

Mainstreaming equalities at Environmental Standards Scotland

Our report on mainstreaming equality, gender representation on public boards, and our equality outcomes 2023-2027

April 2023

Foreword

Environmental Standards Scotland is now in its second year of existence. This report looks back at what we have done so far to build equalities into how we work and looks forward to what we plan to do over the next four years. Equality is essential in who we are as an organisation, how we work and how we engage with the public. The report sets out three outcomes that we aim to achieve. We want to:



- be a team that reflects the diversity of the Scottish population
- create an accessible and inclusive working environment
- ensure that everyone understands what we do and can access our services

Our working environment is now more complex as we continue to adjust to a blend of home and office working. Making sure that we support accessibility and inclusion, irrespective of where we are working is essential.

In addition, the final point is critical. The environment matters to everyone. Environmental Standards Scotland's job of scrutinising how environmental law is being implemented must be accessible to everyone. We are conscious that poor environmental conditions are unevenly distributed with some people and some groups disproportionately affected. Our work is rooted in science and law, but we have to make sure that we make it as accessible as possible to all.

The report sets out what we plan to do to achieve these three outcomes. We will report on what we have achieved in two years' time.

Mark Roberts, Chief Executive

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Version Control

Version	Author	Purpose	Date
1.0	ESS	Version published on ESS website	April 2023

1. Introduction

1.1 Welcome to our first report on mainstreaming equality. This report explains what we have done to mainstream equality in our organisation. It introduces our first set of equality outcomes for the next four years. There is also an [action plan](#) setting out what we will do to achieve these outcomes and how we will measure our success.

About Environmental Standards Scotland

1.2 Our job is to ensure that environmental law in Scotland is effective, and that public bodies comply with it. We are accountable to the Scottish Parliament and are independent of the Scottish Government. Our remit covers all Scottish public authorities including, for example: councils; health boards; the Scottish Government and its agencies.

Our Strategic Plan

1.3 In November 2022, the Scottish Parliament approved our [Strategic Plan](#), which sets out how we plan to deliver our work.

1.4 Within this Plan we set out that we are ambitious for Scotland's environment and our Vision is that:

‘Scotland's people and nature benefit from a high quality environment and are protected from harm through the consistent application of effective environmental laws, which are recognised internationally as setting high standards.’

1.5 Our Mission Statement is that:

‘We will ensure that Scotland's environmental laws and standards are complied with, and their effectiveness improved to achieve Scotland's ambitious targets for the environment, nature and climate change.’

1.6 We have a set of Principles that guide the way we will work:

- 1) We will target our efforts and resources where we can add most value – focusing where our contribution is needed most, or will make most difference
- 2) We will seek to resolve issues through agreement wherever possible – having recourse to our formal powers where we judge it is necessary to deliver the outcome expected
- 3) We will be evidence driven – seeking a wide range of inputs and expertise to inform our work and to support our decisions and advice
- 4) We will be open and transparent – keeping people informed about the progress of our work and providing opportunities to input to and influence it
- 5) We will seek opportunities to work in partnership with others – working closely with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that our collective efforts deliver benefits for environmental protection and enhancement

1.7 In our Strategic Plan, we recognise that an equal and diverse workforce will support us in becoming a high-performing organisation. We want to embed an inclusive culture and are developing our Equality and Diversity Policy.

Our people

1.8 We are led by a [Chair and Board](#), who are experienced in leading independent scrutiny organisations. They have a range of expertise in environmental law, policy and regulation. Our team is headed by a Chief Executive and organised into three specialist teams.

1.9 The structure of our organisation can be seen in Figure 1 below.

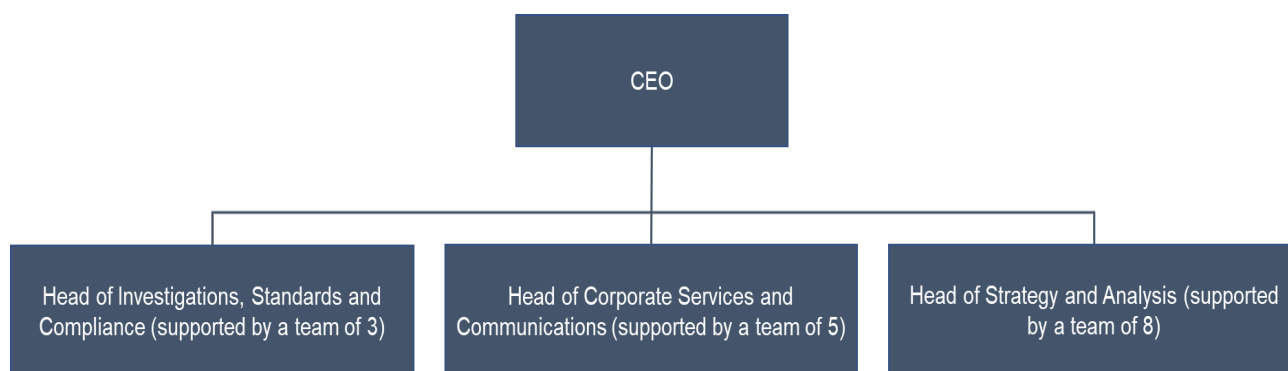


Figure 1 - ESS Organogram

1.10 At the time of publication, we are a team of 20 employees¹ spanning across Scotland, with a main office in Edinburgh.

2. Our legal duties under the Equality Act 2010

2.1 As a public body, ESS must address inequality and discrimination in its work. The Public Sector Equality Duty (“the general duty”), which is part of the [Equality Act 2010](#) (“the Act”), requires that ESS, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

¹ As per the definition of “employee” listed at s.83 of the [Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

2.2 The relevant protected characteristics listed in the Act are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

2.3 As part of the [Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2012](#) (“the Regulations”)² we must:

- report on mainstreaming the equality duty
- publish equality outcomes
- assess and review policies and practices
- gather and use employee information
- consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public sector procurement
- publish this mainstreaming report, equality outcomes and progress updates in a manner which is accessible

2.4 In two years’ time, we will report on our progress against mainstreaming the equality duty. At the same time, we will report progress against the equality outcomes presented in this report.

2.5 We do not currently have to publish gender pay gap information or publish statements on equal pay because of the small size of our organisation³.

² ESS became a listed authority under [The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) \(Scotland\) Amendment Regulations 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

³ Listed authorities must have 20 or more employees throughout the entire reporting period, as per [The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) \(Scotland\) Amendment Regulations 2016 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

3. Mainstreaming the general equality duty

3.1 Under the Regulations we are required to publish a report on the progress we have made to make the general duty fundamental to the exercise of our functions.

3.2 Together, the activities that we have undertaken since vesting in October 2021 support all three aspects of the general duty. This section details our contribution to mainstreaming equality across our organisation, in our activities and in our working practice.

Environmental quality

3.3 Our main goal is to improve the quality of our environment for all the people of Scotland. We recognise the intersectional nature of environmental change and how different groups are disproportionately affected. Our monitoring and analysis work actively looks for areas of concern in environmental performance. Our investigatory work uses our powers to ensure compliance with and effectiveness of environmental law. Together, these activities will help to achieve our vision and ambition that all Scotland's people benefit from a high-quality environment. We will assess progress against key long-term environmental outcomes as one of our own Performance and Management Indicators.

Stakeholder engagement

3.4 We deliver a range of sessions to share information about ESS and its work. These include: targeted stakeholder workshops; public information sessions; presentations on the draft Strategic Plan, etc. In doing so, we consider the materials, the language used, and the timings of sessions. This supports people with different needs, working patterns, or responsibilities, to access the sessions and enables us to reach the broadest possible audience.

3.5 In developing the draft 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, we applied the principles of Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). This helped to consider any potential positive or negative impacts of the draft Plan on different sectors of the population, in different ways. The assessment was informed by: a desk-based exercise which gathered information across the protected characteristics; a workshop with staff to discuss

findings; and views expressed through the public consultation. As a result, we updated the draft Plan to make clearer reference to our commitment to equality and diversity among staff recruitment and development.

3.6 As well as considering accessibility in the planning of workshops and information sessions, we invite attendees to provide feedback. This provides an opportunity for attendees to share comments on what went well and any areas for improvement. Gathering this feedback will help us to improve our sessions in the future and identify areas where we may need additional support or training.

Accessible and inclusive communications

3.7 We have created and shared an internal Accessibility Guide with our team to ensure that all of our content can be easily read and understood. This includes information on writing in plain English, font size, alternative text for images, etc. We check our content against this guidance to ensure that people with different needs can access the information we distribute and publish.

3.8 Much of our work requires analysis of detailed scientific, technical and legal information. It is therefore impossible to avoid using complex terminology at all times. Where appropriate, we provide summaries within or alongside our reports to make the key information more accessible.

3.9 As well as our written communications, we provide some key information in alternative formats. For example, we have created a "[Latest Videos](#)" page on our website so people can easily navigate to information in this format. On our "[Publications](#)" page we also offer all written documentation in an alternative format on request. All new documents contain this line, and we are currently updating previous publications to this effect.

Accessible services

3.10 Anyone can submit a representation to us, and we are aware that poor environmental quality can often affect disadvantaged groups the most. It is therefore imperative that our services are accessible to all. We have produced internal guidance on the investigations process to ensure consistency in approach and

treatment of cases. This guidance clearly sets out our commitment to avoid discrimination, harassment and victimisation in delivering our services. It also requires the consideration of EqIA principles in any changes to our investigations procedures.

3.11 Our website contains a dedicated page setting out, in plain English, [how the public can raise concerns with us](#). This section includes a video blog which includes a step-by-step guide on how to complete our representation form. This section also points the public to our Frequently Asked Questions. Those who are experiencing difficulties using our service are invited to contact us directly for support.

3.12 Our representation form was developed with input from external stakeholders and is designed to be straightforward to complete. It is available as an online web submission form, or can be downloaded and sent to us by email or by post. Our website and our representation form make clear that we are willing to assist those who are unsure whether their concerns fall within our remit.

3.13 We use a case manager system to allocate a dedicated single point of contact to people making a representation or enquiry. Our team will get in touch to ensure that their concerns have been captured correctly in the documentation sent. We also make clear that we are available to discuss their representation/enquiry at any time.

3.14 Our [Service Standards](#) are issued to people making representations setting out what they can expect from ESS. These include our commitments to engage in a respectful, timely and accessible manner. Here we also provide details of our [Freedom of Information Policy](#) and [Privacy Notice](#). We are clear that if we are not adhering to our service standards people may complain to us as per our [Complaints Policy](#).

3.15 We have created an Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form which we will send to people making a representation. This data will allow us to understand who is accessing our services and inform improvements to our procedures. For example, we will know where further engagement is needed to reach different people and groups.

Procurement

3.16 We ensure equalities is a consideration in our procurement process by complying with all relevant equality legislation. Our Procurement Handbook ensures we maintain the principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination. In addition, each of our contracts contains a non-discrimination clause for our service providers.

Recruitment

3.17 We carry out our recruitment procedures in conjunction with the Government Recruitment Service, a part of the UK Government Cabinet Office. We follow the requirements to be open, fair and to recruit on merit. We have also developed a Recruitment Policy to ensure the principles of fair and open competition. The policy demonstrates transparency and our commitment to equality and diversity in all aspects of the recruitment and selection process.

3.18 We advertise our vacancies for a minimum of nine days and over two weekends. We have our own webpage on [Civil Service Careers](#) which highlights our culture and values. We also advertise widely on: the Civil Service Jobs website; LinkedIn; Twitter; Environmentjobs.co.uk; and targeted Scottish Government Yammer communities. This ensures that we reach a wide audience and prospective candidates have the opportunity to get in touch with us.

3.19 The selection process complies with our Equal Opportunities Policy. This removes opportunity for bias, whether direct or indirect, on the basis of: gender; age; race; marital or civil partnership status; disability; religion or belief; pregnancy or maternity; gender reassignment; or sexual orientation. For example, the initial sifting of candidates is blinded and based entirely on meeting the required criteria for the post.

3.20 Where appropriate, we provide reasonable adjustments throughout the application and interview process. Candidates who fall under the Disability Confident Scheme (DCS) AND meet the minimum required criteria are guaranteed an interview.

3.21 We coordinate interviews in a way that safeguards against individual bias or discrimination. Our interview panels will always include a trained interviewer. We will,

as far as is possible, ensure that our interview panels are diverse. We also provide reliable, valid and relevant criteria against which candidates will be marked. This guides our interviewers and provides equal opportunities for candidates.

Employee information

3.22 We developed and distributed an Employee Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form to collect staff data on protected characteristics. Whilst the form is voluntary, we explained our reasoning for collecting the data and achieved a high response rate. We now have a good understanding of the makeup of our workforce. This will help identify potential areas of inequality and inform work to encourage equality and diversity.

3.23 We are currently setting up a voluntary Employee Passport system which will allow staff to discuss personal circumstances with their manager and agree adjustments to support them. The Passport covers, for example, health conditions, disabilities, personal commitments and more. The Employee Passport aims to create an inclusive and supportive work environment which empowers everyone to perform at their best. The Passport is confidential, controlled by the employee, and can be carried forward into new roles.

3.24 When people leave our organisation they are invited to an exit interview. This is carried out by our third-party Human Resources support representative. The interview provides an opportunity to disclose any concerns, including equality-related issues. This helps us to understand the reasons for leaving our employment, and inform policies and procedures going forward if concerns are disclosed.

Staff induction and development

3.25 Our staff have an in-depth induction when joining our organisation. This includes a range of information on individuals' responsibility in respect of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) at ESS, as well as mandatory inclusive culture training. All staff are also required to pursue a mandatory equality objective in their individual work plans, to ensure EDI is central to each workstream within ESS.

3.26 In addition to mandatory training, our staff have access to a wealth of up-to-date EDI resources on our online training platform. We also offer additional opportunities for in-person and online training that will foster an inclusive and supportive environment within the organisation. For example, we ran a full-team training session focused on individual communication methods and preferences, to strengthen team cohesion and raise awareness of differing communication styles.

Staff support

3.27 We regularly engage with our staff to ensure senior management are aware of the needs and concerns of our people. For example, we issue bi-monthly pulse surveys which focus on a particular aspect of our working environment. Topics include wellbeing, hybrid working, internal communications and training. We also run an annual staff engagement survey, to gauge staff's feelings within and towards ESS. To ensure consistency and transparency, we monitor the outcomes of this survey as part of our key management indicators.

3.28 We mirror Scottish Government HR policies, which require consideration of EqIA principles in their development. They ensure equality in treatment of each member of staff, whilst also allowing flexibility where adjustments are required.

These policies include:

- Fairness at Work
- Standards of Behaviour
- Flexible Working Pattern
- Flexible Working Hours
- Hybrid and Homeworking
- Right to Disconnect

3.29 We regularly monitor and share with our team wellbeing initiatives and information from occupational health. These resources, which include information on anxiety management, disability awareness, women's health, etc., are available on our online training platform, Pathways. We also have individual access to confidential, third-party advice and support, and a health programme which includes an annual lifestyle medical check.

3.30 We strive to make ESS a welcoming and inclusive place to work. We have launched a number of social initiatives to foster great relations between co-workers. For example, we have set up an internal, opt-in “Coffee Club”. Staff are invited to a monthly, one-to-one catch up with a teammate selected at random. We have had a high opt-in rate for these initiatives.

Accessible working environment

3.31 We provide a substantial hybrid working equipment offer, enabling our people to work safely and comfortably from home. Staff are invited to complete a Display Screen Equipment (DSE) self-assessment. This allows us to identify areas where staff may need adjustments to their workspace. We compiled a catalogue of home office equipment, based on further engagement regarding individual requirements. All staff have been able to access equipment such as sit-stand desks, ergonomic kneeling stools, etc. to ensure physical wellbeing.

3.32 ESS has also invested in hybrid meeting equipment for the office. ESS staff, Board and Committee members, and our stakeholders have the flexibility to join hybrid meetings remotely, facilitated by collaborative videoconferencing software.

4. Gender representation on our Board

4.1 As a Scottish public body, ESS is also subject to the [Gender Representation on Public Boards \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#). This Act is intended to address the historic and persistent underrepresentation of women in public life.

4.2 This Act sets out the “gender representation objective” which aims for a public board to have 50% of non-executive members who are women⁴. Public boards

⁴ As per the definition of “woman” at section 2 of the [Gender Representation on Public Boards \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#)

should have achieved this objective by 31 December 2022. At ESS we have achieved this objective as our Board comprises four men and three women⁵.

Period	Women	Men	Total	Gender representation objective achieved?
At 31 December 2022 deadline	Two	Three	Five	Yes
At 28 April 2023	Three	Four	Seven	Yes

Table 1 - Gender representation on the ESS Board

4.3 Our Board recruitment processes have supported ESS in achieving the gender representation objective. We have run two vacancy competitions in the reporting period.

Appointments made in April 2021

4.4 The first vacancy competition resulted in the appointment of our Chair and four members in April 2021.

Number of applications received	% of applications from women	Number of women appointed	Total appointments
60	45%	Two	Five

Table 2 - Applications submitted to Board vacancy competition April 2021

⁵ As per section 1(2) of the [Gender Representation on Public Boards \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#), due to our Board comprising an odd number, the 50% figure applies as if our Board has one fewer member

4.5 We used a range of methods to attract applications from a broad pool of candidates. The mechanisms used were:

- Executive Search - a targeted exercise using Munro Consulting
- Leveraging SG networks - blanket distribution through Scottish Government networks facilitated by the Public Appointments and Public Bodies Teams, Scottish Leaders Forum, and the Chief Scientific Adviser for the Environment
- Leveraging personal networks – Senior Civil Service staff and the Scottish Government Environment and Economy Leaders' Group raised awareness of adverts through their own networks
- Cabinet Secretary vlog – the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport produced a vlog regarding the vacancy competition which was tweeted by Scottish Government Communications, Director-General Economy and Public Appointments teams
- Media adverts – a small budget was deployed to advertise on key online platforms and publications, LinkedIn, Sunday Times, etc.

4.6 It was identified that the vlog was particularly helpful in generating traffic to the vacancies. Tweets sharing the vlog via Scottish Government and recruitment consultant feeds received 1829 views.

4.7 Our staff at ESS and the Scottish Government Public Appointments team also notified a number of organisations regarding our Board vacancies. This included a number of gender-specific organisations to encourage applications from women. The organisations were asked to share details of the vacancies with their networks.

Appointments made in April 2023

4.8 We ran a second vacancy competition which resulted in two further appointments being made in April 2023.

Number of applications received	% of applications from women	Number of women appointed	Total appointments
20	35%	One	Two

Table 3 - Applications submitted to Board vacancy competition April 2023

4.9 The vacancies were advertised on a range of platforms including:

- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- ESS website
- The Public Appointments website

4.10 Furthermore, with a more established staff, Board and Committee complement for this vacancy competition, we were able to share the posts more widely via our own relevant networks.

4.11 A range of organisations were notified of the Board positions as per paragraph 4.7.

5. Our equality outcomes

5.1 We are pleased to present our first set of equality outcomes. These are results which our organisation will work to achieve in order to advance equality in what we do. This section details:

- what our outcomes look to achieve
- why we have chosen this outcome and how the outcome advances the general equality duty
- who the outcome is relevant to and who we have engaged with to develop our outcomes
- how we will achieve the outcome and the actions we will take
- when we will achieve these actions over the next two years

5.2 In developing our outcomes and the accompanying action plan we followed the [technical guidance](#) provided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Equality Outcome Action Plan 2023-2027

What outcome are we hoping to achieve?	Why have we chosen this outcome?	Who is the outcome relevant to?	How will we achieve this outcome?	When will we complete these actions?
<p>Outcome 1: ESS' performance is enhanced by having a workforce whose diversity is more representative of Scotland</p>	<p>To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.</p> <p>To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.</p>	<p>This outcome is relevant to all protected characteristics however we will have a particular focus on age and disability.</p> <p>Based on data gathered from our Employee Equality and Diversity Monitoring form⁶ we have identified two protected characteristics which are underrepresented in our organisation compared to the Scottish working age population. These demographics are young people and disabled people.</p> <p>Having identified these areas of underrepresentation we engaged with various organisations to inform our action plan to achieve this outcome, including: HR consultants; charities, including disability and youth charities; Scottish Government Workplace Adjustments team; and trade unions.</p>	<p>We will embed Employee Diversity and Monitoring into staff inductions.</p>	<p>2023/24</p>
			<p>We will set up systems to actively monitor and understand, as far as possible, how many applications are made under the Disability Confident Scheme.</p>	<p>2023/24</p>
			<p>We will increase and diversify the organisations and networks we use to advertise our job vacancies.</p>	<p>2023/24</p>
			<p>We will develop our Civil Service Careers webpage to embed equality principles.</p>	<p>2024/25</p>
			<p>We will implement a programme of student placements within ESS.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
			<p>We will engage with educational institutions to raise awareness of ESS in general and as a potential employer.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
			<p>We will engage with mentoring programmes to raise our profile with underrepresented individuals and share knowledge and expertise in our field.</p>	<p>2023/24</p>

⁶ Due to the small size of our organisation, we are unable to publish any of the findings of ESS' monitoring activities as respondents may be identifiable by either primary or secondary disclosure.

What outcome are we hoping to achieve?	Why have we chosen this outcome?	Who is the outcome relevant to?	How will we achieve this outcome?	When will we complete these actions?
<p>Outcome 1: ESS' performance is enhanced by having a workforce whose diversity is more representative of Scotland (continued)</p>			<p>We will publish an Equality and Diversity Policy.</p>	<p>2023/24</p>
			<p>We will identify and train an Equality Champion within our staff and our Board membership.</p>	<p>2023/24</p>
			<p>We will increase the visibility of equalities considerations in our Board meetings by including a regular update from the Board Equality Champion.</p>	<p>2023/24</p>
			<p>We will develop an enhanced mandatory equalities training programme for both staff and Board members.</p>	<p>2024/25</p>
			<p>We will ensure all staff taking part in recruitment interviews have specific interviewer training.</p>	<p>2024/25</p>
			<p>We will monitor our progress against this outcome by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collecting and monitoring data on employee protected characteristics • collecting and monitoring data on applications made under the Disability Confident Scheme • monitoring activity on our Civil Service Careers EDI pages <p>When measuring progress against this outcome, it is important to recognise our small size and low turnover rate. We are pleased to have a low turnover of staff and a high staff engagement index. However this may also present a challenge in diversifying the makeup of our organisation.</p>	<p>2026/27</p>

What outcome are we hoping to achieve?	Why have we chosen this outcome?	Who is the outcome relevant to?	How will we achieve this outcome?	When will we complete these actions?
<p>Outcome 2: ESS' staff are empowered by removing barriers to an accessible and inclusive working environment</p>	<p>To eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other prohibited conduct.</p>	<p>This outcome is relevant to all protected characteristics as we will seek to make our working environment accessible to and inclusive of all. However, as per our first outcome, we will focus on accessibility for disabled people.</p>	<p>We will run workshops with staff to inform the design of a new office space.</p>	<p>2023/24</p>
	<p>To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.</p>	<p>To support the development of our Equality and Diversity Policy we ran a workshop with our staff to understand what EDI means to them. We also gathered thoughts on how we can improve accessibility for staff members.</p>	<p>We will engage with accessibility consultants to inform the design of a new office space.</p>	<p>2023/24</p>
	<p>To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.</p>	<p>We have also engaged with staff via internal pulse surveys to gather thoughts on preferred working patterns, barriers to returning to the office and issues with homeworking.</p>	<p>We will raise awareness of accessibility considerations within our staff and Board with appropriate training.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>To gain an understanding of the current accessibility of our office base, we have engaged with our landlord and reviewed data relating to accessibility audits of the building. This engagement has helped to identify any issues that may need addressed to ensure our staff and visitors are safe and comfortable within in our office.</p>	<p>We will continue to develop and offer a catalogue of homeworking and hybrid equipment.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>In addition, we have been keen to engage with external organisations to ensure all protected characteristics are taken into account in decision-making relating to our working environment, including: HR consultants; charities, including gender equality, disability, and LGBTQ+ charities; Scottish Government Workplace Adjustments team; Scottish Government equality networks; and trade unions.</p>	<p>We will train a member of staff in Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessments.</p>	<p>2023/24</p>
			<p>We will explore options to set up an equalities working group with organisations sharing our office building.</p>	<p>2024/25</p>
			<p>We will develop our own accessibility audit checklist for any changes to our workspace.</p>	<p>2024/25</p>
			<p>We will monitor our progress against this outcome by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gathering feedback from our staff on our redesigned office space • gathering feedback from our staff on their homeworking set-up • achieving Disability Confident Employer Level 2 	<p>2024/25</p>

What outcome are we hoping to achieve?	Why have we chosen this outcome?	Who is the outcome relevant to?	How will we achieve this outcome?	When will we complete these actions?
<p>Outcome 3: All people of Scotland can readily understand and are enabled to access ESS' services</p>	<p>To eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other prohibited conduct.</p> <p>To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.</p>	<p>This outcome is relevant to all protected characteristics as we will seek to make our services accessible to all people of Scotland.</p> <p>The ESS team undertook an internal literature review exercise to investigate what the Scottish population looks like and what existing barriers to accessible communications are. This helped to inform our understanding of ESS' audience and where we can improve our services to cater to the population of Scotland.</p> <p>We have also engaged with a number of groups in developing infrastructure, guidance and policies around our public-facing services. For example, we: consulted on the drafting of our Strategic Plan; sought feedback from stakeholders on the development of our representation form; and gathered feedback on our workshops and information sessions.</p> <p>In developing this outcome, our planned actions and progress measures, we have engaged with: HR consultants; charities, including gender equality, disability, and LGBTQ+ charities; Scottish Government Workplace Adjustments team; Scottish Government equality networks; and trade unions.</p>	<p>We will regularly review our Accessibility Guide.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
			<p>We will redevelop our website to improve access to our online information and services.</p>	<p>2023/24</p>
			<p>We will introduce Contact-BSL links to staff email signatures.</p>	<p>2023/24</p>
			<p>We will enhance our training offer for staff and Board members relating to accessible communications.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
			<p>We will seek accessibility-specific feedback following stakeholder events.</p>	<p>2023/24</p>
			<p>We will make clear the availability of documents in alternative languages and formats, where possible.</p>	<p>2024/25</p>
			<p>We will improve our process for monitoring equality and diversity data of our service users to increase response rates.</p>	<p>2024/25</p>
			<p>We will implement an engagement programme to raise awareness of ESS amongst different communities.</p>	<p>2024/25</p>
			<p>We will support training as needed in Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) and embed Equality Impact Assessment into our policy development and review process as relevant.</p>	<p>2024/25</p>

What outcome are we hoping to achieve?	Why have we chosen this outcome?	Who is the outcome relevant to?	How will we achieve this outcome?	When will we complete these actions?
Outcome 3: The people of Scotland can readily understand and are enabled to access ESS' services (continued)			We will monitor our progress against this outcome by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • carrying out an accessibility audit of our website • monitoring feedback on accessibility from stakeholder events • monitoring the protected characteristics of people making representations to us 	2024/25

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