



## Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Form

### A. GENERAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of proposal</b>	Dealing with Reference Requests Guidance
<b>Responsible department</b>	Human Resources

### B. AIMS OF THE PROPOSAL

<b>What do you hope to achieve?</b>	This guidance is designed to put in place appropriate arrangements detailing how we respond to requests for references.
<b>Why is the proposal needed?</b>	<p>We frequently provide reference information for employees to prospective employers. This guidance details what we will provide.</p> <p>This proposal updates our existing arrangements so that they are clearer and more understandable.</p>
<b>How will the proposal contribute to the SSSC's strategic objectives and/or priorities?</b>	<p>This guidance supports our Organisational Characteristics in the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and specifically "People want to work at the SSSC".</p> <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 guidance supports strategic themes 1, 3 and 4 of our People Strategy 2021-2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective leaders and managers.</li> <li>• A healthy and inclusive organisation.</li> <li>• Informed, involved and engaged employees.</li> </ul> <p>This guidance supports these priorities by expressing our position and how we respond to reference requests in a fair and consistent manner.</p> <p>By adopting this updated guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We meet our obligations to provide fair and accurate references.</li> <li>• We are clear to managers and employees what information we provide.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How will the proposal address the SSSC's Equality duties?</b></p>	<p>The guidance addresses all 3 of the equality duties in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, <a href="#">Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)</a> ie eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010, advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</p> <p>This guidance makes clear our commitment to equal treatment for employees and sets out how we treat them fairly and consistently.</p>

## C. DATA AND EVIDENCE GATHERING

<b>What evidence has been used to come to the decisions contained in this EQIA?</b>	The guidance has been updated in terms of language and expression. No substantive changes have been made that require extensive benchmarking. Benchmarking has been conducted with ACAS and XPERTHR.
<b>Has the proposal been the subject of relevant engagement and/or consultation?</b>	Consultation has been undertaken with the Operational Management Team, Executive Management Team and with Unison our recognised trade union regarding this guidance. A consultation log has been maintained of their comments and proposals.
<b>Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?</b>	Yes
<b>Have any gaps been found in the data?</b>	N/A.

## D. ASSESSING IMPACT AND IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE EQUALITY

<p><b>Gender</b> – does the proposal take account of different roles and responsibilities? Does it assume, perhaps wrongly that men have no caring responsibilities? Is the proposal flexible enough to provide a service that everyone can access?</p> <p>This guidance adopts a gender-neutral approach wherever possible. The guidance applies equally to all employees, permanent and temporary, and is accessible regardless of this specific characteristic. The guidance does not take a specific approach regarding this protected characteristic but it does create a common approach for us to follow. This contributes towards creating an inclusive culture.</p>
<p><b>Ethnicity</b> – have you covered all minority ethnic groups? Consider the impact your proposal has on someone from a minority ethnic group and remember this impact may differ depending on the gender, disability, faith, sexual orientation or ethnicity of the person as different cultures have different views on what is acceptable. Consider language and format.</p> <p>The guidance applies equally to all employees, permanent and temporary, and is accessible regardless of this specific characteristic. The guidance does not take a specific approach regarding this protected characteristic but it does create a common approach for us to follow. This contributes towards creating an inclusive culture.</p>

**Disability** – a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person’s ability to carry out day-to-day activities. How does this proposal affect disabled people? Are there any impairment groups who are unfavourably affected by the policy?

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We do not provide health data to prospective employees and this protects our employees from being treated differently. This is supportive to all employees and in particular for disabled employees who may have had a higher than average rate of absence.

**Sexual orientation** – what are the issues for this group in terms of your proposal? Does it meet the needs of this group?

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**Gender reassignment** – does your proposal include people of different gender identities? Will your proposal impact transgender individuals in any way?

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We do not provide health data to prospective employees and this protects our employees from being treated differently. This is supportive to all employees and in particular for those employees who may have had a higher than average rate of absence due to reassigning their gender.

**Age** – remember different age groups have different concerns. When considering age remember that some individuals are more vulnerable or have issues that may need additional consideration.

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We do not provide age related data to prospective employees and this protects our employees from being treated differently. This is supportive to all employees and reduces the opportunity for their age to be considered in recruitment decisions by prospective employers.

**Marital and civil partnership** – it is unlawful discrimination for people who are married/civil partnership/same-sex couple to be treated less favourably in employment than those who are not married/civil partnership/mixed-sex couple.

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**Pregnancy and maternity** – protection against maternity discrimination covers 26 weeks after giving birth – this includes treating a woman unfavourable because she is breastfeeding.

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We do not provide health data to prospective employees and this protects our employees from being treated differently. This is supportive to all employees and in particular for employees who have taken leave due to pregnancy who may have had a higher than average rate of absence.

**Religion/Belief/Non-belief** – does your proposal take into account different festivals, holidays, religious days and traditions? Will the different faith beliefs impact on women from that group and exclude or prevent them from using the service?

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## **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 guidance is not expected to have any impact on islands communities beyond those individual employees who live on an island and are employed by us.

## **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 guidance will contribute to the creation of a positive culture. This will impact on those people that we employ and make them happier while at work. This indirectly contributes to the rights and wellbeing of their children and young people. This guidance 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 guidance is expected to contribute to the health and wellbeing of our employees by contributing to creating a positive environment for them. Employees who are healthier are more likely to perform to a higher standard. Employees who are healthier and happier are more likely to contribute to the wider sector and community.

## 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 guidance is expected to contribute towards improve the health of our employees by creating a positive environment for them. Employees who are healthier and happier are more likely to contribute to the wider sector and community.

## 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 guidance 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?

<b>No major change</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Adjust the policy</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Continue with Policy</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Stop and remove the policy</b>	<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 guidance will be monitored on a three-yearly cycle to test for effectiveness and continued suitability.	Ongoing.	Lucy Finn, Head of HR.

## L. SIGN OFF

**Name:** Lucy Finn

**Title:** Head of Human Resources

**Date Approved:** October 2022