

## Executive Advisory Body

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday 28 June 2022
<b>Subject</b>	Inclusive Communication
<b>Agenda No.</b>	30
<b>Paper No.</b>	30.2
<b>Prepared By</b>	Inclusive Communication Team.
<b>Purpose</b>	Discuss

### 1. Background

- 1.1. The Social Security Scotland (Scotland) Act 2018, Our Charter, our Corporate Plan and the Equality Act, Social Security Scotland sets out legal and organisational commitments that require us to communicate in an inclusive way.
- 1.2. In April 2019 the Agency's Senior Leadership Team agreed to establish an inclusive communication project to coordinate the work required to embed inclusive communication approaches in all our external and internal communications.
- 1.3. In August 2020, Executive Advisory Body members were updated on the progress made. They agreed with our approach to embedding inclusive communication principles across the organisation by building
  - leadership and ownership;
  - effective involvement of people who understand and express themselves in different ways;
  - a knowledgeable and skilled workforce and
  - shared inclusive communication resources which are readily available across the agency.

### 2. Key points

- 2.1. A large proportion of the population of people can benefit from inclusive communication approaches.
- 2.2. Good inclusive communication practice is about more than British Sign Language, large print and easy read. Inclusive communication means enabling people to use ways of understanding and expressing themselves that they find easiest on whichever channel works for them whether that's on line, on the phone, in person or on paper.
- 2.3. Organisations need the resilient, self-sustaining assets set out above to implement inclusive communication good practice.

- 2.4. Social Security Scotland are the first public agency to have a duty to implement inclusive communication. There are no direct comparators or blue prints for implementing inclusive communication on this scale.
- 2.5. The upcoming launch of Adult Disability Payment makes the need to implement inclusive communication approaches more urgent. People who are eligible to receive the benefit are more likely to have a communication disability or experience communication disadvantage than the general population. If we don't take action to get inclusive communication right, there is a risk that people will not receive the benefits they may be entitled to and that Social Security Scotland is exposed to criticism.
- 2.6. In April 2022, Social Security Scotland's Inclusive Communication Team completed a wide and collaborative review of the progress towards implementation of inclusive communication approaches.
- 2.7. The review found that the agency has made good progress on developing all the asset however all need development to further fulfil our duties.
- 2.8. The plan sets out reasonable goals which focus on further developing the resilient, self-sustaining assets Social Security Scotland needs to implement inclusive communication principles, our duties, our Charter, our values of dignity, fairness and respect and our ambition to create a workplace that is inclusive for everyone.
- 2.9. In 2022 we will work on thirteen of twenty one actions, mainly concentrating on leadership on inclusive communication. In 2023 and 2024 we will continue this work and pick up work on the remaining eight objectives.
- 2.10. The report has been endorsed by the Inclusive Communication Internal Co-ordination Group and the Inclusive Communication External Stakeholder Reference Group.

### **3. Conclusions**

- 3.1. The Executive Advisory Body is asked to
  - Note the Inclusive Communication Action Plan
  - Provide feedback, questions and advice
  - Champion inclusive communication
  - Actively participate in leaders and champions programme

#### 4. GOVERNANCE CHECKLIST

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

Strategic Objective	Contribution
<b>Helping to deliver a social security system with dignity, fairness and respect.</b>	<p>Will ensure that clients with additional communication support needs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• able to access help and advice to claim the benefits they are entitled to</li> <li>• supported throughout the application assessment process</li> </ul> <p>able to enjoy a positive experience of the Scottish social security system.</p>
<b>Supporting people in Scotland to access devolved benefits that they are entitled to.</b>	<p>Being a communication inclusive organisation will help support our work to increase take-up amongst the most vulnerable groups helping to get money to where it is needed most.</p>
<b>Running our service in a responsible way.</b>	<p>An embedded, mainstream approach to inclusive communication should help to make our system more inclusive and accessible to our clients and our staff.</p> <p>As an organisation that has a diverse workforce, we need to make sure colleagues who communicate differently are provided with the support they require to help them in their work.</p> <p>Improving the quality of our communications activity with staff and clients will increase understanding and lead to greater benefit uptake.</p> <p>It may also help to reduce the amount of error caused by a lack of understanding of the system.</p>

State here how the paper considers these areas and any consultation undertaken in the agency. Only complete the section(s) relevant to your paper.

Strategic consideration	Impact
Environment	<p>Will ensure that the Agency best meets the needs of people with a communication disadvantage and support our work to recruit a diverse workforce.</p>
Governance	<p>Enhanced governance arrangements will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee an annual review cycle to monitor and evaluate implementation of the Inclusive Communication Action Plan</li> </ul>

Strategic consideration	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>agree a strategic and operational measurement framework, and reporting schedule.</li> <li>manage risks associated with choices related to inclusive communication policy, investment and practice.</li> <li>connect and integrate inclusive communication perspective with other strategic activity, for example Charter Measurement Framework and Benefit Take-Up Strategy, Public Sector Equality Duty Review regarding inclusive communication; review of Adult Disability Payment in summer 2023; Disability and Carer Benefits Expert Advisory Group.</li> </ul>
Data	Developing a measurement framework will require data collection and need alignment with other measurement frameworks. Analytical team are being consulted.
Finance	A fully costed sustainable expenditure plan may be required to embed sustained improvement associated with good inclusive communication practice.
Staff	Staff will require new ways of working. This change will be supported and teams across the organisation consulted throughout the project.
Equalities	A key part of our Equalities Strategy. Consultation and joint working is ongoing.
Estates	Will inform how we set out our buildings along with the Look Book and signage etc. Relevant teams are engaged in the project
Communications and Presentation	Will affect both internal and external communication. The Communications Team is working closely with the project team.

**An Impact Assessment** must be carried out during the development of all new Agency policies and services and when making significant changes to policies and services. The Corporate Assurance team should be involved from an early stage to provide guidance and advice relating to completing impact assessments.

[Impact Assessment Saltire Page](#)

General Impact Assessment Queries: [Corporateassuranceteam@socialsecurity.gov.scot](mailto:Corporateassuranceteam@socialsecurity.gov.scot)

Equality Impact Assessment Queries: [Corporateassuranceteam@socialsecurity.gov.scot](mailto:Corporateassuranceteam@socialsecurity.gov.scot)

**Please complete the below table.**

Type of Impact Assessment	Required (Y/N)	If No - briefly state reason e.g. Not relevant/Not eligible – agreed with Deputy Director	If yes – briefly state progress to date, highlight any significant issues.
<a href="#">Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA)</a>		Relevant assessments in hand	
<a href="#">Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA)</a>		Relevant assessments in hand	
<a href="#">Data Protection Impact Assessment</a>		Relevant assessments in hand	
<a href="#">Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)</a>		Relevant assessments in hand	

Type of Impact Assessment	Required (Y/N)	If No - briefly state reason e.g. Not relevant/Not eligible – agreed with Deputy Director	If yes – briefly state progress to date, highlight any significant issues.
<u>Fairer Scotland Duty assessment</u>		Relevant assessments in hand	
<u>Future proofing legislation</u>		Relevant assessments in hand	
<u>Human rights in policy making</u>		Relevant assessments in hand	
<u>Islands Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA)</u>		Relevant assessments in hand	
<u>Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA)</u>		Relevant assessments in hand	