not as flexible or committed as others
  - that women have to outperform or do things better than men, meaning they have to go above and beyond to be seen as being at the same level as a man.
- Concern that those over 50 and going through the menopause can be overlooked, or may have menopausal symptoms such as brain fog which will impact their progression.

#### **Action:**

Effective career conversations, talent identification and succession planning, along with the availability of appropriate development interventions will ensure that the talent pipeline is supported and all genders can flourish. Investment in succession planning will help identify critical roles. Where development needs are identified investment in our people will ensure successors are equipped and ready. Putting these steps in place will help us to support all genders, meaning we are more likely to achieve proportionality within our leadership roles.

Line manager training to be introduced and will discuss and challenge unconscious bias, as well as signposting to CS (Civil Service) Learning.

Talent blogs to be created to showcase career journeys of all genders which will promote and role model how others have progressed.

## **Public Sector Equality assessment:**

Assessing the potential impacts in implementing a Talent Management Framework shows that:

- Unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation will be eliminated by inclusive and accessible language in all materials and communications.
- Equality of opportunity will be advanced by training line managers to recognise where they may hold assumptions and biases, ensuring that they approach career conversations in an open and honest way which is led by the colleague rather than the manager.
- Good relations among and between different groups will be promoted by the sharing of development opportunities with all colleagues.

## **Sexual orientation**

### **Impact:**

- Concern that LGBT people may be treated unfavourably with regards promotion.
- Career conversations can positively impact those who may otherwise be overlooked by giving them a voice.

### **Action:**

The talent management framework is designed to be as inclusive as possible. Language used is gender neutral and does not reference cultural norms.

Line manager training to be introduced and will discuss and challenge unconscious bias, as well as signposting to CS (Civil Service) Learning.

## **Public Sector Equality assessment:**

Assessing the potential impacts in implementing a Talent Management Framework shows that:

- Unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation will be eliminated by inclusive and accessible language in all materials and communications.
- Equality of opportunity will be advanced by training line managers to recognise where they may hold assumptions and biases, ensuring that they approach career conversations in an open and honest way which is led by the colleague rather than the manager.
- Good relations among and between different groups will be promoted by the sharing of development opportunities with all colleagues.

## **Care Experienced**

### **Impact:**

- Concern that assumptions relating to career progression and development can be made based on peoples background. Therefore a concern that stigma may exist for colleagues from a care background who may be treated unfavourably based on education or environment.
- Career conversations can positively impact by helping to build confidence and nurture talent through supportive work-based relationships.

### **Action:**

The Talent Management Framework and approach is designed to accommodate all colleagues, in particular career conversations will provide an opportunity for supportive conversations between line manager and colleagues, helping to nurture talent and build confidence.

Line managers would receiving training which would include unconscious bias helping address any stigma towards someone based on care experienced background.

### **Public Sector Equality assessment:**

Assessing the potential impacts in implementing a Talent Management Framework shows that:

- Unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation will be eliminated by inclusive and accessible language in all materials and communications.
- Equality of opportunity will be advanced by training line managers to recognise where they may hold assumptions and biases, ensuring that they approach career conversations in an open and honest way which is led by the colleague rather than the manager.
- Good relations among and between different groups will be promoted by the sharing of development opportunities with all colleagues.

### **Marriage and Civil Partnership (only if the activity is related to employment practises or issues e.g. recruitment, appraisals and interviews etc.).**

### **Impact:**

We are not aware of any relevant existing evidence at this time on marriage and civil partnership in relation to the framework.



**Action:**

n/a

**Public Sector Equality assessment:**

n/a

**5. Decision making and monitoring**

**How has the Equality Impact Assessment analysis shaped the proposed activity process so far?**

This framework will help introduce ways for us to put in place structures to make sure we can attract, develop and retain skilled colleagues who are committed to delivering a social security service for the people of Scotland. The framework has the potential to impact all colleagues, whether now or in the future.

Following the Equality Impact Assessment analysis we will plan our communications approach, as well as the learning and resources that will support our leaders, managers and colleagues. We will take into account the potential impacts and mitigations that have been identified. Our action plan will focus on ensuring managers are sufficiently trained on diversity matters, coaching and being able to have difficult conversations. This approach will underpin the success and equitability of the framework. Further details are enclosed in the attached action plan.

There have been no implications on costs or resources arising from the Equality Impact Assessment analysis.

**How will the Equality Impact Assessment analysis help develop better outcomes for people and communities?**

Through the Equality Impact Assessment process, we have identified that the Talent Management Framework itself will not cause any negative impact to those with protected characteristics. However, actions will be taken to equip line managers through our training and support materials to mitigate against impacts related to assumptions and biases.

We will develop our communications plan, along with training and resources to support our leaders, managers and colleagues and to mitigate any potential impacts identified.

**How will the activity be monitored going forward?**

This Equality Impact Assessment will be monitored and evaluated by the HR Business Partnering team who have a responsibility for Talent Management within the agency. Monitoring will take place during the evaluation, development, or alteration to our Talent Management Framework and approach.

## **6. Authorisation**

### **Declaration**

I am satisfied with the Equality Impact Assessment that has been undertaken and give my authorisation for the results to be published on the Social Security Scotland website.

**Name:** James Wallace

**Position:** Deputy Director

**Date:** 10 February 2023

## List of References

Workforce Information Statistics – September 2022 - [Social Security Scotland – workforce information: September 2022 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/workforce-information:September2022)

LGBT in Britain work report – Stonewall 2018 - [lgbt\\_in\\_britain\\_work\\_report.pdf \(stonewall.org.uk\)](https://www.stonewall.org.uk/lgbt-in-britain-work-report.pdf)

Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2020/21 Scottish Government - [Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2020/21 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/education-outcomes-for-looked-after-children-2020-21)

Work and resilience: Care leavers' experiences of navigating towards employment and independence, Rosemary Furey, Jean Harris-Evans 2021 - [Work and resilience: Care leavers' experiences of navigating towards employment and independence - Furey - 2021 - Child & Family Social Work - Wiley Online Library](https://www.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cfs.12611)