

Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming Strategy

The Scottish Social Services Council is the regulator for the social work, social care and children and young people workforce in Scotland. Our work means the people of Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled and confident workforce.

We protect the public by registering social service workers, setting standards for their practice, conduct, training and education and by supporting their professional development. Where people fall below the standards of practice and conduct we can investigate and take action.

We:

- publish the national codes of practice for people working in social services and their employers
- register people working in social services and make sure they adhere to the SSSC Codes of Practice
- promote and regulate the learning and development of the social service workforce
- are the national lead for workforce development and planning for social services in Scotland
- publish data and official statistics on the social work, social care and children and young people workforce.

Questions

1. Do you agree with the vision?

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don't Know**

1a. Please explain your answer or provide more information

Yes.

We agree with the vision, as laid out in the consultation document. We believe that the wording of the vision represents a clear idea of the priority areas for the future work of the Scottish Government and the wider public sector. Necessary social services are enshrined as a fundamental right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights so the social work, social care and children and young peoples' workforce will be central to making sure that communities in Scotland are resilient and safe and that their fundamental rights are respected. We also believe that the SSSC, as the regulator for these sectors in Scotland, will have an important role to play in supporting and achieving this vision.

2. Do you agree with the objectives?

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don't Know**

2a. Please explain your answer or provide more information

Yes.

We agree that the objectives as stated provide a solid foundation for achieving the vision outlined in the strategy. We welcome the recognition of embedding the use of a human rights-based approach, robust impact assessment procedures and the PANEL principles as these have been key areas of focus for the SSSC. We believe that wider adoption of these principles across the public sector in Scotland will help to improve outcomes for the people of Scotland.

3. Do you agree that strengthening leadership is a key driver for mainstreaming equality and human rights?

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don't Know**

3a Please explain your answer or provide more information.

Yes.

We believe that ensuring leaders are familiar with the value of promoting equality and human rights will encourage staff across all levels of Scottish Government and the wider public sector to work toward embedding equality and human rights-based practices in their work. We welcome the ongoing focus on developing a better understanding of the wider workforce and the extent to which it representative of the population it serves.

4. Do you agree with the focus on different levels of leadership?

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don't Know**

4a. Please explain your answer or provide more information.

Yes.

We welcome the recognition in the strategy that leadership exists in various levels across the Scottish public sector landscape. We believe this is essential for making sure there is multi-level buy in to the objectives of the strategy as it recognises the roles that a wide number of stakeholders have in realising these objectives.

5. Have we captured the core elements of strengthening leadership within the context of mainstreaming?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

5a. Please explain your answer or provide more information.

Yes. We have no additional comments to add.

6. What actions would you recommend to ensure strengthening leadership as outlined above will contribute to mainstreaming?

We believe that there should be a focus on learning and training resources that reinforce why embedding equality and human rights are so important. This should also provide clear guidance to leaders across the public sector of the consequences, including legal consequences, of failing to properly embed equality and human rights, or complying with legal requirements.

7. Do you agree accountability and transparency are a key driver for mainstreaming equality and human rights?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

7a. Please explain your answer or provide more information.

Yes. Public bodies can and must do this by publishing reports on statutory requirements and appropriate impact assessments.

8. Have we captured the core elements of accountability and transparency within the context of mainstreaming?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

8a. Please explain your answer or provide more information.

Don't know.

We agree that accountability and transparency begin with the public being able to access, in formats they can easily understand, information on how Scottish Government and public bodies are carrying out their functions. However, we believe that true accountability requires clear mechanisms for stakeholders to raise concerns, together with clear consequences for those who fail to meet their obligations. We look forward to the seeing the thinking in relation to the proposed expansion of the powers of the

Scottish Human Rights Commission and the Children and Young Person's Commissioner.

9. What actions would you recommend to ensure greater accountability and transparency contributes to mainstreaming?

See answer above.

10. Do you agree that ensuring an effective regulatory and policy environment is a key driver of mainstreaming equality and human rights?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

10a. Please explain your answer or provide more information.

Yes. We have no additional comments to make.

11. Have we captured the core elements of ensuring an effective regulatory and policy environment within the context of mainstreaming?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

11a. Please explain your answer or provide more information.

Don't know.

We support the intention behind the content of this key driver. The strategy mentions formalising processes to ensure equality and human rights are considered in policy and legislation development. Public bodies organisations are required to carry out EqIAs under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 and must continue to examine how these impacts can help create policies which respond to challenges and facilitate positive change.

12. What actions would you recommend to ensure that an effective regulatory and policy environment will contribute to the achievement of mainstreaming?

We look forward to the seeing the thinking in relation to the proposed expansion of the powers of the Scottish Human Rights Commission and the Children and Young Person's Commissioner.

13. Do you agree that utilising evidence and experience is a key driver for mainstreaming equality and human rights?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

13a. Please explain your answer or provide more information.

Yes.

The SSSC recognises the importance of gathering and utilising robust data in the carrying out of our functions. Our Data and Intelligence Strategy 2022-2025 sets out our vision, which includes using intelligence to protect those who use services and prevent harm. We continue to take several steps to support this vision which include improving the level of data we hold on the registered workforce, and continuing to publish Official and National Statistics on people working in social work, social care and children and young people services. We welcome and agree with the focus in the draft strategy on areas such as improving our understanding of and use of intersectional equality data.

14. Have we captured the core elements of utilising evidence and experience within the context of mainstreaming?

- a. Yes**
- b. No**
- c. Don't know**

14a. Please explain your answer or provide more information.

Yes.

15. What actions would you recommend to ensure that utilising evidence and experience as outlined above will contribute to the achievement of mainstreaming?

We believe that improving the Scottish Government's Equality Evidence finder to better reflect Principles 2 and 3 of Scotland's Equality Evidence Strategy 2023-2025 is key to making the best use of data across government and the public sector.

The Equality Evidence Finder appears to be the logical place to collate the various outputs in relation to equality data generated by Scottish Government and the wider public sector. Following principle 3 and ensuring that all stakeholders across government and the public sector are empowered to produce data in appropriate formats will ensure that those with the need to access various data sets will be able to better explore the intersectionality of issues by drawing on diverse and compatible data sets.

16. Do you agree that enhancing capability and culture is a key driver for mainstreaming equality and human rights?

- a. Yes**
- b. No**
- c. Don't know**

16a. Please explain your answer or provide more information.

Yes. We have no additional comments to add.

17. Have we captured the core elements of enhancing capability and culture within the context of mainstreaming?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

17a. Please explain your answer or provide more information.

Yes. We have no additional comments to add

18. What actions would you recommend to ensure that enhancing capability and culture as outlined above will contribute to the achievement of mainstreaming?

It is essential that Scottish Government shares the lessons it learns in relation to enhancing capacity and culture and highlights examples of good practice from the wider public sector.

19. Do you agree that this Strategy will provide a foundation to influence a culture of mainstreaming equality and human rights within Scottish Government and the wider public sector?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

19a. Please explain your answer or provide more information.

Don't know. We agree that the ideas contained within this strategy have the potential to establish a culture of mainstreaming equality and human rights, but the most important aspect is making sure there are adequate learning and development opportunities across government and the public sector.

20. Do you agree that improving capacity is a key driver for mainstreaming equality and human rights?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

20a. Please explain your answer or provide more information.

Yes. A dedicated workforce equipped with a commitment to equality and human rights will have the capacity to properly embed a culture of change.

21. Have we captured the core elements of improving capacity within the context of mainstreaming?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

21a. Please explain your answer or provide more information.

Yes. We have no additional comments to add

22. What actions would you recommend to ensure that improving capacity will contribute to the achievement of mainstreaming?

We have no further comments.

23. Do you think the proposed approach to a collated Action Plan will drive change?

- a. Yes**
- b. No**
- c. Don't know**

23a. Please explain your answer or provide more information.

Yes. We have no additional comments to add

24. Do you think there is a need for a cross-public sector toolkit to support mainstreaming of Equality and Human Rights?

- a. Yes**
- b. No**
- c. Don't know**

24a. Please explain your answer or provide more information.

Yes. Public sector organisations in Scotland are passionate about embedding equality and human rights in their work, however, due to capacity issues, competing pressures and a lack of confidence in how to do this, this often loses the centrality it requires. A central toolkit endorsed by Scottish Government would give public sector bodies the confidence to take actions to embed equality and human rights.

25. What practical steps would you include to make the toolkit an effective resource?

We believe that to make the toolkit an effective resource, the Scottish Government should consider developing it in conjunction with the wider public sector, in particular the NDPB Equality Forum would be an invaluable resource in highlighting the areas where public sector organisations feel they need additional support. The resource should also be informed by the views of people with lived experience.

26. What are your views on establishing additional reporting requirements?

- a. Additional stand-alone reporting requirements should not be created**
- b. Additional stand-alone reporting requirements should be created**
- c. Don't know**

26a. Please explain your answer or provide more information.

Additional stand-alone reporting requirements should not be created. We believe that reporting requirements are a useful method for making sure public

bodies are meeting the duties to which they are subject. However, public bodies are presently subject to several potentially overlapping reporting requirements. Any additional reporting requirements would be better served by being combined with the PSED Mainstreaming reporting requirements.

27. To what extent do the drivers capture the full range of activity required to mainstream equality and human rights?

- a. Captures the full range**
- b. Captures most of the range**
- c. Captures some of the range**
- d. Does not capture any of the range**

27a. Please explain your answer or provide more information.

b. Captures most of the range. We welcome the recognition in this strategy of the importance of equality and human rights in the work of the wider public sector as well as the importance that improved capacity and proper funding.

28. Please provide any more information that you think would be useful, which is not already covered in your previous responses.

N/A

Scottish Social Services Council

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