

Equality Outcomes Report 2017

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1. Who we are and what we do

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is the regulator for the social service 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 service 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 services and their employers
- register people working in social services and make sure they adhere to the SSSC Codes of Practice
- promote and regulate the learning and development of the social service workforce
- are the national lead for workforce development and planning for social services in Scotland.

2. Purpose of the Equality Outcomes Report 2017

This report concerns our duty, under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, to publish equality outcomes and report progress on them.

This report is in two sections. The first section covers the progress and conclusion of our first set of outcomes, published in 2013. The second section details the development and action plan for our new set of outcomes. We will review these outcomes in 2021.

For a more complete picture of how we address our equality duties, read this report along with our Equality Mainstreaming Report 2017 which sets out:

- our legal equality duties
- our strategic approach to addressing them
- information on our employees' protected characteristics, including our recruitment, retention and their development
- our gender pay gap
- our Equal Pay Statement, including occupational segregation information
- how we plan to make our board more diverse.

The Equality Outcomes Report 2017 focuses on our specific aims to advance equality and the activity we have carried out, and will carry out, to address these aims.

Equality outcomes 2013-2017

3. How we developed the 2013-2017 outcomes

We developed our equality outcomes, published April 2013, taking the following into account.

- Comments from equality groups we consulted, each representing a different protected characteristic.
- Workshops and seminars delivered by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).
- Guidance issued by the EHRC and the Scottish Government.
- Our Equality Action Plan 2012-2013.
- Our Equality and Diversity Policy.
- Data we collect and publish on the social service workforce, for example workforce data reports.
- Feedback from SSSC staff.

We also engaged with a number of other public bodies to make sure the outcome statements were understood.

4. List of 2013-2017 equality outcomes

From the comments and guidance, we set six outcomes which we have worked towards from 2013 to 2017.

- a. All people receive high-quality social services.
- b. All people are encouraged to tell us about the social services they experience and want. Those who share any protected characteristic will feel safe and nurtured in doing so. In support of this, the SSSC will work to ensure the accessibility and effectiveness of its communications with stakeholders, including hard to reach and underrepresented groups.
- c. The SSSC will seek to maximise access to social care education and learning by eliminating any barriers and encouraging access from groups sharing the protected characteristics.
- d. The SSSC will ensure in all areas of our work, we do not unlawfully discriminate against any individual irrespective of any protected characteristic they may share and will assist in the promotion of equality of opportunity.
- e. The SSSC will use its influence to encourage diversity in the workforce of the social service sector in Scotland.
- f. The SSSC will work to ensure that the rich diversity of Scotland is reflected in its workforce, Council and Committee memberships and that staff understand and support the needs of the people we serve.

5. Progress on our 2013-2017 equality outcomes

2013-2017 equality outcome	Actions	How the action contributes to the outcome
<p>a. All people receive high-quality social services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We register social service workers. • We set standards for workers’ practice, conduct, training and education. • We changed the way we regulate social service workers from a conduct model of regulation to a fitness to practise approach. • We updated the SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers. • The consultation process on the changes to our Codes and model of regulation involved people with a range of protected characteristics and explored the equalities implications. We included questions on the equalities implications during the development of both initiatives. • We regularly complete equality impact assessments (EIAs) and all reports submitted to our Council state whether an EIA has been completed. Our EIAs are available on our website. 	<p>Registration and setting standards helps make sure that people with the right skills, training and values work in social services.</p> <p>The new SSSC Codes of Practice and the change in our fitness to practise model will encourage workers to take responsibility for, and improve, their practice. This will contribute to the quality of social services people receive.</p> <p>We consult on the changes we make to help achieve high-quality social services, and use the feedback to inform EIAs. This helps us to make sure that people who share the protected characteristics will continue to provide, or receive, high-quality social services.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the Care Inspectorate, we led the review on updating the Safer Recruitment through Better Recruitment guidance. 	<p>The updated guidance will help employers meet requirements in relation to the safer recruitment and selection of people who work in social services. In the guidance, the section on developing a recruitment policy details equal opportunities issues which employers should consider.</p>
<p>b. All people are encouraged to tell us about the social services they experience and want. Those who share any protected characteristic will feel safe and nurtured in doing so. In support of this, the SSSC will work to ensure the accessibility and effectiveness of its communications with stakeholders, including hard to reach and underrepresented groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We launched a new, more accessible website in 2014. • We communicate using Twitter, Facebook and other forms of social media. • We are able to publish translated versions of our documents in other languages, braille or audio if requested. • We respond to, and address, concerns about accessibility whenever they arise. For example, our online registration system previously had a time limit for completing web forms. If a user took longer than the system allowed, the system lost the entered information. Following requests we increased the time limit to 30 minutes. • Our 'Contact us' webpage highlights the opportunity for British Sign Language 	<p>The website is AA compliant for accessibility in line with the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.</p> <p>We communicate in an accessible and inclusive manner on these platforms.</p> <p>This helps us to make sure that our communications are accessible for hard to reach and underrepresented groups.</p>

	<p>(BSL) to contact us via contactSCOTLAND-BSL, the online British Sign Language interpreting service. We have received several positive comments from registrants with sensory impairment after contacting us.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We support the needs of registrants and witnesses at our hearings. One of our hearing rooms is fitted with a hearing loop and we can provide British Sign Language (BSL) or foreign language interpreters if required.• Our Learning and Development Team frequently engage with stakeholders (including underrepresented groups) in the projects they carry out to improve practice in the workforce. Examples include the following.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Funding individuals to prepare for, and attend, meetings as part of our Citizen Leadership project.○ Engaging with foster children and children of foster parents as part of the development of foster care and residential care standards.○ Involvement with carers and people who use services as part of the development of an app for listening to children.	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consulting people who use the Safer Recruitment through Better Recruitment guidance on the content of the updated guidance. • Our leaflets were distributed at Glasgow Mela and Pride Glasgow. • We engaged with equality organisations, social service workers and people who use services when developing our new set of outcomes. 	<p>We have taken opportunities to proactively communicate with hard to reach and underrepresented groups.</p> <p>This encouraged people to tell us about the social services they experience and want.</p>
<p>c. The SSSC will seek to maximise access to social care education and learning by eliminating any barriers and encouraging access from groups sharing the protected characteristics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We completed an EIA on the review of the social work degree. • We are exploring opportunities for introducing more apprenticeships with Skills Development Scotland across social services. • We will work with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and support colleges and universities, to implement their Gender Action Plans. 	<p>We did this to identify and eliminate any barriers to accessing the social work degree from groups sharing the protected characteristics.</p> <p>Apprenticeships help eliminate barriers to social care education by allowing apprentices to participate in the workforce while working towards a qualification.</p> <p>Working with the Scottish Funding Council will help encourage more men to access childcare education, where there is a severe gender imbalance.</p>

<p>d. The SSSC will ensure in all areas of our work, we do not unlawfully discriminate against any individual irrespective of any protected characteristic they may share and will assist in the promotion of equality of opportunity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We complete EIAs on our policies and practices. • Equality and diversity issues were addressed under Outcome 7 of our Strategic Plan 2014-2017: the SSSC is recognised as a well-run, well governed and effective organisation. The Strategic Plan notes that, to demonstrate that we are achieving Outcome 7, we will ask to what extent 'we ensure equality of opportunity in the organisation and externally'. • Equality and diversity issues have also informed our Strategic Plan 2017-2020. • Our Equalities Working Group (EWG) is made up of staff from all SSSC departments. The group discusses equality issues relevant to the SSSC. • We have delivered equality and diversity training to the vast majority of our Council, staff and sub-committee members. 	<p>EIAs help make sure that our policies do not result in unlawful discrimination and identify opportunities to promote equality of opportunity.</p> <p>Recognising equality issues in our Strategic Plans means that our Council Members hold the SSSC accountable for our performance on equalities.</p> <p>The EWG has a role in making sure that we avoid discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.</p> <p>The training covers the need to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating and supporting the SSSC's objective of 'valuing diversity; improving opportunity' is a compulsory consideration for all staff in their personal development review system (PDRS). • We send details of SSSC vacancies to job centres and Dundee City Council's Employment Support Service. 	<p>The SSSC's formal supervision process requires staff to provide evidence showing how they support the SSSC to promote equality of opportunity.</p> <p>The Employment Support Service helps people with disabilities, health problems and other barriers to find and sustain employment. This helps promote equality of opportunity for disabled people.</p>
<p>e. The SSSC will use its influence to encourage diversity in the workforce of the social service sector in Scotland.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers requires workers to work in a way that promotes diversity and respects different cultures and values. • Our workforce data reports highlight the demographics of the workforce. • Our leaflets were distributed at Glasgow Mela and Pride Glasgow. • Social service workers with qualifications not gained in the UK can apply to have these assessed when applying to our Register. 	<p>Workers and employers are required to comply with the Codes and we may take action when they do not.</p> <p>We use the data to understand which groups are underrepresented, which informs our work to encourage greater diversity in the workforce.</p> <p>We did this to encourage more LGBT+ and BME workers to consider a career in social services.</p> <p>This encourages diversity by eliminating barriers to registration for workers who qualified outside of the UK.</p>

<p>f. The SSSC will work to ensure that the rich diversity of Scotland is reflected in its workforce, Council and Committee memberships and that staff understand and support the needs of the people we serve.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We review all our human resources policies on a regular, scheduled basis. As part of the review, all policies are subject to EIAs. • We offer interviews to all applicants who have a disability who meet the person specification. • We operate a flexible working scheme. • We operate a childcare voucher salary sacrifice scheme. • We provide young people in the Dundee area with work experience in teams across the organisation. • We have been accredited as a Living Wage employer by the Living Wage Foundation. • We have received several awards including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a Carer Positive award ○ a bronze Healthy Working Lives award ○ a silver Investors in People award. • We have published a plan to increase the diversity of our Council, which can be read in our mainstreaming report. • We will begin recruiting for committee 	<p>EIAs help make sure that our policies do not discriminate against people who share any of the protected characteristics.</p> <p>These initiatives help the SSSC to recruit and retain a diverse workforce.</p> <p>Accreditation and awards show potential applicants that we value our staff, encouraging a diverse range of people to apply to work at the SSSC.</p> <p>Our plan contains actions to increase the diversity of applicants for positions on our Council.</p> <p>Our recruitment drive will include targeting</p>
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	<p>members in 2017.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have delivered equality and diversity, dementia awareness and Plain English training to all staff. • We held an event with LGBT Health and Wellbeing and the Care Inspectorate to raise awareness of the needs of older LGBT people. This was open to all staff, including our EWG members. • Our EWG members participated in an awareness session on sensory impairment. • Our Fitness to Practise Sector Liaison and Referral (SLR) Team deliver training to staff about the different groups of people who use services and their needs. • Who Cares? Scotland delivered a session at a SSSC staff conference on Corporate Parenting and the needs of care experienced young people. 	<p>groups which are currently underrepresented among our committees.</p> <p>These actions demonstrate our work to make sure that staff understand and support the needs of the people we serve.</p> <p>The SSSC serves as a Corporate Parent for care experienced young people. This session helped our staff to better understand their needs.</p>
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Equality outcomes 2017-2021

6. Reviewing and developing our new equality outcomes

Before drafting a new set of equality outcomes, we decided to seek views on our Outcomes for 2013-2017. We consulted internally and externally to determine which outcomes, or elements of outcomes, were successful in driving progress.

We consulted with the SSSC Equalities Working Group (EWG)¹ and senior managers. EWG members have experience of tracking our progress on our former outcomes and helped to identify areas for improvement. Senior managers were able to provide strategic input and identify where there are links between our equalities work and the current and new strategic plan.

Our external consultation began with a meeting in 2016, held jointly with the Care Inspectorate and five organisations representing people sharing a range of protected characteristics. We continued this work in January 2017 as the Care Inspectorate held a meeting with the same organisations and their involved people group to discuss equality issues in the care and social service sector. This included discussion of equality issues in the social services workforce, which we have used to inform our new set of outcomes.

The feedback we received expressed that the aims reflected in our 2013-2017 outcomes continue to be the most important for addressing inequality in the social service workforce. Our new outcomes therefore continue to target the inequalities targeted by our previous set of outcomes.

As these are significant inequalities we anticipate that these will take longer than four years to fully achieve. We aim to make progress on these outcomes over the four year period and will review this in 2021.

The outcomes will also require a focus on partnership working. For example, colleges, universities and employers all have a role to play in helping to secure a more diverse workforce. The SSSC will take opportunities wherever they arise to work with other organisations to address inequalities in the workforce.

7. List of 2017-2021 Equality Outcomes

1. More people who belong to groups which are underrepresented in the social service workforce access social service learning and development.
2. The social service workforce in Scotland better reflects the diversity of Scotland's communities.
3. The SSSC's Council and Committee members and staff better reflect the diversity of Scotland's communities.
4. The people who interact with us and use our resources better reflect the diversity of the social service workforce.

¹ For more information about the EWG, read our 2017 Mainstreaming Report.

8. 2017-2021 Outcomes action plan

We have set an action plan which details the actions which the SSSC can carry out which we believe will help achieve progress towards our outcomes.

Outcome	Action
1. More people who belong to groups which are underrepresented in the social service workforce access social service learning and development.	a. We will continue monitoring the protected characteristics information of admissions to the Childhood Practice Awards, Degree in Social Work and postgraduate courses.
	b. We will continue providing a disability allowance for disabled students on the full time MSc Social Work course.
2. The social service workforce in Scotland better reflects the diversity of Scotland's communities.	a. We will continue to monitor the characteristics of workers who go through our fitness to practise process.
	b. We will continue working with other organisations to encourage men to consider careers in early years and childcare.
	c. We will undertake and support any actions identified in the Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016-2030.
	d. We will continue to identify links with and contribute to other policy drivers, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People • the British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan • the Gaelic Language Plan 2015-2020 • Gender Action Plans across the education sector.

<p>3. The SSSC's Council and Committee members and staff better reflect the diversity of Scotland's communities.</p>	<p>a. We will continue to work towards achieving a more diverse Council, as detailed in the action plan in our mainstreaming report.</p>
	<p>b. We will advertise more widely when recruiting committee members.</p>
	<p>c. We will hold, or attend, events directed at underrepresented groups on our committees when recruiting for members.</p>
	<p>d. We will continue to monitor job applications and appointments, including promotions, in relation to all protected characteristics.</p>
	<p>e. We will carry out an annual equal pay audit.</p>
<p>4. The people who interact with us and use our resources better reflect the diversity of the social service workforce.</p>	<p>a. We will keep the accessibility of our website under review.</p>
	<p>b. We will continue to promote the use of Contact-BSL and other resources which help people with sensory impairment.</p>
	<p>c. We will continue to promote the use of Plain English in our publications.</p>
	<p>d. We will collect information on, and views from, people who access our resources and events.</p>
	<p>e. We will require staff to complete, and continue to deliver, equality and diversity training.</p>
	<p>f. We will implement required actions in the British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan.</p>

A. Profile of the social service workforce as of December 2015

The SSSC publishes information on the social service workforce in terms of four protected characteristics: age, disability, race and sex.

This information is correct as of December 2015 and can be found in our [Report on 2015 Workforce Data](#).

Age: The median age of a social service worker is 44. This means the workforce is, on average, older than would be expected. (The median age for those between 16 and 65 in Scotland is 40.)

There is variation between sub-sectors and types of employers. The median age of a private sector social services worker is 40, whereas the median age of a public sector worker is 48. The median age of workers in childcare agencies and day care of children is 32 and 36 respectively. The median age of workers in other sub-sectors varies from 42 to 51.5.

Disability: There is a high rate of unknown responses and non-disclosures (13%). At least 2% of social service workers have a disability, and 85% do not.

Race: This is another category with a high rate of unknown responses (16%). At least 81% of workers are white and 3% are BME.

Sex: Men comprise 15% of the workforce, and women 85%. This varies between sectors: female representation varies between 61% (school care accommodation) and 100% (childminders).