



Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service Mainstreaming Equality Report and Equality Outcomes 2023-2027

(Including Progress Report on
Equality Outcomes 2019-23)



The SCTS is a member of, or accredited by, the above initiatives in support of its equality aims and outcomes.

Purpose

Section 3 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 ('the Regulations') states that public authorities are required to publish a report on the progress that they have made to make equality integral to the exercise of their functions. Mainstreaming reports must be published at intervals of no more than two years.

Section 4(4) of the Regulations states that listed authorities must report on their progress in achieving their previously published equality outcomes. [The previous report](#) was published in April 2021, so this report must be published no later than 30th April 2023.

Foreword from the Chief Executive



Welcome to SCTS's Equality Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcomes. This report summarises our current position and reflects upon the progress we have made in the last two years. It also sets out our Equality Outcomes for 2023-2027 and reaffirms our commitment to fully embed equality, diversity and inclusion within the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) in order to continue to improve our services.

All the work we do is underpinned by our core values of Respect, Service and Excellence. Our vision is to build a Stronger Courts and Tribunals Service focused on providing access to justice, maximising the benefits of technology and improving the service we provide to all users.

We are pleased to see the progress we have made to mainstream equality, but we consider we can do more to embed our equality, diversity and inclusion commitments to support the delivery of our outcomes firmly within the justice system. We plan to do this by improving our staff involvement and representation in our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) agenda and by exploring best ways of utilising our existing staff networks including our partnerships with our trade union, Public Commercial Services Union (PCS) to help raise awareness and understanding of our EDI commitments. These will be key priorities in the next outcomes cycle.

In our 2021 Report, we recognised that this work does not belong to a single group or network, but rather it needs to be embedded by everyone and in everything we do. That continues to be our ethos.

We are grateful to the members of our external Equality Advisory Group who continue to provide wise counsel and help us ensure that our proposals and actions are aligned with the needs of Scotland's increasingly diverse population.

Excelling at mainstreaming equality is a high priority for us and we want to go beyond compliance and statutory requirement to achieve this. I would like to thank all of you that have contributed to the production of this report. Together we are working hard to ensure that SCTS meets the needs of all people whom we serve.

Eric McQueen,
Equality Champion
Chief Executive SCTS

Index

1. Introduction	Page 6
2. Our Organisation	Page 6
3. Legal Context - Our Responsibilities as a Public Body	Page 8
4. Embedding Equality within SCTS	Page 9
• Leadership, Governance and Equality Groups	Page 10
• Working Remotely	Page 12
• Flexible Working	Page 12
• Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion, Silver Award	Page 12
• Living Wage Employer	Page 13
• Disability Confident Scheme	Page 13
• Employee Assistance Programme	Page 14
• Procurement	Page 14
• Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs)	Page 14
• Employment Policy Package	Page 15
• Promoting Diversity in Board Membership	Page 15
• Wellbeing Programme	Page 17
• The Fairer Scotland Duty	Page 18
• Customer Service Excellence	Page 19
• Equality Audit	Page 20
5. Partnership Work within the Public Sector and the Justice System	Page 20
• The Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB) Equality Forum	Page 20
• Cross Party Group on Autism (CPG)	Page 20
• Speech, Language and Communication (SLCN) Subgroup	Page 21
• British Sign Language Justice Advisory Group (BSLJAG)	Page 21
• Cross Justice Working Group on Race and Workforce	Page 21
• The Advisory Council on Women and Girls (NACWG)	Page 22

6. Equality Outcomes 2019-2023 – Progress to Date	Page 23
• Equality Outcome 1 - We will promote awareness and understanding of equality and diversity within our organisation.	Page 23
• Equality Outcome 2 - We will improve the accessibility of our services.	Page 24
• Equality Outcome 3 - We will improve accessibility to our employment.	Page 26
7. Equality Outcomes 2023-2027	Page 29
• Equality Outcome 1	Page 29
• Equality Outcome 2	Page 30
• Equality Outcome 3	Page 30
8. Going forward	Page 31
• A Diverse Nation and Organisation	Page 31
• Scotland 2023 and Beyond	Page 32
9. Involving Others	Page 32
10. Other Languages/Formats	Page 33

1. Introduction

The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) is committed to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between groups with different protected characteristics^[1], both within our workforce and the wider community. Mainstreaming equality is the process by which we are working towards to ensure equality is at the heart of everything we do as an organisation.

In this report you will read about the successes and challenges we have had in mainstreaming equality and in progressing the equality outcomes we set in 2019. The report also sets our new Equalities Outcomes for the reporting period 2023 – 2027. It demonstrates our continued commitment to developing and embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in our corporate strategies, our organisational values and as a fundamental part of our day to day business delivery and decision making

The development of the Report has taken account of the work we have undertaken on equalities, and also legislative, economic and social changes both locally and nationally. It has involved consultation with staff and third sector organisations.

We believe that people in Scotland should experience a better quality of life as a result of accessible, excellent services which are designed and delivered to reflect their individual needs and promote their rights. We are committed to continue to make our contribution in this respect as an employer and public body.

2. Our Organisation

The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service is a non-ministerial public body established by the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008. Its statutory function is to provide administrative support to the Scottish courts, devolved tribunals, the judiciary of the courts and devolved tribunals and the OPG.

The SCTS has a presence in communities across Scotland. Court and tribunal business is conducted daily across the country in over 40 locations and, in the case of tribunal business, some 70 further remote locations.

In addition to administering Scotland's courts and tribunals the SCTS supports the Office of the Public Guardian and Accountant of Court.

^[1] Age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The OPG provides guidance and undertakes investigations to protect vulnerable people under the terms of the

Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000. The Public Guardian is also the Accountant of Court.

The SCTS also provides the staff and administrative support to:

- the Scottish Civil Justice Council, which drafts rules of procedure for the civil courts and advises the Lord President on the development of the civil justice system;
- the Scottish Sentencing Council, responsible for promoting consistency in sentencing, assisting the development of sentencing policy and promoting greater awareness and understanding of sentencing through, among other things, the preparation of sentencing guidelines for the Scottish criminal courts.

The SCTS provides support to Scotland's courts, devolved tribunals and the OPG by assisting the general public through formal court or tribunal business, fulfilling their civic duty as jurors, paying fees or fines, seeking help in managing the affairs of an incapable adult or dealing with the estate of a loved one who has passed away.

The SCTS deals with over a quarter of a million cases each year. Behind each one of these is an individual – looking to the system to help them assert their rights, address wrongs or provide support in a time of need. It is this work – which takes place every day in our courts, tribunals and administrative centres across Scotland – that consumes most of the time, energy and skill of our staff. We take a pride in working as one team and providing high levels of service to all those who use the courts, tribunals and OPG.

We are always looking to improve the services we provide, through innovation and development. Whilst delivering our core services is the top priority, considering how we can improve and develop is also crucial if we are to keep delivering the highest quality service.

Our purpose of supporting justice is translated into seven **strategic priorities** that help us organise the work we do in the most effective way:

- A Well Supported Judiciary
- Satisfied Service Users
- Skilled and Motivated People
- Sustainable Buildings and Business
- Digital Services
- Efficiency and Best Value
- Purposeful Collaboration

This work is underpinned by our core **values** of **respect, service** and **excellence**:



The equality work discussed in this report is set within the broader context of our commitment to support Scotland’s national performance framework by:

- Supporting dignity, compassion and upholding the rule of law
- Providing a trusted, respected and continually improving service
- Supporting victims and witnesses ensuring their voice is heard
- Ensuring human rights are protected and can be asserted
- Reducing inequalities by promoting diversity

3. Legal Context – Our Responsibilities as a Public Body

[The Equality Act 2010](#) harmonised over 100 pieces of existing equality legislation into one single Act in an effort to promote equality, diversity, inclusion and a fairer and more equal society.

The Act places a general equality duty on public bodies, which requires that while carrying out their activities they must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
- foster good relations between different groups.

The Act also aims to protect all individuals against unfair treatment related to their protected characteristics listed below.

The **protected characteristics** are: age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Public authorities in Scotland are also required under [The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2012](#) 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; and
- publish in a manner that is accessible.

[The Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) monitors and regulates compliance with the public sector equality duty and relevant regulations in Scotland.

In 2019 we produced a new set of equality outcomes identifying specific, measurable and realistic objectives in an action plan which shapes our equality and diversity strategic work for the period 2019-2023.

In addition to this core equality legislation, a range of other Scottish Government strategies and policies impact and inform our work on equality. These include the [Fairer Scotland Duty](#), the [Race Equality Framework](#), the [Race Recruitment and Retention Action Plan](#), the [Recruitment and Retention Plan for Disabled People](#), [A Fairer Scotland for Women](#) and [British Sign Language \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) among others. Where these documents, or our own response to them, have generated specific actions or targets for the SCTS, we have aimed to reflect these in our equality action plan.

In line with the aforementioned reporting requirements, our [employee information](#), [Gender Pay Gap Report](#) and [Equal Pay Statement](#) are published separately and can be accessed by following the hyperlinks.

4. Embedding Equality within the SCTS

Mainstreaming is the process of thinking about equality in day-to-day decision making and integrating it in to daily practices. At SCTS, we strive to make mainstreaming the way in which we deliver our all our services.

We also do our utmost to go beyond the requirements set out in equality legislation and to lead by example within the public sector.

This section provides detail of our continuing approach to mainstreaming equality, and of progress made since our last report in 2021.

Leadership, Governance and Equality Groups

Whilst we see Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as everyone's responsibility, its delivery is overseen in SCTS via the following structures.

- **Equality Diversity and Inclusion Team (EDI)**

A dedicated Equality Diversity and Inclusion Team leads on the delivery of our integrated plan across service development and delivery, working closely with colleagues in each of the teams to progress activity. Internally, the team ensures diversity and inclusion is central to what we do as an employer and is responsible for the implementation of mainstreaming within SCTS.

- **Equality Steering Group (ESG)**

The Equality Steering Group (ESG) is an internal equality group chaired by the Chief Executive and SCTS Equality Champion, Eric McQueen.

The group was established to support SCTS's commitment to mainstream equality and to meet our statutory requirements as set out in the Equality Act (2010).

In early 2023, we refreshed the Terms of Reference of the ESG to ensure this cross-team group facilitates the development of SCTS's equality outcomes, the associated action plan to support the delivery of these outcomes and a set of KPI's that enables easy monitoring of progress made.

In line with the new Terms of Reference, the group plays an important role promoting and influencing our work across the organisation to make sure the EDI outcomes are embedded in all we do.

The group has strategic oversight of our approach to EDI and scrutinises delivery of our equality action plan. The ESG meets 4 times a year and receives a report on our equalities work to ensure strong governance and transparency. In turn the group provides assurance to the People Committee and Executive Team on our performance in relation to EDI which includes compliance with our equalities obligations.

- **Equality Advisory Group (EAG)**

The SCTS established its Equality Advisory Group (EAG) in 2011. The aim of establishing the group was to access objective advice about mainstreaming equality from people who are committed to understanding the role of the SCTS and the challenges it faces in delivering the purpose and outcomes.

The main purpose of the EAG is to act as a 'critical friend' to the organisation by giving advice on new and existing policies, procedures and providing fresh insight about developments in the equality sector.

We are currently revising the Terms of Reference for the group and expanding membership making sure that a cross section of equality groups representing all protected characteristics are included.

Currently, the group is comprised of representatives from 8 equality organisations:

- Minority Ethnic Carers of People Project (MECOPP)
- British Deaf Association Scotland
- Royal National Institute for Blind People
- Inter-Faith Scotland
- Close the Gap
- YouthLink Scotland
- Age Scotland
- Disability Equality Scotland

The group meets four times a year and until recently was chaired by Mr Colin Lee, Chief Executive of CEMVO Scotland who has recently stepped down from this position. We are in the process of recruiting a new Chair to the Group.

- **People Strategy**

Our People Strategy sets out our strategic vision for our people. The importance of supporting our people is critical and aligns with our Corporate Plan priorities. It details our ongoing commitment to invest in our people, giving them the opportunity to develop their skills and to build careers in an open, positive and collaborative and inclusive working environment. Our vision for our people is to ensure that the SCTS is a great place to work, learn and develop. The strategy is informed by our core values of respect, service and excellence that underpin everything we do and is focused on four themes: "Valuing Everyone's Contribution", "Our Team", "Learning and Development" and "Realising Potential". Our People Strategy sets out our commitment to be an employer of choice providing a supportive working environment with accessible employment policies and procedures: We are currently developing our new People Strategy 2023 -2028 which recognises the world of work has changed in the last five years with the impact of covid-19 and the way we work, cost of living increases and advances with technology and digitisation. Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion will be at the centre of our People Strategy together with our commitment to continue to support the wellbeing of our employees.

Working Remotely

Equality matters underpinned our decision making for our Covid-19 response and recovery work. This ensured we managed and mitigated risks and like many organisations, we had to respond quickly to enable our employees to work remotely so our services could also be delivered remotely. The health, safety and wellbeing of our employees, and that of their families, was of the utmost priority during the covid-19 pandemic. We assisted employees who had supportive equipment and software in the office environment, to ensure that they had the equipment they needed to support them to work safely at home. Where people had musculoskeletal or other physical disabilities, we made sure they had the correct equipment (specialised chair, mouse, keyboard etc.), and we engaged with our employees on assistive technologies to address any issues because of remote working. Risks continue to be assessed from an EDI perspective and support continues to be offered to employees in terms of hybrid working where we have employees working at home and in the office.

Flexible Working

During the Covid-19 pandemic we also recognised that not everyone was able to work from home and that it was not possible for employees to work their normal hours due to caring responsibilities, underlying health conditions and other reasons. We supported employees to work flexibly when they could do so safely. We have had a flexible working approach in place, which we extended during the pandemic. This provided reassurance to both those with medical conditions related to the virus, and those with caring responsibilities. By allowing staff to work flexibly we supported them to manage childcare, caring responsibilities, and other personal situations they faced whilst being home-based. The additional flexibility has particularly benefitted these groups. A hybrid working policy was introduced in September 2022 to continue to provide opportunities for employees to work in a flexible way when their role and personal circumstances enable hybrid working.

Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion - Silver Award

The SCTS received the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (enei) Silver Award in the 2022 Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) benchmarking exercise.

Enei is the leading employer network promoting equality and inclusion in the workplace. It seeks to influence government, business and trade unions campaigning for real practical change in equality, diversity and inclusion.

We were ranked 18th out of the 155 organisations which took part and first out of the 11 National, Regional and Local Government organisations that took part, scoring a

rating of 82% across the eight categories measured: Workforce, Strategy and Plan, Leadership and Accountability, Recruitment and Attraction; Training and Development; Other Employment Practices; Communication and Engagement; and Procurement.

We scored particularly well in the Strategy and Plan and Attraction and Recruitment sections where we achieved second and first place respectively of our sector rank. This means that we continue to work at what enei calls the “Sustain Level” – the highest level given on this assessment, in our progress towards achieving diversity and inclusion across SCTS.

Our efforts during the past year in several areas including Training and Development, has helped our rating rise slightly since our last submission in 2021, when we had an overall score of 80% and were also awarded the Silver Award.

Living Wage Employer

We are proud to be one of Scotland’s Living Wage Employers and we actively promote the scheme when advertising our jobs. We received the Living Wage Employer accreditation from the Poverty Alliance, which delivers the Living Wage Accreditation Initiative in partnership with the Living Wage Foundation.

Disability Confident Scheme

We are a level two Disability Confident employer and advertise this on our recruitment website to encourage applications from people with disabilities. Through this scheme government aims to encourage employers to recruit and retain more disabled people and also works with employers to:

- challenge attitudes towards disability;
- increase understanding of disability;
- remove barriers;
- ensure that disabled people have the opportunities to fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations.



To achieve level 2 an organisation is required to offer and make reasonable adjustments in the workplace and in their application and assessment processes, as well as taking core actions to get the right people for the business such as internships, apprenticeships, student placements, etc. The application takes account of the advertising methods the SCTS use and the inclusivity of our approaches like targeted advertising with disability specific media.

In continuing our Disability Confident journey, the SCTS is ensuring that disabled people and those with long term health conditions have the opportunities to fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations.

We are currently working towards becoming a Disability Confident Leader and hope to achieve this in reporting period 2023 - 2027.

Employee Assistance Programme

The SCTS Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a free support programme available to all SCTS staff, their partners and immediate families, which provides them with an extensive range of support on a variety of everyday issues, including health and wellbeing and access to a healthy lifestyles website. It is accessed either online or through a 24-hour Freephone service.

Procurement

Through our procurement practices, we aim to uphold the spirit of the Equality Act and address under-representation whilst ensuring adherence with Public Contracts Regulations. Any award criteria and contract performance conditions must, in accordance with the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations, be related and proportionate to the subject matter and value of the contract or framework agreement. The inclusion of award criteria and contract performance conditions should be assessed on a case by case basis to ensure that full consideration is given to the needs of, and likely impact on all those who will be affected by the contract. The decision to include equality-related selection criteria is made on a case by case basis and takes into account the subject matter and value of the contract. In Accordance with the Fair working practices during the evaluation stage suppliers are assessed and encouraged to sign up to the Scottish business pledge. In addition they are required to submit a community benefit proposal on a case to case basis based on value and subject matter of the contract.

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs)

Equality Impact assessment process and guidance helps us to think about the impact of new and current policies, processes or projects on equality groups. We are currently developing an improved EqIA toolkit and governance.

We know that good equality impact assessments are the key to effectively mainstreaming equality into our day to day business. In order to continue to make good progress in our assessment of our policies and practices and their impact on equality groups we have acknowledged that there is more work to do and a new and improved toolkit will help us embed this vital process. We are also doing further work to improve our governance of our equality impact assessment process and building capacity to measure the impact of our policies and practices. Some of the steps we are taking are related to the review and development of clear guidance for the completion of EqlAs. This guidance provides clarity on the role EqlAs play in our approach to policy/process development and review, and how they are required to be considered for all policy reviews or policy changes. To improve the knowledge of our employees we are developing a section on SharePoint our intranet pages to provide information and guidance to support teams when considering questions that they need to answer when carrying out their equality impact assessments. The EDI team are planning the roll out of training for those employees who need to understand the process for EqlAs with a view to complete a first phase of the training by the end of 2023.

Employment Policy Package

We have a comprehensive package of employment policies and guidance, agreed with the PCS Union, which support mainstreaming equality and inclusion. An audit process ensures that policies are up to date with regard to legislation, inclusive language and all other changes in the approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. Our Carers Policy, Transgender Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Unacceptable Actions Policy and Flexible Working Policy among others, help us embed equality in our employment. In addition to reviewing existing policies we ensure that we take into account best practice when developing new policies when this is required by employment legislation or other factors. Recent examples include the Hybrid Working Policy, the Right to Disconnect Policy and the Menopause Policy which have been recently developed.

Promoting Diversity in Board Membership

As an independent non-ministerial department the work of the SCTS is led by its Board, which is chaired by the Lord President. The Board has 14 members, a majority of whom are drawn from Scotland's judiciary.

As a statutory body, appointments to the SCTS Board are governed by specific regulations that the SCTS Board is bound to follow^[1].

^[1] The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (Procedure for Appointment of Members) Regulations 2015 (SSI No. 53) as amended.

The SCTS Board recognise that a broad diversity of skills, experience, knowledge and perspectives contribute to effective decision making and scrutiny. To that end the SCTS Board is committed to achieving diversity amongst its membership.

The regulations that provide for appointment of members to the SCTS Board set out that:

- appointments are made by the Lord President – who will be advised by a selection panel (drawn from the Board’s membership) where a selection process is required for the vacancy in question;
- four of the 14 members of the Board are appointed ex officio – by virtue of other roles they hold in the justice system;
- a further five members of the Board must hold specific judicial offices as defined under the regulations – this ensures that there is a judicial majority on the Board as required by the legislation that established the SCTS – the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008;
- a further two members of the Board must be members of the legal profession (one a solicitor and one an advocate);
- the final three members of the Board are independent non-executive members.

In 2020-2021 the gender split of the (14 member) Board was seven female members and seven male members and includes one member from the BME community.

In 2021-2022, two vacancies arose (one solicitor and one advocate member). A recruitment exercise commenced in November 2021, as per section 2(3)(c) and (d) of the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (Procedure for Appointment of Members) Regulations 2015. A total of four applications were received (two female and two male). Two female candidates were appointed to the Board.

In 2022-2023, two vacancies for non-Executive members of the Board arose with one of these positions also required to take up the position as chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. A recruitment exercise commenced in March 2022. A total of ten applications were received (seven male and three female). One female and one male were appointed to the Board. The female candidate was also appointed as chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.

One further vacancy to the Board, Sheriff Principal, required to be filled with effect from 1 April 2023. In accordance with Regulation 3(3)(a) of the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (Procedure for Appointment of Members) Regulations 2015, any Sheriff Principal may nominate himself or herself, or any other Sheriff Principal, for the role. One female Sheriff Principal was nominated and appointed.

At the time this report was published, the gender split of the (14 member) Board was ten female members and four male members and includes two members from the BME community.

SCTS Board (1 April 2023)



Top row (left to right) Steven Dickson, Sheriff Jillian Martin-Brown, Eric McQueen, Rt. Hon. Lady Dorrian, Dr. Sophie Flemig, Margaret Craig, Sheriff Olga Paspornikov

Bottom row (left to right) Rt. Hon. Lord Woolman, Sheriff Principal Aisha Anwar, Anne Scott, Rt. Hon. Lord Carloway (Chair), Ruth Innes KC, Lynsey Walker, Morna Rae JP

In taking forward future appointments to the Board, members will continue to ensure that diversity of membership is promoted. As the categories of Board membership vary the precise action taken in relation to each vacancy that arises may vary. Specific activity to encourage applications from the broadest pool of candidates will include:

- the selection panel in all future appointments being invited to consider the steps that should be taken in relation to promoting applications from those with protected characteristics – ensuring this is consciously considered by those involved in the process and that the specific vacancy in question is taken into consideration;
- using the networks and outreach provided by members of our Equality Advisory Group to ensure that Board vacancies are publicised and shared amongst the broadest range of potential applicants – in addition to publicising these through traditional recruitment channels and via social media;
- a review of the relevant person specifications, skills requirements and general application material used for Board recruitment, to ensure that this is not inadvertently creating barriers to application for any group; and
- continuing to support our Board and Committee members as they attend relevant training, events and outreach activity – acting as advocates for the SCTS and increasing interest both in the organisation and the desire to serve on its Board.

Wellbeing Programme

Wellbeing underpins everything we do and since 2019 when the Wellbeing Initiative was launched, we have focused on ensuring that we have the right employment policies, support and tools in place to enable all our employees to carry out their role.

We are committed to providing a healthy working environment and improving the quality of working lives for all employees and we work in Partnership PCS to achieve this. The Wellbeing Initiative aims to support our core values of respect, service and excellence and the recognition that our employees are our greatest asset.

This initiative includes an enhanced Employee Assistance Programme; a Wellbeing Toolkit for Line Managers, to provide advice on how to support wellbeing in teams; and an updated Wellbeing Hub with information and advice on a variety of areas associated with wellbeing, among others.

Following on from the pandemic and its negative impact on our employee wellbeing, physical and mental health, in common with the general population, we have maintained and strengthened our focus on wellbeing supporting our staff in the workplace and investing in training so that they can support those using our services who may be experiencing trauma or distress.

The Fairer Scotland Duty

As a public body with a significant presence in communities across Scotland, the SCTS has a legal duty to:

- Show that it has actively considered (“pay due regard to”) how it can reduce socio-economic inequalities in the strategic decisions that it makes and
- Publish a short written assessment on how it has done this.

“Strategic” has been given a broad interpretation in this regard and means:

- High level public sector decisions
- Decisions which affect how a public body fulfils its intended purpose, over a significant period of time

Socio-economic disadvantage can be experienced both in places and communities of interest, leading to further negative outcomes such as social exclusion

The SCTS adopts a progressive approach, seeking to address inequality both for its people and its surrounding communities where possible. This, however, must be achieved within the statutory duties placed upon SCTS as an independent non-ministerial department by the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008. Our founding legislation limits our functions to the provision of the property, services and employees necessary for the administration of justice in Scotland’s courts and devolved tribunals; the judiciary of those courts and tribunals and the Office of the Public Guardian.

In order to help us to actively consider this duty in strategic decision making and to ensure that any key outcomes associated with such decisions would not adversely impact on those already suffering from socio-economic disadvantage, we are developing our Equality Impact Assessment toolkit and guidance to include the Fairer Scotland Duty and rebranding the process as an Integrated Impact Assessment. Alongside this, we are keen to ensure that staff have knowledge about our organisational obligations and their individual obligations under the equalities

legislation and we will be providing a variety of training sessions to support and enhance this knowledge and awareness during 2023/24.

Customer Service Excellence

Customer Service Excellence (CSE) is an externally-accredited standard involving assessment of customer-focused service delivery against 57 elements broken down across five criteria:

- Customer Insight
- The Culture of the Organisation
- Information and Access
- Delivery
- Timeliness and Quality of service

Some of the elements assessed are directly relevant to equality and diversity as set out below which includes specific ratings.

- ‘we make particular efforts to identify hard to reach and disadvantaged groups and individuals and have developed our services in response to their specific needs’ (rated compliance plus 2022-23);
- ‘we ensure that all customers and customer groups are treated fairly and this is confirmed by feedback and the measurement of customer experience’ (rated fully compliant 2022-23);
- ‘we provide our customers with the information they need in ways which meet their needs and preferences, using a variety of appropriate channels’ (rated fully compliant 2022-23).

Three ratings can be awarded for each element:

- Partial Compliance – this is where there is limited evidence or assessors feel there is inconsistent service delivery, or procedures are not applied as supplied in the evidence that has been supplied.
- Fully Compliant - this is where assessors are satisfied with the evidence that they find/are presented with.
- Compliance Plus – this is where assessors observe best practice in service delivery.

[The last assessment in 2022/23](#) accredited the SCTS once again to the CSE Standard. It concluded with the SCTS maintaining 13 ‘Compliance Plus’ ratings from the previous assessment in 2019, gaining one additional ‘Compliance Plus’ rating, bringing the total to 14. There are now just two ‘partially compliant’ ratings.

Re-accreditation demonstrates our continuous commitment to providing quality services and follows on from great satisfaction rates following the [2021-22- Court User Satisfaction Service](#).

Equality Audit

In 2022 we commissioned an internal audit of our approach to complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The audit results set out that SCTS has a strong commitment to the principles of Equality and Diversity and is in compliance with the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act. It also referenced the strong commitment from the Executive Team and clear leadership, direction and engagement from a senior management level. The outcome of the audit identified a small number of improvement opportunities and these include: reviewing our internal governance arrangements, communication and corporate strategies; our EDI learning and development activities and our EqIA process. Reviewing these areas will enhance the overall governance and assurance framework and validate the good work that we have out in place to drive our EDI agenda forward. We have developed an Action Plan and this will be monitored by our ESG and EAG with regular updates presented to the Executive Team, People Committee and Audit and Risk Committee.

5. Partnership Work within the Public Sector and the Justice System

We continue to work with justice partners, other public bodies and the third sector groups on joint equality issues and to share knowledge. We are a member of the Justice Board and the Justice Leaders Network. Together we are committed to work towards delivering the Justice in Scotland vision and priorities ensuring best practice is achieved and shared across the justice sector.

The Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB) Equality Forum

The NDPB Equality Forum is a collaboration of Scottish public sector bodies who each have a responsibility for responding to the Public Sector Equality Duties. In 2021 the SCTS Equality Team joined this forum which draws expertise and resources from a range of partners to influence and support the development and implementation of policy and practice on equality, diversity and inclusion in Scotland. The forum is involved in the Scottish National Equality Improvement Project (SNEIP) led by Scottish Government. The SNEIP is one of the main ways in which all public authorities can share knowledge and practice on equality and input to the current review of the public sector equality duty in Scotland.

Cross Party Group on Autism (CPG)

A forum to raise awareness and promote the interests of autistic people, including those with Asperger syndrome, their families and carers; and to influence government policy.

The Cross-Party Group seeks to bring together individuals, organisations and Parliamentarians who have a shared interest in raising awareness of autism and promoting the interests of autistic people, their families and carers at the Scottish Parliament; with a view to influencing Scottish Government policy and improving the lives of this group of people

Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) Subgroup

The Children's Rights implementation group was established under the Youth Justice Improvement Board (YJIB) to take forward priorities and actions relating to children's rights and participation under the new youth justice vision, Justice for children and young people - a rights-respecting approach: vision and priorities, as published in June 2021. The vision outlines the key outcomes and priorities to be achieved for youth justice by 2024 and is supported by an accompanying action plan.

The Children's Rights implementation group agreed to the formation of this subgroup to contribute to addressing the outcomes of the vision.

The SLCN subgroup focuses on the following priority:

- Provision should be made to ensure professionals/services are taking into account speech, language and communication needs, including additional support needs to improve life chances.

BSL Justice Advisory Group (BSLJAG)

In 2020 the SCTS joined a BSL-led justice advisory group which was established by the Scottish Government's Civil Law and Legal System division, consisting of twelve organisations at commencement. The group plays a key role in developing and delivering a programme of improvements to help the justice agencies better meet the needs of BSL users.

The BSLJAG met for the first time in February 2020, and while the COVID-19 pandemic hindered progress, plans are in place to develop a new statutory framework for a forward-looking, user-centred legal aid service.

The BSLJAG is currently exploring various routes to source a substantial evidence base in order to focus its guidance and improvements on a wider variety of areas. Once a sufficiently large evidence base is gathered, the group will develop a programme of improvements.

Cross Justice Working Group on Race and Workforce

Our Director, HR is a member of the Cross Justice Working Group on Race and Workforce. The focus of this group is to ensure there is a comprehensive picture of the current activity to address recruitment, retention, progression and promotion across the Justice sector; to provide a strategic and cohesive approach to tackling barriers to employment across the justice system at all levels of the workforce, and to support cross system learning within the justice sector. The group has a number of

outcomes and these include having an improved understanding of the barriers to individuals from ethnic minorities in recruitment, retention, promotion and leadership to justice organisations and the development of policies to respond to these and for the justice system, and each organisation within it, to be more representative of the communities they serve.

The National Advisory Council on Women and Girls (NACWG)

The NACWG is a group that helps drive forward action to tackle gender inequality. This group provides annual reports to the first minister making recommendations based on the findings from engagement with their supportive allies – known as ‘the circle’. The circle act as public champions for gender equality.

The SCTS is a circle member and ally of the NACWG.

In January 2021 the NACWG launched a new ‘Make your Pledge’ webpage where organisations can share their commitment/s to making gender equality a historical curiosity in Scotland by producing a statement/pledge. This is a new way they have established for their ally organisations to make their #generation equal commitments.

Organisations making a pledge are committing to accelerate progress on gender equality and are willing to be held accountable.

We have submitted our pledge committing to a number of actions – see below, around removing gender bias, reducing the gender pay gap and improving gender equality, designed to help accelerate this progress over the next 3 years.

- Action around reducing the gender pay gap.
- Action around zero tolerance of discrimination and harassment.
- Action around removing gender bias in recruitment and career development.
- Action around encouraging women and girls (of diverse lived experience) to pursue a career in the sector.
- Action around improving the gender balance of board/leadership teams.

By sharing these commitments, we will help the NACWG build a picture of what’s changing for the better in Scotland, and what needs more work.

Key measures of success:

- Our Pay Gap Report demonstrates that we have reduced our gender pay gap.
- SCTS has established networks and partnerships across Scotland including schools, academic institutions and specialist organisations to help to promote SCTS as an employer of choice to women and girls of diverse lived experience.
- Our range of recruitment metrics demonstrate that we attract women and girls applicants.

- We carry out regular recruitment surveys and we receive positive feedback on our internal and external recruitment campaigns from women and girls applicants and recruiting managers;
- All recruiting managers are trained or coached in recruitment and selection before they manage a recruitment campaign.
- We have recruitment and selection processes in place that provide clear links to realising our women and girls employees' potential and succession planning;

Our pledge:

“The SCTS is committed to equality in all our policies and practices enabling us to deliver tangible results and making our organisation a great place to work for everyone”.

6. Equality Outcomes 2019-2023 – Progress to date

In our 2019 Mainstreaming Report we set out the three equality outcomes we would focus our efforts on achieving over the period 2019 – 23. The following section looks at the progress towards achieving each of these outcomes since 2021.

Generally good progress has been made across some areas. However, we have experienced a degree of difficulty in delivering complete results in certain work streams as a consequence of the impact of Covid-19 on our work priorities. We will incorporate tasks related to those work streams in the new action plan for the next four-year reporting period.

Please note that the information below builds on the progress report we published in April 2021 which contains additional detail.

Equality Outcome 1

We will promote awareness and understanding of equality and diversity within our organisation by:

Supporting outcome 1a): Promoting the value of submitting and collecting appropriate equality monitoring data.

Equality Data Staff Communications Campaign

In May 2021 we issued a corporate communication campaign to raise awareness amongst staff of the importance of updating their personal information, to ensure our services and practices promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

A short animated film, setting out the importance of personal information and how it is used, was also published along with another film showing how to access the people system we use internally to collect this data.

Following publication of the campaign, and the promotion of films and working with senior managers, completion rates have improved with an increase in EDI metrics to almost 50% across the protected characteristics. Clearly there is more work to be done in building trust in the monitoring process, and an action plan with clear outcomes is being developed to ensure there is further transparency in the requirement and use of this information.

This personal information is important so we can identify focus areas for improvement, and use this information to review and improve employment policies and procedures, to ensure work practices are fair and inclusive and support and promote diversity. Our commitment to embed equality and diversity is a commitment set out in our People Strategy 2023 - 2028

In terms of new employees all of our recruitment on-boarding processes now record EDI metrics.

Supporting outcome 1b): Introducing Inclusion Ambassadors with specialist knowledge of the protected characteristics.

Following a recommendation from the Scottish Government Internal Audit of SCTS in 2022, the Terms of Reference for the Equality Steering Group have been revised to embody an enhanced role for the Equality Steering Group. Specifically to include an ambassadorial EDI role to promote the EDI agenda throughout SCTS.

Initial progress and endeavour has been made to promote the uptake of these roles which are viewed as key to promote the continued drive to educate and embed EDI, and deliver on Equality Outcomes in the 2023 - 2027 reporting period.

Supporting outcome 1c): Supporting and developing the function of the SCTS Staff Equality Engagement Network (SEEN).

We have been unable to make progress against this supporting outcome due to dependencies on other pieces of work and underlying objectives in Equality Outcome 1.

However, the Equality Steering Group have discussed how to approach progressing this outcome and what the next steps would be. SCTS will work towards establishing an Equality Engagement Network when progress in the previous section has been achieved. We will further reflect on the purpose of this network and the Group will agree a meaningful approach that will aim to maximize the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion across SCTS.

Equality Outcome 2

We will improve the accessibility of our services by:

Supporting outcome 2a): Creating a bespoke page on our website that deals entirely with accessibility information and guidance.

Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)

In 2022 we initiated a project to re-develop the SCTS website in collaboration with an external company. It is expected that the new website will be launched at the end of 2023. The new website is being designed in line with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, known as WCAG 2.1.

The use of assisted technologies is also being considered, and members of the Equality Steering Group have designed an interim proposal to update different parts of the website. Consequently a dedicated section (Support/Reasonable Adjustments) was launched on our public website to better support those with protected characteristics who wish to access SCTS services.

Links to this section were added to other parts of the website including “contact us”, “accessibility statement”, “equality”, “about SCTS” and “coming to court”. The contact details of the Equality and Diversity Manager were added to this section which has helped to streamline the management of requests related to extra support.

Similarly, a dedicated section (British Sign Language) was launched on our public website at the end of 2022 to better support those who use BSL as a first language. Since its launch, we have been adding new content and have also added a quick link to directly access the EDI page which facilitates navigation.

Supporting outcome 2b): Scoping the use of online interpreting and support services at public counters to facilitate ad hoc general enquiries, payment of financial penalties, etc.

As part of the work required to progress this outcome, the EDI team has reviewed and evaluated the data that Public Counters have collected in relation to requests from Court users. This information would inform and potentially justify a decision to implement online interpreting and support services.

The result of this evaluation indicated that there is not enough relevant data to support a decision to implement online interpreting and support services at this point. More information related to the demand and need of such services in Public Counters is required and is being pursued before an informed decision can be taken.

Supporting outcome 2c): Promoting use of online support services e.g. the [Next Generation Text Service](#), [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](#) and telephone interpreting, by updating our website pages and raising awareness among members of SCTS staff.

The contactSCOTLAND-BSL service logo has been added to the SCTS recruitment pages to facilitate and encourage applications from BSL users. All adverts now signpost potential applicants to additional support that we can accommodate though provision of documents in different styles and formats. SCTS has also confirmed the appointment of ‘Deaf Action’ as the provider of all British Sign Language Services

across the organisation. Recruiting managers have been briefed about the availability of these provisions.

Both the contact SCOTLAND-BSL and Relay UK are services that are promoted and explained within the Sensory Impairment and BSL section within the internal Equality SCTS SharePoint Hub that the EDI team manages.

Supporting Outcome 2d): Implementing recommendations from the Enabling Jury Service Report.

The SCTS has recently committed to taking forward the outstanding recommendations from Lord Matthews' report on [Enabling Jury Service](#) dated February 2018. This has been communicated to Scottish Ministers via the Scottish Government Criminal Justice Reform Unit.

SCTS staff met with colleagues from the Scottish Government at the end of 2022 and the group are in the process of agreeing the remit and scope of work along with a terms of reference. However, there has been no decision made in respect of the next steps of the project as delivering any potential progress will require a legislation change out with the control of SCTS.

Supporting outcome 2e): Working with other justice agencies to increase the pool of qualified and suitably experienced BSL/English and deaf/blind interpreters working in the justice system.

Prior to the pandemic the Equality and Diversity Manager attended regular meetings with the Programme Leader, MSc Advancing Practice in Signed/Spoken Language Interpreting at Queen Margaret University. These meetings stopped following the start of the pandemic and recruitment challenges within the EDI team at SCTS. As such, we have been unable to make meaningful progress against this supporting outcome. However, we have recently re-initiated those conversations with Queen Margaret University and the collaboration will continue into the new reporting period. Our contact at the university has confirmed that they continue to run their Interpreting in Justice Setting's module, and they have explained that this is now open to Associate Students - those who join university for a single module and do not wish to study for a full PGDip/MSc.

The EDI team is also joining a working group run by the UK Ministry of Justice which looks at the pipeline of future professionals working with sign language users.

Equality Outcome 3

We will improve accessibility to our employment by:

Supporting Outcome 3a): Engaging with a variety of local communities in order to raise awareness of the critical role the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service plays in the justice system.

Working with our local communities elevated significantly since the relaxation of lockdown measures. The SCTS has attended various in-person career events at schools, colleges and universities across the country as well as Fife Pride and events hosted by other public and private sector organisations. A blend of approaches has been used to accommodate a Covid-consequential rise in the preference to attend events in a virtual capacity and SCTS systems and its people have accommodated that well.

In 2022/23 the team (with support from colleagues across the business) attended the following events:-

- Scottish Fire & Rescue Career fun day, Glasgow 6/8/22
- Fife Pride, Kirkcaldy, 17/9/22
- Law Fair, Strathclyde University, 21/9/22
- Scottish Graduate Recruitment Fair, Virtual, 5/10/22
- UK Careers Fair, Assembly Rooms Edinburgh, 14/10/22
- St Mungo's Academy Recruitment Fair, 8/11/22
- Career Fest 22, Open University, Virtual 9/11/22
- Student Opportunities Week, Edinburgh Napier University, 14/2/23

Falkirk District Jobs Fair, Forth Valley College, has been booked to attend at end of April 2023 with various other events including Edinburgh Pride booked already for 2023/24.

'Employerability' training was taken forward in 2022 and is provided by Disability Inclusion Scotland. SCTS managers involved in Recruitment and Selection activities are trained to be more inclusive in their approach when assessing candidates in our recruitment and selection process. The training equips managers to be inclusive in their work practices and specifically in recruitment and selection activities. This new training is listed on the SCTS education and learning hub.

The SCTS videos regarding our careers, vacancies and assessment process continued to be utilised by Careers Advisers in Schools and Colleges regarding career opportunities across Scotland's Public Sector and are accessible to all on YouTube.

The SCTS is represented by the Strategic Partner – Recruitment and Resourcing on the Cabinet Offices Going Forward into Employment Network (GFIE). GFIE was launched in 2017 as a cross-government collaboration. Breaking new ground, it provides improved life chances and social mobility opportunities for citizens through civil service employment, delivering a more diverse and inclusive workforce. This network has allowed the SCTS to explore utilisation of schemes set up by other organisations like Scottish Governments' Fair Start Scotland Scheme as well as its own 'life chances' modern apprenticeship scheme.

Supporting Outcome 3b): Introducing the SCTS Recruitment and Resourcing Strategy with a particular focus on developing SCTS as a socially inclusive employer.

The Recruitment and Resourcing Strategy and its aims and objectives has enabled the following progress to be made in the SCTS:-

- The increased use of Social Media to promote our activities as an employer, our videos, employee testimonials, careers and job opportunities has seen an organic growth of followers on LinkedIn of over 500% in the last 3 years to in excess of 8,000 people.
- Candidates and potential applicants are able to contact the SCTS regarding job applications and opportunities over various platforms and not just by email or phone.
- The SCTS uses LinkedIn to provide advance notice of attendance at events and to promote our acquisition of awards and accreditations.
- The SCTS 'glassdoor' account is allowing the SCTS to receive and respond to previous and current employees and candidates regarding their experiences with the SCTS including topics such as equality and diversity and organisational culture.
- Adapted recruitment approaches that align with industry expectations for our senior roles where landing pages providing testimonials, information about the roles, the organisation and the recruitment process can be navigated easily by potential applicants and candidates.
- Executive level sign off for the centralisation of the Recruitment and Resourcing function with the HR Unit in the SCTS where it was agreed that a centralised team will have greater capacity to tackle objectives like diversifying our workforce and developing inclusivity in our approach to initiatives associated with youth employment.
- Procurement of a new and modern people system which includes an e-recruitment module and on-boarding module to significantly improve accessibility and the overall candidate journey.
- Recruiting managers receive full recruitment and selection training online with a supported webinar with a recruitment specialist covering not only our legislative requirements but also equality, diversity, inclusion, and all forms of bias and advertising strategies.
- Attendance at recruitment and career events with provision of materials and advice catering to a diverse set of people, their needs and preferences.
- An average of 12% of new starts in the SCTS in quarters 2 and 3 of 2022/23 having declared a disability.

Supporting Outcome 3c): Improving accessibility to the recruitment section of our website.

Improvements in the accessibility to the recruitment section of our website are closely connected to progress on the measures being taken in relation to Equality Outcome 2 –'We will improve accessibility of our services'.

The attendance at in person and virtual events with prospective applicants and people who are interested in SCTS activities has expanded and improved accessibility to all of our services.

Collaboration with other organisations has also helped to promote the services we offer and the career opportunities in a more inclusive and effective manner.

Supporting Outcome 3d): Introducing an inclusive work placement scheme in order to assist people to gain work experience; and in preparation for same to raise associated awareness among members of staff.

The SCTS ‘Modern Apprenticeship Scheme Social Inclusion’ scheme launched October 2019 remains as a recognised and endorsed scheme by the Civil Service Commission. The scheme features in the list provided across the GFIE Network. The scheme has successfully resulted in permanent employment within the SCTS for those completing their apprenticeship and is a scheme that we look to use again in the future.

7. Equality Outcomes 2023-2027

Equality outcomes are commitments to work to address long-standing or significant issues of inequality or underrepresentation, requiring us to take action and go beyond basic compliance in mainstreaming equality.

We have produced the following outcomes supported by relevant actions (detailed below) for the 4-year period from 2023 to 2027:

Equality Outcome 1

The services provided by SCTS are suitable and accessible to all who need to use them.

This outcome is focused on:

- Black, Asian and minority ethnic people
- Disabled people
- Neurodiverse people
- People from lower income backgrounds
- Elderly people

Supporting Outcomes	<p>Examples of specific steps/work streams that we need to have fulfilled to achieve equality outcome:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have considered the needs of all communities as we design our products, projects and communications. 2. We are collecting the right information about our service users.
---------------------	--

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Continue to integrate EqIA's as part of a project initiation stage 4. Progress the project to replace the SCTS website to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (known as WCAG 2.1). 5. We have adapted our communications approach to an inclusive communication approach to reflect the needs of the wider Scottish population. 6. We have a communications strategy that includes EDI communications 7. We work in collaboration with expert organisations who represent the communities who we need to reach.
--	---

Equality Outcome 2

SCTS is an inclusive employer with a workforce which proportionately reflects the diversity of Scottish society and where employees have an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential.

This outcome is focused on:

- Black, Asian and minority ethnic people
- Disabled people
- Neurodiverse people
- People from lower income backgrounds
- Elderly people

Supporting Outcomes	<p>Examples of specific steps/work streams that we need to have fulfilled to achieve equality outcome:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have more people from underrepresented communities applying for our internal and external vacancies. 2. We have evaluated and improved our job design, job evaluation and recruitment systems to remove barriers and bias. 3. We have worked with partners to create new routes into employment with SCTS, such as Skills Development Scotland, Inclusion Scotland and others.
---------------------	---

Equality Outcome 3

SCTS staff are knowledgeable about equality legislation and protected characteristics and treat all court users and colleagues with dignity and respect.

This outcome is focused on:

- Black, Asian and minority ethnic people
- Disabled people

- Neurodiverse people
- People from lower income backgrounds
- Elderly people

Supporting Outcomes	<p>Examples of specific steps/work streams that we need to have fulfilled to achieve equality outcome:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have raised awareness on equality, diversity and inclusion within the organisation. 2. Information on reasonable adjustments is available to all employees. 3. We have developed the new people strategy with equality and human rights at its heart and setting out our EDI intentions. 4. We have increased the completion rate of mandatory Equality and Unconscious Bias training for staff. 5. A communication and compliance framework has been developed to ensure regular communication and reminders are in place advising employees of the importance and need to complete the mandatory E-Learning. 6. We have improved our staff involvement and representation in the EDI agenda. (activities around local partnership framework / ambassadors) 7. We have set up organisational equality KPIs and these are included in the HR measures report provided quarterly to the People Committee and the SCTS Board.
---------------------	--

8. Going Forward

We will continue to focus on equality, diversity and inclusion during this new reporting period. Activities and action plans will be mainstreamed into the wider work of the organisation ensuring that equality underpins the work that we do. Looking forward, we acknowledge there is further work to be done in relation to mainstreaming and advancing our equalities duties as a public service provider.

A Diverse Nation and Organisation

As the range of services we administer has grown in recent years, the diversity of the organisation has changed too. The justice system must reflect the society that it serves – and for it to do so we must ensure that SCTS remains a great place for people from all walks of life to work. Our approach to workforce planning will continue to develop so that we can offer attractive careers – balancing flexibility, mobility and opportunities for our employees to develop.

It is only by maintaining a skilled, engaged and diverse workforce that we can provide a high-quality, innovative and compassionate service – recognising that, behind every

case, there are individuals with their own expectations and needs. Our work to improve the service provided to the most vulnerable people in the system will continue – backed up by the development of a trauma-informed workforce, able to appropriately respond and support the broad range of people who find themselves involved in the system – often through no fault of their own.

Scotland 2023 and Beyond

The values that sit at the core of Scotland’s National Performance Framework are that – ***‘We are a society which treats all our people with kindness, dignity and compassion, respects the rule of law, and acts in an open and transparent way’***.

The justice system is fundamental to ensuring we live in safe, inclusive and thriving communities. It supports the rule of law and our democracy, and is a core part of our public services. Dignity and compassion can only be guaranteed if, when violated, there is an independent judiciary and a system which enables wrongdoing to be addressed and the rights of individuals to be upheld. Access to justice and the principle of open justice underpins open and transparent government.

While the ability to fulfil our civic rights and respect for the rule of law remain an absolute constant, SCTS must transform to meet the needs of people in today’s society. This includes ensuring we deliver person-centred services and embed trauma-informed practices.

Over the course of the next reporting period SCTS will face a number of new opportunities and challenges – developing online service provision; tackling high outstanding case volumes; and implementing reform to improve the way the system manages serious sexual offence cases – all against a background of restricted funding coupled with high inflation. In this environment the importance of a well-functioning, independent justice system cannot be overstated. We will continue to work in collaboration with agencies and organisations across the system to maintain and improve standards and implement key reforms.

9. Involving Others

The SCTS would like to thank the following organisations who were invited to comment on the draft of the Equality Mainstreaming Report 2019-2021:

- Age Scotland
- British Deaf Association Scotland
- Close the Gap
- Disability Equality Scotland
- Interfaith Scotland
- MECOPP
- Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS)

- RNIB Scotland
- YouthLink Scotland

10. Other Languages/Formats

If you require information from this document in another language/format please contact:



Human Resources Business Unit
Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service
Spur N1, Saughton House
Broomhouse Drive
Edinburgh
EH11 3XD



equality@scotcourts.gov.uk



0131 248 1866

If you use British Sign Language (BSL) and wish to phone us using a sign language interpreter, you can use the online video relay interpreting service.



Contact us through an online
Sign Language Interpreter

BSL [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/contact-scotland-bsl)

If you have a text phone you can contact us using [Text Relay](#)



Relay UK

If you wish to know more about the role of the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service, please visit our website www.scotcourts.gov.uk