Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

Stakeholder and partner engagement plan

May 2024

Dignity, fairness, respect.

Contents

Purpose

Successful public services are not delivered in isolation.

Working with others helps get the benefits we deliver to those who are entitled to them. Building effective relationships and partnerships improves performance and provides efficiencies.

Through this plan we will raise awareness, understanding, generate action that will have an impact. We will do this by listening to their experience of our service and identifying ways in which we can work together to achieve positive outcomes. Our aim is to build familiarity, favourability, trust and advocacy.

For this plan, we consider a stakeholder to be an individual or organisation external to the core Scottish Government who has an interest in our organisation or where we have an interest in the work that they do. This could be organisations from the public, third or private sectors. It could be small local organisations right through to large multinational organisations. The nature of the relationship or partnership could be an interest in social security as a policy area and how we contribute to that through delivery right through to an organisation we are dependent upon to deliver our service.

How we engage with the public, media and parliamentarians will be covered in our communication and parliamentary engagement plans.

Objectives

- Build familiarity, favourability, trust and advocacy.

- Identify ways that we can work with others to achieve our corporate objectives – ensuring that we see and understand the connections and that these are nurtured and managed effectively. Find ways to support what others are doing that aligns with our interests and the interests of our clients.

- Align stakeholder activity at a strategic, tactical and operational level reflecting Scottish Government expectations and corporate objectives. Defining the rules of engagement and feedback across business areas. Improve clarity on the 'what', 'how' and 'when' of engagement.

- Proactively manage stakeholder expectations and keep them up to date on our service.

- Ensure we have suitable mechanisms in place to manage relationships where there are dependencies between ourselves and stakeholder organisations (e.g. MOUs).

- Develop ways of working that ensure that we are being as efficient as possible and maximising impact of every engagement.

- Ensure we have a diverse and inclusive range of stakeholder voices – including supporting special interest groups to participate in the conversation. Utilise stakeholder relationships to give our clients a platform to tell their story.

- Provide clear routes for stakeholders to contact us.

- Ensure we have a framework and processes for gathering, monitoring and utilising stakeholder feedback to support our decision making and continuous improvement.

Our approach

Layers of engagement

Strategic	This is Ministerial and SCS level engagement with their peers in stakeholder/partner organisations. The purpose of these engagements is to hear from senior levels in stakeholder/partner organisations about concerns or pain points, give us an opportunity to influence and manage expectations and identify opportunities for collaboration. This includes being an escalation point where we have an SLA or MOU that is not being met. The desired outcomes are: • head off issues before they are taken to Ministers, Parliamentarians or the media • action taken by stakeholder to help achieve common goals • senior stakeholder assistance in getting messages out to their colleagues • find opportunities that could improve impact and efficiency for us and others • Support sentiment tracking.
Tactical	This is operative led engagement where we maintain relationships with peers. This engagement should provide an early warning system for emerging issues or risks. This engagement will help to inform strategic engagement requirements and briefing. It is engagement that we use to transmit information to a large volume of stakeholders to enhance their understanding of our service and benefits and to help build a positive perception of Social Security Scotland. It is there to give stakeholders a route to contact us. The desired outcomes are: • improved horizon scanning and organisational response to emerging stakeholder issues and risks • increase in awareness and perception of our service • efficiencies in how we manage stakeholder contact and improved stakeholder experience when they have a general query • Improved record keeping and reporting on stakeholder engagement and correspondence.
Operational	This is operative led engagement – managed by the appropriate business owner across the organisation - where we work with other organisations to deliver our service. This includes working at local levels to share information that will support operational planning – for example at Community Planning Partnership Meetings or Financial Inclusion Groups. It includes where we have service level agreements and memorandums of understanding in place with stakeholders where we have interdependencies or where we need to work together to ensure a seamless services for shared clients. It includes relationships with suppliers and where we work with other organisations to deliver corporate requirements – for example, our relationship with Audit Scotland in regards to our Annual Report and Accounts.

Engagement approach

Keep satisfied (strategic)
- Regular horizon scan for shared areas of interest
- Direct correspondence
- Regular offer for 1-2-1 engagement
- Named Social Security Scotland contact for enquires

Manage closely (strategic)
- Key players with allocated Social Security Scotland SCS as relationship lead
- Regular catch ups
- Membership of stakeholder forums, where appropriate
- Utilise as supporters/goodwill ambassadors where appropriate

Stakeholder influence

Monitor (tactical)
- Newsletter
- Social media
- Presence at external events (speaking slots, exhibition stands)
- Events we run
- Clear route to channel enquiries (correspondence team)

Keep informed (tactical)
- All actions under monitor
- Involve in user research
- Membership of targeted stakeholder working groups, where appropriate
- Utilise as supporters/goodwill ambassadors where appropriate
- Access to correspondence team who will respond to general enquiries

LOW

LOW   Stakeholder interest   HIGH

Stakeholder Management

The why and the what

Purpose

- Responsible for ensuring alignment of stakeholder activity across the organisation and linking in with Scottish Government to ensure engagement activity is joined up.

- Proactively manage our strategic relationship with key stakeholders.

- Help strengthen our reputation and relationships.

- This team will make sure we manage stakeholder expectations and that we gather feedback from stakeholders on the delivery of our service.

Focus

- Strategic engagement with stakeholders that we want to keep satisfied and manage closely. They will support developing stakeholders understanding and drive action and advocacy.

Outcomes

- Improved insight into stakeholder sentiment.

- Maintain positive reputation with stakeholders.

- Build trust with stakeholder to get early indications of, and enable us to better manage, expectations and risks or emerging issues.

The how

- Identify key stakeholders and establish appropriate relationship management approach.

- Provide clarity on why a stakeholder has a high interest in us and why they have a high influence to help identify Director or Deputy Director best placed to be relationship lead.

- Support Director and Deputy Director by setting up regular engagements – including liaising with stakeholder where appropriate to agree agenda and, where appropriate, intended outcomes.

- Provide briefing to Director and Deputy Director and, where required, stakeholder in advance of engagement.

- Keep record of interaction and ensure actions are brought back to appropriate people in Social Security Scotland or Scottish Government – ensuring that loop on action is closed at next engagement.

- Support Director and Deputy Director to get speedy responses to any queries that come in from key players – working with the correspondence team as appropriate.

- Establish stakeholder forums, where appropriate, to gather feedback and work collaboratively.

- Supporting the business to bring together short life working groups to gather input from special interest groups (for example fluctuating conditions, neurological conditions, terminal illness).

- Establish and maintain relationship database that can be drawn upon as part of business planning, risk management, briefing and communications and that will enable us to manage a love stakeholder map that displays sentiment.

Stakeholder relationships

The why and the what

Purpose

- Work with business owners to make sure we have memorandums of understanding in place where there are dependencies between us and our stakeholders and where it would help us achieve our corporate objectives and better outcomes for the people we serve.

Focus

- Strategic engagement with stakeholders that we want to manage closely and supporting colleagues across business with operational engagement that will see action, impact and build trust.

Outcomes

- List of existing strategic relationships and associated agreements / memorandums of understanding.

- List of strategic relationships and agreement / memorandums of understanding we require in the future.

- Signed off Memorandums of Understanding in place that are managed by business owners.

- Central record of strategic relationships and associated agreements / memorandums of understanding (including review and retention plan).

- Efficient and effective partnership working stakeholders.

- Clear escalation routes for business owners.

The how

- Work with the business and key stakeholders to identify Memorandums of Understanding that may be required.

- Bring business owners together with their counterparts from stakeholder organisation to agree content of memorandums of understanding.

- Facilitate drafting and sign-off of memorandums of understanding.

- Create central record of service level agreements and memorandums of understanding with agreed review periods and process to prompt reviews.

- Work with stakeholder management team to identify where relationships exist that can be used as escalation route for memorandums of understanding not adhered to and ensure this is captured in the memorandums of understanding.

Stakeholder communications

The why and the what

Purpose

- Identify and develop effective partnerships with organisations across the public, private and third sector that support raising awareness of our service and build a positive perception of us.

Focus

- Strategic and tactical engagement with all stakeholders that will build familiaritry and favourability.

Outcomes

- Supporting take-up of all benefits by extending the reach, frequency and impact with key communication messages amongst our target audiences.

- Protection and promotion of the reputation of Social Security Scotland amongst key opinion formers and influencers.

- Reduction in enquires as people readily have the information and understanding they need.

The how

- Development of activity co-designed and co-delivered with partners (e.g. schools, health centres, retailers, advice services) that extends the engagement of messages via cost efficient interventions – including attendance at events that map effectively against our target audiences and that provide value for money as a communication tactic.

- Development of resources (videos, toolkits, etc) for partners and stakeholders that increase their knowledge of the benefits we deliver, to support the cascading of information to their customers, clients and audiences.

- Ensure actions and feedback captured at events are brough back to appropriate people in Social Security Scotland or Scottish Government – ensuring that loop on action is closed through ongoing communication and engagement.

Stakeholder correspondence

The why and the what

Purpose

- Ensure correspondence is handled efficiently.

- Deliver high quality responses that are clear and consistent, help people understand our service, manage expectations and build a positive reputation.

- Identify themes and trends in correspondence that may point to organisational risks or opportunities and flag to appropriate colleagues to address.

Focus

- Strategic and tactical layer that cuts across all stakeholder relationships that is important for building understanding, familiarity and trust.

Outcomes

- Reduction in repeat queries and staff hours spent responding to correspondence.

- Improvement in understanding of our service and trust in our organisation with stakeholders.

- Searchable central record of correspondence.

- Improved insight.

The how

- Manage response stakeholder correspondence using MICASE, acting as a postbox and passing to relevant colleagues where appropriate.

- Share insight from correspondence – including identifying themes and trends – to support ongoing stakeholder management and communication planning and wider organisational planning and decision making.

Monitoring and measuring engagement

Stakeholder mapping

- We will have mapped stakeholder by influence and interest to plot them into one of the four stakeholder management approaches.

- Within these quadrants we will categorise the nature of relationship (delivery partner, client population representatives etc).

- We will monitor and map the manage closely and keep satisfied stakeholder quadrants in terms of their familiarity and favourability of our organisation using reporting from our engagements with them. We will be unable to do this with keep informed and monitor as we will not have regular engagement with them.

- This will be a live document and we will review, and update as appropriate, following engagement with a stakeholder.

- The more detailed rationale behind each rating will be captured in a Stakeholder Relationship Management database.

- We will engage with Governance and Performance and Strategy to consider most appropriate way in which to share this map on a regular basis with the Executive Team, Executive Advisory Body, Director General as Portfolio Sponsor and Cabinet Secretary.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

24

[Redacted]

Measuring and monitoring impact

- Much of this work should be reflected in the contribution it makes to other core metrics (e.g. benefit take up rates, processing times).

- Stakeholder mapping - monitoring familiarity and favourability.

- Improved record keeping to enable us to identify themes and trends to support briefing and horizon scanning.

- Charter Measurement Framework Partner Survey (we will look at questions to see if we are able to get a general benchmark across stakeholders on familiarity and favourability).

- Trust and Advocacy will be evaluated based on progress with partnerships we are able to forge.

- Monitoring volumes and trends across correspondence.

- Engagement with stakeholder communications.

- Volume and nature of escalations across our strategic relationships.

- Where engagement is required to support a particular business challenge, we will develop appropriate measures (for example on supporting information, we will look to see improvements in quality and speed at which this is provided).