

<b>Title of report</b>	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
<b>Public/Confidential</b>	Public
<b>Summary/purpose of report</b>	To ask Council to approve the updated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy for the SSSC.
<b>Recommendations</b>	Council is asked to approve the updated policy
<b>Author</b>	Neil Macleod, Policy and Equality Manager
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Laura Shepherd, Director, Strategy and Performance
<b>Link to Strategic Plan</b>	<p>The recommendation in this report links to:</p> <p>Outcome 1: <b>Trusted</b> People who use services are protected by a workforce that is fit to practise.</p> <p>Outcome 2: <b>Skilled</b> Our work supports the workforce to deliver high standards of professional practice.</p> <p>Outcome 3: <b>Confident</b> Our work enhances the confidence, competence and wellbeing of the workforce.</p> <p>Outcome 4: <b>Valued</b> The social work, social care and children and young people workforce is valued for the difference it makes to people's lives.</p>
<b>Link to Risk Register</b>	Risk 3: We fail to meet corporate governance, external scrutiny and legal obligations.
<b>Impact assessments</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was developed.</li> <li>2. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) was not required.</li> <li>3. A Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) was not required.</li> </ol>
<b>Documents attached</b>	Appendix 1: Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, July 2023

	Appendix 2: <a href="#">Equality Impact Assessment: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy</a>
<b>Background papers</b>	None

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy sets out our approach to mainstreaming equality, diversity and inclusion in the SSSC. It also sets out our contribution to mainstreaming equality, diversity and inclusion in the wider social work, social care and children and young people workforce. The policy covers our principles, responsibilities and governance.
2. This policy was due for renewal in July 2023 and the updated version for Council approval is at Appendix 1. The revised policy has further information on our principles and our roles and responsibilities. It also sets out our updated governance and reporting arrangements. These include changes to the remit and membership of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group and development of a Community of Practice. The revised draft shows all the tracked changes.

## **ANNUAL REPORTING**

3. As part of our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirements we publish revised outcomes every four years and we publish a mainstreaming report every other year. The mainstreaming report uses several sources and indicators to monitor our performance. These include our Key Performance Indicators and the findings from our registrant and staff surveys. We have updated the version to reflect this.
4. In March the Council approved the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mainstreaming Progress Report, April 2023. The report was published in April.

## **RAISING AWARENESS OF MICROAGGRESSIONS**

5. The Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines microaggressions as an 'act or remark that discriminates against one or members of a minority group, either deliberately or by mistake.' The revised behaviour at work and raising concerns section references the need for all of us to be aware of microaggressions. We have added a section in the policy to reflect this.
6. Raising awareness of microaggressions is a key priority for Scottish Government and public bodies.
  - The [Scottish Government's Anti-Racist Employment Strategy](#) notes that organisations that understand institutional racism will 'call out racism and racist behaviours in the workplace, including microaggressions and casual remarks that may go unchecked.'

- A recent Scottish Association of Social Workers event on tackling racism highlights the need to tackle microaggressions in the workplace.
- Our Fairness for All training module references the wider need for staff to consider the impact and risk of unintentional discrimination.
- We are working with Organisational Development and Human Resources to reinforce key messages on microaggressions. Organisational Development is exploring how they can incorporate this message into a new course on Unconscious Bias. Human Resources will consider any implications as part of their next review of the Dignity at Work Policy.

## **CONSULTATION**

7. We consulted the Executive Management Team, Operational Management Team, Partnership Forum and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group. We also received feedback from the Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations (CEMVO.)

## **RISKS**

8. We have an averse risk appetite towards legal compliance. The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 requires the SSSC to act in a way which encourages equal opportunities. Our responsibilities on equality issues were expanded by the Equality Act 2010 including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as detailed in section 149 of the Act. This section is known as the General Duty. The duty covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The General Duty has three needs which include eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity between different groups and fostering good relations between different groups.
9. Our legal responsibilities were expanded by the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. The specific equality duties require us to undertake a range of functions. These include publishing a report every two years on our progress to make the general duty part of our functions.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### **Resourcing**

10. The revised policy does not create any new financial, sustainability or staffing implications.

### **Compliance**

11. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) regulates the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in Scotland. The EHRC can, where appropriate, take pre-enforcement or formal enforcement to ensure that listed authorities are giving due regard to the aim of the general duty. The Scottish Government also expects listed authorities to comply with the PSED and sets out these requirements in several places including legislation, strategies and consultations.

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

### **Equalities**

12. An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) was developed for this revised policy and forms Appendix 2 to this report. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy has an impact on people with protected characteristics. Our wider activities play a greater role in mainstreaming equality and making sure that we consider the general duty as part of our ongoing functions.

## **CONCLUSION**

13. Council is asked to approve the policy at Appendix 1.