EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EQIA) FORM

A. General information

Name of proposal	SSSC corporate website, www.sssc.uk.com
Responsible department	Communications and Policy

B. Aims of the proposal

What do you hope to achieve?	Publish and maintain the SSSC website which is accessible and inclusive and meets WCAG 2.1 standards.
Why is the proposal needed?	So that information about our role and processes is available for registrants, employers, stakeholders, the public and anyone who needs it. We also need the website to meet our statutory duties as a public sector body to publish and report information and meet the Public Sector Equality Duty.
How will the proposal contribute to our strategic objectives and/or priorities?	The website contributes to all four strategic outcomes of the SSSC Strategic Plan 2023-2026 as it's where we publish all the information about our work. • People who use services are protected by a regulated workforce that is fit to practise. • Our work supports the workforce to deliver high standards of professional practice. • Our work enhances the confidence, competence and wellbeing of the workforce. • The social work, social care and children and young people workforce is valued for the difference it makes to people's lives.
How will the proposal address our equality duties?	The website complies with the public sector accessibility guidelines which means all users have the same access and it will help us meet our Public Sector Equality Duty to: • eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010

	• advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, by making sure our website is accessible and inclusive • foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, by making sure everyone has the same access.

C. Data and evidence gathering

What evidence have you used to come to the decisions contained in this EIA?	Scottish Social Service Sector: Report on 2022 Workforce Data. Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 guidance.
Have you engaged and consulted on the proposal?	We carried out user research before developing the current website.
Have you used best judgement in place of data/research/evidence?	No.
Have you found any gaps in the data?	We must have an accessible and inclusive website that reflects the wide and varied nature of the social work, social care and children and young people workforce we regulate. We have limited information on those with protected characteristics from our social service workforce data reports, particularly ethnicity and disability as there is a large proportion reported as unknown in the data returns. We are developing an improved understanding of registrants by asking them to complete equality data and plan to publish an updated picture in due course.

D. Assessing impact and identifying opportunities to promote equality

Gender – 83% of the social service workforce is female and 47% of the workforce work part time (Scottish Social Service Sector: Report on 2022 Workforce Data). Our website is freely available at all times so access is not affected by working patterns and caring responsibilities, which predominantly fall to women. This means it should have a neutral impact.

Ethnicity – we don't hold complete ethnicity data for our registrants, as it's optional to provide this information. It is also under reported in the workforce data reports. The latest data report shows that 4% of the total workforce is from an ethnic minority, but this varies from 1% in the public sector to 6% in the private sector. Our website will have a neutral impact on this protected characteristic as it is freely available.

Disability – there is a large number of unknowns regarding disability in our workforce data reports but the latest one shows it is low in all sub-sectors ranging from 0%-7%. We have a statutory duty to meet the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 and have made improvements to meet these as far as possible within the constraints of the current website platform. We continually review the content and make improvements to accessibility in partnership with our website development company when we can. Some things are constraints of the website platform, which would require universal changes to the software by Microsoft. Anything like this which we cannot change is acknowledged in our accessibility statement as required by the regulations. We are currently carrying out a research and scoping project to inform the planned redevelopment our website during 2024-25 to make sure we meet our obligations under the accessibility regulations. We have accessibility guidance for staff to help them make sure any publications or resources they produce meet the required accessibility standard and all our content should follow our Brand Guide and be written in plain language. These mitigations mean there is a neutral impact on this protected characteristic.

Sexual orientation – our website will have a neutral impact on this protected characteristic as it is freely available.

Gender reassignment – our website will have a neutral impact on this protected characteristic as it is freely available.

Age – the median age of the social service workforce is 43, which is older than the general working population median age (41). The SSSC provides lots of support to improve the digital capabilities of the workforce, which can help improve confidence in using technology. This mitigation means it has a neutral impact.

Marital and civil partnership – our website will have a neutral impact on this protected characteristic as it is freely available.

Pregnancy and maternity – our website will have a neutral impact on this protected characteristic as it is freely available.

Religion/belief/non-belief – our website will have a neutral impact on this protected characteristic as it is freely available.

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.

The website is freely available all over the world and users can access it in their own time, so there's a positive impact for island communities as they can access the same as users on the mainland. An ICIA 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.

Our website is not aimed at children but having information about registration, regulation and workforce development freely available to the workforce (registered and unregistered), employers and the public supports high standards of care and fosters a positive impact on the areas listed. We are also working to make sure our resources and publications are accessible as possible, for example producing an easy read and a child friendly version of the Codes of Practice.

Supporting workforce development and high standards of care helps address article 27 which requires that every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for their mental, spiritual, moral and social development and article 27 (3), which requires states to help parents meet this right.

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.

Providing information to support registration and workforce development on our website has a positive impact on health and wellbeing of workers, as it enables them to improve their knowledge, skills and confidence to undertake their role and meet the behaviours and values in the SSSC Codes of Practice. Enabling them to maintain their registration and support their continuous professional learning (CPL) will help them be more able to stay in employment, progress to other roles and improve family income and health and wellbeing. Being better able to deliver high quality care services brings similar benefits for the people receiving those services too.

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.

Supporting registrants to maintain registration and complete their CPL by providing our website helps workers have the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver high quality person-centred services, which promote equality and opportunity for all and contribute to overall community wellbeing and sustainability.

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.

Supporting registrants to maintain registration and complete their CPL by providing our website helps workers have the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver high quality person-centred services, which impacts positively on care experienced children, young people and adults. This will have a positive impact on our duties as a corporate parent by improving care for care experienced children, young people and adults receiving services.

J. Decision making

Which of the following statements best describes the action that you should take following the EqIA for your proposal?

No major change	x
Adjust the policy	☐
Continue with policy	☐
Stop and remove the policy	☐

Outline the reasons why you have selected this option.

There is no evidence that our website will have negative impacts for those with protected characteristics.

K. Monitoring and reviewing

How will you monitor the implementation of the policy/proposal? How and when will you review the impact of the proposal? Outline the actions that you will take, the timescale for these and who will be responsible for carrying out these actions.

Action	Timescale	Person Responsible
We regularly report on the website using Google Analytics to see how users navigate the website, what's popular and any barriers they come across. We also have a feedback survey and web form so people can report any issues.	Monthly web usage reporting and ongoing monitoring and response/ actions as appropriate from feedback survey and web form.	Communications Manager
We are currently carrying out a research and scoping project to inform the planned redevelopment our website during 2024-25 to make sure we meet the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.	We are due to complete the research and scoping project by February 2024. Redevelopment of the website is subject to funding being available in 2024-25.	Communications Manager

L. Sign off

Name: Nicola Gilray
Title: Head of Communications and Policy
Date approved: 13/11/2023.