



Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

Social Security Scotland Equality Impact Assessment Record Volume Recruitment Project

Dignity,
fairness,
respect.

Description of Activity

Title of Activity – Volume Recruitment Project

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Officials involved in the Equality Impact Assessment – Transformation Lead, Transformation Partner, Resourcing Manager, Resourcing Partners, SG People Directorate, Diversity Networks including Race Equality Network, Model Office, LGBTI+ and Trade Unions

Is this a new activity or a change to an existing activity – New activity

1. Screening

What is the aim of the proposed activity?

Social Security Scotland is committed to being a diverse and inclusive employer, proactively engaging with local communities to encourage those who may have barriers to employment to apply for our roles. We want to provide opportunities for careers and progression to everyone regardless of their circumstance or background. We are committed to developing a Social Security system that ensures both our clients and colleagues are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect.

To deliver the next wave of devolved benefits, Social Security Scotland will be increasing its headcount significantly. Our forecast headcount growth is substantial and complex. Initial capacity modelling and broken down monthly resourcing targets show our current operating model will be completely overwhelmed by the demand. *Source for table below – Business Analyst compiled Workforce Planning data modelling for the initial proposal to Executive Team in March 2021. If a similar data set required in the future, a Business Analyst should complete the exercise again.*

Capacity based on current process

sifting capacity	interview capacity	pre-employment capacity	payroll capacity	opsec capacity	laptop builds	cds service desk	L&D	No. of New Starts	Month
114%	568%	38%	95%	47%	284%	5%	51%	114	Aug-21
181%	905%	60%	151%	75%	452%	8%	80%	181	Sep-21
139%	695%	46%	116%	58%	348%	6%	62%	139	Oct-21
176%	880%	59%	147%	73%	440%	8%	78%	176	Nov-21
444%	2220%	148%	370%	185%	1110%	20%	197%	444	Dec-21
445%	2223%	148%	371%	185%	1112%	20%	198%	445	Jan-22
205%	1025%	68%	171%	85%	513%	9%	91%	205	Feb-22
297%	1485%	99%	248%	124%	743%	13%	132%	297	Mar-22
194%	970%	65%	162%	81%	485%	9%	86%	194	Apr-22
151%	755%	50%	126%	63%	378%	7%	67%	151	May-22
302%	1510%	101%	252%	126%	755%	13%	134%	302	Jun-22
58%	290%	19%	48%	24%	145%	3%	26%	58	Jul-22
110%	550%	37%	92%	46%	275%	5%	49%	110	Aug-22
								2815	

To successfully achieve the volume recruitment requirements in compliance with the Civil Service Recruitment Commissioner Principles and the Social Security Scotland Charter, while maintaining cost and management resource efficiency and effectiveness, we have identified the need to recruit in partnership with Capita, a preferred organisation already servicing Scottish Government needs.

Introducing an online application and selection system with Capita will significantly reduce the time and resource requirements taken to deliver an anonymised volume recruitment process. Partnering will also minimise impact on effective day to day running of operations and service delivery to clients, allowing the agency to prepare for the delivery of newly devolved disability benefits.

Social Security Scotland believes that our core values of dignity, fairness, and respect, must lead everything we do. The purpose of this Equality Impact Assessment is to analyse the potential impact this process may have on people with protected characteristics. It helps us to make sure we meet the legislative requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and consider any wider people impacts, for example on those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

This paper looks to identify and assess the potential impacts as well as develop a framework for ongoing monitoring. A 'lessons learned' approach will be taken to continuously improve and refine the process.

The aim of the strategy is to:

- Partner with Capita to recruit a workforce reflective of the working population of Scotland to deliver our service at the right time for our clients.
- Deliver new and existing services in a timely and cost-effective way mitigating risks to planned delivery of newly devolved benefits.
- Work in partnership to advertise, sift, interview, and offer through a new set of processes and procedures.
- Increase objective assessment through bias-free sifting not available through our current applicant tracking system (ATS) platform.
- Have readily accessible MI that can be interrogated to identify and mitigate exclusion.
- Minimise the need for managers to be away from operations therefore maximising time supporting colleagues and clients.
- Mitigate any negative impact this partnership may have on our candidates by actively promoting inclusion and increase opportunity at every stage.

Who will it affect?

This activity will affect candidates as well as colleagues within Social Security Scotland. There will also be an impact on people with protected characteristics, as defined in the Equality Act (2010).

What might affect the success of the proposed activity?

Success of the project may be affected by:

- Leadership buy in.
- Team capacity and capability when implementing the strategy.
- Access to management information.
- Working with external partners.
- Technology and candidate's ability to access the internet.

2. Exploratory workshop results

HR Transformation held sessions within the team to identify existing evidence and potential impacts. Separate meetings were also held with wider stakeholders. Evidence gathered is detailed in section three below.

The management information included below contains aggregated figures on Social Security Scotland's recruitment campaigns drawn from a live administrative system used to manage recruitment activity. These figures are based on a data cut taken on 2 March 2021. As this management information is from a live system, figures may change in future data cuts. This is due to the system being updated (e.g., if candidates are offered positions from a reserve list).

The difference in figures between 'Successful at Interview' and 'Agreed Start Date' are at times due to some candidates being successful at interview stage and being placed on a reserve list awaiting a position as the number of posts available versus successful candidates vary. Candidates are offered employment/posts based on merit. Those who score highest are offered posts first, with a reserve list created for business areas to recruit from if another post arises within the 12-month timeframe.

This report contains management information for all campaigns in the Vacancies Online System which closed between 06 November 2018 - 31 December 2020 or where at least one applicant has an agreed start date in place on or before 31 December 2020. This includes a total of 225 campaigns. Campaigns receive a closed date when all actions have completed, and all successful candidates have been recruited for a position.

The tables include the total number of applications across all recruitment campaigns, rather than the number of unique applicants. It is possible that an individual may be counted more than once if they applied to multiple campaigns. Any numbers smaller than five have been suppressed for disclosure control purposes, apart from 'unknown' and 'prefer not to say' categories as they do not reveal information about any individuals.

In terms of consultation, sessions have been held with (but not limited to) Social Security Scotland Transformation Lead, Resourcing Manager, Resourcing Partners, SG People Directorate, Diversity Networks including Race Equality Network, LGBTI+, Trade Unions and Accessibility & Model Office, where feedback has been gathered to include in this process.

General considerations

Primarily, do all candidates have guaranteed access to the necessary level of technology for the required amount of time? Those without internet and technology access may find it harder to borrow equipment or attend local amenities such as libraries, dependant on availability and local COVID restrictions.

This leads on to digital familiarity. Is the proposed tool intuitive/easy to use? Is it accessible on mobile and desktop devices? Is there a required level of technological competence? Is there guidance available on how to use the tool? Are candidates confident in using the technology? Is the tool accessible to those who need accessibility software? Are there alternatives available by way of reasonable adjustments? What support is available for potentially excluded groups of our population?

Taking this approach, we are working to put in place an inclusive and accessible tool with clear guidance in a variety of formats. Guidance will show how to navigate the tool by using virtual tutorials and workshops. Visible 'contact us' information, an overview of a candidate journey and testimonials from real agency employees will be provided. Communication with candidates will be jargon free.

Both sift stages are to be name blind where candidates will be progressed based on their performance results and nothing else to the point of assessment of their pre-recorded interviews.

For the first time, we will have live candidate journey reporting enabling us to review our performance in achieving a workforce reflective of Scotland's diversity in real time.

Understanding our candidates' lived experience of the volume recruitment journey will also enable the agency to adopt a continuous improvement/lessons learned mind-set when implementing change as a result of actual user feedback.

3. Data and evidence gathered

Age

The table below shows management information on the number and percentage of applications at each stage of recruitment by the age of the applicant. *Source - Social Security Aggregated Diversity Management Information for Recruitment Campaigns closed between 06/11/2018 – 31/12/2020.*

Age ¹	Applied		Invited to Interview		Offer Date		Agreed Start Date	
	Number of Applications	%	Number of Applications	%	Number of Applications	%	Number of Applications	%
Less than 16	*	*	-	0	-	0	-	0
16-19	328	1.9	146	4.0	22	2.1	21	2.5
20-29	4,390	25.8	844	22.9	279	26.1	210	24.7
30-39	4,619	27.1	999	27.1	312	29.1	256	30.1
40-49	3,934	23.1	842	22.9	247	23.1	198	23.3
50-54	2,147	12.6	504	13.7	120	11.2	100	11.8
55-59	1,131	6.6	261	7.1	65	6.1	45	5.3
60-64	343	2.0	66	1.8	19	1.8	14	1.7
65+	24	0.1	5	0.1	*	*	*	*
Unknown²	*	*	14	0.4	*	*	*	*
All	17,022	100	3,681	100	1,071	100	851	100

1. Age is calculated based on the date the individual applied for the vacancy.

2. This includes any applications where date of birth details have not been provided or where the date of birth is believed to be incorrectly entered due to an improbable age value (i.e., where applicants would be under 14 or over 80 years old).

3. * denotes small cohorts containing numbers 1 to 4

The below table shows the most up-to-date statistics relating to the age tranches of the active working population. *Source - Office for National Statistics (2019).*

16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-64	65 and over
3.3%	20.9%	22.1%	21%	22.7%	7.3%	2.7%

According to study conducted by Ipsos MORI which examined digital capabilities across the UK, Scotland has one of the highest percentages of adults with basic digital skills. 81% of adults in Scotland reported having basic digital competency. *Source - Scotland's Digital Strategy: evidence discussion paper.*

However, certain demographic groups in Scotland are less confident in carrying out online activities. Among those that have internet access, a lower proportion of adults in social housing were very or fairly confident in their ability to perform a variety of online activities than those in private rented housing. Those aged over 60 and those on incomes between £10,000-£20,000 consistently reported being less confident than average across all activities.

Disruption in the labour market due to Covid-19 could see many young people unemployed with the effects lasting for years to come. *Institute for Fiscal Studies (2020)* suggests economic recovery plans should focus on investing in the human capital of the younger generation. Younger people are more likely to work in industries that have been impacted the most, such as retail and hospitality.

Disability

The table below shows management information on the number and percentage of applications at each stage of recruitment by disability. *Source - Social Security Aggregated Diversity MI for Recruitment Campaigns closed between 06/11/2018 – 31/12/2020.*

Disability/Health Condition ¹	Applied		Invited to Interview		Offer Date		Agreed Start Date	
	Number of Applications	%	Number of Applications	%	Number of Applications	%	Number of Applications	%
Disability/Health Condition	2,236	13.1	590	16.0	184	17.2	148	17.4
No Disability/Health Condition	9,937	58.4	2,207	60.0	802	74.9	669	78.6
Prefer not to say	4,849	28.5	884	24.0	85	7.9	34	4.0
Unknown ²	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
All	17,022	100	3,681	100	1,071	100	851	100

1. This is based on applicants answer to the question 'Do you have a health condition or disability?'

2. This includes any applications where details on disability and health condition are not available.

The table below shows management information on the number and percentage of applications at each stage of recruitment that requested a Guaranteed Interview.

Guaranteed Interview?	Applied		Invited to interview		Offer Date		Agreed Start Date	
	Number of applications	%	Number of applications	%	Number of applications	%	Number of applications	%
No	15,829	93.0	3,343	90.8	970	90.6	775	91.1
Yes	1,193	7.0	338	9.2	101	9.4	76	8.9
All	17,022	100	3,681	100	1,071	100	851	100

In 2017 the Scottish Health Survey estimated that 32% of adults aged 16 and over were disabled. The prevalence of disability increases with age. In 2018, 19.6% of people aged 16-64 were disabled. *Source - Scottish Health Survey 2017.*

In 2018, the employment rate for those classified as disabled under the Equality Act 2010 was 45.6% compared to 81.1% for non-disabled people. The disability employment gap in Scotland is 35.8%.

The gap between the employment rates for disabled and non-disabled people was lower for women (31.1 percentage points) than men (40.0 percentage points).

The employment rate gap between the employment rate for disabled and non-disabled people was lower for 16-24 year olds (25.0 percentage points) and increased with age. It was highest for those aged 50-64 (39.1 percentage points).

There is regional variation in the employment rate for those who reported a disability. 22.5% of all disabled people in employment reside in Glasgow City (11.8%) and Edinburgh (10.8%).

In 2018 49.7% of disabled people were recorded as 'economically inactive' compared to 15.9% for non-disabled people. The term 'economically inactive' refers to those who have not been seeking work for four weeks and would be unable to start work in two weeks.

Based on data from 2017, 27% of inactive disabled people want to work. It is estimated that there are 36,000 disabled people who are unemployed and actively looking for work and 86,000 who are classified as inactive but would like to work.

Source – Office for National Statistics, 2018, Annual Population Survey 2018

Source - A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan

According to the Office for National Statistics, median pay is consistently higher for non-disabled employees than disabled employees. In Scotland, the pay gap is 8.3%. The disability pay gap was the widest for those in their 30s and 40s compared with the oldest and youngest age bands. *Source - Office for National Statistics Scotland's Digital Strategy*

The evidence gathered (above) from national surveys and similar suggests that a high percentage of the Scottish working age population has a long-term condition or is disabled, under the Equality Act 2010.

Twenty-seven per cent of adults who have some form of long-standing physical or mental health condition or illness reported not using the internet, compared with eight per cent of those who do not. Though the percentage of disabled adults not using the internet has been declining, in 2018, it was 23.3% compared with only 6.0% of those without a disability

Social Security Scotland is committed to recruiting a workforce reflective of the Scottish population by continuing to work with external stakeholders that represent people with disabilities to make our application process more accessible to different groups.

We will support people with additional needs, making sure that appropriate adjustments are in place throughout the recruitment process and for their first day of work and ensuring support and equal opportunities for all staff with disabilities on an ongoing basis.

Where candidates cannot access the online process, candidates will be signposted to organisations which can support with digital access such as Connecting Scotland or, they can request the manual process. A lessons learned approach would further mitigate issues for future recruitment exercises using virtual options. *Source – work with stakeholder groups.*

Gender reassignment

Scottish Government Trans Equality and Inclusion Policy

Social Security Scotland will not disclose if anyone is trans or that they have transitioned or are transitioning unless it obtains their written consent to do so at the appropriate point.

We will manage all data in line with data protection policies and the Scottish Government Trans Equality and Inclusion Policy and at each stage of data gathering, candidates will have the option of “prefer not to say” specific to gender.

In the LGBT survey, 80% of respondents aged 16-64 had been in employment at some point in the 12 months preceding the survey. Trans people were less likely to have had a paid job in the 12 months preceding the survey (65% of trans women and 57% of trans men had one). One in four trans people (25%) have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. Although no data could be found on digital exclusion for trans people, the high levels of homelessness and higher levels on unemployment experienced by trans people may result in higher levels of digital exclusion than cisgender people.

27% of trans respondents with a job in the preceding 12 months had not been open about their gender identity with any of their colleagues at the same or a lower level. Respondents were even more likely to say that they had not been open with any senior colleagues (38%) or any customers or clients (64%). *Source - National LGBT Survey: Research report – Housing & Homelessness – LGBT Youth Scotland*

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 meant that people could apply to a tribunal for a Gender Recognition Certificate allowing the recipient to be legally recognised in the gender they live in. This effectively changes their sex for legal purposes and, where the person's birth was registered in the UK, they are also issued with a new birth certificate reflecting this gender. The Act does not cover non-binary gender identities. *Source - Gender Recognition Act 2004 Review – June 2019*

In 2016-2017, the Gender Recognition Panel issued a total of 318 full gender recognition certificates but do not provide statistics on where people live.

This may be linked to the following, homelessness:

- Trans and non-binary young people faced additional barriers to accessing shelters and accommodation
- Trans young people faced prejudice from service users and felt that staff were not always equipped to respond. Some transgender young people had been denied access to single-sex services and non-binary young people often felt there was no suitable alternative for them

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Nothing highlighted during evidence gathering as it would be covered under age and race specific to the likelihood of accessibility to and use of technology.

Pregnancy & maternity

A 2019 research paper published on Working Families.org.uk, found that only 11% of jobs (salaried at £20,000 plus) were advertised as “being open to flexible working options” and as a result, the talent pool was restricted before hiring started. It highlighted the benefits of flexible options as follows:

- Attracting extra candidates
- Progressing the best people
- Skills utilisation
- Diversity and gender pay gap
- Employer brand

Each of our job roles clearly state that we can offer flexible working to help balance work and home life – this will be visible to all candidates. As a Carer Positive and Disability Confident Employer, we will be starting that flexibility from recruitment with our virtual process empowering candidates to start and finish the journey on days and at times appropriate to their circumstances.

Sources - Working Families.Org.uk, Flexible Hiring Guidance for Employers 2019

Race

Data from the Office of National Statistics suggests that in recent years, the ethnicity gap in internet usage has narrowed as the proportion of internet non-users has declined. *Source - Office for National Statistics: Dataset Internet Users.*

	% Used in the last 3 months							
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
White	82.9	84.7	85.9	87.4	88.4	89.3	90.5	91.6
Mixed/multiple ethnic background	95.1	95.2	97.0	95.4	96.2	97.9	96.0	99.2
Indian	84.2	85.8	87.8	88.9	90.6	92.7	90.4	96.3
Pakistani	79.5	79.2	85.7	88.1	90.3	92.8	91.1	91.7
Bangladeshi	82.5	86.9	83.1	86.5	87.0	90.7	91.9	87.8
Chinese	93.6	90.8	92.6	96.4	98.3	97.6	98.6	97.6
Other Asian background	91.3	90.4	91.0	92.7	93.1	96.4	95.6	96.8
Black/African/Caribbean /Black British	86.2	87.7	87.7	90.5	92.1	91.2	92.8	95.4
Other ethnic group	87.9	88.0	90.5	94.2	94.1	95.4	94.5	97.6

	% Used over 3 months ago							
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
White	2.6	2.3	2.2	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.6
Mixed/multiple ethnic background	1.7	0.7	0.6	0.9	0.7	0.7	1.5	0.2
Indian	1.5	1.7	1.7	1.4	1.3	0.5	1.1	0.3
Pakistani	3.0	2.8	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.2	0.6
Bangladeshi	1.6	1.3	2.3	1.2	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.9
Chinese	1.2	1.8	1.5	0.7	0.7	0.3	0	0
Other Asian background	1.2	1.5	1.8	0.9	0.6	1.1	0.8	0.4
Black/African/Caribbean n/Black British	2.8	2.5	2.4	1.9	1.7	1.7	1.3	1.2
Other ethnic group	2.4	2.8	1.4	1.4	1.0	0.3	0.7	0.3

	% Never used							
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
White	14.3	12.8	11.7	10.6	9.6	8.9	7.8	6.7
Mixed/multiple ethnic background	3.2	3.8	2.2	3.4	3.0	1.1	2.4	0.5

Indian	14.1	12.3	10.4	9.4	8.0	6.7	8.2	2.9
Pakistani	16.8	17.3	11.8	10.3	8.4	4.7	7.3	7.6
Bangladeshi	15.9	11.6	14.1	10.7	11.3	6.6	6.7	9.8
Chinese	4.7	6.5	5.9	2.6	1.0	1.5	1.4	2.4
Other Asian background	7.3	7.8	7.1	6.0	6.0	1.8	3.2	2.6
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	10.9	9.5	9.6	7.2	6.1	6.5	5.5	3.4
Other ethnic group	9.6	9.0	6.9	3.7	4.9	4.0	4.6	2.1

These findings evidence the fact that greater numbers of people from more diverse backgrounds are accessing and using online technology and as a result, widening our selection pool.

Pairing this with anonymised sifting and our new ability to access live Management Information specific to candidate journeys, will enable us to promote diversity through an inclusive recruitment process. For example, if female candidates of a certain age group appear to be scoring c. 42% but the pass mark is 45%, we can elect to amend the pass mark to foster inclusion for the otherwise excluded group of candidates.

Religion or belief

The Equality and Human Rights Council advises employers flexibility around interview dates and times to ensure individuals “are not excluded on grounds of race or belief...” amongst other characteristics. *Source - Equality and Human Rights Commission, Religion or Belief – Recruitment Advice and Guidance May 2017.*

CIPD shares the perspective based on the Equality Act 2010 making it “...unlawful for employers to discriminate against job applicants (and existing workers) because of one of the ‘protected characteristics...’”. *Source - CIPD, Recruitment & Selection Q&A June 2021.*

With this in mind, our new recruitment process ensures that there is no room for bias at any of the sift stages as all candidate personal data is removed as is all biographical information. Additionally, reasonable adjustments can be requested by individuals should they deem them necessary. These processes promote equality towards our candidates but additionally, we will be seeking feedback based on their personal experience as a candidate.

Sex

Scotland’s gender employment gap, which measures the difference between the employment rates for men and women, decreased from 8.2 percentage points in

2009 to 6.3 percentage points in 2019. *Source - Gov.scot; Gender Employment gap over the last decade May 2020.*

Since 2009, employment levels for 25 to 34, 50 to 64, and 65 and over have increased with those in employment aged 65 and over almost doubling, rising from 54,800 to 89,100.

Then we were faced with COVID. One of the impacts of COVID has been the ability to further highlight women's labour market inequality. *Source - Close The Gap.org.uk; Disproportionate Disruption – The impact of COVID on Women's Labour Market Equality.*

This is evidenced through areas such as job disruption because women tend to do different types of jobs to men, they will have a greater likelihood of caring responsibilities curtailing their flexibility for paid work, they are less likely to be in a role where they can work from home, younger women, those from non-white backgrounds and those on zero hour contracts are more likely to work in sectors that had to close, all of which is resulting in increased unemployment and underemployment for the group.

- Women are more likely to work in sectors that have been affected by social distancing measures
- 77% of people working in high exposure jobs in the UK are women
- Women do most of the unpaid care for children, older people, sick people and disabled people
- Women are twice as likely to give up paid work in order to care

Whereas we may have had access to a balanced candidate pool, this may no longer be the case but in order to offer successful candidates meaningful opportunities they need to be flexible. This will enable us to tap into an otherwise potentially excluded but diverse talent pool.

Sexual orientation

LGBT young people are disproportionately represented in the young homeless population. As many as 24% of young homeless people are LGBT with 77% of them stating their identity was a causal factor in them becoming so. *Source - LGBT Youth Scotland 2021.*

- LGBT young people were not presenting as 'homeless' to local councils
- Young people said that they simply did not know where to go and many said they did not want to have discussions at open desks
- LGBT young people were fearful of disclosing their LGBT identity/ 'coming out' to support services
- Some had negative experiences of 'coming out.' There were also perceptions that religious organisations were more likely to be homophobic or biphobic

This circumstance could impact an individual's ability to apply for vacancies potentially due to lack of access to or availability of technology. Equally, having to supply contact information, postal address may leave them feeling they are unable to proceed demonstrating the importance of our workshops delivered in partnership with our employability stakeholders. These are designed to share not only the journey candidates will take but also a platform for the partners to signpost support available for their clients.

The ISE (Institute of Student Employers) suggests the use of inclusive language, spotlighting mental health & wellbeing and the use of existing positive role models.
Source - Insights.ISE.org.uk 2021.

Care Experience

Scottish Government employees were invited to complete a pulse survey asking them about their experiences of working from home during the Covid 19 pandemic.
Source - Social Security Scotland COVID-19 Pulse Survey.

Although this survey asked respondents to think about how this impacted their current work, some of the responses to the questions could also apply to those being asked to participate in a virtual recruitment process.

Many of the respondents cited that having childcare responsibilities made it difficult for them to work from home as this led to more interruptions and distractions. Some were also unable to find a quiet place to work.

Carers Trust – Scotland conducted research starting in November of 2020 across unpaid carers and Care Service Workers and the key findings were:

- 90% of carers are spending more time caring
- 86% of carers say their workload has increased
- 82% of carers have had no access to respite or breaks from caring
- 74% said that unpaid carers' needs had become more complex
- Support services all but closed, child and adult protection concerns increased, travel bans resulted in inability to access support and, families breaking down, mental health and financial issues resulted in carers being further isolated in challenging circumstances.

Source - Carers.org Carers Trust Research – Impact of COVID on unpaid carers and Care Service Workers.

In order to include people with caring responsibilities, it is critical we effectively convey the benefits of working for Social Security Scotland and signpost flexible working, carer's passport initiatives, our health and wellbeing initiatives and our culture.

Welcoming prospective candidates with this information and sharing the flexibility of the application process may encourage more of them, where possible, to apply and if successful, enrich our diverse workforce.

Evidence was also gathered on those with a lower socio-economic background:

The proportion of households in Scotland with internet access was at a record high of 88 per cent in 2019, broadly in line with the prior year (87 per cent). However, there is a positive relationship between internet usage and household income, although a break in the pattern for income bracket £6,001-£10,000 is present. This is because students are overrepresented in the lowest income bracket of below £6,000 and are very likely to have internet access at home. *Source - Scottish household survey 2019: annual report.*

Households in the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland continue to be less likely than those in the 20% least deprived areas to have access to the internet at home (82 percent and 96 per cent respectively in 2019). Internet access also varies by tenure: 79 per cent of those in social rented housing have internet access compared with 91 per cent of households who owned their home.

Citizens advice bureau across the country interviewed all their clients over a week to see how they used the internet. In total, more than 1,200 people across Scotland were asked about their digital access and skills. Key findings from the research indicate that there are still a significant number of bureau clients who face digital exclusion. *Source - Citizens Advice Scotland: Disconnected.*

Key findings include:

- Almost one in every five respondents never use the internet (18%)
- One in every five respondents who used the internet only did so through a smartphone (20%)
- Broadband costs were the most common barrier to people going online
- Internet use was lower for respondents who were older and for those in more deprived areas
- 41% of rural respondents identified broadband signal as a barrier

Connecting Scotland Initiative

Connecting Scotland is a Scottish Government programme set up in response to coronavirus. It provides iPads, Chromebooks, and support to develop digital skills for people who are all the following:

- digitally excluded – do not have an appropriate device and/or are not connected to the internet at home
- on low incomes so cannot afford to buy a device or pay for internet access
- at risk of isolation due to coronavirus because they are in the extremely high vulnerability group ('shielding') or the higher risk of severe illness group

To reach these people, Connecting Scotland collaborates with local councils, public and third sector organisations who are already working with them. Organisations and local councils get support from The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO). This includes:

- kit – internet enabled devices
- connectivity – through mobile data
- training and support – for staff and volunteers to become ‘digital champions’ to support people to use the internet confidently and safely.

Connecting Scotland is a partnership between the Scottish Government, local councils and SCVO. It is supported by a range of organisations from across Scotland and the UK

We must be mindful that candidates from lower socio-economic backgrounds may face challenges accessing an online assessment system and offer alternatives when needed. In preparation for candidates unable to access the online tool, Social Security Scotland will ensure signposting referring candidates to organisations which can support with digital access such as Connecting Scotland.

Working with our employability stakeholders, Social Security Scotland Resourcing will continue to roll out candidate recruitment workshops for under-represented groups. Offering candidates support and information to assist with all stages of application creates a starting point for those who may not have peer or role model-based guidance. The workshops will also be shared with third sector organisations and employability providers to assist them to support their clients.

Evidence was also gathered on part time workers:

Social Security Scotland directly employed staff: by working pattern

Year	Quarter to end:	Working Pattern		Total head count
		Full-Time	Part-Time	
2018	Sep	154	21	175
	Dec	228	25	253
2019	Mar	321	42	363
	Jun	353	50	403
	Sep	394	50	444
	Dec	491	69	560
2020	Mar	583	83	666

Requesting part-time work in the current climate may to the candidate, feel that they will fall out of the running for securing a permanent role.

Whilst the need is there for a candidate to train on a full-time basis, the process has been developed to allow each successful candidate to have the contracted hours

conversation with our Resourcing team colleagues who can answer questions and put them at ease.

Source - Social Security Scotland Workforce Information: March 2020 (Table 12).

Other evidence gathered

An article by an HR Journal states the following benefits of virtual assessment and recruitment tools:

- **Accessibility.** Virtual tools enable candidates who may not have had the resources to travel to an assessment day or centre to participate more easily in the initial stages of the process and get a feel for the role and organisation. This gives organisations a wider pool of potential talent as candidates from all over can be included in testing at minimal cost to both parties.
- **Significantly reduces cost** for both the candidates and the organisation. From room hire to admin, travel costs and even the price of a new outfit and childcare.
- **Time.** No travelling for candidates and less organisation and admin time for employers – no more paperwork to sort through at the end of an assessment centre. Digital assessments make gathering data much easier, quicker, and more sustainable.
- **Environment.** We have already seen short term benefits world-wide in terms of air quality since COVID-19 forced many of us to abandon our cars and travel less.

In addition to this and of particular note in relation to our ambition of developing a diverse workforce reflective of Scotland, the process is fully anonymised until the point of interview to eliminate potential unconscious bias through all sifting and short/long-listing stages. It will also allow access to data, not currently available, giving insight into the diversity makeup of candidates, allowing us the freedom to make informed decisions on e.g., evolving scoring, reviewing media campaigns and so on, ensuring we work towards greater diversity in our workforce through selection practice.

4. Assessing the impacts and identifying opportunities to promote equality

Age

Impact - Potential negative impact for candidates aged 60 or over, potential positive impact for those in younger age groups

- Research has shown that a higher % of those over the age of 60 have reduced IT / internet access / skills in comparison with younger people. Older people may also feel less confident when using online means to communicate than younger people.
- Equally, those in younger age groupings have been more severely impacted by COVID as a direct result of the industries they are likely to be / have been employed in such as retail and hospitality.
- Those in younger age groups are more likely to already use technology to communicate and therefore may be positively impacted.

Action

A robust programme of support has been built into the process with candidates able to try the technology before they embark on the actual selection journey.

Candidate workshops are already widely used to engage with candidates to remove barriers to applying for our roles. They are also shared with our employability stakeholders and third sector organisations to help them support their clients.

Candidates will also have access real life testimonials from existing staff to get a feel for the agency, the culture, and the reality of working for Social Security Scotland's positive and inclusive culture.

A reliable online recruitment platform with the ability to access dedicated IT support if needed.

Candidates will have the opportunity to complete trial assessments before starting actual assessments eliminating fear of the unknown.

A platform designed and tested for accessibility on desktop and mobile devices from communications content and style through to ensuring specialist software compatibility.

Candidate feedback will be continuously sought throughout the recruitment process to assess experience, address any concerns, and improve the candidate journey.

Accessible data and MI dashboards will allow us to review our candidate profile and make changes to promote positive inclusion in real time scenarios.

Contingencies – we have worked with Capita to build in alternatives by way of reasonable adjustments for those unable to use the online tools. These reasonable adjustments are assessed by Capita on an individual basis and assist candidates who may need support throughout the process. If a candidate had no access to technology and no other mechanism to assist was appropriate, arrangements could be made to offer an in-person interview.

Each sift stage is free of all biographical data and name blind to the point of final stage which is review and scoring of pre-recorded interviews to eliminate unconscious bias.

The mitigations should support candidates of all ages and abilities in becoming aware of the opportunities and, through the recruitment and selection process itself.

Disability

Impact - Potentially positive and negative impacts

- Research has shown that there is a higher instance of digital exclusion in those with disabilities. There is a higher risk of disabled people lacking the IT skills and confidence to be able to perform well in online selection.
- There are also potential benefits for those with mobility issues. Online application journeys are completed in familiar environments for the candidate so they would not have to travel. This could also provide benefits by reducing anxiety.
- By working with our stakeholders, we will engage them in the conversation making them aware of upcoming opportunities and look for them to raise awareness of these via their own websites.
- We would also be looking for their support in the site development aspect to ensure accessibility for those with disabilities.

Action

A robust programme of support has been built into the process with candidates able to try the technology before they embark on the actual selection journey.

A reliable online recruitment platform with the ability to access dedicated IT support if needed.

Candidate workshops are already widely used to engage with candidates to remove barriers to applying for our roles. They are also shared with our employability stakeholders and third sector organisations to help them support their clients.

We have a robust programme of user acceptance testing in place involving key stakeholders and those with lived experience to help us understand the candidate

journey and make improvements based on recommendations through the build lifecycle of the platform.

We are also engaging with accessibility/modern office user group and digital accessibility experts in user acceptance testing runs.

We will continue to engage and partner with third sector organisations to share opportunities and to seek advice and feedback.

Candidate feedback will be continuously sought throughout the recruitment process to assess experience, address any concerns, and improve the candidate journey.

Data access – we will be able to review our candidate profile and make positive changes to promote positive inclusion.

Each sift stage is free of all biographical data and name blind to the point of final stage which is review and scoring of pre-recorded interviews to eliminate unconscious bias.

Contingencies – we have worked with Capita to build in alternatives by way of reasonable adjustments for those unable to use the online tools. These reasonable adjustments are assessed by Capita on an individual basis and assist candidates who may need support throughout the process. If a candidate had no access to technology and no other mechanism to assist was appropriate, arrangements could be made to offer an in-person interview.

The application of these mitigations in partnership with our employability organisations, should support raising awareness of the opportunities as well as share support available for those who would like to apply for the advertised roles.

All of this will support Social Security Scotland secure a diverse workforce reflective of our society and work towards reducing unemployment within our community for those of us with disabilities.

Gender reassignment

Impact - Potentially positive and negative impacts

- We will continue to have “Prefer Not To Say” as an option to gender pronouns on the new platform. It is important to highlight that many government departments continue working from legacy systems and as a result, the option is not available for e.g., HMRC etc. It should therefore be noted that whilst we may have the ability to update our platform, this is not the case for those out with our control.
- The opportunity to participate in a selection process almost free of biographical data and name-blind is seen as a positive step in reducing unconscious bias.

- The need for gender pronouns on an application system/process has the potential to cause upset and importantly, disclosure of personal sensitive information should the candidate be successful, at the point of supplying referee details – former employers may be unable to match documents if they are unaware of the transition.

Action

Candidate workshops are already widely used to engage with candidates to remove barriers to applying for our roles. They are also shared with our employability stakeholders and third sector organisations to help them support their clients. This will allow us continued access to a candidate pool who otherwise, may not be aware or not apply for the opportunities.

Candidates will also have access real life testimonials from existing staff to get a feel for the agency, the culture, and the reality of working for Social Security Scotland's positive and inclusive culture.

A reliable online recruitment platform with the ability to access dedicated IT support if needed.

Candidates will have the opportunity to complete trial assessments before starting actual assessments eliminating fear of the unknown.

A platform designed and tested for accessibility on desktop and mobile devices from communications content and style through to ensuring specialist software compatibility.

We will continuously seek feedback from candidates throughout the recruitment process to assess their experience, address any concerns and improve the candidate journey.

We will use previously unavailable biographical data (where candidates have chosen to supply it) for the purposes of diversity monitoring and, to support our ambition of a diverse workforce reflective of the communities we serve.

All sifting will be free from biographical data and name-blind to the point of interview assessment – only then will interviewers have access to applicant name and additional information relevant to the assessment.

We will use the Government Recruitment Service meaning that successful candidates will not have to supply references from previous employers who may not be aware of the candidate's gender reassignment and therefore, unable to match the request with the employee.

Pregnancy and maternity

Impact - Potentially positive impacts

- The ability to elect for flexible working is shared across all our job roles to promote work and home life balance.
- As we are developing a virtual process, candidates who are either pregnant or on maternity leave can participate at dates and times appropriate to them.
- This potentially negates the need to travel, employ or source childcare, finance clothing and, allows the candidate to be in control of their environment.

Action

A robust programme of support has been built into the process with candidates able to try the technology before they embark on the actual selection journey.

Candidate workshops are already widely used to engage with candidates to remove barriers to applying for our roles. They are also shared with our employability stakeholders and third sector organisations to help them support their clients.

Candidates will also have access real life testimonials from existing staff to get a feel for the agency, the culture, and the reality of working for Social Security Scotland's positive and inclusive culture.

A reliable online recruitment platform with the ability to access dedicated IT support if needed.

Candidates will have the opportunity to complete trial assessments before starting actual assessments eliminating fear of the unknown.

A platform designed and tested for accessibility on desktop and mobile devices from communications content and style through to ensuring specialist software compatibility.

We will continuously seek feedback from candidates throughout the recruitment process to assess their experience, address any concerns and improve the candidate journey.

Accessible data and MI dashboards will allow us to review our candidate profile and make changes to promote positive inclusion in real time scenarios.

Contingencies – we have worked with Capita to build in alternatives by way of reasonable adjustments for those unable to use the online tools. These reasonable adjustments are assessed by Capita on an individual basis and assist candidates who may need support throughout the process. If a candidate had no access to

technology and no other mechanism to assist was appropriate, arrangements could be made to offer an in-person interview.

Each sift stage is free of all biographical data and name blind to the point of final stage which is review and scoring of pre-recorded interviews to eliminate unconscious bias.

Race

Impact - Potentially positive impacts

- COVID has pushed people's reliance on technology as never before. More of us using it in our daily lives as a mechanism ranging from contact with family to deliveries of food.
- The increased use of technology has happened across all ethnicities, some to a lesser extent, however it is happening and as a result, our potential talent pool is growing in volume and diversity.
- In addition, our virtual selection process is free from all biographical data and name-blind (something not available to us through our legacy systems) therefore, the process is completely merit based where candidates only become known to assessors at the point of scoring pre-recorded interview.

Action

A robust programme of support has been built into the process with candidates able to try the technology before they embark on the actual selection journey.

A reliable online recruitment platform with the ability to access dedicated IT support if needed.

Candidate workshops are already widely used to engage with candidates to remove barriers to applying for our roles. They are also shared with our employability stakeholders and third sector organisations to help them support their clients.

Candidates will also have access real life testimonials from existing staff to get a feel for the agency, the culture, and the reality of working for Social Security Scotland's positive and inclusive culture.

Candidates will have the opportunity to complete trial assessments before starting actual assessments eliminating fear of the unknown.

We will continuously seek feedback from candidates throughout the recruitment process to assess their experience, address any concerns and improve the candidate journey.

Data access – we will be able to review our candidate profile and make positive changes to promote positive inclusion. All sift stages will be conducted “name-blind” in a bid to mitigate any unconscious bias.

Contingencies – we have worked with Capita to build in alternatives by way of reasonable adjustments for those unable to use the online tools. These reasonable adjustments are assessed by Capita on an individual basis and assist candidates who may need support throughout the process. If a candidate had no access to technology and no other mechanism to assist was appropriate, arrangements could be made to offer an in-person interview.

We want to continue working in partnership with Race Equality Network to support diverse, inclusive hiring and will consult them on developing improvement strategies if the process indicates falling short of our ambition.

Religion or belief

Impact - Potential positive impacts

- As we are developing a virtual process candidates are at liberty to choose days/times where they can take account of religious festivals and holidays specific to them.
- Progression through the process is based purely on passing sift stages against set criteria/scoring and no assessor will have access to biographical or personal data until the point of reviewing and marking pre-recorded interviews.

Action

A robust programme of support has been built into the process with candidates able to try the technology before they embark on the actual selection journey.

Candidate workshops are already widely used to engage with candidates to remove barriers to applying for our roles. They are also shared with our employability stakeholders and third sector organisations to help them support their clients.

Candidates will also have access real life testimonials from existing staff to get a feel for the agency, the culture, and the reality of working for Social Security Scotland’s positive and inclusive culture.

A reliable online recruitment platform with the ability to access dedicated IT support if needed.

Candidates will have the opportunity to complete trial assessments before starting actual assessments eliminating fear of the unknown.

A platform designed and tested for accessibility on desktop and mobile devices from communications content and style through to ensuring specialist software compatibility.

We will continuously seek feedback from candidates throughout the recruitment process to assess their experience, address any concerns and improve the candidate journey.

Accessible data and MI dashboards will allow us to review our candidate profile and make changes to promote positive inclusion in real time scenarios.

Contingencies – we have worked with Capita to build in alternatives by way of reasonable adjustments for those unable to use the online tools. These reasonable adjustments are assessed by Capita on an individual basis and assist candidates who may need support throughout the process. If a candidate had no access to technology and no other mechanism to assist was appropriate, arrangements could be made to offer an in-person interview.

Each sift stage is free of all biographical data and name blind to the point of final stage which is review and scoring of pre-recorded interviews to eliminate unconscious bias.

The mitigations should support candidates of all belief systems in becoming aware of the opportunities and, through the recruitment and selection process itself.

Sex

Impact - Potential positive impacts

- Salary scales are clearly mentioned on adverts – research has shown this to promote gender diversity and assist with gender pay-gap reporting (as males have been known to negotiate higher starting salaries where “flexible” salary scales are mentioned).
- The ability to elect for flexible working is shared across all our job roles to promote work and home life balance therefore, indirectly reducing risk of poverty.

Action

A robust programme of support has been built into the process with candidates able to try the technology before they embark on the actual selection journey.

Candidate workshops are already widely used to engage with candidates to remove barriers to applying for our roles. They are also shared with our employability stakeholders and third sector organisations to help them support their clients.

Candidates will also have access real life testimonials from existing staff to get a feel for the agency, the culture, and the reality of working for Social Security Scotland's positive and inclusive culture.

A reliable online recruitment platform with the ability to access dedicated IT support if needed.

Candidates will have the opportunity to complete trial assessments before starting actual assessments eliminating fear of the unknown.

A platform designed and tested for accessibility on desktop and mobile devices from communications content and style through to ensuring specialist software compatibility.

We will continuously seek feedback from candidates throughout the recruitment process to assess their experience, address any concerns and improve the candidate journey.

Accessible data and MI dashboards will allow us to review our candidate profile and make changes to promote positive inclusion in real time scenarios.

Contingencies – we have worked with Capita to build in alternatives by way of reasonable adjustments for those unable to use the online tools. These reasonable adjustments are assessed by Capita on an individual basis and assist candidates who may need support throughout the process. If a candidate had no access to technology and no other mechanism to assist was appropriate, arrangements could be made to offer an in-person interview.

Each sift stage is free of all biographical data and name blind to the point of final stage which is review and scoring of pre-recorded interviews to eliminate unconscious bias.

The mitigations should support candidates of all ages and abilities in becoming aware of the opportunities and, through the recruitment and selection process itself.

Sexual orientation

Impact - Potential positive impacts

- Employability workshops will continue in partnership with our stakeholder organisations to ensure access to under-represented groups.
- This will raise awareness of the opportunities and of the actual recruitment process itself whilst signposting support available.
- The tool has been designed for desktop and mobile use with the ambition of increasing inclusion.

- Language has been sense checked to ensure inclusion by our communications experts and through the use of specific technologies.
- The benefits of working for Social Security Scotland are detailed in the role descriptions and testimonials sharing lived experience of actual colleagues

Potential negative impact

- Homelessness in Scotland – 24% of young homeless people are LGBTQI+ which can result in underemployment as well as erratic home/job histories.

Action

A robust programme of support has been built into the process with candidates able to try the technology before they embark on the actual selection journey.

Candidate workshops are already widely used to engage with candidates to remove barriers to applying for our roles. They are also shared with our employability stakeholders and third sector organisations to help them support their clients.

Candidates will also have access real life testimonials from existing staff to get a feel for the agency, the culture, and the reality of working for Social Security Scotland's positive and inclusive culture.

A reliable online recruitment platform with the ability to access dedicated IT support if needed.

Candidates will have the opportunity to complete trial assessments before starting actual assessments eliminating fear of the unknown.

A platform designed and tested for accessibility on desktop and mobile devices from communications content and style through to ensuring specialist software compatibility.

We will continuously seek feedback from candidates throughout the recruitment process to assess their experience, address any concerns and improve the candidate journey.

Accessible data and MI dashboards will allow us to review our candidate profile and make changes to promote positive inclusion in real time scenarios.

Contingencies – we have worked with Capita to build in alternatives by way of reasonable adjustments for those unable to use the online tools. These reasonable adjustments are assessed by Capita on an individual basis and assist candidates who may need support throughout the process. If a candidate had no access to technology and no other mechanism to assist was appropriate, arrangements could be made to offer an in-person interview.

Each sift stage is free of all biographical data and name blind to the point of final stage which is review and scoring of pre-recorded interviews to eliminate unconscious bias.

The mitigations should support candidates of all ages and abilities in becoming aware of the opportunities and, through the recruitment and selection process itself.

Care Experienced

Impact - Potentially positive and negative impacts

- The ability to elect for flexible working is shared across all our job roles to promote work and home life balance.
- As we are developing a virtual process, candidates with caring responsibilities can participate at dates and times appropriate to them.
- This potentially negates the need to travel, employ or source care, finance clothing and, allows the candidate to be in control of their environment.
- The candidate may not feel they have the energy to apply for a new role, indeed, they may not even be looking as that would take emotional capacity which they may well be lacking.

Action

A robust programme of support has been built into the process with candidates able to try the technology before they embark on the actual selection journey.

Candidate workshops are already widely used to engage with candidates to remove barriers to applying for our roles. They are also shared with our employability stakeholders and third sector organisations to help them support their clients. Our association with third parties also provides additional support to candidates to access technology or safe spaces if required.

Candidates will also have access real life testimonials from existing staff to get a feel for the agency, the culture, and the reality of working for Social Security Scotland's positive and inclusive culture.

A reliable online recruitment platform with the ability to access dedicated IT support if needed.

Candidates will have the opportunity to complete trial assessments before starting actual assessments eliminating fear of the unknown.

A platform designed and tested for accessibility on desktop and mobile devices from communications content and style through to ensuring specialist software compatibility.

We will continuously seek feedback from candidates throughout the recruitment process to assess their experience, address any concerns and improve the candidate journey.

Accessible data and MI dashboards will allow us to review our candidate profile and make changes to promote positive inclusion in real time scenarios.

Contingencies – we have worked with Capita to build in alternatives by way of reasonable adjustments for those unable to use the online tools. These reasonable adjustments are assessed by Capita on an individual basis and assist candidates who may need support throughout the process. If a candidate had no access to technology and no other mechanism to assist was appropriate, arrangements could be made to offer an in-person interview.

Each sift stage is free of all biographical data and name blind to the point of final stage which is review and scoring of pre-recorded interviews to eliminate unconscious bias.

The mitigations should support candidates with caring responsibilities in becoming aware of the opportunities and, through the recruitment and selection process itself.

Socio-economic background

Impact - Potential positive impacts

- Engagement with employability organisations that signpost opportunities available and support with the process
- The ability to conduct the process from their home means no travel costs (especially for those in more rural areas) or extra expenses buying new clothes for a face-to-face interview.
- The ability to complete the process at dates and times that suit candidates.
- Reasonable adjustments will be available to those who require them.

Impact - Potential negative impacts

- Those from lower socio- economic backgrounds are more likely to be in overcrowded accommodation, so getting a quiet space to complete the selection process might be more difficult.
- There could be anxiety around the appearance of their surroundings
- Research has shown that those from poorer background are more likely to have limited access to IT equipment/ reliable internet and have more limited IT skills.
- They may lack confidence in the use of IT for conducting the online process

Action

A robust programme of support has been built into the process with candidates able to try the technology before they embark on the actual selection journey.

A reliable online recruitment platform with the ability to access dedicated IT support if needed.

Candidate workshops are already widely used to engage with candidates to remove barriers to applying for our roles. They are also shared with our employability stakeholders and third sector organisations to help them support their clients.

We will continuously seek feedback from candidates throughout the recruitment process to assess their experience, address any concerns and improve the candidate journey.

We will continue to engage with third sector organisations to seek advice and feedback.

Data access – we will be able to review our candidate profile and make positive changes to promote positive inclusion.

Contingencies – we have worked with Capita to build in alternatives by way of reasonable adjustments for those unable to use the online tools. These reasonable adjustments are assessed by Capita on an individual basis and assist candidates who may need support throughout the process. If a candidate had no access to technology and no other mechanism to assist was appropriate, arrangements could be made to offer an in-person interview.

Part time workers

Impact - Potential positive impact

- Those who work or require flexible working hours can participate in the recruitment process without having to travel to another location and at a time appropriate to their needs.

Action

A robust programme of support has been built into the process with candidates able to try the technology before they embark on the actual selection journey.

Candidate workshops are already widely used to engage with candidates to remove barriers to applying for our roles. They are also shared with our employability stakeholders and third sector organisations to help them support their clients.

Candidates will also have access real life testimonials from existing staff to get a feel for the agency, the culture, and the reality of working for Social Security Scotland's positive and inclusive culture.

A reliable online recruitment platform with the ability to access dedicated IT support if needed.

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Each sift stage is free of all biographical data and name blind to the point of final stage which is review and scoring of pre-recorded interviews to eliminate unconscious bias.

The mitigations should support candidates with caring responsibilities in becoming aware of the opportunities and, through the recruitment and selection process itself.

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

Nothing highlighted during evidence gathering as it would be covered under age and race specific to the likelihood of accessibility to and use of technology.

Public Sector Equality assessment

Assessing the impact of the Volume Recruitment Project shows that:

- Unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation will be mitigated by anonymised sifting to the point of scoring pre-recorded interviews.
- Equality of opportunity will be advanced by the introduction of workshops available to all candidates, to provide advice and prepare them as much as possible for the process.

- Good relations among and between different groups will be promoted by gathering and analysing feedback from candidates to continuously improve the recruitment process.

5. Decision making and monitoring

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

Planned activities will continue to be introduced following this Equality Impact Assessment. These will ensure candidates are supported during the application process, and that equality of opportunity will be advanced for those with protected characteristics. Sift stages will continue to be anonymised, working towards removal of any unconscious bias.

No new implications on costs or resources have arisen from this Equality Impact Assessment analysis.

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

Through the Equality Impact Assessment analysis, we have identified positive and negative impacts for people with protected characteristics. Positive impacts include the removal of unconscious bias by anonymising sift stages, the ability for candidates to complete assessment stages at times suitable to them and the ability to elect for flexible working, promoting work and home life balance. Where potential negative impacts have been identified, mitigations have been put in place.

How will the activity be monitored going forward?

Until the close of the Volume Recruitment Project, activity will be regularly monitored by the Resourcing, Onboarding and Transformation teams within Social Security Scotland. External insight will be provided via focus groups. Candidate surveys and focus group outcomes will be analysed by the HR Transformation team and supporting data compiled to enable continuous improvement of the recruitment process.

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

7. List of References

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