Scottish **Social Services** Council

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report 2021-2025

April 2021

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Foreword

Welcome to our fifth report setting out how we continue to mainstream and promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the SSSC. This report summarises recent progress and introduces our equality outcomes for the next four years. We are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in our various roles which include being a public body and the regulator for the social service workforce in Scotland.

Our vision is that the people of Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled and confident workforce and that through our work, we protect people who use social services and strengthen the professionalism of this workforce.

We recognise and value the benefits that a diverse workforce brings to our approach and we aim to treat everyone fairly and with respect, including registrants and our staff.

The social service workforce has a critical role throughout the pandemic, and we are taking steps to support the sector during this unprecedented time. For example, we extended the period for new workers to register with us and we are publishing several new resources on our Learning Zone website. Our Ambassadors for Care continue to promote the sector as a positive career choice and to highlight the opportunities for development. Our understanding of the need to address inequality has arguably never been greater and is a key message in the Promise and the Feeley Review. We have a key role to play in turning these commitments into reality. These include reviewing the Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers.

We know that we need to do more to support and develop our own workforce. Our organisational development programme has introduced several new initiatives which are helping us to recruit and nurture staff. These include a revamped recruitment process and a new leadership and management course for staff.

This report sets out our equality outcomes for the next four years and set out how we intend to build on our progress. They include a focus on data, partnership working and supporting our staff to engage effectively. They also include initiatives which will help us to develop a diverse workforce. We'd welcome your feedback and we will continue to provide regular updates on our progress.

Lorraine Gray, Chief Executive

1. Introduction and purpose of this report

This report sets out our approach to meeting the General Duty and Specific Duties imposed by Scottish Ministers under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, to develop and publish equality outcomes and report progress on them. The report sets out:

- our legal equality duties and strategic approach to addressing them
- information on our employees' protected characteristics, including recruitment, retention and development
- our gender pay gap
- our Equal Pay Statement and occupational segregation information
- information on the diversity of our Council.

1.1 Who we are and what we do

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is the regulator for the social work, social care and early years 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 workers, social care and early years 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 work, social care and early years services and their employers
- register people working in social work, social care and early years and make sure they adhere to our codes of practice
- promote and regulate their learning and development
- are the national lead for workforce development and planning for the social work, social care and early years workforce in Scotland.

Our [Strategic Plan for 2020-2023](#) identifies our priorities for the next three years. The plan sets out our three strategic outcomes. In February 2021 we agreed to add a fourth outcome.

Outcome 1: People who use services are protected by ensuring the regulated workforce is fit to practise.

Outcome 2: The SSSC supports and enhances the development of the registered workforce to deliver high standards of practice and drive improvement.

Outcome 3: Our workforce planning activities support employers, commissioners and policy makers to deliver a sustainable, integrated and innovative workforce.

Outcome 4: The social work, social care and early years workforce is recognised as professional and regulated and valued for the difference it makes to people's lives.

The Strategic Plan also sets out the organisational characteristics and values that support us to embed a culture of equality and diversity across the SSSC. These include maintaining a focus on the needs of our customers and working with others to deliver our outcomes. They are also about making sure that we are a respected and valued organisation and that people want to work for us.

In 2020 our Council agreed our new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. The policy applies to all employees, secondees, agency staff and anyone else working on behalf of the SSSC. The policy also sets out some of the steps that we are taking to promote equality in the wider sector. This includes embedding standards that promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the [Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers.](#)

We are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. Our work actively promotes human rights and the core principles such as dignity, fairness, equality, respect and autonomy.

- We are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in our varied roles which include being a public body, regulator and an employer.
- We recognise and value the benefits a diverse workforce brings to our work.
- We treat everyone fairly and with respect, including registrants, staff, applicants and all other key stakeholders.
- We will go beyond minimum statutory duties when considering and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion for people with characteristics not protected by law.
- We are supporting initiatives to increase the diversity of our workforce and the social service workforce in Scotland.

1.2 Public Sector Equality Duty

This is our fifth report on mainstreaming the equality duty and sets out our equality outcomes for 2021-2025. It is also the third report to address our duties around the diversity of our Council. A separate data annex contains further information on our workforce.

Our legal duties in relation to equality are set out in various pieces of legislation including the Equality Act 2010 and Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001. The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 requires the SSSC to act in a manner which encourages equal opportunities. Our responsibilities on equality issues were expanded by the Equality Act 2010 including the Public Sector Equality Duty detailed in section 149 of the Act. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) was created by the Equality Act 2010.

As a public body, we comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED, or general equality duty). We pay due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who don't
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who don't.

The general duty is accompanied by the specific duties which were approved by the Scottish Parliament and are set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. These duties are to:

- report on mainstreaming the equality duty
- publish equality outcomes and report progress
- assess and review policies and practices
- gather and use employee information
- publish gender pay gap information
- publish statements on equal pay
- consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement publish in a manner that is accessible.

Gender representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018

We are also required to publish information on:

- the number of men and women who have been members of our Council over the previous two years
- how we have used the protected characteristics information of our Council Members to take steps towards making sure that the membership is diverse.

The Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 requires public authorities to set out their approach to meeting the gender representation objective for Boards of public bodies so that 50% of non-executive board members are women. Our approach is set out in section five.

Protected characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 introduced nine protected characteristics. It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of a protected characteristic.

Age	Disability
Gender reassignment	Marriage and civil partnership
Pregnancy and maternity	Race
Religion or belief	Sex
Sexual orientation	

2. Mainstreaming equality in the SSSC

This section summarises our approach to mainstreaming the equality duty in our work. These insights have been used to develop our equality outcomes for 2021-2025. These include our regulatory function and our work as the national lead for workforce development and planning for social services in Scotland. We also have opportunities in our role as an employer. We aim to drive, promote and support the mainstreaming of equality within the wider social service sector and within our own workforce.

2.1 Responding to COVID-19

We have supported the sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. For the latest information please see our website. A summary of our steps over the past year follows.

- We extended the grace period for new workers to register with the SSSC from six to 12 months. Our experience is that employers are continuing to follow normal recruitment processes such as Disclosure Scotland checks for all staff.
- In 2020 we paused the removal process for anyone who did not pay their annual or renewal fee. We will restart this process from March 2021. We have put measures in place to support anyone who is unable to pay fees to allow them to remain on the Register.
- We are giving workers an additional 12 months to meet a qualification condition.
- We suspended requests for registrants to provide their training and learning logs temporarily.
- We revised our approach to Fitness to Practise cases to support the sector. During the first months of the pandemic we focused on high risk fitness to practise cases.
- We continue to develop resources for the sector on our learning zone website covering topics such as person-centred care, working safely and infection prevention and control. We work in partnership with NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and the wider sector to do this.
- We are taking steps to tackle the significant shortfall in practice placements for social work and HNC students. We are working with the Social Work Education Partnership (SWEP) and universities to develop a simulated advanced practice module which will be a substitute for social work first practice placements. We are working with SQA and the College Development Network to find ways HNC students can gain their full award and meet the qualification requirements for registration with the SSSC. We have provided tool kits, agreed contingency arrangements and changes to programme delivery to support this.

We contribute and participate in several relevant national working groups such as the Mobilisation Recovery Group (MRG), Children and Education Recovery Group (CERG) and the Pandemic Response in Adult Social Care Group (PRASCG).

2.2 Social and community impact

We protect the public by supporting the workforce to deliver high quality professional services.

- Our Register includes people who work as social workers and staff working in residential childcare, early learning and childcare and in care homes. People working in care homes for adults,[1] housing support service and care at home[2] services must also register with us. There are more than 168,000 people on our register as of January 2021. Many staff hold required qualifications and many more are working to achieve these.
- Our Register is a key starting point for contacting the workforce and we regularly share information on behalf of Scottish Government and other key stakeholders.

The Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers (the Codes) set the national standards of conduct and practice that apply to all workers. By setting clear standards of professional practice and behaviour, the Codes are a key part of regulating and improving the quality of care for people who use services. We continue to promote how the standards in the Codes have an impact on people's work including this recent video with staff from Capability Scotland. We can and do act where a registrant's practice falls below the standards. Our Fitness to Practise department investigates concerns about workers and takes action where necessary.

Adult social care has a unique and critical role in the community and it is essential that workers' roles are recognised, rewarded and valued. We have been actively involved in the national recruitment campaigns for early learning and childcare and adult social care and we have developed several careers resources and case studies from people working in the sector.

Two recent landmark reviews identify the critical role of the workforce in transforming services for care experienced people and adult social care. These reviews reinforce the need to put people at the centre of our work. Three brief examples of our approach follow.

- In 2019 we published our first Involving People Plan. The plan is based on extensive feedback and aims to recognise and consider the way we can involve people with lived experience of social services throughout our work.
- In January 2021 we published Realising potential, our plan for putting care experienced children, young people and adults at the heart of what we do.
- In February 2021 we published our first Children's Rights report. The report sets out how our work aligns with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In 2020 and 2021 we organised several presentations and sessions for our staff to consider the social and community impact of our work in greater detail. We heard from contributors including Who Cares? Scotland, the Promise and Scottish Care. Our revised Equality Impact Assessment form requires staff to consider the impact of their work on all our equality and social obligations.

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[1] Managers, supervisors, practitioners and support workers
[2] Managers, supervisors, and support workers

2.3 Environmental impact and procurement

We manage our carbon emissions in partnership with the Care Inspectorate as part of our Shared Services directorate. Our 2018–2023 Carbon Management Plan sets out how we will deliver our Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 duties. Through this plan we aim to reduce our carbon emissions by 25% by 2023 (from a 2015-2016 baseline). Our latest report on the Scottish Biodiversity Duty (December 2020) sets out steps we are taking such as modernising our office lighting, intensifying our focus on recycling and updating our travel policies.

Our Procurement Strategy 2020-2023 is published jointly with the Care Inspectorate and establishes our ongoing commitment to delivering sustainable procurement. Our standard terms and conditions confirm that suppliers must not unlawfully discriminate against another person within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 in their activities relating to contracting with the SSSC. Our tender document and standard terms and conditions also indicate that suppliers must comply with the Employment Relations Act 1999 (Blacklist) Regulations 2010 which address blacklisting activities.

2.4 Equality audit

In 2020 we commissioned an internal audit of our approach to complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Table: Equality audit 2020: summary of recommendations and actions

Recommendation	Action	Status
1. The ongoing review of the terms of reference of the Equality Working Group (EWG) should consider the introduction of a member of the Executive Management Team (EMT) as the Executive Lead for equality and diversity and to chair future meetings.	The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group (EDIG) is now chaired by a member of the EMT. We have extended the remit to include monitoring our wider work around supporting care experienced children, young people and adults and promoting children's rights.	Complete
2. Develop and implement specific step by step guidance and associated training for all staff on how to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.	We have revised our template and developed step by step guidance for all staff. We have developed a training broadcast for all staff and intend to offer specific training sessions or support as required.	Complete
3. Ensure that all applicants complete the equality monitoring form before we consider any applications for employment.	Our new recruitment process includes an updated equality monitoring form.	Complete
4. Use the recent introduction of MyView (a self-service HR system) to request that all staff update personal details, including equality information.	MyView can now hold and provide the relevant information. Staff receive regular reminders to provide this information. We have highlighted the need for this data in the induction process. We are developing further resources which will reinforce why we require this information. Approximately 85% of staff have provided most of this information as of December 2020.	Complete

2.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group

In 2020 we introduced our new organisation-wide Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group (EDIG). A member of our Executive Management Team (EMT) chairs the group and membership includes senior representatives from across the SSSC. The key purpose of the EDIG is to:

- support the mainstreaming of equalities within the SSSC
- support, maintain and update our equality action plan which provides evidence towards our equality outcomes.

The EDIG has additional roles such as:

- promoting and mainstreaming good practice throughout SSSC
- supporting the development and implementation of our mainstreaming and equality outcomes
- participating in the delivery of equality, diversity and inclusion training for our staff
- assisting the SSSC to meet its responsibilities in relation to legislation
- a source of advice on the development of Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) and to track actions
- contributing to consultations.

The EDIG recently developed a new Equality Delivery Plan which brings together all our activities around this area. The plan has been extended to include monitoring our actions to implement Realising potential and our first Children's Rights report.

2.6 Equality Impact Assessments

Where our policies or practices have an impact on people with protected characteristics, we expect our staff to complete Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA). Assessing impact helps to take effective action on equality so that policies meet the needs of our registrants, staff and people who use services. They have several other benefits which include helping us to meet the three needs of the general equality duty such as advancing equality of opportunity for different groups. We update and refresh our HR and corporate policies on an ongoing basis and expect an EQIA to be conducted for every policy and procedure or indicate why one is not required.

In 2020 we developed a more accessible approach to EQIAs. The new process sets our expectation that all policies must have an EQIA. Our revised approach also covers complementary requirements such as considering the impact of our work on people with experience of care, children's rights and island communities. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group (EDIG) reviews progress on implementing the actions. Many draft EQIAs are shared with the EDIG for comment or advice.

We publish all EQIAs on our website unless there is a significant reason not to. In 2020-21 our EQIAs covered several topics such as:

- the development of our Strategic Plan 2020-2023
- our role in developing a recruitment portal in response to COVID-19
- the move to support all staff to work from home
- our new Complaints Handing Procedure
- our revised Carers' Policy
- our Inspiring Care Stories website.

2.7 Supporting our Council and staff

Our organisational development programme is called **evolve**. It is about nurturing and developing our staff and managers throughout their SSSC work journey. There are several workstreams and activities within the **evolve** programme. We:

- have developed a new digital induction material for our staff in response to COVID-19 and the move to work from home
- have introduced a new leadership and management training programme.
- are developing a new agile working approach which will allow our staff to work in a more flexible way.
- are creating a new exit questionnaire for staff leaving the SSSC.

The wellbeing of our staff is critical and we recognise that the pandemic has brought additional challenges for many. We've taken significant steps to ensure that our staff have the support and equipment that they need to work from home. We've provided detailed information about internal sources of support such as our Employee Assistance Programme. We have maintained our Healthy Working Lives silver award and are working towards gold level. Our staff can use the Healthy Working Lives website to access online resources covering topics such as the impact of alcohol and drugs on the workplace and increasing their awareness of mental health. We've also introduced a Mental Health First Aider (MFHA) programme. The MFHAs have received training and are a first point for support until professional help is available.

Our recent Investors in People (IIP) survey indicates that we're in the top quartile compared to other organisations. In 2020 we also received our Investors in Young People Award. The award recognises the steps we've taken to support career opportunities including the introduction of a young mentoring programme. In November 2020 we completed our latest internal Investors in People survey. We are currently analysing the results and will create an action plan aligned to our 2021-2025 outcomes.

We've recently had a detailed review of our approach to providing equality, diversity and inclusion training for all our internal stakeholders.

- We're finalising a new staff induction scheme based on our 23 things leadership and 23 things digital approaches. Equality, diversity and inclusion features prominently in our approach.
- All staff must complete a yearly e-module on the Equality Act 2010 and the implications for the organisation. We are also introducing a new fairness for all module which covers such as unintentional discrimination and the distinction between intent and impact in communication. Our Council and senior managers have recently completed a similar training programme.
- Several of our learning opportunities highlight the importance of our values and organisational characteristics. For example, we held sessions on this at our staff event in February 2021. Our new leadership and management development programme also focuses heavily on our values and organisational characteristics.
- We continue to support our staff to develop their skills and understanding. We have recently introduced guidance on how to make sure that our documents meet accessibility requirements.

2.8 Partnership working

Our wider regulatory and workforce development roles require close partnership working with many organisations including regulators, public bodies and umbrella groups. On equality, diversity and inclusion we work closely with relevant public bodies like the Care Inspectorate. We engage extensively with our stakeholders to inform our reports, learning resources and products.

A key ambition of our Involving People Plan is to ensure that our involvement activities make a difference and have a positive impact on our work and the people involved. The plan sets out the different ways that we can engage people in the development of our approach. This engagement can include:

- working with people with lived experience from the start, such as resources on our website
- consulting people on the development of our strategies and resources like our Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and revised Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers
- informing people about opportunities to participate in the development of our resource or examples of good practice.

The need to increase our engagement with people who have lived experience is a priority for us and features prominently in our outcomes for 2021-2025.

2.9 Mainstreaming in social service sector

We continue to explore how we can drive, support and promote diversity across the wider social service workforce. A summary of some of our activities follows.

- Our focus on mainstreaming equality is set out in our strategies and publications. Our Strategic Plan 2020-2023 sets out our organisational characteristics which include being a respected and valued organisation.

- Our regulatory model contributes to the creation of a skilled, sustainable, purposeful workforce. This ensures that workers are qualified to the level appropriate for the role they carry out and are committed to continuous professional learning. The Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers states clearly discrimination is unacceptable, and that workers and employers should not condone any discrimination. A future review of the Codes will consider if we need to revise the language to reinforce this message.

- We are part of Skills for Care and Development, the Sector Skills Council for the social service sector. We work in partnership with employers in the sector to develop the social service workforce and to invest in workforce planning. We also develop the National Occupational Standards which underpin qualifications for registration and outline the skills, knowledge and understanding employers tell us is necessary for an effective workforce.

- We contribute to the Fair Work in Social Care agenda and have contributed to or participated in relevant reports by the Fair Work Convention.

- We develop the Official and National Statistics on the social service workforce. We also publish detailed data on the adults and children's workforce and vacancy levels. This information can be explored in greater detail on our data website. Our reports explore protected characteristics, for example, they confirm that most social service workers are female and highlight the areas where males are slightly better represented such as residential childcare and school care accommodation. We are examining our reports to determine how we can improve our approach to collecting and using equality information.

- We continue to develop an extensive range of resources for the social service sector. These include websites, videos, case studies and apps. They are available from our Learning Zone website. These resources are regularly updated and often developed in partnership with key stakeholders such as the Care Inspectorate and NHS Education for Scotland (NES). Two examples follow.

  - In 2020 we published a suite of resources to support the sector during the pandemic which cover areas such as person-centred care, working safely, and key legislation and guidance.
  - We developed joint guidance with the Care Inspectorate on recognising signs of ill-treatment or wilful neglect.

- We support the Scottish Government's [Young Person's Guarantee](#). The Guarantee aims to ensure that every young person who is at risk of unemployment has access to a job, apprenticeship, education or training opportunity. We have set out [several steps](#) that we will continue to take to support the Guarantee. These include:

    - working with Skills Development Scotland to promote modern apprenticeships
    - developing an employability group with key partners to share knowledge and identify improvement actions.

- We continue to support and contribute to national policy initiatives around mainstreaming equality. For example, our staff recently facilitated breakout sessions at a session by the National Advisory Council on Women and Girls (NACWG)

- Our publications and resources aim to highlight people with a range of protected characteristics and backgrounds. These include the [careers in care](#) and [Inspiring Care Stories](#) websites. Over 151,000 people have viewed our stories on social media and they have received national media coverage. Approximately 90% of respondents to a recent survey indicated that these stories help people to better understand the skills and experience required for a career in this sector.

2.10 Raising awareness of our equality role

We continue to raise awareness of our equality work. For example, in recent months we've reiterated our commitment to [treating everyone fairly](#) and being part of the societal change required to tackle racism. We also promote the option to get our materials such as the [Codes of Practice in alternative formats such as Gaelic or Polish](#) or to contact us via the [contact Scotland BSL website.](#)

The [equality section](#) on our website brings together all our reports and policies around this area. We're aware that we need to do more here and we're continuing to look at how we can raise awareness of our work. A key priority will be around exploring how we can provide further data for the sector.

We keep our staff and internal stakeholders updated on our approach to mainstreaming equality. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group (EDIG) is our key route for communicating with our wider staff. Our intranet pages have information about our duties and access to our training resources.

2.11 Driving improvement and accreditations

We use the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model which helps us to show improvement through a focus on direction, results and execution. We also have and are working towards several relevant accreditations. We recently received an Investors in Young People good practice award and we are now working towards gold level accreditation.

3. Reviewing our equality outcomes 2017-2021

3.1 Consultation and engagement on our 2017-2021 outcomes

To develop our 2017-2021 equality outcomes, we consulted with our Equality Working Group (EWG) and senior management team to identify areas for improvement. In 2016 in collaboration with the Care Inspectorate we held a series of engagement events with a number of organisations in the sector that represented people with protected characteristics.

3.2 Reporting, monitoring and reviewing our equality outcomes

In 2020 we introduced our new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group (EDIG). The group is now chaired by a member of our Executive Management Team (EMT) and its remit is extended to include monitoring our care experience and children's rights plans. In 2021 the EDIG will consider our approach to involving people with experience of social services.

The following tables summarise progress we've made on delivering our equality outcomes from 2017-2021. Our equality outcomes for 2021-2025 are set out in section four.

Outcome 1: More people who belong to underrepresented groups in the social service sector access learning and development

Action	Examples of progress 2017-2021	Next steps
1. We will continue to monitor the protected characteristics of admissions to the childhood practice awards, the degree in social work and postgraduate courses.	Collecting data through annual monitoring forms from approved courses. Monitor information from social work students when they initially register via MySSSC.	Updating MySSSC to allow registrants to share and update this information.
2. We will continue to provide a disability allowance for disabled students on the full time MSc Social Work course.	We pay postgraduate bursaries to eligible students studying the full time MSc Social Work course. They can also apply for a disabled student's allowance (DSA) and can claim for equipment, non-medical support or general assistance such as printing).	Continue to support students.

Outcome 2: Our workforce in Scotland better reflects the diversity of Scotland's communities

Action	Examples of progress 2017-2021	Next steps
1. We will continue to monitor the characteristics of workers who go through our fitness to practise process.	We ask about reasonable adjustments in our first letter to people we are investigating. Our general personal statement form asks registrants to confirm whether there are any measures we can take to support their engagement and participation in the process. We have a specific personal statement form for health cases. We ask employers about health conditions or any adjustments made to support someone.	Our initial priority is around improving the information we collect via My SSSC We are exploring how we can do more to make reasonable adjustments.
2. We will continue working with other organisations to encourage men to consider careers in early years and childcare.	We continue to publish official statistics on the workforce. Our Ambassadors for Careers in Care aims to change the perception of roles and give examples which avoid gender stereotyping. We promote careers though our website and resources and we aim to attract people into the sector regardless of experience, background or qualifications. Our careers website has stories from 30 people, 12 of these are men. In 2019-20 we participated in the development of the national early learning and childcare induction resource. The resource highlights key themes such as the importance of avoiding gender stereotypes.	We will continue to provide positive case studies and contribute to activities which encourage men and others to consider a career in the sector.

Outcome 3: The SSSC's Council members and staff better reflect the diversity of Scotland's communities

Action	Examples of progress	Next steps
1. We will work towards achieving a more diverse Council. 2. We will advertise more widely when recruiting committee members. 3. We will hold or attend events directed at underrepresented groups on our committees when recruiting for members.	Our Council Members are recruited through public appointments. We continue to contribute to this process as set out in section five of this report.	Our approach is set out in section five of this report.
4. Continue to monitor job applications and appointments, including promotions, in relation to all protected characteristics.	In 2020 we introduced a new application form and recruitment process for all applicants. The revised application form includes updated monitoring questions. We have developed updated recruitment guidance. Recruitment training is part of our new managers' development programme.	We are reviewing our recruitment policy and will continue to explore how we can make better use of our data on job applications and appointments.
5. Carry out an annual equal pay audit.	This report includes our updated equal pay statement.	We will develop an updated audit in 2023.
6. Identify and provide training opportunities and guidance for staff working with organisations in relation to equality issues.	We outlined our approach in section two of this report.	We are progress this via our Organisational Development programme, Evolve.
7. Develop internal protected characteristics support groups with staff to allow specific focus and action in the organisation.	Our initial priority was to establish a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group (EDIG). We have also taken steps to support some groups such as the introduction of a mentoring scheme for younger workers.	We are continuing to explore how we can provide further support for staff.

8. Encourage staff to become involved in equality work including via the EDIG and mainstreaming this within the organisation.	Our priority was to establish a revised approach to delivering equality through our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group.	We continue to involve staff in the work of the EDIG. This includes encouraging staff to consult the group for feedback on Equality Impact Assessments.
9. Require staff to complete equality monitoring forms.	In 2020 we introduced a new approach for capturing protected characteristics information of our staff. Staff can input this information themselves on our HR system (MyView). The findings are set out in section six and the data annex.	We continue to raise awareness of why we collect this information and how it informs our work.
10. Promote equality dates and commemoration to staff through internal communications.	We formally introduced this as an action in 2019. Our Communications Department has continued to do this via our intranet and staff bulletin.	We continue to share this information with our staff.

Outcome 4: The people who interact with us and use our resources better reflect the diversity of the social service workforce. They find us accessible, have opportunities to get involved and influence our work by telling us what they want.

Action	Examples of progress	Next steps
1. Keep the accessibility of our website under review and consult with stakeholders to ensure all members of the community can access information.	Taking steps to ensure that our website meets accessibility standards. Our publications set out how to request information in an alternative format.	We are introducing a guide to accessibility for our staff.
2. Continue to promote the use of Contact-BSL and other resources which help people with sensory impairment.	We continue to raise awareness of Contact-BSL services. The Codes of Practice are in BSL and have been viewed over 2,100 times on YouTube as of January 2021.	We are continuing to explore how we can make greater use of BSL in our resources.
3. Continue to promote the use of plain English in our publications.	We promote the use of plain English on letters which are crystal marked by the Plain English Campaign. All new staff must complete the Plain English Campaign's online plain English training.	We continue to promote Plain English.
4. Collect information and opinions from people who access our resources and events.	Our Involving People Strategy sets out our approach to engaging people. We use several methods including: • an annual survey of registrants and stakeholders • a regulatory forum • consultations with registrants and stakeholders • website surveys • consulting stakeholders on the development of resources.	We are reviewing our approach to stakeholder engagement. We have adapted our approach due to the pandemic. We continue to explore how we can use technology to collect feedback in future.

4. Equality outcomes 2021-2025

This section sets out our three equality outcomes for 2021-2025.

4.1 Developing our equality outcomes 2021-2025

Our new outcomes:

- build on activities that we have identified or made limited progress on between 2017-2021, such as a better understanding of the profile of our registrants
- are informed by engagement with stakeholders in the sector
- align with the priorities in our Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and related publications such as our plans for involving people, supporting care experienced people, and promoting children's rights
- link to priorities that we've identified in key reports and initiatives including the Promise, the Independent Review of Adult Social Care (the Feeley Review) and a parliamentary inquiry into race and employment.

Our recent engagement on these outcomes has been restricted due the pandemic. The list of activities that we have identified under each outcome is not exhaustive. Our EDIG Group will monitor progress on each outcome and the indicators. We will identify immediate priorities and set timescales for each action. We will review our outcomes and activities and report on progress in our next mainstreaming report in 2023.

4.2 Equality outcomes 2021-2025

This section contains our three equality outcomes for 2021-2025. We briefly set out the context, what the data tells us and our proposed activities for each outcome. The final section sets out how will demonstrate progress on each outcome.

Outcome 1: To promote diversity in the social care workforce, including disabled people, people from ethnic minority backgrounds and people with care experience.

Context

Every day, people working in social care provide high quality care and support to thousands of people to improve their life chances. These services should reflect the diverse communities that they serve. This includes the 200,000 trusted, skilled and confident social service workers that deliver them. We have several significant roles and opportunities to promote and encourage diversity in the social service sector.

- We publish the national codes of practice for people working in social service and their employers.

- We promote and regulate the learning and development of the social service workforce.

- We are the national lead for workforce development and planning for social services in Scotland.

- We develop and publish official and national statistics on the social service workforce.

Our first outcome for 2021-2025 focuses on what we can do to support increased participation in the social service workforce.

What the data tells us

We have two sources of data on our registrants and the wider workforce.

- The first key data source is the data that we get from registrants. We collect data when people register with us using the MySSSC portal. A broad overview of our registration data is available from our data website. One of our current priorities is to develop this resource to broaden our knowledge of the sector.

- We publish official statistics on the social service sector. This data is collected from annual returns to the Care Inspectorate and the annual survey of Scottish Local Authority Social Work Services (SLASWS). We published the Scottish Social Service Sector: Report on 2019 Workforce Data in August 2020. The report provides an overview of the social service sector as of December 2019. A summary of selected key points is included in the appendix.[3]

Our activities to support this outcome

1a. Develop an enhanced approach to collecting and using workforce equality data to inform our understanding of the sector.
1b. Review and update the Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers.
1c. Continue our work with the Care Inspectorate and other key stakeholders to promote equality within the wider social service sector.
1d. Continue our relevant activities to support wider participation in the social service sector.

1a. Develop an enhanced approach to collecting and using workforce equality data to inform our understanding of the sector.

We will invite all registrants to provide updated information on protected characteristics on MySSSC. We will ask about other areas including if workers are also undertaking caring responsibilities. We will use this information to publish a high-level overview of our Register. We are also working with the Care Inspectorate to update the question set within the annual returns and the SLASWS. The updated questions will allow us to develop enhanced information on the wider workforce.

We will review how we support people who are going through the Fitness to Practise process. This will include exploring if we can do more to support them by providing reasonable adjustments.

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[3] Figures may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

How we will do this

- We will introduce our new approach to collecting information on registrants in 2021-2022. We will publish an annual report containing an overview of our registrants and the data on protected characteristics. This data will inform our approach to making improvements to the way we support our key stakeholders.

- We will identify ways of revising our approach to collecting data from the Care Inspectorate's annual returns and the SLASWS. The updated information will be published in future workforce data reports and we will work with the Care Inspectorate to identify how we use this data.

- We will report on the steps that we have taken to use this data in our next mainstreaming report.

- We will review our approach to supporting people through Fitness to Practise by consulting key stakeholders as part of that process. We will review our approach to reasonable adjustments and explore if we can do more to support people. This may be include setting out further information about the options that are available to them.

1b. Review and update the Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers.

The [Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers](#) set out the standards of behaviour and practice expected of people who work in the sector. The Codes are critical to the regulation and improvement of sector and its workforce.

There have been several significant policy developments since the publication of the current Codes in 2016. These include the development of the new [National Health and Social Care Standards](#), a new inspection methodology and the publication of the [Independent Review of Adult Social Care](#) in Scotland. One of the most significant drivers for change has been the publication of the Promise which identifies the need for regulators to 'declutter and streamline' professional Codes. We have committed to working with the sector to review the Codes and ensure they are fit for purpose.

How we will do this

- We are developing a plan for the Review of the Codes of Practice. As part of this plan, we are identifying key stakeholders who will be involved in the review. We intend to involve people with a range of protected characteristics, experiences and backgrounds. We will review all the language within the Codes.

1c. Continue our work with the Care Inspectorate and other key stakeholders to promote equality within the wider social service sector.

We work closely with the Care Inspectorate on several areas such as developing key reports on staff vacancies in care services and guidance on recognising potential signs of ill-treatment and wilful neglect. We have a shared HR service and have worked together to develop systems for staff development and publishing data on the composition of our workforce. A priority is to explore how we do more to enable equality, diversity and inclusion across the wider social service workforce.

How we will do this

- We will continue to explore how we can develop a shared approach to meeting some of the outcomes in our plan. We will share examples of good practice and information on our contributions to regulation and workforce development.

1d. Continue our relevant activities to support wider participation in the social service sector.

We will continue to build on our current approach which includes:

- providing a disability allowance for disabled students on the full time MSc Social Work course

- contributing to key priorities such as the Fair Work Convention

- publishing an extensive range of learning resources on our Learning Zone website

- promoting a range of diverse and positive examples of people working in the sector

- promoting the use of Equality Impact Assessments within the SSSC.

We will implement the actions in our Investors in People and Investors in Young People plans. We will also implement the actions in our latest plans for supporting care experienced people and promoting children's rights. We will also continue to explore how we can make our resources more accessible. We will support our staff by providing further guidance and training on how to do this.

Outcome two: Increasingly demonstrate how our work is shaped by our key stakeholders including people who are care experienced.

Context

The need to put people at the centre of what we do is a key priority throughout all areas of social care and has featured prominently in two recent landmark reviews of the sector.

- The Promise centres around the need to identify and deliver lasting change that will transform the wellbeing of infants, children and young people. At its heart is the need to ensure that children and young people feel loved, are listened to and meaningfully involved in decisions about their care.

- The recent Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland (the Feeley Review) identifies the need to tackle an implementation gap between intent and lived experience. It also highlights the need to maintain a relentless focus on involving people in driving change. Key drivers include the need to protect, promote and ensure human rights, while promoting greater empowerment among people who use these services and their carers.

We play a key role in promoting the need to involve people with experience of care throughout the sector. We do this is by setting standards for social service workers' practice, conduct, training and education and engage with people who use services and carers in the development of our resources and approaches. We have also developed a connections map setting out many of key stakeholders who can help us to do this.

A priority over the next few years is to identify how we can formalise this approach by supporting our staff to make connections with people who have lived experience. We plan to develop forums to allow our workforce and the people who use social services to engage with each other. We will train our staff on the importance of this and raise awareness by sharing information about wider opportunities for engagement and highlighting the need for staff to use Equality Impact Assessments.

What the data tells us

Indicator	Purpose	Collection method
Stakeholders' perceptions on how much the work of the SSSC promotes equality, diversity and inclusion (based on 1 to 5 scale).	External perceptions	Annual stakeholder survey
The percentage of registrants who believe that the work of the SSSC helps improve their practice.	External perceptions	Annual registrants' survey
Percentage of SSSC policies which include an Equality Impact Assessment.	Measure compliance	Annual sample
Percentage of staff who believe that the SSSC is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace.	Staff perception	Annual staff survey

Our activities to support this outcome

2a.   Support our staff to engage with and involve people who use services in the development of our approach and resources.
2b. Identify and establish a new forum for engaging with people who use services.
2c. Continue to promote and build upon our approach to raising awareness and the role of the Equality Impact Assessments.

2a. Support our staff to engage with and involve people who use services in the development of our approach and resources.

One challenge for our staff is identifying appropriate options for engaging with people who use services. There are several options and it can be difficult to identify a starting point. We will develop information to support our staff to do this.

How we will do this

We will develop guidance for user involvement in a project. The guide will build upon our Involving People Plan and highlight examples of how staff can do this. It will build upon our current connection map by identifying stakeholders and our options to involve them. The guidance will include evidence to inform our approach and will be linked to our Equality Impact Assessment and project management resources.

2b. Identify and establish a new forum for engaging with people who use services.

We recognise the benefits of engaging with an existing or external network including accessing support from a specialist group or stakeholders. We also recognise that there are significant benefits in establishing our own reference or advisory group and we are aware of several public bodies that do this. These groups can include people who use services, carers and registrants and some people may be in more than one groups. We will explore potential for a new advisory group to support us to improve the way we involve people in our work.

How we will do this

We will consult with key stakeholders and develop options to achieve this by reflecting on experiences and good practice from others and consider some of the logistics such as purpose, membership and resources.

2c. Continue to promote and build upon our approach to raising awareness and the role of the Equality Impact Assessment.

We revised our Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) process to include key questions around care experience, children's rights and the impact on the Islands to ensure staff consider these priorities. We have also reinforced our expectation that staff complete these for major activities including all policy and procedures. We will continue to identify ways of promoting and building upon our approach.

How we will do this

- In early 2021-22 we will consult staff on our process with a view to making further improvements to our assessment approach. We have already identified additional priorities which include supporting our staff to connect with key groups and to reflect evidence in their assessments.

- We will continue to encourage staff to share draft EQIAs with our equality group.

- We will also develop a process to enable the group to monitor progress on our actions.

Outcome three: People increasingly view us as an employer of choice which promotes equality, diversity and inclusion in our recruitment processes and our existing staff.

Context

Outcome three focuses on the steps that we can take to be viewed as an employer of choice which promotes equality, diversity and inclusion in our recruitment process and for our staff. We will continue to implement measures which will help us to improve the diversity of our workforce by recruiting more people from a range of backgrounds, with a particular focus on supporting people from minority ethnic backgrounds. We also continue to train and raise our staff awareness so they are aware of our focus on advancing equality and our statutory requirements like the Public Sector Equality duty.

What the data tells us

Information on recruitment, retention and development data is contained in our data annex. The following table summarises our internal indicators.

Indicator	Purpose	Collection method
Percentage of SSSC staff who have experienced discrimination at work in past twelve months.	Staff perception	Annual staff survey
Percentage of staff who believe our leaders champion diversity.	Staff perception	Investors in People Survey
Percentage of staff who have fully or partially shared their protected characteristics data.	Staff engagement and compliance with reporting	MyView HR data, six-monthly
Percentage of SSSC staff who have completed equality training.	Understanding of staff awareness	Annual snapshot

Our activities to support this outcome

3a. Improve our approach to recruiting SSSC from minority ethnic backgrounds
3b. Improve our approach to recruiting SSSC staff from a range of backgrounds.
3c. Establish new ways of ensuring our approaches reflect wider perspectives.
3d. Maintain our focus on nurturing and developing our staff.

3a. Improve our approach to recruiting SSSC staff from minority ethnic communities.

This report sets out the latest data on the composition of our workforce. We know that we need to do more to recruit staff from a range of backgrounds including minority ethnic communities. We welcome the recent report by the Scottish Parliament's Equality and Human Rights Committee on the need for public bodies to make further progress on improving equality for minority ethnic people and the expectation that organisations should be reflective of the diverse communities that they serve.

How we will do this

- We will conduct a review of our approach against the Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit and develop an action plan examining how we can improve the diversity of our workforce. The findings from our internal review are likely to be transferable within the wider sector and we will share them in due course.

3b. Improving our approach to recruiting SSSC staff from a range of backgrounds.

There are significant opportunities to learn from best practice and other organisations. We will develop an approach for learning from others.

How we will do this

- Section two of this report contains a summary of our relevant accreditations. Accreditations provide methods for assessing and delivering an improved approach. Our accreditations include Healthy Working Lives, the Living Wage Foundation, Disability Confident and the Carer Positive Award. We are also working towards our Investors in People Gold award. We will work with our Equality, Inclusion and Development Group to identify further priorities and develop an action plan to achieve these.

- We will identify additional ways of understanding our current profile by publishing our ethnicity gap and disabled gap. We will also look at ways of learning lessons from other approaches such as the Scottish Government's Recruitment and Retention Plan for Disabled People.

3c. Establish new methods of ensuring our approaches reflect wider staff perspectives.

We have taken significant steps to engage with our staff over the past few years giving opportunities for staff to contribute to and shape our wider work. These include staff events and opportunities to submit anonymous suggestions. We measure staff perceptions around engagement in several ways including the staff and Investors in People surveys. We have identified a potential gap around supporting staff with protected characteristics and will take steps to address this if needed.

How we will do this

- We will develop a paper for our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group setting out a potential strategy. This may include a confidential survey so that we can gather staff perceptions and preferences and develop an action plan. We are exploring potential groups for young workers or women.

3d. Maintain our focus on organisational development.

Our organisational development programme **evolve** plays a critical part in developing and nurturing our staff. The programme has six workstreams which cover our employees' journey through the SSSC.

How we will do this

There are several actions which we will take forward as part of our ongoing work on **evolve**. For example, we will:

- continue to develop our external recruitment portal and add further stories and resources around our recruitment and working at the SSSC

- introduce our new induction programme and agile working approach

- continue to develop further training and development initiatives for staff

- create an action plan to further embed our values

- explore how we support and learn from staff moving on from the SSSC, including the development of an exit questionnaire.

- continue to provide opportunities for young people such as apprenticeships and traineeships.

4.3 Monitoring progress on our equality outcomes 2021-2025

The following three tables show how we will make progress on our outcomes between now and 2025. We will report on this progress in our next mainstreaming report in 2023.

Outcome one: To promote diversity in the social care workforce, including disabled people, people from ethnic minority backgrounds and people with care experience.

Activity	Evidence
1a. Develop an enhanced approach to collecting and using workforce equality data to inform our understanding of the sector.	We will improve the level data we collect and publish on the profile of our workforce. We will do this by updating our question set on MySSSC which will enable registrants to share information more easily on their protected characteristics. We will also work with the Care Inspectorate to review the questions in the annual return and consider implications for the annual survey of Scottish local authority social work services. We will work with employers and other stakeholders to highlight why we ask for this data and how we will use it. We will publish an annual overview of the findings from our data. The report summarises the status of the sector and key points for employers and the SSSC. We will also continue to publish reports on our data website.
1b. Review and update the Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers.	We will finalise our plan and publish the new Code within the timescales. We will work with key stakeholders to develop the revised Codes and we will develop updated versions in alternative languages and formats.
1c. Continue our work with the Care Inspectorate and other key stakeholders to promote equality within the wider social service sector.	We will continue to work closely with the Care Inspectorates and others the promote equality in the wider social service sector. Our next mainstreaming report will set out further information around how we are doing this.
1d. Continue our relevant activities to support wider participation in the social service sector.	We will continue to undertake these activities and will provide updates in our next mainstreaming and outcomes report. We will continue to promote how we do this in the usual ways. For example, we will update senior management and Council on the numbers of people who access the disability allowance.

Outcome two: increasingly demonstrate how our work is shaped by key stakeholders including people with lived experience.

Activity	Evidence
2a. Support our staff to engage with and involve people who use services in the development of our approach and resources.	We will develop a guide to help our staff consider ways of involving people. We will survey our staff periodically to determine whether the guide meets their needs and helps to involve people who use services.
2b. Identify new avenues for engaging with people who use services.	Develop a scoping paper setting out options and recommendations on a new approach.
2c. Continue to promote and build upon our approach to raising awareness and the role of the Equality Impact Assessments.	We will monitor indicators such as the number of policies which have an EQIA.

Outcome three: people view us as an employer of choice which promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion in our recruitment processes and our existing staff.

Activity	Evidence
3a. Improve our approach to recruiting SSSC staff from minority ethnic communities.	We will review our approach using the Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit and will develop an action plan.
3b. Improving our approach to recruiting SSSC staff from a range of background and 3c. Establish new ways of ensuring our approaches reflect wider staff perspectives.	We will identify priorities based on relevant accreditations and examples from elsewhere such as the Scottish Government's recruitment and retention plan for disabled people and will develop an action plan.
3d. Maintain our focus on nurturing and developing our staff.	This work is part of our organisational development programme, **evolve**. We will develop an annual analysis of our recruitment, retention and development data for our next mainstreaming report.

5. Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018

We are working to develop a diverse Council with a range of people including people with lived experience of social services and registrants. We meet the requirements in the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 which state that the SSSC must appoint at least:

- two members who are registered social service workers
- two members who:
    o use or have used care services
    o care for people who use or have used care services.

We aim to maintain a gender balance. The Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 aims to address the historic and persistent underrepresentation of women in public life. The Act sets a gender representation objective for boards of public bodies so that 50% of our non-executive board members are women.

	March 2020	March 2021
Female Council Members	6	6
Male Council Members	4	4

We filled six vacancies on 1 September 2019. We had one competition to fill these six vacancies. We appointed four women and two men. We have not had any further vacancies since then.

The Act requires public bodies to take the steps that they consider appropriate to achieve a gender representation balance by 31 December 2022. Our Council currently meets the gender representative objective and we have taken no additional steps. Our Council Members are appointed through Public Appointments. Our Convener is part of the recruitment process and our Head of Legal and Corporate Governance provides advice on the role of members, skills and knowledge required. The Convener is also on in the interview panel. We are involved in publishing the advert and promote it as widely as possible. We welcome the steps that are being taken to address under-representation on Boards such as the Public Appointments Race Equality Plan 2019-2022.

6. Employee monitoring information

We must take steps to gather and use employee information on:

- the composition of our employees in relation to their protected characteristics
- the recruitment, development and retention of employees in relation to their protected characteristics.

We must publish an annual breakdown of this information and detail the progress we make in gathering and using this information to meet the Equality Duty. This section contains a brief overview of the key figures. The data annex contains further information.

All figures are a snapshot as of December 2019 or December 2020 or examine trends over the calendar year. Here are two examples.

- Approximately 75% of our workforce are female as of December 2020.
- In 2020 we had 93 successful job applicants.

6.1 Overview of SSSC workforce

As at December 2020, we have 310 employees (headcount), an increase of 29 on equivalent 2019 figure. Approximately 78.4% are in full time roles. A brief overview of the protected characteristics of our workforce follows. Further information can be found in the data annex.

- Females continue to make up approximately 74% of our workforce.
- As of 2020 we offer staff the option to indicate their gender identity. Approximately 63% of our staff consider themselves to be female. The identity of approximately 15% of our staff is unknown.
- Approximately 55% of our workforce is aged between 25-44. This figure is identical to the comparable figure for 2019. The percentage of staff who are under 25 has remained at approximately 6-9% since 2018.
- As at December 2020 approximately 15% of our workforce have a disability.[4]
- Most of our staff indicated that they have not had gender reassignment or consider themselves to have trans status. The percentage of staff who prefer not to answer or whose status is unknown remains at approximately 15-20%.
- Most of our workforce (at least 80%) is white. We know that this figure is likely to be even higher as the ethnicity status of approximately 17% of our workforce is unknown. Approximately 1.6% of our workforce identify as Asian.
- Our data indicates that approximately 78% of our workforce are heterosexual or straight. We anticipate that this figure may be higher as the status of a further 19% is either unknown or they have indicated that they would prefer not to say.

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[4] This is a significant increase on our equivalent January 2018 figure of 2.3%/. Since 2018 we've provided some broad examples around what we mean by disability. We've also experienced a significant increase in the proportion of staff who have responded to this question.

- Approximately 44% of our workforce indicated that they have no religion, a very slightly increase on the equivalent figure for 2019. Approximately 24% are unknown or have chosen not to say. Approximately 10% identify as catholic.
- As of December 2020, the SSSC employs 243 full time and 67 part time staff.

Flexible working and leavers

- In 2020 we had 21 successful flexible working applications, an increase of two on the previous year. These figures do not tell the full story as we know many staff have worked in a more flexible way during the pandemic. These figures also exclude informal working arrangements.
- In 2020, 30 staff left the SSSC, compared to 45 in 2019.

The data annex contains further information on flexible workers and leavers.

6.2 Recruitment and selection

We have seen a significant overall increase in the number of applications for our posts in 2020, as set out in the following table.

Applicants	Those applying for a position		Those who were shortlisted		All successful applicants	
	2019	**2020**	**2019**	**2020**	**2019**	**2020**
All people	373	663	204	146	51	93
External	212	559	100	98	25	43
Internal	74	104	63	48	4	50
Unknown	87	0	41	0	2	0

The data annex contains further information by protected characteristic. We include data on the proportion of applicants who have a caring responsibility. These figures are likely to be underestimated as a significant proportion of the protected characteristics for some people is unknown.

A summary of key findings follows.
- In 2019-2020 approximately 12.5% of successful applicants told us that they have a caring responsibility.
- Approximately half of our workforce are aged between 35-54. We continue to attract young people to work with us. In 2020 at least:

  - 21.4% of applications were from people who were aged 29 or under
  - 27% of shortlisted candidates were aged 29 or under
  - 25% of successful applicants were aged 29 or under

Most of the successful applicants for our roles are female. In 2020 at least:
- 46.3% of all applicants were female
- 52.4% of shortlisted candidates were female
- 57% of successful applicants were female.

We need to encourage and support people with a disability to work at the SSSC. In 2020 at least:
- 6.3% of applicants indicated they have a disability
- 13.4% of shortlisted candidates indicated they have a disability

- 11.8% of successful applicants indicated they have a disability.

We do not have information on some applicants. For example, in 2020 approximately 26.6% of all applicants did not answer this question.

We need to do more to encourage and recruit more people from ethnic minority backgrounds to work in our organisation. In 2020 at least:
- 62% of all applicants described themselves as white
- 74% of all shortlisted candidates were white
- 81% of successful applicants were white.

These figures are likely to be a significant underestimate as we do not have ethnicity data for every applicant.

6.3 Occupational segregation

Sections 6.3 and 6.4 focus on occupational segregation and our pay gaps.

Occupational segregation is the distribution of workers across and within occupations based on their characteristics. This section focuses on gender. We have also included figures on disability.
Vertical segregation examines the extent to which opportunities for career progression for a particular gender are limited.
Horizontal segregation is where the workforce is over-represented by women or men.

The following table uses three broad categories to examine our workforce.

Table: Occupational distribution by gender, December 2020

Grades	Numbers of females	Numbers of males	Total number of staff	Females as proportion	Males as proportion
C5+ (all staff earning £41,000 pa or more)	49	23	72	68%	32%
E8-D6 (all staff earning approximately £26,000-£41k pa or more)	77	26	103	74.8%	25.2%
F11-E9 (all staff earning up to £26k pa)	104	31	135	77%	23%
Total	230	80	310	74.2%	25.8%

Approximately 21% of our workforce is part time. Approximately 58.2% of these workers ae in the F11-E9 grouping.

We know that disabled people and minority ethnic people are underrepresented throughout our workforce and one of our outcomes sets how we intend to continue addressing that. Our initial priority has been to improve our understanding of our current workforce and to develop a better understanding of the proportion of our staff. For example, this includes developing a better understanding of the proportion of staff who consider themselves to have a disability. In the short-term we will use the Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit to review our approach to improving representation.

Table: Occupational distribution by disability December 2020[5]

The following table examines the proportion of staff who consider themselves to have a disability at each grade. Forty-five of our staff (approximately 14.5%) consider themselves to have a disability. Approximately 57% of these staff are in the F11-E9 category.

Grades	Don't know, prefer not to say, unknown	No	Yes	Total number of staff
C5+ (all staff earning £41,000 pa or more)	18	42	12	72
E8-D6 (all staff earning approximately £26,000-£41k pa or more)	22	74	7	103
F11-E9 (all staff earning up to £26k pa)	26	83	26	135
Total	66	199	45	310

Ethnicity

We have also examined the data by ethnicity. Our view is that it would be counter-productive to publish at this stage due to the small numbers of minority ethnic staff involved. Our intention is to continue reviewing this data and to publish as relevant.

6.4 Pay gap

We develop our pay gap data using [guidance developed by Close the Gap.](#) We provide the mean and median figures. There has been a slight improvement in our gender pay gap. We've also published additional information for the first time examining the differences between full time males and part time females. We've also examined the data on ethnicity and disability. These areas also show significant gaps.

Gender pay gap

Both tables show a narrowing of the pay gap. For example, our pay gap in 2020 is 3.6%.

	Mean female hourly	Mean male hourly	Gender pay gap
2019	£16.80	£17.51	4.1%
2020	£17.80	£18.47	3.6%

	Median female hourly	Median male hourly	Gender pay gap
2019	£14.02	£17.54	20.1%
2020	£17.13	£18.25	6.1%

Full time and part time pay gap

The following table examines the pay gap between full time males and part time females in the SSSC. It shows that there is a significant and growing gap between these two groups. A significant proportion of our part time female staff are in lower paid roles.

	Full time male		Part time female		Pay gap	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
2019	£34,918	£34,861	£29,378	£23,964	15.9%	30.9%
2020	£32,714	£32,667	£29,358	£25,581	10.3%	21.7%

Disability pay gap

	Mean disabled hourly	Mean non-disabled hourly	Disabled pay gap
2019	£15.70	£17.10	8.2%
2020	£16.61	£18.07	8.1%

	Median disabled hourly	Median non-disabled hourly	Disabled pay gap
2019	£12.72	£14.82	14.2%
2020	£13.13	£18.07	27.3%

Ethnicity pay gap

Our ethnicity pay gap follows. Caution is advised when considering these figures due to the small number of BAME staff employed by the SSSC.

	Mean BAME hourly	Mean white hourly	Ethnicity pay gap
2019	£17.97	£16.95	-6.0%
2020	£19.20	£17.90	-7.3%

	Median BAME hourly	Median white hourly	BAME pay gap
2019	£15.22	£14.25	-6.8%
2020	£19.61	£18.07	-8.5%

6.5 Equal pay statement

We are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in our varied roles which include being a public body, regulator, and an employer. We recognise and value the benefits that a diverse workforce brings to our work. We are committed to advancing equality of opportunity irrespective of protected characteristics. This includes other factors such as whether someone is a carer or their work pattern.

A key part of this commitment is the principle that staff should receive equal pay at all levels. At the heart of that is our commitment to have an approach to pay which is transparent, based on objective criteria and free from any bias relating to any of the protected characteristics. We are committed to equal pay for men and women. This principle extends to people in minority racial groups and people with a disability. The data annex sets out further information on occupational segregation (vertical and horizonal) within the SSSC.

We have made steady progress in addressing our gender pay gap although we know that there is more to do. In 2021 we have published our ethnicity and disability pay gaps for the first time. These figures also reflect our improved understanding of the proportion of our staff who consider themselves to have a disability and the relatively small proportion of our staff who come from minority ethnic backgrounds. We highlight these statements to put this into context. We know that we need to do more to address these gaps and we will continue to explore ways of doing so.

As part of our ongoing commitment to put equal pay into practice we will:

* examine and keep under review existing and future pay practices including continuing to use an objective job evaluation system
* carry out regular monitoring of the impact of the organisation's pay practices
* provide guidance for managers directly involved in decisions relating to remuneration
* continue to work in partnership with Unison on the actions and implementation of this policy
* conduct an annual equal pay audit.

Appendix 1 – Profile of the social service workforce, December 2019

This section summarises the profile of the social service workforce. The findings are from the [Scottish Social Service Sector: Report on 2019 Workforce Data.](#) This Official Statistics publication combines:

- an analysis of the annual returns collected by the Care Inspectorate for all registered care services
- an annual survey of Scottish local authority social work services.

Further information is available on our [data website](#) and includes an option to create charts using data on gender and age.

Key points

- The size of the social service workforce has increased to 206,400, a rise of 0.8% since 2018. This is the highest level since these reports began. The social service workforce makes up approximately 7.8% of all Scottish employment. This increase has been driven mainly by increases to the day care of children sub-sector and with public sector provision.

- The stability index of the workforce is 76.8%. This means just over three quarters of the workforce remained in the same post since last year.

- The three largest sub-sectors are housing support / care at home, care homes for adults and day care of children. Together these account for almost 78% of the workforce.

- The median age of the workforce is highest in the public sector (47) and lowest in the private sector (41). Early years workers in the private sector have the lowest median age (28). The sector's workforce is on average older than would be expected given the age profile of Scotland's working age population.

- The percentage of men working in the sector is 15%, although it is around double or greater that proportion in criminal justice and residential children's services.

- Approximately 74% of the workforce is white. Approximately 1% is Asian or Black respectively. The ethnicity of the remaining 22% is unknown. There is wide variation within the figures. For example, approximately 23% of nursing agency staff are from ethnic minorities.

- Approximately 2% of the workforce has a disability although the disability status of approximately 16% of the workforce is unknown.

Appendix 2 – Terminology used in the report

We refer to Black, Minority and Ethnic (BAME) as a way of illustrating the diversity of our workforce and sector. We recognise that terms such as BAME or non-white are complex and may not be entirely inclusive. For example, we appreciate that BAME can exclude some groups such as people with a mixed ethnic background.

We recognise that there are significant and complex challenges around sex and gender data. Our approach to data collection is informed by draft guidance published by the Scottish Government's Sex and Gender in data working group.

We use the term 'people with lived experience' broadly to refer to people who use or have used social services and people who are carers. We recognise that this term is complex and that there is no universal term which can capture all experiences. A key reason for using this term is to illustrate our recognition that our approaches must be informed by and reflect a range of backgrounds, experiences and needs.