



Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

Social Security Scotland Equality Strategy 2021-2022

Easy Read version

Dignity,
fairness,
respect.

Introduction



This document is about Social Security Scotland. There are some words in the document that might be harder to understand.

When these words appear in the document you will see them in **bold purple**. If they appear again, they will be in purple.



There is a list at the back of the document. It will tell you what the words mean.

Social Security Scotland wants everyone using our services to be treated equally and fairly.



Social Security Scotland

Social Security Scotland was formed on 1 September 2018.

We deliver the following benefits:

- Best Start Grant Pregnancy and Baby Payment
- Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment
- Best Start Grant School Age Payment
- Best Start Foods
- Carer's Allowance Supplement
- Funeral Support Payment
- Job Start Payment
- Young Carer Grant
- Child Winter Heating Assistance
- Scottish Child Payment



Working together



We work with other departments in Scottish Government on Social Security.

We also share some services and systems with the Scottish Government.



Sometimes this can affect how we change things or the speed we can change things at.

We explain this more in this **Equality Strategy**.

Law



This **Equality Strategy** follows the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018. We follow 3 principles:

- Dignity
- Fairness
- Respect



Human Rights and United Nations Guidance means everyone has the right to social security.



Together these help us make sure we treat and support everyone fairly.



Equality Act 2010

We also have responsibilities under **the Equality Act 2010**. This helps us to meet these responsibilities as a service provider and an employer.



Related strategies and plans

We have other strategies and action plans that help us support our **Equality Strategy**. These include:



- Corporate Plan
- Our Charter
- Charter measurement Framework
- People Strategy

Our plans help our workforce, people and organisations interested in our work, to work together for best results.



These plans help us to keep thinking about:

- What we are doing.
- Reviewing how we are doing it
- Checking if we can do more



This **Equality Strategy** includes details of work we already do that is part of Scottish Government plans and includes:

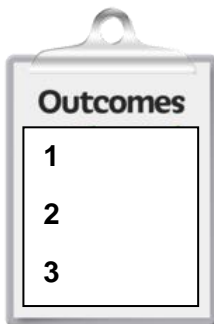
- The Race Equality Action Plan
- The Gypsy and Traveller Action Plan
- A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan
- The Gender Pay Gap Action Plan



Developing our Equality Strategy.

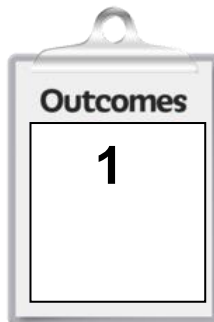
To develop this strategy, we held:

- An online consultation between November 2019 and February 2020
- 9 workshops with the public, people and organisations interested in our work.
- Three staff events
- Talks with our Internal and External Equalities Networks



Equality outcomes

Equality outcomes support putting this strategy into practice. There are 3 outcomes.



Outcome 1 – Our workforce

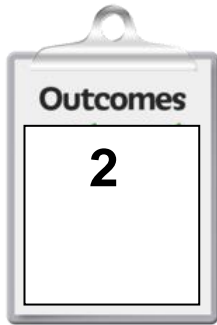
Our workforce will be as different as the people who use our service.

We want to increase the number of employees who are disabled or from ethnic minority backgrounds.

We will make sure everyone can:

- Find out about jobs available
- Apply for jobs
- Understand how we interview
- Know about the support we offer





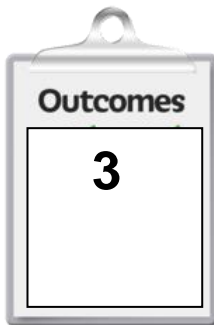
Outcome 2 – Our culture

We will encourage our staff to listen to each other and people who use our service.

We want our management and people who make decisions to be as different as people who will use our service.



We will support people from ethnic minority backgrounds and disabled people to move to senior levels.



Outcome 3 – Delivering and improving our service.

Talking to and listening to people who use our service, and their supporters will help us to be a better service.

We learn from what people tell us.

This includes people who:



- Use our service now
- May use our service in future
- Qualify for our services but are not using them

We want more people to know about and apply for benefits. These include:



- People from ethnic minority communities
- People who communicate in different ways
- People with care experience



Purpose

We want to make our service a good experience for everyone. How we do our work is as important as what we do.



As part of the wider Scottish Government, we support them to meet targets in the **National Performance Framework**.



Over the next 2 years we will also contribute to the wider outcomes of:

Human Rights - we will treat people:

- Fairly and respectfully
- With dignity
- Provide a high-quality service to our clients



Poverty – we will contribute to reducing poverty in Scotland.

Commitments



This **Equality Strategy** shows how we will make sure everyone is treated equally in our organisation. To do this we will work with different people.



We will have good relationships with our staff, people and organisations interested in our work, trade unions and our clients.



We also have 3 commitments that will help us to make our strategy work.

1. Evidence base -
Information we have will help us with what we do and to judge it's success

2. Framework for practice -
Our people will know how we expect them to treat people equally and fairly

3. **Intersectionality** –
We will work to develop understanding of all disadvantaged groups. We will gather and use information to help us do this.



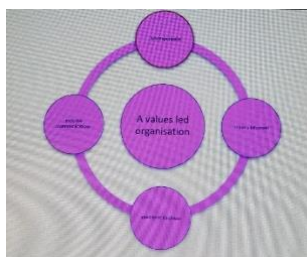
Evidence base

We are still collecting information about our organisation. This will help us understand what we need to do to treat everyone equally.



Framework for practice

This framework includes things we do and things we are developing in how we do our work.





These support:

- How we behave as an employer
- How we expect our workforce, suppliers and contractors to behave and treat people
- How we will continue to develop and deliver our service.



This includes:

- **Inclusive Communication**
- **A trauma-informed approach**
- **Intelligent kindness**
- Lived experience — always listening to and learning from the experience of our workforce and clients



These actions will help us to give the best service to everyone.

They will help us to operate as an organisation led by our values.

These practices link to the Social Security Charter and the Charter Measurement Framework.

Intersectionality

People experience discrimination because of the following things:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Sexual orientation





More about **Intersectionality**.

- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex



People can experience discrimination in more than one of these ways. We need to understand this more.

Improving awareness of this will make us a better employer and service provider.



It will help us to achieve our equality outcomes.

Putting this strategy in place

Everyone at Social Security Scotland must treat everyone fairly in our daily work.

We must all know our responsibilities and show how we promote equality through our work.

Our Strategy and Client Experience Division leads this. They support colleagues across the organisation.

2 equality networks guide our approach and support us to improve understanding.

The Internal Network has an action plan to support how we do this work.





The External Network gave us ideas on how we present and report on equality information.



The External Equalities Network has people from 18 organisations.

The Internal Equalities Network has 23 members from across Social Security Scotland. They have different job roles. They bring their experience of equality issues.



We will keep supporting and developing both networks.

Equality impact assessments



The law says we must look at what we do and how it may be different for different people.

Understanding how each activity of our organisation affects different people is one way we meet the requirements of the law.



We use what we learn to show how we meet the needs of our workforce and communities. We can identify how to treat everyone equally and fairly.



We need to continue to understand how what we do affects different people.

We need to listen to people and communities from across Scotland.



In our Corporate parenting Plan we have added people with care experience to the list of **protected characteristics**.

We consider these when checking the effect of our decisions.

We have developed different ways to support our staff to look at how decisions are made.



We organise workshops.

We have written guides.

We have lots of conversations with people interested in our work.

These help us to learn what will make our service better

Evaluation



We will work with our staff and Scottish Government to check the strategy is working.

We will also work with our analyst colleagues to develop an evaluation process.



We will review our equality outcomes each year. We will report on the progress and outcomes every year to our Executive Advisory Body.

Word List

Equality Act	The Law that tells us what we need to do to treat everyone equally.
Equality Impact Assessment	An assessment of our policies on how they impact people with protected characteristics.
Equality Strategy	Our plan to ensure we treat everyone equally and fairly.
Inclusive Communication	Communicating in a way that helps everyone to understand.
Intelligent Kindness	Understanding that everyone is equal and should be treated with the same kindness. Treating everyone importantly and not as a stranger.
Intersectionality	People being treated unequally because of more than one protected characteristic.
National Performance Framework	Scottish Government set of national outcomes.
Protected Characteristics	The ways listed in the Equality Act in which a person can be treated unfairly.
Trauma Informed Approach	Understanding people might have suffered some kind of pain. Staff should do what they can to understand this and help people.

This Easy read Strategy has been produced for Social Security Scotland by CH Consultancy on behalf of

Values Into Action Scotland

15- 17 Nasmyth Road South
Glasgow G52 4 RE

0141 212 3395

Info@viascotland.org.uk



made with
photosymbols[®]