

Audit and Assurance Committee

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 10 November 2020
Subject	Register of Compliance Obligations Update
Agenda No.	6
Paper No.	7.8
Prepared By	Corporate Assurance Team
Purpose	Discuss

1. Background

- 1.1. The Corporate Assurance Team within Social Security Scotland are responsible for ensuring we meet the expectations on 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, that forms part of the 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. We have not this time provided the full Register of Compliance Obligations, but this is available on request.

Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 part 3

- 2.2 Social Security Scotland is now publishing reports on our corporate website of transactions over £25,000. Reports will include payments for goods, services, grants and transactions to other government departments and public bodies. Exemptions include staff salaries, pension and National Insurance contributions, severance, compensation and legal settlements, National Security expenditure, settlements with companies and spending which may disclose possible personal security threats. Monthly reports are signed off by the Agency Leadership Team and the Deputy Director for Finance and Corporate Services prior to publication. Finance will also publish details of electronic Payment Card spending of over £500 as matter of good practice.

Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011

- 2.3 The Social Security Scotland Records Management Plan was submitted to the Keeper of the Records of Scotland on 29 April 2020. The plan has been assessed and agreed by the Keeper with a report issued containing recommendations for improvements. The Keeper agreed that the plan and supporting evidence combine to set out the proper arrangements for the management of Social Security Scotland's public records.

Equality Strategy

- 2.4 Social Security Scotland is finalising its first Equality Strategy and set of mainstreaming equality outcomes. This strategy and outcomes will ensure equality is at the centre of all that we do, and will be the main driver for ensuring we meet our duties under both the Equality Act 2010 and Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018.
- 2.6 Two Networks have been established to help inform the process. One internal comprising volunteers from across the organisation. One external with representatives from key stakeholder organisations. We have also recently consulted with the wider Executive Advisory Body on key questions that will shape both the strategy and mainstreaming outcomes.

Website Accessibility Regulations

- 2.7 Social Security Scotland's redeveloped corporate website went live on Tuesday 27th October 2020. Public sector websites need to meet certain accessibility standards and publish a statement saying they have been met. Details of how we have met these obligations within its development are now published on the new corporate website.

3. Statutory Functions

- 3.1 In respect of monitoring the delivery of our statutory functions under the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018, we have mapped this 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 have mapped out the obligations required to be met for each benefit individually. This ensures our team has gathered evidence to ensure as new benefits go live each requirement is met. This includes specific operational guidance and letters which must be in place for each benefit.

- **Recognition of importance of independent advice and advocacy**– An Interim Advocacy Service was put in place on 30th June 2020. Clients with a physical disability, learning disability or mental health condition might find it difficult to express their views and needs when communicating with Social Security Scotland. These clients have the right to access an independent advocacy service for free. Operational guidance is in place to ensure client advisors refer clients appropriately to this service.

[Redacted]

- **Re-determinations**
As previously reported, The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 includes changes to the way that Social Security Scotland can manage re-determinations and appeals. These changes are to enable people time to have their decision looked at again should Covid-19 impact on their ability to submit their request within set timescales.

The extension to make a decision has been exercised several times. This has been due to late submission of evidence by clients and late requests for a redetermination due to Covid has also been requested by clients and accepted by the Client Experience Team.

The corporate assurance team have now assigned leads to each area of the business so that there is a single point of contact for both providing support and gathering updates.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 This is our fourth 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.

1. GOVERNANCE CHECKLIST

Strategic Objective	Contribution
Dignity, fairness and respect Delivering a service with dignity, fairness and respect at its core.	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.
Equality and tackling poverty Promoting equality and tackling poverty.	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.

Strategic Objective	Contribution
Efficiency and alignment Ensuring efficiency and aligning our activities with wider public sector for the benefit of the people we serve.	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.
Economy, society and environment Contributing to our economy, society and protection of our environment.	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.



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

