

Equality Strategy

2017-2019

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Education Scotland Equality Strategy 2017-2019

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1. Introduction

This Strategy is designed to support Education Scotland in mainstreaming the Equality Duty as defined in the Equality Act 2010. It sets out our vision and long-term plan designed to deliver our equality outcomes. It also supports us in delivering the Scottish Government's commitment to delivering excellence and equity in Scottish education. This requires us to integrate equality into our day-to-day work and take equality into account in the way we exercise **all** our functions.

Each of our strategies exists to help all Education Scotland staff, and our key stakeholders, align their work to make the biggest possible impact. When planning and delivering our work we should use these strategies to ask ourselves whether what we are doing or the way we are doing it, can be further improved to have even more impact.

Our Vision for Equality

Education Scotland is committed to equality for all. Our vision is to be leaders in ensuring equality for all and modelling practices in eliminating discrimination, promoting equality and diversity and addressing inequity in all aspects of our work.

Equality is the removal of discrimination, disadvantage, inequality and / or barriers which can affect people on the grounds of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Equity means treating people fairly, but not necessarily treating people the same. Equity in education means that personal or social circumstances such as gender, ethnic origin or family background are not obstacles to achieving educational potential and that all our young people are well supported to secure wellbeing, skills for learning, life and work and the best possible post-school destination, HGIOS 4 (2016). Equity is generally understood to refer to fairness and impartiality for people in general and sometimes especially relating to fairness for people facing socio-economic disadvantage.

Diversity aims to recognise, respect and value people's differences to contribute and realise their full potential by promoting an inclusive culture for all.

The Scottish Government has set out its vision as an employer in SG2020 on the [Delivering Diversity and Equality](#) page of saltire:

SG2020: what our organisation will look like

We want to be a world leading, diverse employer where people can be themselves at work, where:

- the majority of people are comfortable to tell us whether or not they are from an equality or minority group protected by legislation and are confident that this information will be kept confidential and secure, in accordance with the law
- our managers have great confidence in identifying and dealing with equality and diversity matters and engaging internally and externally to effect change and improvement
- we have got a gender balanced senior civil service
- we are broadly representative of the Scottish population across our organisation
- we are sharing our learning and valuing the different contributions and perspectives people bring to our work.

The National Improvement Framework (NIF) (2016), sets out a clear vision for Scottish Education:

- **Excellence through raising attainment:** ensuring that every child achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, set out within Curriculum for Excellence levels, and the right range of skills, qualifications and achievements to allow them to succeed; and
- **Achieving equity:** ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

1.1 Equality legislation and Public Sector General Duties

Education Scotland has responsibilities as a service provider and employer under the Equality Act 2010 and, as a body carrying out public functions, is bound by the General Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a new public sector general equality duty that combined the existing legislation requiring public authorities to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations. These requirements apply across the protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation, and (to a limited extent) marriage and civil partnership.

In April 2011, the Public Sector General Duty was introduced, which is about the measures public sector organisations must take to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other prohibited conduct:

- advance equality of opportunity: and,
- foster good relations, by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

To underpin and support better performance of the General Duty, Scottish Ministers introduced the Scottish Specific Public Sector Equality Duties (SSPSED) in 2013. Education Scotland is not an individually listed body for the purposes of SSPSED and therefore as an organisation does not need to directly comply with SSPSED. However, in line with our vision to be leaders in modelling practices we want to align our practices with the expectations within SSPSED.

The SSPSED requires listed bodies to:

- publish a report on the progress made on mainstreaming equality every 2 years
- publish equality outcomes report on their progress every 4 years based on evidence and involvement of equality groups and communities;
- equality impact assess all new and existing policies (including decisions, for example financial) taken by public authorities;
- gather and publish employment data on the structure of the organisation by protected characteristic
- publish statements on equal pay between equality groups and on occupational
- segregation from equality groups in particular grades and particular occupations
- consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement
- publish information in a manner that is accessible.

1.2 What do we say in the Corporate Plan about Equality?

Education Scotland's new Corporate Plan takes account of the new and enhanced role outlined in [Education Governance Next steps – Empowering Teachers, Parents and Communities in Delivering Excellence and Equity for our Children](#).

1.3 What do we believe about promoting equality and diversity and eliminating inequity?

We believe that our commitment to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality and diversity involves an inward, outward and forward approach to all aspects of our work. We aim to ensure equal opportunities for **all** our staff, taking full account of the information we have about protected characteristic groups, as defined in the Equality Act 2010. We value all our staff who are committed to ensuring they progress and develop to reach their full potential within an inclusive culture.

We are committed to developing practitioners' understanding of equality and diversity issues and supporting them in addressing inequity. We are also committed to involving our stakeholders, including protected characteristic groups, in our work as fully involved as possible. Barriers to participation and learning for individuals and groups usually involve multiple interacting factors, rather than just one. We believe that a holistic approach is always necessary and that this is closely related to the provision of **inclusive education** and focus on human rights and Rights of the Child.

The UNESCO (2008) definition states that inclusive education is: "an on-going process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination" (p. 3). UNESCO-IBE, 2008.

<https://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/i-access/glossary-of-terms>

"At the core of inclusive education is the **human right to education**, stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1949. Equally important is **the right of children not to be discriminated against**, as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). As a result, all children have the right to receive an education that does not discriminate against them based on disability, ethnicity, religion, language, gender and so on."

https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/International%20Conference-%20First%20resultst_0.pdf

In Scotland, inclusive learning takes place when local schools and communities create a learning environment designed to meet the needs of all learners. In inclusive environments the needs of diverse learners are provided through personalised learning and support that takes account of individual needs, choices and circumstances while relentlessly reinforcing high expectations. Effective individualised support is provided in environments that ensure all our children and young people become successful learners, responsible citizens, effective contributors and confident individuals.

1.4 Equality Outcomes

Education Scotland will continue to play our full role in promoting the Scottish Government's public sector equality duties. We will make a key contribution to the Scottish Government's equality outcomes for 2017-2021 detailed within the [Scottish Government Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report, 2017](#).

To help target our contributions to the Scottish Government equality outcomes, we have developed a set of specific Education Scotland equality objectives detailed below.

The Process of Developing our Equality Outcomes / Objectives

We developed our equality outcomes / objectives using evidence from a range of sources linked to our general equality duties which included: inspection findings; employment statistics including staff profiling; internal audits and annual staff survey.

The equality outcomes / objectives align with national priorities and reports including National Improvement Framework, Scottish Attainment Challenge, Race Equality Framework, and the Education Governance Review (2017).

Staff were able to comment on the draft Equality Strategy at various internal meetings and boards including the Equality Strategy Group meetings, Management Board, Senior Education Officers forum, the Education staff conference and Corporate Services staff equality seminars. Across the organisation, all staff had opportunities to share their views on the draft outcomes. The feedback was used to amend the outcomes / objectives further to reflect staff's concerns and expectations.

The development of the equality outcomes / objectives involved partners representing various groups with protected characteristics through their membership of Education Scotland's Equality and Diversity Network. The high quality of comments had a direct impact on the content and structure of the Equality Strategy. A wider range of stakeholders on the Local Partnership Forum had an opportunity to comment on the Strategy and Policy.

We had initially proposed that Education Scotland would, from 2017, develop its own Agency Equality outcomes. However, as a result of the above engagement process it was agreed that due to the significant system level change in education and demands on resources that we would continue to align with and report into the Scottish Government Equality Outcomes and mainstreaming reporting for the period 2017-2019. Our equality objectives make clear our contribution to the national equality outcomes.

2.0 What is this strategy trying to do?

Our equality strategy provides an overarching framework to mainstream equalities across all our functions and to deliver on our vision for equalities. Implementing the strategy requires close cooperation and coordination across the organisation. We aim to ensure equal opportunities for all our staff, taking full account of the information we have about "protected characteristic" groups, as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

In order to deliver this commitment, our equality strategy must focus on 3 key strategic drivers across our work:

2.1. Equality in Employment and within our Corporate Systems and Processes (inward)

- Objective: All our staff can progress and develop to reach their full potential within an inclusive culture.

2.2 Mainstream Equality in Education (outward)

- Objective: Increased educational practitioners' understanding of equality and diversity has contributed to improved practices which lead to narrowing achievement gaps of targeted groups of learners from protected characteristic groups.

- Objective: We will support the implementation of the Mental Health Strategy to improved practices which lead to narrowing achievement gaps of targeted groups of learners from protected characteristic groups.

2.3 Secure Continuous Improvement in Equality (forward)

- Objective: Improving monitoring, reporting on progress and impact of our equalities through an evidence-based approach to inform our future work.

3.0 What does this Strategy Commit our Organisation to?

3.1 Leadership and Governance

We have put in place the following measures to ensure we deliver on equality.

Inclusion and Equality Programme: we have included 3 workstreams related to our inward, outward and forward equalities work within the Inclusion and Equality Programme. This will ensure that we report on all our equalities work within the Programme Board governance arrangements.

Responsible Officers: In order to ensure that we discharge our responsibilities appropriately, we have put in place a number of responsible officers. Their roles and responsibilities are detailed in our **Equality Policy**. This provides the framework within which Education Scotland staff, individually and collectively, can understand and deliver their responsibilities in relation to equality.

3.2 The Equality Impact Assessment Process

Education Scotland will embark on a regular programme of Equality Impact Assessments of its priority and core programmes. The results arising from impact assessments should inform decisions taken by the Corporate Management Team to ensure that equality outcomes are embedded in strategic planning, service delivery and monitoring of performance. The strategy and its associated action plan will set out how the organisation will carry out impact assessments to ensure that:

- Legal duties are being met.
- Unlawful policy and practice is eliminated.
- Policies and services are better able to deliver equality outcomes.
- The views of a wide range of staff and partners inform policy and service development.
- Services are more accessible to equality groups.
- Actions are taken to mitigate negative impacts and enhance the positive impacts of policy and service review.

4.0 What are the Key Features of Implementation?

This section provides an overview of the key aspects of implementing this strategy.

The detailed actions are held within the associated action plan.

We will

- Implement our **Action Plan** detailed in this Strategy to promote improvement in delivering equality. It will provide detail of mandatory professional learning for all staff, how the key features of the Strategy will be taken forward across all aspects of Education Scotland's work and how this will impact on our engagement with external providers and partners. Individuals and teams will take ownership of implementing specific actions in the plan.
- Develop a set of outcomes for our Equality workstreams and provide evidence of our impact.
- Develop an integral focus on delivering on our equality outcomes and objectives through our business planning and reporting processes.
- Work closely with teams from across Education Scotland to ensure that their **engagement with external providers and partners** reflects the key elements of the strategy. Key groups include all staff who will be engaging directly with educators to lead and support professional learning and leadership development activities.
- Use the Strategy in our engagement with key stakeholder groups and seek ways to emphasise its key messages with stakeholders as appropriate.
- Ensure transparency and openness by placing the strategy on our website as part of our suite of approaches for improvement.

5. How will we Evaluate the Impact of this Strategy?

We will work with teams across Education Scotland to evaluate the impact of the Strategy. We will work with teams to determine the best approach to gathering evidence of impact and to provide appropriate support and challenge as required. We will introduce systems that allow us to evaluate the impact of this Strategy including gathering evidence from a variety of sources and activities.

Section 6: Equality Outcomes Action Plan 2017-2019

Scottish Government Equality Theme: Employment (Inward)					
Outcome: Employment inequalities, discrimination and barriers are reduced. Employment opportunities for women and ethnic minorities are increased and progress made towards reducing, by at least half, the employment gap between disabled people and the rest of the working age population.					
Outcome: The Scottish Government's workforce increases in diversity to reflect the general Scottish population by 2025.					
	Objective	Action(s)	How we will measure progress	Timescale	Link to General Duty
1.	Our staff can progress and develop to reach their full potential within an inclusive culture.	<p>Support improvement in equality in employment in Education Scotland in relation to recruitment, progress and development, and equality of opportunity to professional learning, in particular disability, ethnicity and age at certain grades. We will place a high priority to engaging with staff from protected characteristic groups to reflect national priorities in addressing issues related to race, disability and LGBTI.</p> <p>Provide a range of professional learning and development opportunities in partnership with Equality and Diversity network for Education Scotland staff to develop an increased and strong understanding, commitment and belief in equality to enhance and improve our work.</p> <p>Support embedding equalities in our corporate systems, strategies, policies and processes.</p> <p>Gather and use employment information - Education Scotland will gather and use information that describes the composition of employees by relevant protected characteristic with regard to total employee body, recruitment, development and retention.</p> <p>Promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations between people, both within our workforce and in the wider community where possible, in order to eliminate discrimination and promote diversity.</p>	<p>The measures will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of our workforce by gender, ethnicity, disability, age, sexuality and salary Recruitment and selection analysis including internal promotions and assignments Numbers of staff by protected characteristic who apply and are granted flexible working arrangements Learning and development analysis Board member gender profile 	2017-2019	<p>Eliminate Discrimination</p> <p>Advance Equality of Opportunity</p> <p>Foster Good Relations</p>

Scottish Government Equality Theme: School Education¹ (Outward)					
Outcome: Within the longer-term outcome that every child and young person should thrive and have the best opportunity to succeed regardless of their social circumstances or additional needs, there will be progress by 2021 in the educational experience of those for which evidence indicates their success is impacted negatively due to a protected characteristic.					
	Objective	Action(s)	How we will measure progress	Timescale	Link to General Duty
2.	Increased educational practitioners' understanding of equality and diversity has contributed to improved practices which lead to narrowing achievement gaps of targeted groups of learners from protected characteristic groups.	<p>Through inspection and review, evaluate the impact of education providers delivering their Equality Duties.</p> <p>Ensure a more consistent emphasis to eliminating discrimination, promoting equality and diversity, and addressing inequality through our external improvement approaches, on-line digital offer and supporting delivery of advice, information and resources</p> <p>Delivering on the DYW Recommendations 26, 27 and 33 (gender, disabilities, and ethnicity). Delivering on goal 15 of the Race Equality Framework.</p> <p>Delver on Actions 44, 49 and 50 of the independent Race Equality Advisor Recommendations.</p> <p>Build capacity through professional learning related to anti-sectarianism, gender, disabilities and religion. Support implementation of 'A National Approach to Anti-bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People' to address prejudice based bullying (sexuality, disabilities and religion).</p> <p>Identify national best practice in positive action for protected characteristics through gathering evidence of implementation and facilitation through national networks and regional groups.</p>	<p>We will draw on a range of evidence to measure progress including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence from Inspection and Review (SIF analysis and QI evaluations) Outputs from regular equality audits/reporting across all ES Programmes Annual statistical analysis; attainment, leaver destination, exclusion and attendance and pupil census; Annual report to Parliament on Additional Support for Learning - including a focus on interrupted learners, pupils with a disability, and support provided for learning. On-going engagement between Scottish Government and Education Scotland to measure and analyse data and trends and support delivery of advice, information and resources to support improvement in 	2017-2019	<p>Eliminate Discrimination</p> <p>Advance Equality of Opportunity</p> <p>Foster Good Relations</p>

¹ While the focus of this Outcome is on school education our actions will involve delivering across sectors including early learning and childcare, community learning and development, and colleges.

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Outcome: Within the longer-term outcome that every child and young person should thrive and have the best opportunity to succeed regardless of their social circumstances or additional needs, there will be progress by 2021 in the educational experience of those for which evidence indicates their success is impacted negatively due to a protected characteristic.					
	Objective	Action(s)	How we will measure progress	Timescale	Link to General Duty
		<p>Support the implementation of NIF</p> <p>Support improvements in practices in addressing the socio-economic achievement gap through SAC.</p> <p>Building resilience though safeguarding including Prevent, FGM and CSE (gender, race, religion).</p>	<p>delivery of education, including in Inclusion and Equality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress towards goals in supporting capacity building in preventing and dealing with bullying, including across protected characteristics. Annual report to Parliament on Developing the Young Workforce; Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy Feedback from practitioners on impact of our engagement and improvement. 		

Scottish Government Equality Theme: Mental Health (Outward)					
Outcome: Over the 10 years of the Mental Health Strategy, we will work on achieving parity between mental and physical health					
	Objective	Action(s)	How we will measure progress	Timescale	Link to General Duty
3.	Improved practices which lead to narrowing achievement gaps of targeted groups of learners from protected characteristic groups by supporting the implementation of the Mental Health Strategy.	Carry out a Review of Personal and Social Education in a sample of early education and childcare establishments and schools.	Successful delivery of report with recommendations for Scottish Government, education authorities and schools.	2017-2019	Advance Equality of Opportunity

Scottish Government Equality Theme: Hate Crime (Outward)					
Outcome: People feel increasingly confident in reporting hate crime when they experience it or witness it; and the prejudicial attitudes that drive hate behaviours are reduced					
	Objective	Action(s)	How we will measure progress	Timescale	Link to General Duty
4.	Increased educational practitioners' understanding of equality and diversity has contributed to improved practices which lead to narrowing achievement gaps of targeted groups of learners from protected characteristic groups	We will support the implementation of the ESOL (English for speakers of other Languages) Strategy (race). We will contribute to the development of the disability action plan which includes a commitment to tackling disability hate crime.	To be developed	2017-2019	Eliminate Discrimination Foster Good Relations

Scottish Government Equality Theme: Violence Against Women and Girls (Outward)					
Outcome: Violence against women and girls is reduced, along with the harms of gender based violence on women and their children					
	Objective	Action(s)	How we will measure progress	Timescale	Link to General Duty
5.	Increased educational practitioners' understanding of equality and diversity has contributed to improved practices which lead to narrowing achievement gaps of targeted groups of learners from protected characteristic groups	We will contribute to the delivery of the Mentors in Violence Prevention Programme by engaging new local authorities in the development and delivery (Gender)	Impact on staff, young people in participating schools.	2017-2018	Eliminate Discrimination Advance Equality of Opportunity

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