Equality Impact Assessment

Internal Professional Learning Strategy

June / 2024

For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators

Equality Impact Assessment Record

Title:	Internal Professional Learning Strategy
Senior Lead Officers	David Burgess- Head of Professional Learning and Leadership; Lise McCaffery- Senior Lead Specialist
Operational lead	Stephanie Peat- Lead Specialist
Directorate: Division: Team	Professional Learning and Leadership (PLL) & People Team
Is this new policy or revision to an existing policy?	New Policy

Screening

As the national organisation supporting the education profession, Education Scotland, should be seen to be a leader in providing professional learning. ES should be an organisation that values & invests in the learning of its staff based on the important fact that the quality of what we do externally is very dependent on what we invest internally. As such, the PLL and People Team will work collaboratively, pulling together their knowledge and expertise to co-create a comprehensive and supportive internal learning strategy which all ES staff can access.

This Equality Impact Assessment examines the potential impacts of our planned internal professional learning strategy on diverse groups within our organisation. As part of our commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable workplace, this assessment evaluates how various aspects of our strategy may affect employees differently based on characteristics such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. By systematically identifying and addressing potential inequalities, we aim to ensure that our PL opportunities are accessible, relevant, and beneficial to all employees, thereby promoting a culture of continuous learning and inclusivity.

Who will it affect?

It is anticipated that this new strategy will affect all staff in Education Scotland.

The Scope of the Equality Impact Assessment

In undertaking this assessment, Education Scotland has assessed the impact on each of the protected characteristics and has considered measures against the three needs of the general equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:

• eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation;
• advance equality of opportunity; and,
• foster good relations.

Key Findings

This assessment has identified some positive impacts on one or more of the protected characteristics, but we recognise that there may be some potential indirect and disproportionate negative impacts of the measures we have taken on one or more of the protected characteristic groups within the staff population. These are set out and explored further in this impact assessment, with mitigating actions identified.

What might prevent the desired outcomes being achieved?

There are a few issues that might affect the delivery and prevent the desired outcomes from being achieved. These include, but are not exclusive to:

- Lack of certain protected characteristic data relating to the ES workforce making it difficult to ascertain the actual potential impact. For example, 31.4% of the workforce's race is unknown and 38.1% of the workforce's religion/belief is unknown.
- Lack of funding associated with this work to put some mitigating actions in place.

Stage 1: Framing

Results of framing exercise

The planning and delivery associated with this work is managed and led by a small team of Education Scotland staff within the PLL and People Team. As a result of our framing exercise, we identified that there was potential for the strategy to have slight impact on some protected characteristic groups, with some being more disproportionately impacted, either negatively or positively, than others.

Protected characteristic: age

Key Considerations:
- There may be a preference difference in how younger and older individuals access and engage with professional learning.

Recommendations:
- Engagement Preferences:
➢ Develop and offer multiple platforms for PL communication and engagement, catering to both individuals who might prefer digital and interactive mediums and individuals who might prefer traditional or in-person formats.

Protected characteristic: disability

Key Considerations:
- Barriers to accessing PL for those with disabilities will differ for in-person versus online interactions.
- Free venues provided due to budget constraints might not always be suitable for individuals with disabilities.

- Consistent protocols and approaches are essential for accessibility.
  For example, stylistic approaches to fonts and colours in materials must consider accessibility needs.
- Facilitation of PL sessions and their length should consider the needs of individuals with disabilities.
- Pre-reading materials can help reduce the duration of sessions.
- Continuous evaluation is necessary to ensure accessibility needs are being met.

Recommendations:
- Venue Accessibility:
- ➢ Ensure all PL session venues are fully accessible, considering factors such as entry, seating, and facilities.

- Material Design:
- ➢ Ensure all professional learning delivered in ES adheres to SG accessibility guides.
- ➢ Where possible, provide pre-reading materials to shorten the length of live sessions and accommodate various needs.
- ➢ Signpost accessibility training to those leading PL in ES under the new strategy.

- Evaluation and Protocols:
- ➢ Regularly evaluate the accessibility of sessions as part of the ongoing evaluation form.
- ➢ Establish and maintain consistent, accessible protocols for all PL sessions.

Protected characteristic: gender reassignment

Key Considerations:
- Proper introduction of pronouns during sessions should be standard.
- Language in materials must meet inclusivity standards.
- In-person sessions need suitable venues, including appropriate bathroom facilities.
- Mandatory equalities training for staff is crucial.

Recommendations:
- Inclusivity in Language:
- ➢ Ensure all PL session introductions include pronouns of facilitators as encouragement for participants to do the same.
- ➢ Review and revise materials to meet inclusive language requirements.

- Suitable Venues:
- ➢ Where possible, select venues that provide appropriate facilities for all gender identities.

- Staff Training:
- ➢ Signpost and support equalities training for all staff to foster an inclusive and informed culture.

Protected characteristic: marriage or civil partnership

Not applicable.
*Please note, this protected characteristic is only applicable when policies, programmes and services are relevant to employment.

Protected characteristic: pregnancy and maternity

Key Considerations:
- Importance of Keeping in Touch (KIT) days.
- Providing support for those returning to work to access missed sessions and materials.
- Where appropriate, recording sessions to help with appointments and other commitments.
- Bear in mind communication challenges as SCOTS accounts close after six months of inactivity.
- Upskilling line managers to support the PL of returning staff.

Recommendations:
- Support and Communication:
- Record all appropriate sessions and provide easy access to PL materials on a centralised platform.

Protected characteristic: race

Key Considerations:
- Decolonise our internal PL.
- Materials should reflect diverse perspectives.
- Code of conduct regarding language and working definitions associated with race.
- Use Building Racial Literacy Programme facilitation guidance for internal ES staff sessions.
- Implement quality assurance processes.

Recommendations:
- Inclusive Content:
- ➢ Review and revise PL content to decolonise materials and ensure diverse perspectives. Making sure that a diverse range of knowledge sources are examined, but also acknowledging when thinking is Eurocentric.

- Conduct and Facilitation:
- ➢ Develop a code of conduct addressing inclusive language and working definitions of terms associated with race.
- ➢ Use BRL facilitation guidance for ES staff PL sessions.

Protected characteristic: religion or belief

Key Considerations:
- Timing of sessions.
- Awareness of religious dates.

Recommendations:
- Session Scheduling:
- ➢ Where possible, schedule PL sessions at times that do not conflict with major religious observances.
- ➢ Maintain a corporate calendar of religious dates to inform scheduling.

Protected characteristic: sex

Key Considerations:
- Career development barriers for women.
- Need for flexibility due to caring responsibilities.
- Menopause café signposting.

Recommendations:
- Flexibility:
- ➢ Provide flexible access to PL to accommodate those with caring responsibilities i.e. recorded sessions and open-access supporting materials.

- Support for issues related to sex:
- ➢ Signpost resources such as SG menopause cafés and other relevant support for this protected characteristic.

Protected characteristic: sexual orientation

Key Considerations:
- Signpost to relevant PL support and opportunities.
- Awareness of power dynamics.
- Consideration of images in resources.

Recommendations:
- Signposting to Networks:

> Ensure signposting to relevant PL support in wider SG like the LGBTQI+ Network and in other third party organisations like TIE.

- Power Dynamics and Imagery:
> Be mindful of power dynamics and ensure images in resources are inclusive and representative of diverse sexual orientations.

Interaction with Other Policies (Draft or Existing)

The Internal Professional Learning Strategy will align with Education Scotland's Accessible Events Policy and accessibility guidelines.

Extent/Level of EQIA required

The framing exercise has highlighted the need for the aforementioned actions:

Age:
- Develop and offer multiple platforms for PL communication and engagement, catering to both individuals who might prefer digital and interactive mediums and individuals who might prefer traditional or in-person formats.

Disability:
- Ensure all PL session venues are fully accessible, considering factors such as entry, seating, and facilities.
- Ensure all professional learning delivered in ES adheres to SG accessibility guides.
- Where possible, provide pre-reading materials to shorten the length of live sessions and accommodate various needs.
- Signpost accessibility training to those leading PL in ES under the new strategy.
- Regularly evaluate the accessibility of sessions as part of the ongoing evaluation form.
- Establish and maintain consistent, accessible protocols for all PL sessions.

Gender reassignment:
- Ensure all PL session introductions include pronouns of facilitators as encouragement for participants to do the same.
- Review and revise materials to meet inclusive language requirements.
- Where possible, select venues that provide appropriate facilities for all gender identities.
- Signpost and support equalities training for all staff to foster an inclusive and informed culture.

Pregnancy/Maternity Leave:

- Record all appropriate sessions and provide easy access to PL materials on a centralised platform.

Race:

- Review and revise PL content to decolonise materials and ensure diverse perspectives. Making sure that a diverse range of knowledge sources are examined, but also acknowledging when thinking is Eurocentric.
- Develop a code of conduct addressing inclusive language and working definitions of terms associated with race.
- Use BRL facilitation guidance for ES staff PL sessions.

Religion / Belief:

- Where possible, schedule PL sessions at times that do not conflict with major religious observances.
- Maintain a corporate calendar of religious dates to inform scheduling.

Sex:

- Provide flexible access to PL to accommodate those with caring responsibilities i.e. recorded sessions and open-access supporting materials.
- Signpost resources such as SG menopause cafés and other relevant support for this protected characteristic.

Sex orientation:

- Ensure signposting to relevant PL support in wider SG like the LGBTQI+ Network and in other third party organisations like TIE.
- Be mindful of power dynamics and ensure images in resources are inclusive and representative of diverse sexual orientations.

Stage 2: Data and evidence gathering, involvement and consultation

Statistical data from consultation presentation can be found here.

Stage 3: Assessing the impacts and identifying opportunities to promote equality

Age
•   Preference on how to access/engage with PL, difference between young and older.

Disability
•   Barriers different for online to face to face.
•   Due to budgets the free venues ES might use not suitable.
•   Stylistic approach to font/colours etc.
•   Evaluation to help make sure ES are meeting accessibility needs.
•   Facilitation of PL session.
•   Length of sessions.
•   Pre-reading sent to staff to help reduce length of session.
•   Protocols / consistency of sharded approaches.

Gender reassignment
•   How we introduce ourselves in sessions- pronouns.
•   Materials we use meets the language requirements.
•   Sessions being held in-person has suitable venues i.e. toilets etc.
•   Equalities based mandatory training for staff.

Marriage / Civil Partnership
•   Not applicable.

Pregnancy / Maternity Leave
- Keeping in touch days.
- Support on return to access missed sessions.
- Recording of session to help with appointments etc.
- Communication as SG account closed after 6 months.
- Upskilling line managers for PL.
- Where is best for materials to be stored for easy access to staff.

Race
- Decolonise our PL.
- Materials used i.e. Equalities network link.
- Code of conduct i.e. language used or working definitions.
- BRL facilitation guidance could be used for staff for sessions.
- Quality Assurance (this would be for all but maybe done at another level).

Religion / Belief
- Time of sessions.
- Calendar of religious dates.

Sex
- Career development barriers.
- Flexibility due to caring responsibilities.
- Menopause café signposting.

Sex orientation
- Access to Materials in SG and wider.
- Power dynamics.
- Consider images in resources.

Stage 4: Decision making and monitoring

Identifying and establishing any required mitigating action

Have positive or negative impacts been identified for any of the equality groups?	The different elements of the PL strategy can have both positive and negative impacts to varying degrees for most protected characteristic groups. It is intended that the multi-faceted and flexible approach should allow for most of the negative impacts to be minimised. Potential negative and positive impacts will be managed under the 5 subheadings of: **Multi-platform:** By using 4 main platforms to host the different types of learning (Pathways, Sharepoint, Viva Engage and Face-to-face) this should keep the offer streamlined and cater to different learning preferences. **Accessibility:** Keep a strong focus on accessibility across the offer, whether that be online or in-person, will ensure that the learning content is easy to find and engage with. **Inclusivity:** Keep a strong focus on inclusivity across the offer so that the learning content and resources are reflective and welcoming of the diverse population of ES. **Scheduling:** Be mindful of when live learning sessions are scheduled to minimise clashes with religious and cultural observances and maintain a standard of flexibility so that those that can't attend live sessions, for whatever reason, can access in another way. **Signposting:** Ensure that we maintain good awareness of PL offers in wider SG and across the system that may be relevant to ES colleagues and will fill potential gaps in PL provision.
Is the policy directly or indirectly discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010[17]?	No

If the policy is indirectly discriminatory, how is it justified under the relevant legislation?	N/A
If not justified, what mitigating action will be undertaken?	N/A

Monitoring and Review

This assessment has highlighted the potential impacts that the Internal professional learning strategy could have on colleagues with protected characteristics across ES. These findings will inform the decisions taken by the team. We will continue to monitor and review our decisions on a routine basis as part of the ongoing development of the strategy.

Stage 5 - Authorisation of EQIA

Please confirm that:

This Equality Impact Assessment has informed the development of the Education Scotland Internal Professional Learning Strategy .

Yes ☒   No ☐

Opportunities to promote equality in respect of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation have been considered, i.e.:

• Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation;
• Removing or minimising any barriers and/or disadvantages;
• Taking steps which assist with promoting equality and meeting people's diverse needs;
• Encouraging participation (e.g., in public life)
• Fostering good relations, tackling prejudice, and promoting understanding.

Yes ☒   No ☐

If the Marriage and Civil Partnership protected characteristic applies to this policy, the Equality Impact Assessment has also assessed against the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation in respect of this protected characteristic:

Yes ☐   No ☐   Not applicable ☒

Declaration

I am satisfied with the equality impact assessment that has been undertaken and give my authorisation for the results of this assessment to be published on the Education Scotland website.

Name: David Burgess
Position: Head of PLL on Behalf of Strategic Director.
Authorisation date: 26th June 2024