



Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Form

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of proposal	Continuing Education Policy
Responsible department	Organisational Development

B. AIMS OF THE PROPOSAL

What do you hope to achieve?	This policy is designed to support SSSC staff who wish to complete continuing education ie a professional or academic qualification which is relevant to their current role or a role they aspire to within the organisation.
Why is the proposal needed?	<p>It is necessary for us to provide clarity and guidance on the support available for continuing education and the application process. This policy details the different categories of continuing education, the support available and the potential reimbursement of costs which may apply.</p> <p>This proposal updates our existing arrangements so that they are clearer and more understandable.</p>
How will the proposal contribute to the SSSC's strategic objectives and/or priorities?	This policy supports our Organisational Characteristics in the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and specifically "People want to work at the SSSC".

	<p>The Strategic Plan states "we are committed to investing in our own workforce the same way we are invested in the external workforce".</p> <p>This policy supports strategic themes 1, 2, 3 and 4 of our People Strategy 2021-2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective leaders and managers. • Recruit and develop excellent people. • A healthy and inclusive organisation. • Informed, involved and engaged employees. <p>This policy supports these priorities in the support provided by SSSC for the continuing education of our employees.</p> <p>By adopting this updated policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We meet our commitment to investing and developing our staff. • We will benefit from enhanced staff performance and engagement. • We establish a clear route for employees to request continuing education.
<p>How will the proposal address the SSSC's Equality duties?</p>	<p>The policy addresses all 3 of the equality duties in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). It is a policy on continuing education for all employees to access. The policy seeks to ensure there are no barriers to anyone making use of the policy and any employee who wishes to complete continuing education will not be disadvantaged unfairly.</p> <p>This policy makes clear our commitment to equal treatment for employees.</p>

C. DATA AND EVIDENCE GATHERING

What evidence has been used to come to the decisions contained in this EQIA?	The policy has been updated in terms of language, expression and layout. No substantive changes have been made that require extensive benchmarking. Benchmarking has been conducted with other organisations including CI and other public bodies.
Has the proposal been the subject of relevant engagement and/or consultation?	Engagement has taken place with Human Resources and Legal Corporate Governance teams. Further consultation will include the Operational Management Team, Executive Management Team and Unison our recognised trade union regarding this policy. A consultation log has been maintained of their comments and proposals.
Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?	Yes
Have any gaps been found in the data?	N/A.

D. ASSESSING IMPACT AND IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE EQUALITY

<p>Sex –</p> <p>In December 2021, 74.23% of our staff were female however, as an organisation, we have an organisational full time and part time gender pay gap of 31.2% (based on median pay figures). This indicates that female staff at the SSSC are concentrated in lower paid roles. We believe that this policy is likely to have a positive impact on female staff as it provides opportunities for them to gain further education which in turn could lead to higher paid roles. This policy will have a positive impact on eliminating discrimination between men and women and will advance equality of opportunity for female staff in the SSSC.</p> <p>This policy adopts a gender-neutral approach wherever possible. The policy applies equally to all employees, permanent and temporary, and is accessible regardless of this specific characteristic. The policy does not take a specific approach regarding this protected characteristic but it does create a standard approach to applications for continuing education which contributes towards creating an inclusive culture.</p>
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Ethnicity

Approximately 3% of the SSSC 's staff are from minority ethnic backgrounds so the potential for any impact, either positive or negative, on the basis of ethnicity as a result of this policy is unlikely. We believe that the existence of this policy will help us to be viewed as an employer of choice for people from all ethnic backgrounds, which will mean that more people from diverse ethnic backgrounds will apply for and be successfully recruited to roles in the SSSC.

Disability

Approximately 12% of our staff declare having a disability, however, the current figures for the disability pay gap in the SSSC are unknown. We believe that the existence of the continuing education policy will allow us to advance equality of opportunity between staff that have declared a disability and those who have not by creating pathways for accessing higher education, which may provide greater access to more financially rewarding roles.

Sexual orientation

We have not identified any potential for impact, either negative or positive resulting from the continuing education policy on the basis of sexual orientation.

Gender reassignment

We have not identified any potential for impact, either negative or positive resulting from the continuing education policy on the basis of gender reassignment.

Age

In 2019/20 only 1.7% of entrants into first degrees in Scotland were over the age of 50, for postgraduate degrees, 4% of entrants were over the age of 50. In the SSSC approximately 20% of our workforce is over the age of 55. This policy is deemed to have the potential to positively impact this age group by creating an additional pathway to education.

A small percentage of SSSC staff (2.92%) are under 25, however, this policy has the potential to positively impact his group as it creates a pathway to education for young people employed by us who may not have had the opportunity to explore further education prior to joining the SSSC.

Marital and civil partnership

We have not identified any potential for impact, either negative or positive resulting from the continuing education policy on the basis of marital or civil partnership status.

Pregnancy and maternity

We believe our continuing education policy has the potential to positively impact staff that have been through pregnancy or maternity. Pregnancy and maternity have the potential to create inequalities between female staff and their male colleagues owing to career breaks. The continuing education policy will allow female staff returning from pregnancy or maternity leave to access the educational tools they need to advance their careers.

Religion/Belief/Non-belief

We have not identified any potential for impact, either negative or positive resulting from the continuing education policy on the basis of religion/belief/non-belief.

E. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROUPS LIVING IN AN ISLAND COMMUNITY

This section considers the impact or effect of the proposal on island communities and whether this could be significantly different from its effect on other communities.

It is recognised that our islands face particular challenges around distance, geography, connectivity and demography, so it is important that we consider these properly and make sure islands receive fair and equitable treatment and that there is no detriment to their unique circumstances.

This policy is not expected to have any impact on islands communities beyond those individual employees who live on an island and are employed by us. The policy is sufficiently flexible to accommodate different requirements of employees including those who live on an island. In such circumstances the employee will be treated in the same manner and style as any other employee. An ICIA (Islands Community Impact Assessment) is not required.

F. CHILD RIGHTS AND WELLBEING

This section considers the impact of the proposal on children and young people, or specific groups of children and young people, in Scotland.

This policy will contribute to the creation of a positive culture. This will impact on those people that we employ and make them happier and healthier while at work. This indirectly contributes to the rights and wellbeing of their children and young people. This policy is not expected to have a direct impact on the rights and wellbeing of children and young people.

G. HEALTH AND WELLBEING AND HEALTH INEQUALITIES

This section considers the impact of the proposal on physical and mental health and wellbeing; this includes for example, participation, creativity and developing potential.

This policy will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our employees by supporting requests for continuing education and providing financial funding and study support. It will also have a positive impact in other ways for example promoting participation in training and also have a role developing the potential of current staff and increasing the potential for career development opportunities.

H. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

This section is concerned with the impact of the proposal on pay and employment opportunities as well as valuing and supporting voluntary work.

The policy is expected to improve pay and employment opportunities of staff by supporting requests for continuing education and providing financial funding and study support. It will also have a positive impact in other ways for example promoting participation in training and also have a role developing the potential of current staff and increasing the potential for increased pay and/or career development opportunities.

I. CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

This section concerns our duties to put Scotland's care experienced children, young people and adults at the heart of what we do.

This policy will have a positive impact on care experienced staff by supporting requests for continuing education and providing financial funding and study support which may not have been previously. It will also have a positive impact in other ways for example promoting participation in training and also have a role developing the potential of current staff and increasing the potential for career development opportunities.

This policy is not expected to have a specific impact on care experienced children or young people. We have other policies in place that support our employees in this regard.

J. DECISION MAKING

Which of the following statements best describes the action that should be taken following the EqIA in relation to your proposal?

No major change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Adjust the policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continue with Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stop and remove the policy	<input type="checkbox"/>

Outline the reasons why you've selected this option

We have not identified any major changes following the completion of the Equality Impact Assessment.

K. MONITORING AND REVIEWING

How will the implementation of the policy/proposal be monitored? How and when will the impact of the proposal be reviewed? Outline the actions that will be taken, the timescale for these and who will be responsible for carrying out these actions.

Action	Timescale	Person Responsible
The policy will be monitored on a two-yearly cycle to test for effectiveness and continued suitability.	Ongoing.	Pamela Jamieson-Smith, Head of OD.

L. SIGN OFF

Name: Pamela Jamieson-Smith

Title: Head of Organisational Development

Date Approved: 24 January 2023