Social Security Scotland Mainstreaming Equality

Draft Equality Outcomes Consultation Analysis Report

Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

June 2020

Contents

Executive summary

Rocket Science UK Ltd was commissioned by Social Security Scotland to analyse the feedback from an online public consultation and events across Scotland relating to their Draft Maintstreaming Equality Outcomes. The public consultation was open from 7 November 2019 to 6 February 2020. 81 individuals and organisations completed a response online. Nine events also took place across the country to compliment the public consultation: Shetland, Orkney, Western Isles, Inverness, Aberdeen, Dumfries, Falkirk, Glasgow and Perth. 108 people in total attended these events. The methodology is outlined in more detail in Chapter 2. Survey details may be found in the Appendices. In this report, the analysis is broken down into:

- An analysis of the public consultation (online survey)

- An analysis of the consultation events

- An analysis of the Easy Read responses to the public consultation.

The four most important messages emerging from the analysis are set out below.

Key messages	
Respondents to the consultation encouraged Social Security Scotland to go beyond supporting only protected characteristics	Participants to the public consultation as well as the consultation events felt that Social Security Scotland had a unique opportunity to "go beyond" legal requirements of supporting protected characteristics. Participants encouraged Social Security Scotland to be more ambitious and improve draft outcomes more generally to include those who may need support but aren't protected by their characteristics. For example, carers, those experiencing poverty or those from more disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds and acknowledging that many groups face multiple inequalities and interacting disadvantages
Wording and the language used for the outcomes was a significant issue for many respondents	Respondents at events and from the online survey were concerned with the overall wording and language used in the outcomes. It was felt that wording of the entire outcome could be improved to be more specific and that outcomes could be written with more clarity in how they were to be achieved. This includes concerns about the outcome statement itself, how it meets general duty and protected characteristics, measures of success and supporting activities.
	This would be done by outlining the situation and need of certain groups first, then detailing the change required, describing a rationale, detailing the activities and strategy to achieve this and finally, describing in detail the means of measuring success of each activity and outcome.

Respondents wished to see specific protected groups be explicitly mentioned in the overall outcomes as well as the activities and measures of success	It was mentioned often by respondents that the outcomes should explicitly acknowledge the inequalities some groups face and the disadvantages they therefore face in terms of accessing welfare benefits. By doing this for each group, Social Security Scotland could then outline specific, relevant and time-bound outcomes which are achievable through activities which could be measured.
Respondents wished to see more involvement of groups with protected characteristics	It was felt by respondents, especially those who identified as coming from protected groups, that those from protected groups be consulted frequently during the design of the Mainstreaming Equality Outcomes process.

1. Background to the consultation

This section explains the context, content and aims of the Mainstreaming Equality Outcomes consultation and describes the consultation process.

The Mainstreaming Equality Outcomes consultation was developed and held by Social Security Scotland, an Executive Agency of the Scottish Government. Social Security Scotland, formed in 2018, delivers benefits on behalf of the Scottish Government including benefits that were previously delivered by the UK Government and some new benefits introduced by the Scottish Government. Social Security Scotland is committed to taking a rights-based approach and views social security as a human right, to be delivered as a public service that reduces poverty and provides dignity and respect to Scottish citizens.[1] Social Security Scotland is currently developing an Equality Strategy to ensure that equality is at the centre of all its activities while also meeting the expectations set out in the Equality Act 2010[2] and the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018[3]. A set of equality outcomes will underpin this strategy and these outcomes are the focus of the Mainstreaming Equality Outcomes consultation presented and analysed in this report.

The Mainstreaming Equality Outcomes consultation sought feedback on five draft Equality Outcomes as well as on activities to help achieve each outcome and on ways to measure progress on achieving each outcome. The aim of the consultation was to ensure that Social Security Scotland's Equality Strategy will reflect the needs of those who experience discrimination and disadvantage.

---

[1] Social Security (Scotland) Bill, available at
https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/105188.aspx

[2] Equality Act 2010, available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

[3] Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018, available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2018/9/contents/enacted

A public consultation was held between 7 November 2019 and 6 February 2020 using the Scottish Government's online consultation hub. Social Security Scotland also held a series of events across Scotland to compliment the public consultation. These events gave individuals and stakeholder organisations the opportunity to receive more information about the Equality Outcomes and participate in a group discussion. Events were open to the general public, but places had to be booked in advance.

This report presents the findings from the public consultation and the events and explains the methodology that was used to analyse responses.

2. Methodology

This chapter details the methodology used to analyse responses to the Mainstreaming Equality Outcomes consultation.

Responses were collected in two ways:

- A public consultation comprising quantitative (Yes/No) and qualitative (open-ended) questions. There was a standard online form as well as an easy read online form and responses could be submitted in other formats and via email to increase accessibility

- A series of events across Scotland to complement the consultation and give stakeholders the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback.

Event notes and responses to the public consultation where analysed separately.

Data from the public consultation was first cleaned. There were no campaign responses that had to be dealt with. However, one respondent completed the consultation twice; answers to all questions were identical and we deleted one set of answers to avoid double counting.

Responses to the standard public consultation and the easy read version were analysed separately where questions were phrased differently. The data analysis had a quantitative and a qualitative component. The quantitative analysis covered:

- The number and proportion of individuals and organisations who answered the consultation

- The number of respondents who answered each yes/no and each open-ended question, broken down by respondent type

- The number of respondents who answered each yes/no question by yes or no, broken down by respondent type.

All findings from the quantitative analysis are presented in the Findings Chapter. The qualitative analysis of open-ended questions involved the following stages:

- Stage 1: Based on 10 randomly selected sample responses, an initial thematic grid was developed for the analysis. This grid was further refined during the analysis.

- Stage 2: All open-ended responses were "coded" using the software NVivo and the thematic grid developed in stage 1.

- Stage 3: NVivo was then used to analyse the full range of views and issues raised by respondents and, where possible, quantify how often certain views were raised by different respondent types. As part of this, areas of consensus and disagreement were identified as well as any differences and similarities in views between respondent types (i.e. individuals and organisations).

Notes from the consultation events were provided by Social Security Scotland and we analysed these using the same thematic grid we used for the qualitative analysis of open-ended responses to the public consultation.

The qualitative analysis of event notes and open-ended responses to the public consultation were then combined into a thematic analysis identifying views and tendencies.The full qualitative analysis is presented in the Findings Chapter. Quotes are included where possible without breaching confidentility, in other words, only if a relevant respondent has consented to their response being published. Please note that where participants views have been recorded, not all these statements have been fact checked.

When discussing the prevelance of certain views, we have used the following terms to indicate the proportion of consultation responses that raised a particular point:

- "Few": 5-9%

- "Some": 10-19%

- "Many": 20-49%

- "Most" or "majority": 50-74%

- "Large majority" or "broad agreement": 75 -89%

- "Consensus": 90% or more.

It is important to note that, given the number of respondents and the fact that they were not selected randomly, the views emerging from this consultation are not representative of the view of the whole population. But they give a good indication of the range of opinions held by a notable number of interested organisations and individuals and the main issues they identify as important.

Another limitation of the analysis is that, given the available data and its level of detail, it was not possible to break down responses by geography (especially urban/rural) or distinguish between types of organisation.

3. Findings

This chapter presents the main themes and issues that emerge from the consultation, based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of responses. It will first set out the findings from the online survey, followed by the consultation events and, lastly, it will present the findings from the easy read responses.

Respondents were asked to comment on the five draft Equality Outcomes. They were given the opportunity to comment on the outcome, activities and meaures of success of these outcomes. These equality outcomes are:

1. Social Security Scotland will deliver a seamless service that is inclusive and where our clients are able to access the support they need.

2. Social Security Scotland will have a culture built on inclusivity where differences are supported, our people feel valued and they have opportunities to reach their full potential.

3. Social Security Scotland will be an employer of choice and through our recruitment process we will look to build a workforce that is representative of the population of Scotland.

4. Social Security Scotland uses the equality data (evidence) collected from clients, our people and other sources to respond to feedback and continually improve the service provided to all clients.

5. Social Security Scotland's service is delivered through having established partnerships with relevant public sector, third sector and community bodies providing clients person centred advice no matter their circumstances.

Greater detail on the outcomes (including measures of success and activities) can be found in Appendix A.

3.1   Who answered the consultation?

81 respondents provided responses to the Draft Mainstreaming Equality Outcomes consultation through standard, non-standard and easy read formats.

Format	Number
Standard	73
Non-standard (pdf and Word file)	6
Easy Read	2
Total	81

Figure 1 – Overview of the type of responses to the Equality Outcomes consultation [Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

108 people attended one of the nine consultation events across Scotland (Shetland, Orkney, Western Isles, Inverness, Aberdeen, Dumfries, Falkirk, Glasgow and Perth).

Of the 81 respondents who answered the consultation, 65% were individuals (53 respondents) and 35% were organisations (28 respondents).

The majority of respondents to the consulation were individuals
[n = 81]

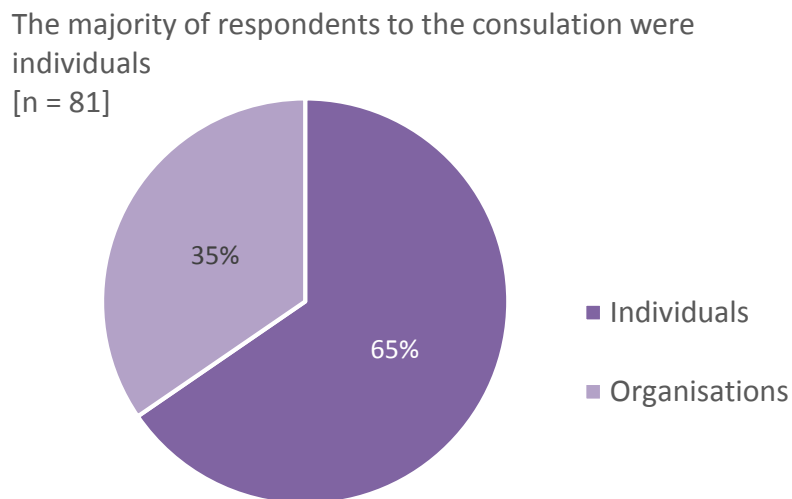- Individuals
- Organisations

35%

65%

Figure 2 – Breakdown of respondent types
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

Of the 28 organisations who responded to the survey, only those who gave consent to have their responses published have been named in the list below:

- Church of Scotland
- Close the Gap
- The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)
- Engender
- Fife Centre for Equalities
- Inclusion Scotland
- MS Society Scotland

- National Deaf Children's Society
- NHS Health Scotland
- People First (Scotland)
- Royal National Institute for Blind People Scotland
- Scottish Commission for Learning Disabilities
- Stirling Council
- See Me.

3.2 Equality Outcome 1

Equality Outcome 1 relates to the service delivery of Social Security Scotland. It states:

Social Security Scotland will deliver a seamless service that is inclusive and where our clients are able to access the support they need

Needs of protected groups

Equality outcome 1 states that it "cuts across all the protected characteristics." Survey respondents were asked if they felt that the outcome met the needs of protected groups. In total, 72 respondents answered this question. 89% of individuals (47 respondents) agreed that the outcome met the needs of protected groups, in contrast 45% of organisations (9 respondents) agreed.
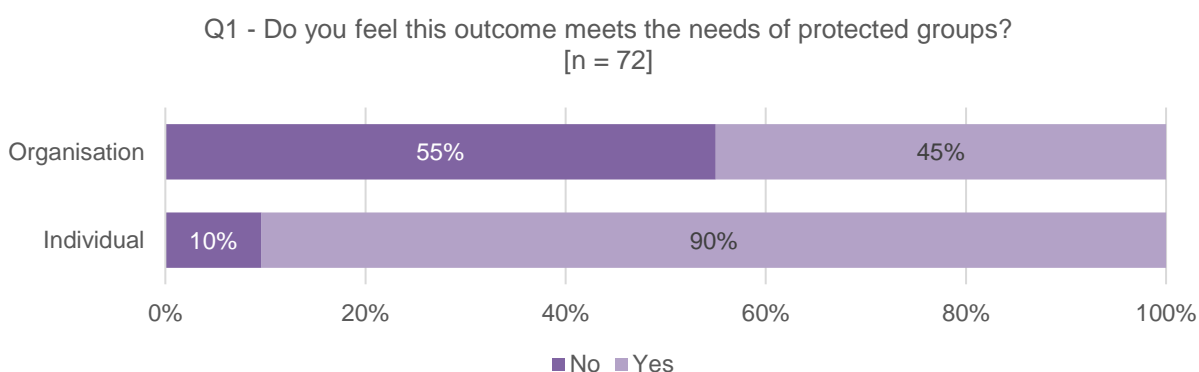

Figure 3 – Breakdown of responses to question 1
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

30% of respondents to the consultation (18 organisations and 6 individuals) provided comments on how the outcome could be improved to meet the needs of protected groups.

Most respondents who commented (58%; 12 organisations and 2 individuals) provided concerns in relation to specific protected groups and inequalities. Respondents felt that there was:

> *"little exposition about how the outcome meets the needs of each protected characteristic, making it hard to judge whether specific needs are met".*

Respondents suggested that Social Security Scotland explicitly acknowledge "the rights of individuals to equitable access for the service and support" and the inequalities that some groups face:

> "We would suggest that the agency… identify which groups with a protected characteristic experience the most disadvantage in terms of accessing welfare benefits. For example, do Black and Minority Ethnic communities face disproportionate difficulties in finding out about benefit entitlements, do their applications take longer to process, are they subject to more intensive scrutiny, and are there higher levels of appeals made and attendance at tribunals due to claims being refused?"

Half of respondents (50%; 12 organisations) who commented expressed concerns about the wording of the outcome:

Respondents felt that clarification was needed around what having a "seamless service" meant in practice. For example, how Social Security Scotland will follow-up with clients and how this will be measured:

> "Does it mean that staff have all the information that they need at hand so as to not ask clients to repeat their stories or does it mean that there will only be one primary staff member that clients will deal with."

Several organisations suggested that further clarity was needed in relation to how the outcome "cuts across all protected characteristics." It was felt that the outcome should address each characteristic separately

Respondents were concerned with the wording "clients are able to access the support they need". This was felt to be "unambitious" as it related "only to equality of opportunity". It was suggested that the outcome could instead say "the support to which they are entitled" or "all potential clients receive the support they need".

Respondents wished to have more clarirty on the types of support clients will access, especially in terms of having clients' circumstances taken into account and being "supported through the application process".

Supporting activities

Outcome 1 listed a number of activities that could support achieving an inclusive, seamless service where clients can acces the support they need. These activities included:

1. An inclusive communications project (having various formats of materials and documents)

2. Engagement with equality groups to inform on decisions relating to the phyical environment for Social Security Scotland locations

3. Ensuring feedack from delivery

4. The rolling out of an impact assessment process

5. Delivery of the Social Security Charter

6. Pre-application support in delivery areas

7. Creation and delivery of Equality and Diversity training.

In total, 72 respondents answered the question whether the supporting activities would help achieve Outcome 1 "Social Security Scotland will deliver a seamless service that is inclusive and where our clients are able to access the support they need". 90% of individuals (47 respondents) agreed that the supporting activities would help achieve the outcome, in contrast 45% of organisations (9 respondents) agreed.

Q2 - Do you feel that the supporting activities stated will help achieve the stated outcome?
[n = 72]

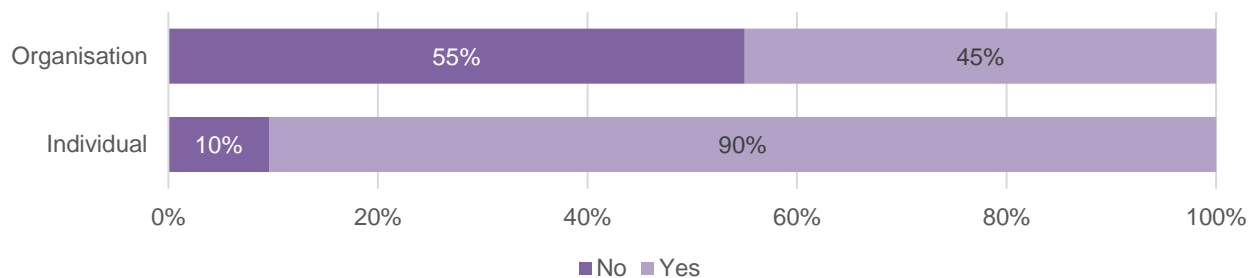|	No	Yes
Organisation	55%	45%
Individual	10%	90%

Figure 4 Breakdown of responses to question 2
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

Just over a third of survey respondents (34%; 20 organisations and 7 individuals) raised a number of issues in relation to the supporting activities.

The most frequent issue mentioned related to the "inclusive communication project". Many respondents who raised issues (44%; 10 organisations and 2 individuals) commented on this and felt that the project should be expanded to include:

- Online, telephone and face-to-face communication. This would include user-friendly platforms and ensuring people get put through to staff quickly

- Audio and braille formats of key client materials and publications and interpretation support

- A consideration that people may have multiple needs/protected characteristics/disadvantages and as a result may have more complex communication needs

- Disadvantages alongside protected characteristics e.g. trauma, anxiety, victims/survivors of violence against women and girls

- Further training of staff on issues such as mental health to ensure effective and caring communication

- Eliminating barriers to access and communication presented by poverty (e.g. inability to afford transport) and inadequate infrastructure (e.g. flat pavements).

22% of respondents who raised issues (6 organisations) also mentioned that the activities needed to be more specific in order to realise Equality Outcome 1.

Respondents suggested that Outcome 1 be "more specific" overall in order to "enable more targeted activities to be developed." This would include having information on how each activity will be achieved e.g. which internal policies are needed to carry out the Equality Impact Assessments further, respondents felt that there could be more information on how internal acitvities will help achieve a "seamless service".

15% of respondents who raised concerns (4 organisations) felt that the engagement with equality groups to inform decisions on the physical environment for Social Security Scotland locations should be expanded to include:

Suggestions	Description
Wider expertise of equality groups	By using the "full breadth of expertise that equality groups can provide", Social Security Scotland can ensure that equality groups inform more than the physical environment for locations.
The "emotional environment" of Social Security Scotland locations	One organisation recommended equality group engagement on the emotional environment of external and internal features of buildings. This was because the "'benefits office' can be an extremely daunting place to visit" and mitigating this would help claimants.
Rurality and geography	There is a risk that clients who live in rural areas will be overlooked as living in a rural area "is not a protected characteristic". Respondents felt that rurality needed to be seen as a "crucial factor in how the service will be delivered."
Transport to Social Security Scotland locations	Social Security Scotland should consider transport links and distances clients have to travel for appointments. For example, some individuals may suffer from anxiety and their pain is made worse by travel.
Facilities at locations	Facilities like multiple bathrooms, parking, flat pavements and handrails should be installed to support Equality Outcome 1, ensuring accessibility of all people. This should be done by consulting those who need these facilities.

Figure 5 – Suggestions relating to the engagement of equality groups
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

Measures of success

Equality Outcome 1 lists 8 ways in which Social Security Scotland will measure the success of the outcome. These measures are:

1. Client Insights Research

2. Equality and Feedback Monitoring Form

3. Client experience data

4. Application journey meausures (eg number of applications)

5. Measurements associated with Social Security Charter

6. Feedback from representative groups

7. Requests for information in orther forms

8. Published Equality Impact Assessments

In total, 72 respondents answered the question whether the measures of success would help Social Security Scotland measure the progress of Outcome 1 "Social Security Scotland will deliver a seamless service that is inclusive and where our clients are able to access the support they need". 85% of individuals (44 respondents) agreed that the measures of success would help measure the progress of the outcome, in contrast 45% of organisations (9 respondents) agreed.

Q3 - Do you feel that the measures of success stated will help Social Security Scotland measure the progress of this outcome? [n=72]
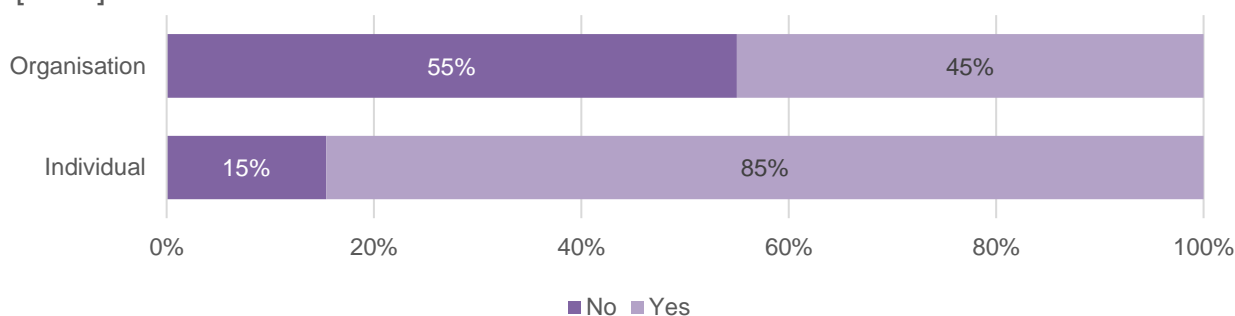

Figure 6 – Breakdown of responses to question 3
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

35% of all survey respondents (22 organisations and 6 individuals) described a number of concerns they had relating to measures of success provided in Outcome 1.

39% of these respondents (7 organisations and 4 individuals) were concerned that the outcome was difficult to measure. While respondents felt that the measures of success listed were a "valuable source of data for the agency", it was felt that it would be difficult to measure progress over time.

21% of respondents who had concerns (3 organisations and 3 individuals) suggested that the measures should state the frequency which it intends to measure success. It was suggested that Social Security Scotland carry out frequent consultations "to ensure that no one is left behind, and all voices are heard".

21% of respondents who raised concerns (6 organisations) suggested including qualitiative measures of success in Equality Outcome 1. For example, measuring the lived experience of individuals would add valuable evidence in ascerting whether clients are able to access the support they need. Respondents felt this was important because "no two conditions are the same and no two people have identical experiences."

Some respondents who raised issues (18%; 3 organisations and 2 individuals) were concerned that Equality Outcome 1 did not provide enough information on how success will be measured:

> *"These measures are very vague and without further detail it is difficult to be sure that they would provide the evidence needed to determine whether the activities were working and whether movement was being made towards the outcome."*

18% of those who had concerns (3 organisations and 2 individuals) suggested measuring success by gathering information on those who are eligible to social security, but are not engaged with the system. This would mean analysing the take-up of benefits to measure if clients are able to access the support they are entitled to. This would determine a more accurate picture of groups who are not claiming (e.g. those who are unaware of entitlement):.

> "We believe that it is critical that measuring the success of this outcome also requires capturing the stories of people who have both fallen out of or who are not engaged with the system – not just the stories of people who are successful in claiming social security. As currently drafted, it appears that these voices are not represented here. These seldom heard voices will provide insight into the quality of support available to people before and during a claim."

Some respondents who described their concerns identified further measures that Social Security Scotland could use in the measuring the success of the outcome. These included:

- Adding timescales to each measures of success
- Analysis of complaints received that relate to equality of access.

3.3 Equality Outcome 2

Equality Outcome 2 relates to the organisational culture of Social Security Scotland and states:

Social Security Scotland will have a culture built on inclusivity where differences are supported, our people feel valued and they have opportunities to reach their full potential.

Needs of protected groups

Equality Outcome 2 states that this "cuts across all the protected characteristics."

In total, 73 respondents answered the question whether Outcome 2 meets the needs of protected groups. 92% of individuals (48 respondents) agreed that the outcome meets the needs of protected groups, in contrast 48% of organisations (10 respondents) agreed.

Q4 - Do you feel this outcome meets the needs of protected groups?
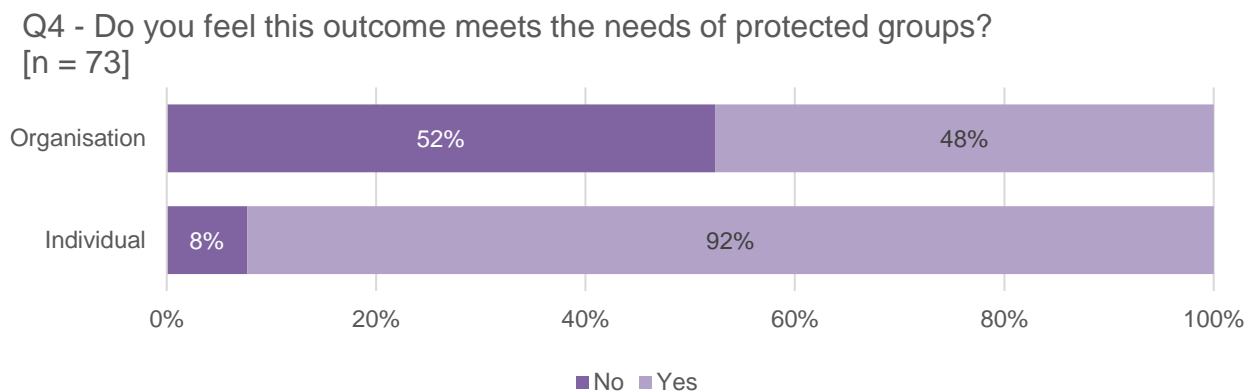[n = 73]

Figure 7 – Breakdown of responses to question 4
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

Overall, many respondents (28%; 18 organisations and 4 individuals) provided suggestions about how Equality Outcome 2 could be improved to meet protected groups' needs. These suggestions included:

Improving the wording of the outcome. 41% of respondents who provided suggestions (9 organisations) felt that:

- The word "differences" ought to be replaced from the Outcome as it has "negative connotations". Respondents felt it would be better to instead focus on "diversity"

- The meaning of "our people" was not clear. It was recommended that the Outcomes clearly distinguish between staff and service users within the outcomes

- Two organisations reflected on the phrase "Social Security will have a culture…" and suggested the wording be changed as it "treats organisational culture as a fixed entity". By changing the wording to "will develop a culture" reflects the evolving nature of the service and is less "top-down".

Making the outcome more "outward-looking". 18% of those who made suggestions (4 organisations) felt that Equality Outcome 2 focused on Social Security Scotland's "inner workers" and staff which made the outcome inward-looking. It was therefore difficult for respondents "to see how [the outcome] meets the needs of protected groups".

> "It would perhaps be better to distinguish between internal and external equality outcomes."

Further suggestions to meet the needs of protected groups included:

- Mentioning which protected groups the service aims to support, including and not limited to those with disabilities, LGBTQ, women, those who have experienced violence, people from different socioeconomic backgrounds

- Having trained counsellors or mental health awareness amongst staff to support the needs of protected groups

- Hiring paid disabled staff and advocates.

Supporting activities

In total, 73 respondents answered the question whether the supporting activities would help achieve Outcome 2 "Social Security Scotland will have a culture built on inclusivity where differences are supported, our people feel valued and they have opportunities to reach their full potential". 88% of individuals (46 respondents) agreed that supporting activities would help achieve the outcome, in contrast 43% of organisations (9 respondents) agreed.

Q5 - Do you feel that the supporting activities stated will help achieve the stated outcome?
[n = 73]

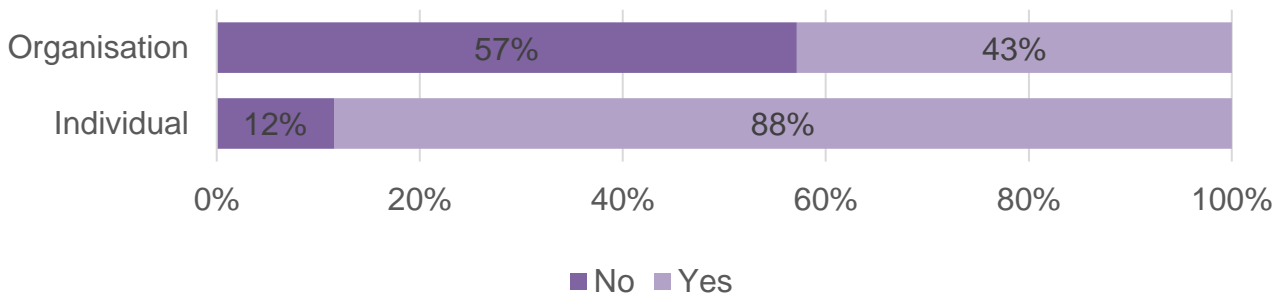|	No	Yes
Organisation	57%	43%
Individual	12%	88%

Figure 8 – Breakdown of responses to question 5
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

A third of respondents who replied to the public consultation (33%; 19 organisations and 7 individuals) gave responses relating to the types of activities missing from Equality Outcome 2 and improvements which could be made.

27% of these respondents (7 organisations) felt that improvements could be made to the wording of the supporting activities of Outcome 2. For example,

- The listed activity of "overall culture of work" is both "broad" and "subjective." Respondents felt that this activity could be improved through a detailed description of what this activity means

- One respondent expressed some activities, such as facilities (e.g. having a prayer room), relate more to people feeling supported and comfortable enough in the workplace to use them. Therefore the wording should be improved to include these activities.

Two organisations who provided responses relating to missing activities (8%; 2 organisations) suggested that Social Security Scotland should evidence the equality issue each activity is seeking to remedy. Further, the respondents recommended having an overall strategy for the outcome instead of a list of activities will improve the likelihood of delivering Equality Outcome 2:

> "It is difficult to determine to what extent these supporting activities will make an impact on the delivery of this outcome as there is no mention of an overall strategy for realising this outcome. Change in organisational culture is notoriously difficult to implement. We would like to see explicit mention of what the drivers for change are expected to be. One approach could be to identify values that will create and drive the culture of the agency and in turn influence attitudes and practice. At present these are missing from the Outcome."

Respondents who identified missing activities suggested further improvements in order to make an impact on delivery of Equality Outcome 2:

- Go beyond legal requirements for equality and include support service for those who do not fall under protected characteristics e.g. those with mental health problems or introduce support policies for women's health needs

- Consider specific partnerships with third sector organisations to inform recruitment and retention process

- Have an "inclusion champion" who staff can approach informally at each location

- Introducing flexible working to help carers, older people, those with health issues, parents

- Promote transparency and tackle wage inequalities by publishing pay grades

- Aim to achieve the "Equally Safe at Work" accreditation status

- Include visual impairment awareness in training sessions

- Have awareness weeks or initiatives for different characteristics.

Measures of success

The success of Equality Outcome 2 will be measured in the following way:

1. Staff survey (including an anlysis across protected characteristics)

2. Staff insights research

3. Self-declaration (eHR data on protected characteristics)

4. Retention rates

5. Number of greivances

6. Analaysis of HR data

7. Organisational rewards

8. Success of staff networks

9. Reporting supporting specific equality duties

10. Board member information

In total, 71 respondents answered the question whether the measures of success would help Social Security Scotland measure the progress of Outcome 2 "Social Security Scotland will have a culture built on inclusivity where differences are supported, our people feel valued and they have opportunities to reach their full potential". 88% of individuals (46 respondents) agreed that the measures of success would help measure the progress of the outcome, in contrast 42% of organisations (8 respondents) agreed.

Q6 - Do you feel that the measures of success stated will help Social Security Scotland measure the progress of this outcome?
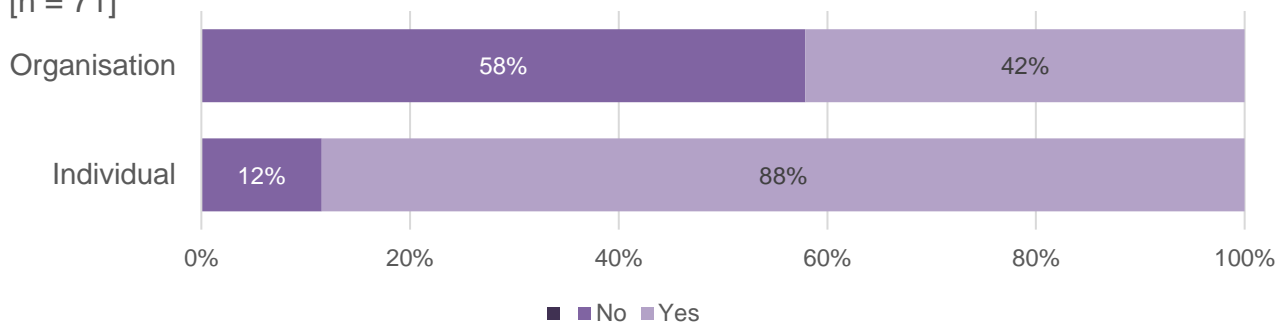[n = 71]

Figure 9 – Breakdown of responses to question 6
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

27% of respondents to the question (16 organisations and 5 individuals) raised concerns about the meaures of success used in Outcome 2.

Some respondents who raised concerns (19%; 4 organisations) suggested including more qualitiative measures of success. Respondents felt that including qualitiative measures would ensure that many activities listed (e.g. staff networks) would be measured effectively:

> "Much of these measurements will only provide quantitative data which whilst helpful, should be further complimented with qualitative data which can add a further layer of analysis to determine how well this outcome is progressing. All insights that are gathered as part of this process should be published where possible to promote transparency and accountability as well as promoting learning between different Scottish Government agencies."

> "In our view, to meaningfully assess organisational culture and how valued people feel it will be important to pay due attention to people's subjective experiences."

Further measures of success were identified by respondents who raised concerns and some suggestions included:

- Measures of success "need to be properly defined around equality outcomes and protected groups"

- Identify what "success" is and how it will be reported on. It was recommended that "success" take into account the rates of pay and grades of all staff. For example, this would allow people to compare the pay of disabled people with non-disabled peers and measure the gender pay gap

- Define what organisational rewards are – "does this mean rewarding departments based on employing people with protected characteristics?" One organisation expressed concern that this may be a "tick box exercise" and should be avoided".

- Introduce a clear process for safe disclosure of grievances and complaints, and measure the outcome of this process

- Ensure staff survey is anonymous and covers all stages of the employment process

- Have frequent meetings and consultations with the workplace and trade unions to ensure all needs are catered for

- Use an external organisations to supplement any internal audits.

3.4 Equality Outcome 3

Equality Outcome 3 relates to Social Security Scotland's workforce and states that:

Social Security Scotland will be an employer of choice and through our recruitment process we will look to build a workforce that is representative of the population of Scotland.

Needs of protected groups

With regards to the needs of protected groups, Outcome 3 states that it "cuts across all the protected characteristics".

In total, 72 respondents answered the question whether Outcome 3 "Social Security Scotland will be an employer of choice and through our recruitment process we will look to build a workforce that is representative of the population of Scotland" meets the needs of protected groups. 88% of individuals (45 respondents) and 57% of organisations (12 respondents) agreed that the outcome meets the needs of protected groups.

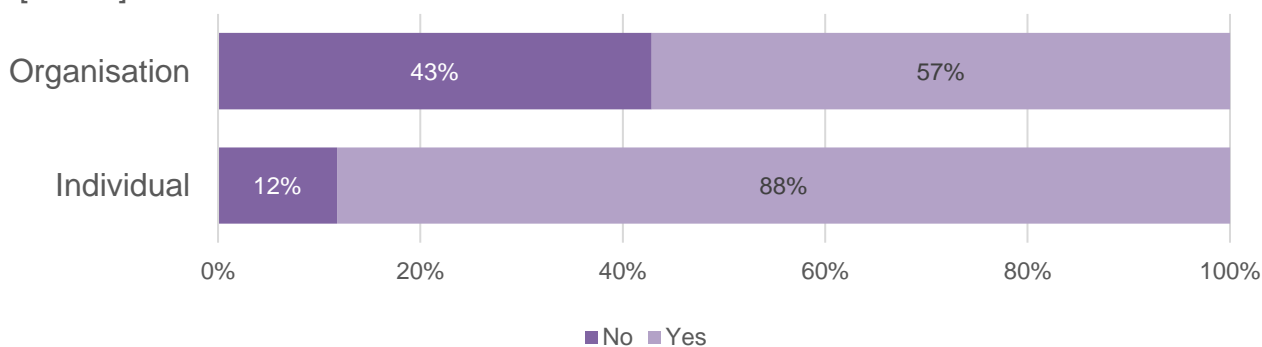Q7 - Do you feel this outcome meets the needs of protected groups?
[n = 72]

Figure 10 **–** Breakdown of responses to question 7
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

A quarter of the 79 respondents who provided qualitative responses to the consultation[4] (14 organisations and 6 individuals) outlined how the outcome could be improved in terms if how it meets the needs of protected groups.

---

[4] The number of qualitative open-text responses to this question was higher (79) than the number of quantitative yes/no responses (72) because some respondents only provided an open-text response.

35% of these respondents (7 organisations) suggested that the wording and information provided be improved in the following ways to ensure the outcome meets the needs of different protected groups:

- Respondents felt that more detail was needed around how the outcome meets the needs of protected characteristics:

  "It speaks about mainstreaming inequalities and not about an equality outcome for protected groups"

- Respondents also wished to see improvements to the wording of the outcome overall, especially in terms of:
  - The phrase "employer of choice". There was a concern that this could be interpreted in different ways. Further, it was felt that the use of jargon should be avoided
  - The phrase "a workforce that is representative of the population of Scotland." Respondents were concerned about how this would be measured and whether the intention was to "recruit per head of population for each group of people with protected characteristics".

While respondents who suggested improvements welcomed Equality Outcome 3's emphasis on the recruitment process, 35% of respondents (6 organisations and 1 individual) expressed the following concerns:

- Respondents suggested that accessible and inclusive policies and practices should be in place to attract people with protected/multiple protected characteristics to Social Security Scotland. This is because:

  "It does not address the inequalities in the recruitment process that leave some groups under or over-represented and implies no vision of where in the agency particular populations are concentrated."

- Respondents highlighted that Outcome 3 should focus on the "whole employee journey":

  "Recruitment is only one stage of the 'employee journey' and equal consideration must be given to exploring other elements, such as retention and progression, through an 'equalities lens', to ensure diversity across the entire workforce."

- Identify and eliminate gaps between rhetoric and the reality of Social Security practices:

  "For instance, although vacancies often say they are 'flexible', they are mostly full-time positions, located in big cities. These discrepancies need to be addressed if mainstreaming equality Outcome 3 is to become a reality."

Other suggestions made by respondents who suggested improvements in how Equality Outcome 3 meets the needs of protected groups included:

- Combining Outcome 3 with Equality Outcome 2. This is because Outcome 3 relates to an effective recruitment strategy to meet the inclusive workforce described in Outcome 2.
- Considering the socio-economic background of potential candidates alongside protected characteristics.

Supporting activities

Social Security Scotland listed a number of activities that could support the achievement of Equality Outcome 3. These included:

1. Social Security Scotland recruitment policy
2. Stakeholder input into recruitment materials
3. Targeted workshops/roadshows with under-represented groups
4. Insights research investigating experiences with recruitment processes
5. Mentoring
6. Targeted internships supporting equality groups
7. Fair assessment process
8. Representative workforce
9. Early identification and actioning reasonable adjustments required to improve employee's journey and experiences after recruitment.

In total, 72 respondents answered the question whether the supporting activities would help achieve Outcome 3 "Social Security Scotland will be an employer of choice and through our recruitment process we will look to build a workforce that is representative of the population of Scotland". 88% of individuals (45 respondents and 67% of organisations (14 respondents) agreed that the supporting activities would help achieve the outcome.

Q8 - Do you feel that the supporting activities stated will help achieve the stated outcome?
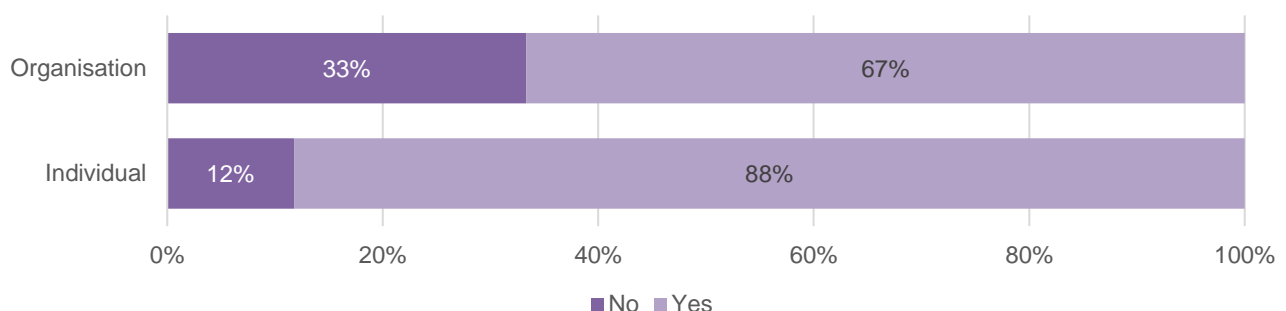[n = 72]

Figure 11 – Breakdown of responses to question 8
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

Overall, 22 respondents (28%; 15 organisations and 7 individuals) provided comments about the supporting activities stated in Outcome 3.

Many of the respondents who commented (27%; 6 organisations) suggested that the activities be more specific in how they could support achieving the Equality Outcome 3. These suggestions included:

- Adding detail on what will be done for protected groups and identify an intersectional approach for people with multiple protected characteristics

  Note: because the outcome is more general in its aim, respondents felt that appropriate activities would be hard to list. One respondent suggested that the outcome be defined through the SMART criteria (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) to ensure its success

- Avoiding unintended negative outcomes of activities e.g. accusations of "different treatment" or "lowering the bar". To do this, it would be important for Social Security Scotland to ensure the wider workforce and stakeholders are aware of and understand the need for the approach

- Including continual reviews and improvement strategies of the recruitment process and further "employee journey"

- Ensure staff surveys and demographic statistics are acted upon and published publicly.

Other suggested improvements to the supporting activities by respondents who provided comments included:

- Targeted advertising for under-represented groups through relevant media and third sector organisations

- Engaging with job coaching services which support people of different protected characteristics

- "Ensuring recruitment and working practices are both accessible and inclusive"

- Creating "open, supportive and collaborative working environments"

- Deliver "disability awareness training to staff"

- Have an active policy on relieving the gender pay gap

- Provide continuous publications outlining current position of workforce and steps that have been taken to improve the situation.

Measures of success

Equality Outcome 3 outlined four measurse of success:

1. Analysis of HR data across protected characteristics
2. Staff insights research
3. Feedback on recruitment process
4. Recruitment research.

In total, 71 respondents answered the question whether the measures of success outlined above would help Social Security Scotland measure the progress of Outcome 3 "Social Security Scotland will be an employer of choice and through our recruitment process we will look to build a workforce that is representative of the population of Scotland" 86% of individuals (44 respondents) and 50% of organisations (10 respondents) agreed that the measures of success would help measure the progress of the outcome.

Q9 - Do you feel that the measures of success stated will help Social Security Scotland measure the progress of this outcome?
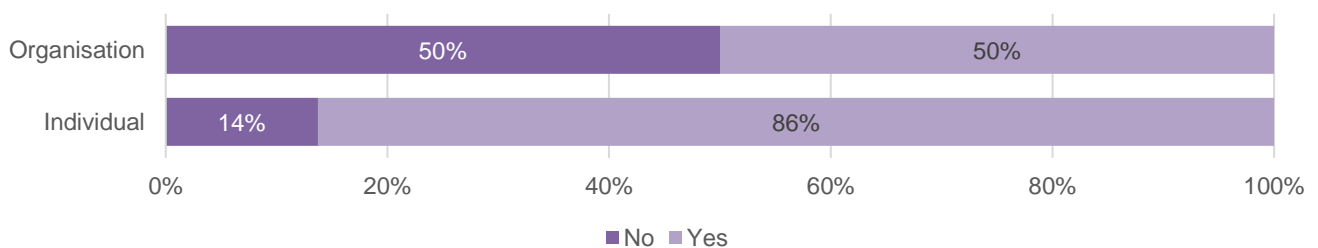[n = 71]

Figure 12 – Breakdown of responses to question 9
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

Overall, 32% of all respondents who provided a response to the review (17 organisations and 8 individuals) stated concerns about the measures of succes for Outcome 3.

40% of those with concerns (7 organisations and 3 individuals) felt that the meaures of success could be more detailed. For example, respondents wanted further detail from whom "feedback on recruitment process" would come from and what "recruitment research" would entail:

> "There is also a clear need for this section to be expanded to include measures that tell us about what success looks like in relation to retention and progression, as well as recruitment. In addition, the measures of success need to go beyond 'doing research' and make clear the actions that flow from that research. These are the 'so what?' or 'what next?' questions that make clear the difference the research is making."

Respondents felt that the outcome needed to target more directly "the identified equality issue" and this would need to be based on evidence. Related to this, it was felt that the the diversity of applications, unconscious bias during recruitment and staff training should be measured:

> "We believe that reference needs to be made to measurement of training and take up as well as on the job guidance, feedback and research."

Questions were raised regarding the nature of the information and research used to measure success e.g. will it be both qualitiative and quantitative. Respondents felt that these aspects may be a result of Equality Outcome 3 not being easily measurable.

Further recommendations on the meures of success of Equality Outcome 3 included:

- Reviewing all current employment policies to ensure that they are "fit for the inclusive ambitions of Social Security Scotland"

- Identifying the number of applications from protected groups and percentages of those who are successful. Include actions to be taken to address identified gaps in applications from protected groups

- Including the experience of those who have not been hired to measure success

- Measuring more than just the recruitment process e.g. internal assessments of decisions during the recruitment process and exit questionnaires

- Introducing a gender pay gap measurement

- Encouraging reviews from employees on job-review websites.

3.5 Equality Outcome 4 – Evidence Data

Equality Outcome 4 relates to the evidence data and states that:

Social Security Scotland uses the equality data (evidence) collected from clients, our people and other sources to respond to feedback and continually improve the service provided to all clients.

Needs of protected groups

Equality Outcome 4 states that it "cuts across all protected characterisitcs".

In total, 70 respondents answered the question whether Outcome 4 "Social Security Scotland uses the equality data (evidence) collected from clients, our people and other sources to respond to feedback and continually improve the service provided to all clients" meets the needs of protected groups. 86% of individuals (42 respondents) and 71% of organisations (15 respondents) agreed that the outcome met the needs of protected groups.

Q10 - Do you feel this outcome meets the needs of protected groups?
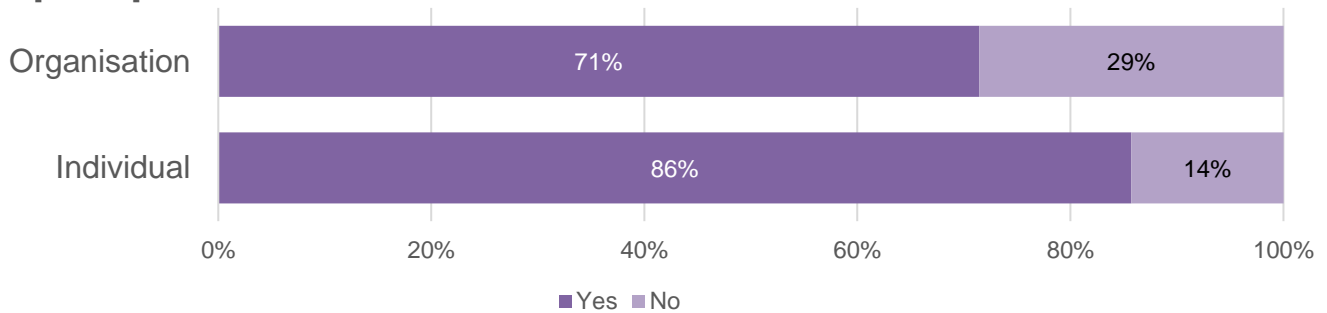[n = 70]

Figure 13 – Breakdown of responses to question 10
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

A quarter of respondents who gave responses to the consultation (12 organisations and 8 individuals) highlighted concerns about whether Outcome 4 meets the needs of protected groups. These concerns included:

25% of respondents who raised concerns (4 organisations and 1 individual) felt that the Equality Outcome 4 could be clearer in how it meets the needs of protected groups. It was felt that this outcome was more of a "process of continual improvement" and that an outcome "would be the result" of this process. One organisation stated that if Outcome 4 were to remain an outcome, its focus should be on:

> *"continual improvement of the service with particular attention paid to* ensuring fairness and overcoming barriers for groups with protected characteristics."

15% of respondents who raised conerns (2 individuals and 1 organisation) were concerned about the security of the data (evidence) collected. This is because gathering highly sensitive data during the claims process "can be risky". It was recommended that data on vulnerable or protected groups "must be as secure as possible".

> "Great care needs to be taken about communicating the purpose of the data gathering as it could have the effect of deterring vulnerable people from accessing the help and support that they need."

2 organisations who mentioned their concerns (10%) felt that the outcome was worded in a "hard human resource" style. It was recommended that to make employees feel supported "and reflect the reality of their experiences", the wording should highlight the potential challenges employees may face in achieving Outcome 4. It was also recommended that the outcome acknowledge the importance of governance alongside the "protection for employees" who deliver a quality service.

Other recommendations for improvements to Equality Outcome 4 from respondents included:

- Recognise that the needs of protected groups are often inter-connected in equality data e.g. many of those living with a physical condition are at a disproportionate risk of experiencing poverty

- Ensure all protected groups are visible in data collected

- Collect evidence on and investigate wider benefit take-up rates as not every individual entitled to support claims benefits

- Empathy training of staff could help the outcome meet the needs of protected groups

- Introduce quality checks and performance improvement action plans for staff

Supporting activities

Equality Outcome 4 provided a list of activities that could support achieving the outcome. These were:

1. Development and application of the Clients Insights Research programme

2. Development of accessible client surveys on engagement with Social Security Scotland

3. Social Security Scotland reporting on specific duties (workforce/gender/disability pay gap)

4. Implementation of 'all ideas matter' staff suggestion scheme

5. Supporting Scottish government analysts to design and measure benefit take up

6. Developing and embedding a continuous improvement culture

7. Action plan following staff survey results

8. Quality checks in place and performance improvement action plans for staff not achieving the desired standard.

In total, 69 respondents answered the question whether the supporting activities would help achieve Outcome 4 "Social Security Scotland uses the equality data (evidence) collected from clients, our people and other sources to respond to feedback and continually improve the service provided to all clients". 90% of individuals (44 respondents) and 70% of organisations (14 respondents) agreed that the supporting activities would help achieve the outcome.

Q11 - Do you feel that the supporting activities stated will help achieve the stated outcome?
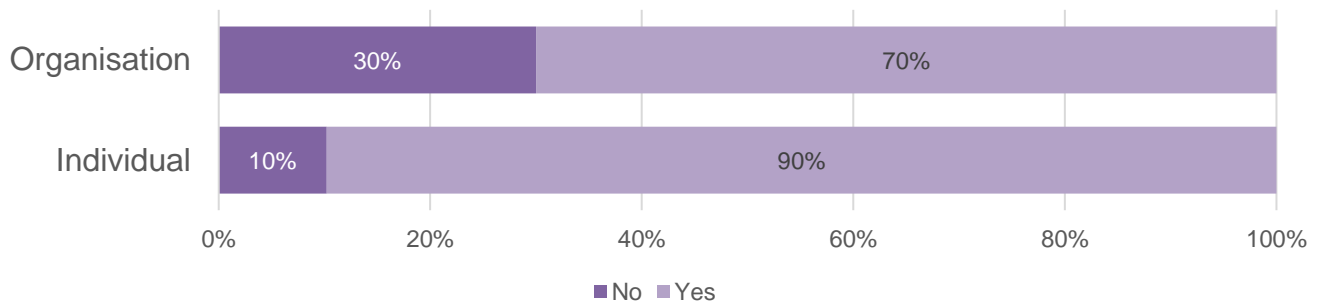[n = 69]

Figure 14 **–** Breakdown of responses to question 11
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data**]**

24% of respondents (14 organisations and 5 individuals) provided comments on whether they found the listed activities enough to make an impact on the delivery of Equality Outcome 4.

Over half of those who commented (53%; 8 organisations and 2 individuals) felt that the activities could be improved if more detail was provided on what they entail:

- Respondents felt that there should be more detail in activities describing what the current issues are and the desired change necessary to improve the current situation

- Respondents encouraged Social Security Scotland to provide more information on the collecting and reporting of the equality data

- Respondents suggested providing more detail on Client Insights Research programme, such as who will undertake the research and who will interpret it

- Respondents felt that reporting "on specific duties" could be expanded to include groups other than those with protected characteristics (e.g. carers)

- Respondents recommended wording of some of the activities be reconsidered to be more inclusive as phrases such as "quality checks" and "for staff not achieving the desired standard" could "alienate or intimidate agency staff".

Respondents suggested other types of activities they felt were missing from Equality Outcome 4. These suggestions included:

- Addressing the disparity between the aim of the outcome and the activities that support it, i.e. more activities should be outward facing to include service users:

  "The outcome itself appears to be outward facing and the activities appear to be inward facing."

- Including activities which relate to collecting data of first-hand and lived experiences of the barriers some individuals face e.g. women

- Include activities which relate to gathering evidence about groups who do not fall under the protected characteristics e.g. those experiencing poverty, carers

- Develop a health and wellbeing impact survey for clients "to gather data on the health impact of the service for clients and the working environment for the workforce
- Include evaluations on the impact the activities have on clients.

Measures of success

Equality Outcome 4 listed five methods in measuring success of the proposed outcome of using equality data to improve the service to all clients. These methods include:

1. Equality monitoring and feedback form

2. Human Resource data

3. Client and staff insights research

4. Benefit take-up rates

5. Client experience data.

In total, 69 respondents answered the question whether the measures of success would help Social Security Scotland measure the progress of Outcome 4 "Social Security Scotland uses the equality data (evidence) collected from clients, our people and other sources to respond to feedback and continually improve the service provided to all clients". 90% of individuals (44 respondents) and 60% of organisations (12 respondents) agreed that the measures of success would help measure the progress of

Q12 - Do you feel that the measures of success stated will help Social Security Scotland measure the progress of this outcome?
[n = 69]
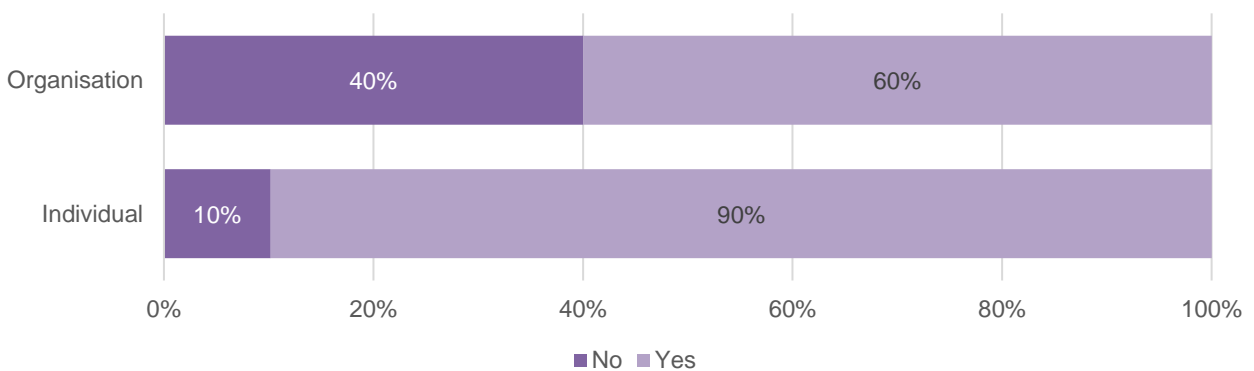
the outcome.

Figure 15 **–** Breakdown of responses to question 12
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

Many respondents (27%; 16 organisations and 5 individuals) identified concerns and made suggestions regarding the measures of success listed in Equality Outcome 4.

Over half of these respondents identified issues with the benefit take-up rates as a measure of success (52%; 8 organisations and 3 individuals). It was felt by respondents that including benefit take-up rates in the measures of success would lead to inconclusive data respondents suggested that Social Security Scotland include analyses on the application process, multiple marginalisation and unsuccessful or abandoned applications as part of the take-up rate to improve data.

> "If the agency is unable to take a similar contacting applicant who hasn't completed their application then using take-up rate as a measure will be meaningless"

Additionally, it was suggested that Social Security Scotland include both qualitative and quantitative approaches to understanding benefit take-up rates.

> "One of the most important tools of accountability is ensuring a qualitative approach is taken to benefit up take figures. This should include strong analysis of why numbers may be so low/high for particular groups and what can be done to augment this."

29% of respondents who raised issues (6 organisations) mentioned concerns relating to human resource data listed in Equality Outcome 4's measures of success. This related to the concern that people often choose not to disclose a disability or impairment:

> "Staff's willingness to disclose personal information will, in part, depend on the culture of the agency and how confident they feel that disclosing information about protected characteristics will not lead to negative perceptions or discriminatory behaviours. How the data will be used and the value of making it available to the agency and Scottish Government must be clearly articulated to staff."

There was also a concern that listing human resource data as a measure of success was too vague. It was suggested that the measure could be improved by providing information as how to this data will be collected, measured and used.

10% of respondents who raised issues (2 organisations) were concerned with the measures of success in relation to Equality Outcome 4 overall. It was felt that Outcome 4 described "more of a process of continual improvement", i.e., Outcome 4 confused "outcomes with outputs":

> "The agency is required to articulate outcomes which are a description of "changes that result for individuals, communities, organisations or society as a consequence of the action" taken by the body. Using equality data (evidence) is an output or an activity, it does not describe a change for any of the groups the agency is required to consider." Other respondents listed their concerns and suggestions relating to Equality Outcome 4. These included:

- Encouraging a culture of "believability" where people with protected characteristics are believed and their opinions are accepted without scepticism

- Publishing anonymised client feedback responses alongside plans to address negative feedback.

3.6 Equality Outcome 5 – Partnership Working

Equality Outcome 5 relates to partnership working of Social Security Scotland and is outlined in the following statement:

Social Security Scotland service is delivered through having established partnerships with relevant public sector, third sector and community bodies providing clients person-centred advice no matter their circumstances.

Needs of protected groups

Equality Outcome 5 states that it "cuts across all the protected characteristics."

In total, 70 respondents answered the question whether Outcome 5 "Social Security Scotland's service is delivered through having established partnerships with relevant public sector, third sector and community bodies providing clients person centred advice no matter their circumstances" meets the needs of protected groups. 86% of individuals (43 respondents) and 80% of organisations (16 respondents) agreed that the outcome met the needs of protected groups.

Q13 - Do you feel this outcome meets the needs of protected groups?
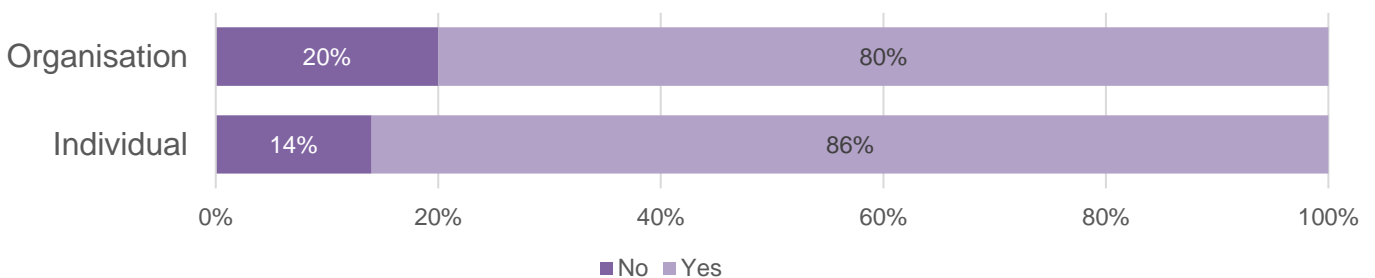[n = 70]

Figure 16 – Breakdown of responses to question 13
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

Many respondents (22%; 11 organisations and 6 individuals) provided comments relating how the outcome could be improved to meet the needs of protected groups.

Many of these respondents (41%; 5 organisations and 2 individuals) suggested that the outcome "could go further" in describing which characteristics they wish to support:

- Respondents felt that "person-centred advice" could include independent advocacy, signposting to other relevant authorities and adequate knowledge about what each protected group is entitled to

- Respondents recommended that "advice no matter their circumstances" could be more grounded in the Public Sector General Equality Duty as well as explicitly recognise the barriers to communication e.g. time delays in getting an interpreter

- One organisation referred to "established partnerships" and suggested that Outcome 5 could outline the:

  "need to continually improve and develop partnerships with organisations who are committed to equality and human rights."

35% of respondents who suggested improvements (5 organisations and 1 individual) recommended that the wording of the outcome be improved to meet the needs of protected groups. These respondents recommended that the outcome recognise that not all partnerships with Social Security Scotland will be "established" and instead have the service be delivered through "continually developing relationships":

  "Social Security Scotland will need to have relationships which are open and honest with organisations who wish to remain independent, e.g. independent advocacy organisations and third sector organisations."

Further, respondents recommended having greater clarity surrounding terms such as "relevant" body and "advice".

Supporting activities

Equality Outcome 5 listed a number of activities that could support achieving this outcome. These activities are as follows:

1. Establish local delivery partnerships – developing Social Security Scotland's services in close partnership with stakeholders and those with direct lived in experience

2. Delivery of Engagement and Relationships Strategy

3. Tailored pre-application support based on local needs

4. Developing client referral arrangements

5. Appropriate design, analysis and reporting of stakeholder consultations

6. Providing enough resources to support people

7. Ensure support systems and person-centred advice.

In total, 70 respondents answered the question whether the supporting activities would help achieve Outcome 5 "Social Security Scotland's service is delivered through having established partnerships with relevant public sector, third sector and community bodies providing clients person centred advice no matter their circumstances". 84% of individuals (42 respondents) and 50% of organisations (10 respondents) agreed that the supporting activities would help achieve the outcome.

Q14 - Do you feel that the supporting activities stated will help achieve the stated outcome?
[n = 70]

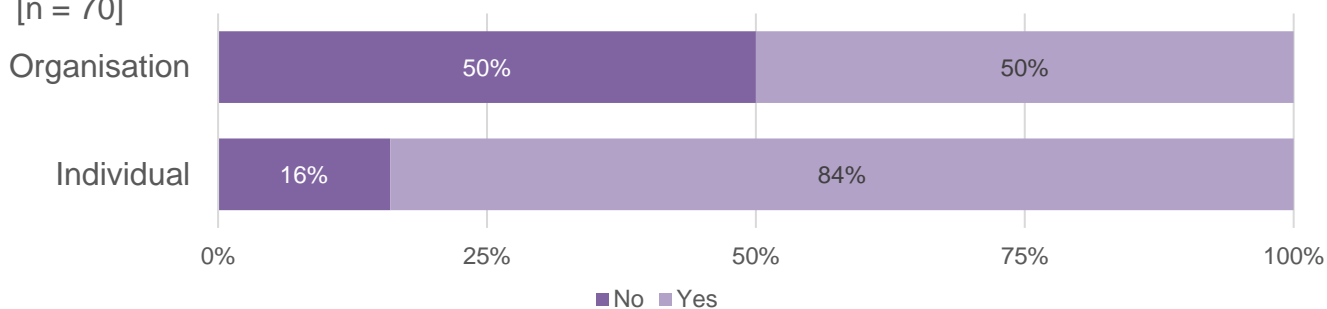|	No	Yes
Organisation	50%	50%
Individual	16%	84%

Figure 17 – Breakdown of responses to question 14
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

Many respondents to the survey (30%; 16 organisations and 8 individuals) expressed concerns regarding the activities which could support achieving Equality Outcome 5.

46% of these respondents (7 organisations and 4 individuals) suggested that more detail regarding the activities involved would be beneficial:

Respondents suggested more clarity in the listed activity of "providing enough resources to support people". Respondents felt that this activity should make explicit reference to:

Understanding invisible and difficult to prove conditions e.g. autism

Clients in rural areas of Scotland – "to make sure that they receive the same level of service for those in urban areas"

Inclusive communication to help clients communicate directly with Social Security Scotland

Staffing levels and expertise

Financial resources.

Respondents suggested that Equality Outcome 5 list how the activities will be carried out in practice e.g. timings

There were suggestions that the activity regarding local delivery partnerships should include specialist services as well as contracts. Respondents felt that Social Security Scotland should ensure that "any contract wording in terms of outcomes are tight enough to deliver genuine progress"

One respondent suggested the inclusion of an escalation policy/strategy for clients who wish to dispute a Social Security Scotland decision.

Further suggestions to the supporting activities by respondents to make an impact on the delivery of Equality Outcome 5 included:

- Mentioning how the activities will be:

  "delivered to people in their place and communities. This should include how the service will be made accessible and delivery of services to the most vulnerable communities."

- Having advocates and peer support for protected groups

- Having effective signposting for clients

Additionally, it was felt by two respondents that Equality Outcome 5 was a "means of delivering a service" and the activities listed related to delivering this service. They therefore felt that the activities would not help achieve an "equality outcome" and that overall, Outcome 5 could be improved to focus more on being an outcome.

Measures of success

Equality Outcome 5 listed four methods of measuring success:

1. Feedback from organisations

2. Client experience feedback

3. Equality and feedback monitoring form

4. Stakeholder consultations.

In total, 70 respondents answered the question whether that the measures of success will help Social Security Scotland measure the progress of Outcome 5 "Social Security Scotland's service is delivered through having established partnerships with relevant public sector, third sector and community bodies providing clients person centred advice no matter their circumstances". 86% of individuals (43 respondents) and 60% of organisations (12 respondents) agreed that the measures of success would help measure the progress of the outcome.

Q15 - Do you feel that the measures of success stated will help Social Security Scotland measure the progress of this outcome?
[n = 70]

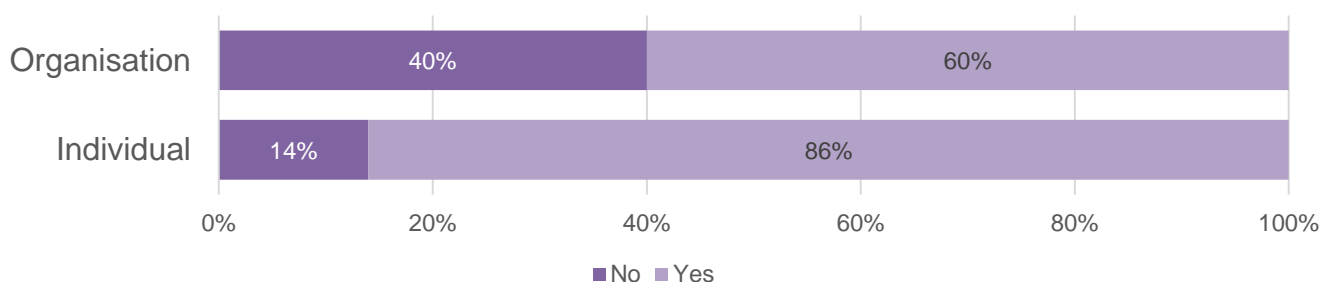|	No	Yes
Organisation	40%	60%
Individual	14%	86%

Figure 18 – Breakdown of responses to question 15
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

A quarter of respondents (15 organisations and 5 individuals) raised concerns about the measures of success described in Equality Outcome 5.

Many of those who raised concerns (45%; 8 organisations and 1 individual) recommended including more detail with regards to the methods of measuring success. This included ensuring:

- Certain groups are not underrepresented within data collection and consultations by being "genuinely inclusive both in terms of accessible communication and inclusive participation process"

- Greater detail on the format of stakeholder consultations to ensure success can be measured

- Timescales are attached under each measure

- Expert independent analysis of measures of success

- Effective training of front-line staff.

Further concerns relating to Equality Outcome 5 and suggestions of further measures which could be used included:

- Measuring success by looking at the percentage of those who are entitled to support are receiving it

- Learning from negative feedback:

  "Concentrate on learning why some people have had poor experiences and then addressing the faults or barriers that led to these."

- Publishing the number of service level agreements made with local delivery partners

- Considering power dynamics between Social Security Scotland and third sector and community bodies in how honest feedback can be given

- Measure numbers of partnerships and their spread across Scotland to monitor success of engagement.

3.6 Areas of most relevance

In total, 70 respondents answered the question whether the outcomes target the areas of most relevance for Social Security Scotland. 92% of individuals (47 respondents) agreed that the outcomes targeted the areas of most relevance for Social Security Scotland, in contrast 53% of organisations (10 respondents) agreed.

Q16: Do the outcomes stated target the areas of most relevance for Social Security Scotland?
[n = 70]

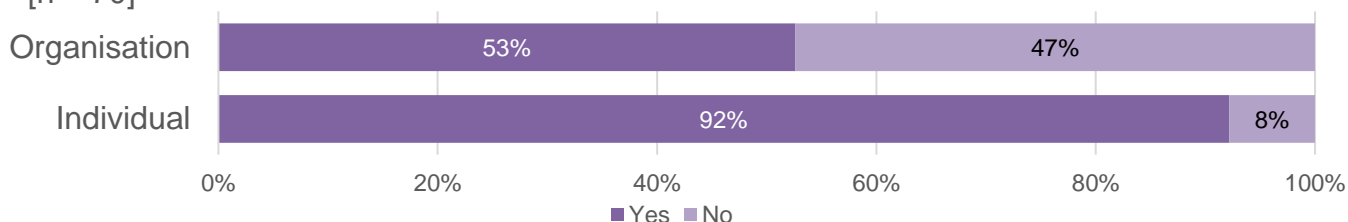|	Yes	No
Organisation	53%	47%
Individual	92%	8%

Figure 19 – Breakdown of responses to question 16
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

22% of all respondents (12 organisations and 5 individuals) provided suggestions for Social Security Scotland in terms of further outcomes which could be considered.

There was broad agreement amongst those who provided suggestions (76%, 10 organisations and 3 individuals) that parts of the outcomes needed to be reconsidered. These participants were concerned with:

- The outcomes relating to equality more generally – respondents suggested creating specific outcomes which meet the distinct needs of protected groups

- Whether the outcomes meet the minimum standards required by the Scottish Specific Duties – respondents suggested providing details about how the outcomes aim to meet general duty and how they cut across all protected characteristics

- The outcomes appearing "inward-looking" i.e. that they were aimed "towards staff, rather than people engaging with Social Security Scotland" – respondents suggested distinguishing between outward and inward outcomes:

  e.g. "delivering an accessible service to protected groups and those aimed at being accessible and welcoming employer for those in protected groups"

  Many respondents who provided suggestions (35%; 5 organisations and 1 individual) recommended that Social Security Scotland should aim to "go beyond protected characteristics." It was felt by respondents that the outcomes could be more "ambitious" by going beyond "the statutory requirements of considering equalities only in relation to protected characteristics." It was suggested by respondents that Social Security Scotland take a more "explicitly intersectional approach that recognises the complexities of people's lives." This would include groups such as carers or asylum seekers who may be marginalised and need the support of a "flexible service that can understand and respond to their needs".

Many respondents who made suggestions (35%; 5 organisatiosn and 1 individual) were also concerned that the measurability of the outcomes. Respondents suggested creating strategic and actionable outcomes which have a "concrete direction". This would enable the outcomes to identify "specific evidence-based actions". For example, one organisation recommended the following:

  "It is our understanding, based on Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance, that outcomes should be developed with a SMART approach (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) in mind. We understand that as a new agency, this may pose difficulties in terms of the baseline being worked from and where the agency would like to go to as a result of achieving the outcomes but we believe that adopting a SMART approach would be helpful in this context."

3.7 Specific inequalities highlighted by participants

A majoirty of respondents (59%; 26 individuals and 21 organisations) highlighted specific inequalities which they felt were relevant to the delivery of social security benefits and should be addressed explicitly in the outcomes.The specific inequalities mentioned by participants can be seen in the table below.

Specific inequality	Percentage and breakdown of respondents	Description
Disabilities	30% (8 organisations and 6 individuals)	Respondents suggested that outcomes acknowledged not all those with disabilities have the same experience and their needs often intersect with other inequalities e.g. poverty. Many respondents were concerned with the understanding, knowledge and experience of staff at all levels may have in relation to people with disabilities, including the following: • Learning disabilities: people with learning disabilities are often discriminated against and experience difficulties overcoming "environmental, organisation and attitudinal barriers which means they are often excluded as active citizens and rights holders" • Physical disabilities: Many individuals with physical disabilities struggle to travel far and access assessments and buildings e.g. telephone services are "almost impossible for deaf/hard of hearing people • Unseen disabilities: Social Security Scotland staff need to be aware of hidden symptoms and conditions
Gender	17% (7 organisations and 1 individual)	Participants highlighted that social security is "heavily gendered" and has a "significant impact" on women's economic and social situation including their experience of paid work, unpaid care and experience of violence or discrimination. Women's pre-existing economic inequality and their greater propensity to having caring roles places them at greater risk of poverty. Respondents felt it was crucial to mainstream gender equality within the outcomes and consider women's experiences and lives.

Poverty	17% (5 organisations and 3 individuals)	Poverty is not a protected characteristic and therefore not considered explicitly within the outcomes, however respondents highlighted that poverty disproportionally affects people with protected characteristics.
Disability benefits	17% (6 individuals and 2 organisations)	Respondents were concerned that those applying for disability benefits would be "treated like a liar until they can prove otherwise". Respondents recommended that claimants be treated respectfully, helped through the process and assessments for lifelong conditions put to an end.
Mental health	11% (4 individuals and 1 organisation)	Respondents recommended that mental health become more recognised and that those who suffer are "given the support they need to get the benefits they are due." It was also suggested that Social Security Scotland become more aware that the application process can negatively affect the mental health of applicants.
Rural and island areas	11% (4 organisations and 1 individual)	Respondents highlighted that delivery costs are higher in rural areas and that these areas were at risk of not getting adequate services. However, one respondent highlighted the island-proofing undertaken at the development stages of the service and suggested that The Islands Act 2018 would ensure full island-impact assessments in the future.
Autism	9% (3 individuals and 1 organisation)	Few respondents highlighted difficulties when engaging with social security with regards to autism. Respondents hoped that the service will provide support outwith "face-to-face" meetings, i.e. at "every stage and engagement."
Black and ethnic minorities	9% (4 organisations)	Few respondents highlighted the barriers faced by black and ethnic minorities in engaging with welfare services and employment. Respondents wished to see evidence-based support in helping those from black and ethnic minority communities into employment with the service and supported during the claiming process also.
Digital exclusion	4% (2 organisations)	Two respondents highlighted that digital exclusion is an inequality that "cuts across both age and poverty characteristics" as well as disabilities. It was recommended that Social Security Scotland take lower levels of access to digital platforms into account.

Figure 20 – Inequalities highlighted by participants [Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

Other inequalities mentioned which respondents felt were relevant to the delivery of social security benefits included: inequalities experienced by LGBTQ+ communities, refugees, people who are homeless and those who experienced changes to their benefits as a result of 'welfare reform'.

15% of respondents who mentioned specific inequalities which should be addressed by the outcomes (6 organisations and 1 individual) provided evidence or signposted Social Security Scotland to further information. This can be found in Appendix C.

3.8 Further comments and suggestions from respondents

Just under half of respondents (48%; 23 individuals and 15 organisations) provided further comments and suggestions.

Many of these respondents (45%; 14 individuals and 3 organisations) expressed a general wish that Social Security Scotland staff treat clients "with dignity, fairness and respect". This involved staff members being patient, having the ability to listen, giving their time to help individuals, treating everyone equally and not assuming "one size fits all".

Some respondents who provided further comments (18%; 7 organisations) expressed that more detail regarding the outcomes would be beneficial and some others (13%; 5 organisations) suggested improvements could be made to the wording of the outcomes. Respondents recognised that the outcomes are "well intentioned" and welcomed its approach putting "dignity fairness and respect at its heart". However, it was suggested that improving the wording and detail of the outcomes to include specific inequalities would be more likely to guarantee the "equality of opportunity, autonomy, process and, eventually, outcomes for people from different protected characteristics".

11% of respondents who made suggestions (3 individuals and 1 organisation) commented on the medical assessments for benefits. These respondents strongly believed that the medical assessments needed to be improved and, in some cases, "scrapped" e.g. "having suitably qualified people assessing and awarding" medical evidence to support claim and having assessments such as the "20ft rule" addressed.

A few respondents who provided further comments (8%; 2 organisations and 1 individual) suggested that the outcomes adopt a human rights-based approach:

> "So that those who do not have a protected characteristic, such as unpaid carers, are included within the agency's equality outcomes."

3.9 Events

The Scottish Government facilitated a series of Equality Consultation Events across the country in order to explore how people felt about the Mainstreaming Equality Outcomes and where best to focus efforts for positive change. Nine consultation events occurred across the country: Shetland, Orkney, Western Isles, Inverness, Aberdeen, Dumfries, Falkirk, Glasgow, and Perth. The events were structured as an open discussion with common themes relating to each of the Mainstreaming Equality Outcomes. Please note that where participants views have been recorded, not all these statements have been fact checked. Names and local authority areas have been omitted to ensure the anonymity of participants.

Key messages	
General points	Overall, like the consultation survey respondents, event participants felt that the outcomes needed to specify which protected characteristic(s) they were targeting and what impact they would have on making the experience "better" for people. Additionally, it was felt that Social Security Scotland should be more ambitious and go beyond supporting only protected characteristics. Participants felt that Social Security Scotland had the opportunity to become an "exemplar public body". Similar to the survey responses, participants at the events felt that both qualitative and quantitative data as evidence and measures of success should be used. Further recommendations included: • Stating the desired change as a result of the activities • Focus on more than just the existing clients • Describing the current situation, issues relating to the situation, what will be done and why • Distinguish if outcomes are outward-facing (for clients) or inward-facing (for staff and organisations) • Demonstrate an understanding of intersectionality • Outline an approach to advocacy and third-party referrals.
Language	As in the consultation survey responses, participants felt that the use of jargon should be limited to avoid Social Security Scotland being viewed as a "closed shop". Further, respondents seemed to agree with the survey findings felt that the wording of the outcome should be reconsidered, especially with regards to words like "inclusive" and "inclusivity" should be used instead of "diverse" and "diversity." Other comments relating to language included sentences being shorter and more accurate grammar used i.e. active language is used instead of passive language, e.g. "will build" instead of "will look to build".

Structure of document	Participants recommended using overarching principles or commitments to include, for example: • Type, availability and use of data sources • Maximising uptake • Progress reporting • Inclusion of external stakeholders Specific outcomes should follow the overarching principles or commitments. Participants felt that these outcomes should be structured in the following way: 1. Have a clear statement of activity to address mainstreaming 2. Separate set of outcomes that will detail change required 3. Then describe the rationale for the outcome 4. Finally, detail the means of measurement. Further suggestions included not prefacing every outcome with "Social Security Scotland…"
Activities	Participants commented on a number of activities with regards to the outcomes. They are described in greater detail below. Culture: Participants suggested the introduction of a cultural policy to outline staff expectations and appropriate behaviours e.g. what is tolerated in the workplace. Participants felt that culture matters: "people judge on what they see and hear." It was also suggested that mentoring and coaching become a listed activity in achieving the outcomes. Networks: Participants encouraged Social Security Scotland to establish a Staff Equalities Network in order to celebrate diversity and address specific issues within the workplace. Creating Equalities Champions as internal groups of interested people to serve as a critical sounding board was recommended as an additional activity. Participants also felt that the outcomes should elaborate further on activities e.g. describe what will be done. Stakeholder engagement: It was felt by participants that there was a need for on-going wider stakeholder engagement, especially with the commencement of Local Delivery. Local Delivery: It was important to participants for Social Security Scotland to be willing to respond to differences in different parts of Scotland and not to target different areas in the same way. Although a minimum set of standards across all areas was identified as necessary to implement; no details were given about the nature of these standards.

	Specific activities mentioned at island events: Participants at the island events felt that activities needed to take into account a local and rural perspective by understanding island communities and the isolation and poor connectivity (broadband and telephone) some communities experience. This could be done by increasing the number of home visits. Additionally, it was recommended that activities consider the use of Gaelic for the Mainstreaming Equality Outcomes and in the issues they address. It was also important to participants that Social Security Scotland recognize the cultural differences in terms of language in island and rural areas. This could be done by training staff to understand the different dialects across island communities. Further comments relating to activities more generally: Participants were keen to have an activity relating to the probationary period of employment and have it explained in greater detail in the outcomes. It was particularly important for staff to know this before they start.
Measurements	Participants at the consultation events agreed with the survey respondents in terms of explicitly mentioning which measures were being measured, the frequency of measurements and the reporting process and including qualitative measures which are specific to each outcome. Further measurements which participants suggested be included in the outcomes included: • Defining how culture is measured • Using exit interviews, reasonable adjustment information and transparent data during recruitment process • Mystery shopper and having public feedback, even via the local community.

Figure 21 – Key messages gathered from the consultation events
Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

Participants were also able to suggest improvements to the wording of each outcome. Some of these suggestions are seen below.

1. Equality Outcome 1 – Social Security Scotland will deliver a seamless service that is inclusive and where our clients are able to access the support they need.

   Participants felt that the wording of the outcome could be improved to reflect the "flexible" delivery of the service ensuring that people get the "support to which they are entitled… in a way that works for them."

2. Equality Outcome 2 – Social Security Scotland will have a culture built on inclusivity where differences are supported, our people feel valued and they have opportunities to reach their full potential.

   Participants suggested that "accessibility" be used instead of "inclusivity", "diversity" instead of "difference" and "encouraged" or "celebrated" used instead of "supported".

3. Equality Outcome 3 – Social Security Scotland will be an employer of choice and through our recruitment process we will look to build a workforce that is representative of the population of Scotland.

    Participants felt that the workforce of Social Security Scotland ought to be representative of the people that use the service and not representative of the population of Scotland overall. It was also suggested that this outcome could reflect the lived experience of clients who use the service.

4. Equality Outcome 4 – Social Security Scotland uses the equality data (evidence) collected from clients, our people and other sources to respond to feedback and continually improve the service provided to all clients.

    It was felt by participants that this outcome could have an overarching commitment instead of a standalone outcome as it was more of an activity. Participants suggested that baselines needed to be stated alongside defining what "our people" meant e.g. using "our staff" or "our workforce" instead.

5. Equality Outcome 5 – Social Security Scotland's service is delivered through having established partnerships with relevant public sector, third sector and community bodies providing clients person-centred advice no matter their circumstances.

    Participants felt that positive changes to Outcome 5 would include removing the word "established" to embrace all types of partnerships and removing "no matter their circumstances". It was also suggested that this outcome could become more action oriented.

3.10 Easy Read findings

To ensure the Mainstreaming Equality Outcomes consultation was accessible, Social Security Scotland made an Easy Read version available. Responses were analysed separately because the outcomes and questions were phrased differently. The Outcomes (or Ideas as they are referred to in the Easy Read) can be found in Appendix D and the list of questions can be found in Appendix E.

Two organisations provided responses through the Easy Read version. Organiation names and local authority areas have been omitted to ensure the anonymity of participants.

Idea 1 – service delivery

1 respondent stated that yes – they thought Idea 1 and the things Social Security Scotland can do to make it happen was fair for all groups of people.The second respondent did not provide an answer for this question.

Respondents felt that Idea 1 made "some good suggestions" about how to make the Social Security Scotland work well for everyone. However, it was felt that improvements could be made.

Both respondents were concerned about how protected groups could feed into and influence the process of designing the social security system. One participant felt there was a risk that those with protected characteristics will be "under-represented" as it was easy for some groups to feed into the process. It was recommended that Social Security Scotland "directly engage with these groups".

Both respondents felt that training of staff was an important aspect of Idea 1. Training staff to "take into account the communication needs of people" with different needs could help make Idea 1 fair for all groups of people. Further recommendations to ensure Idea 1 was fair for all groups included:

- Work closely with third sector to provide training for staff

- Use Easy Read or Plain English as the standard format of documents

- Ensure service is flexible and responsive to the needs of people.

Idea 2 – organisational culture

One respondent stated that yes – they thought Idea 2 and the things Social Security Scotland can do to make it happen was fair for all groups of people and will give them what they need. The second respondent did not provide an answer for this question. Both respondents provided details on how Social Secuirty Scotland can make Idea 2 fair for all groups.

One respondent felt that performance measures needed to be improved to make Idea 2 fair for all people. This issue related to assessing qualitative data e.g. assessing "quality of interactions and outcomes for people using the service."

One respondent emphasised that the third sector could help Social Security Scotland realise Idea 2 in addressing some of its goals, for example:

> "working with different groups of people in the community to give them information and find out what they need and helping to ensure information we give people is easy to understand."

Further ideas mentioned by one respondent included:

- Having a human rights approach to the workplace culture

- Improve staff awareness that the role of social security should be to allow a person to live an independent life and "contribute and be part of our communities."

Idea 3 - workforce

One respondent stated that yes – they thought Idea 3 and the things Social Security Scotland can do to make it happen was fair for all groups of people. The second respondent did not provide an answer for this question but provided suggestions on how Idea 3 could be improved to be fair for all groups of people. This included:

- Having a human rights approach that "centres on positive outcomes for people" who use the service. This will "attract people with the right values and attitude"

- Having an accessible recruitment process that is not solely available online. This could be done providing reasonable adjustments and wide-ranging support to all groups

- Involving third sector organisations and groups for those with protected characteristics to help design the recruitment process.

Idea 4 – evidence data

One respondent stated that no – they did not think Idea 4 and the things Social Security Scotland can do to make it happen was fair for all groups of people. The second respondent did not provide an answer for this question. Both respondents provided suggestions on how Idea 4 could be improved for all groups of people.

Both respondents felt that gathering information from people who use the service is important. However some suggestions included:

- Enhance wording of "write reports about how we are doing to treat everyone fairly" by including greater detail on how these reports will be used e.g. to challenge our own perceptions of equality or in order for us to improve

- One respondent agreed that there should be different options and formats for providing feedback

- However, another respondent felt that there needed to be evidence that there was a need for "a new way for staff to give us their ideas." It was suggested by this respondent that the wording of this point be changed to "test our mechanism(s) for getting staff insights works and if not improve."

- Ensure clients are aware that feedback over the phone or though text message will not cost them anything

Idea 5 – Partnership working

One respondent stated that yes – they thought Idea 5 and the things Social Security Scotland will do to make it happen was fair for all groups of people. The second respondent did not provide an answer for this question but provided suggestions on how Idea 5 could be improved to be fair for all groups of people.

Both respondents agreed that having strong links with other agencies and organisations was important and that there should be enough resources to support people and various agencies to work together. However, one respondent expressed that they have not yet been able to feed into the design of Social Security Scotland in a consistent and regular way. They suggested:

- That groups and organisations have a way to regularly inform the process
- Long-term funding and investment are provided for advocacy and welfare rights services.

Discussions regarding anything unfair about the way people currently get benefits

One respondent/organisation highlighted that they felt people with learning disabilities were being treated unfairly by the current benefits system. It was felt that the responsibility fell on the client to "prove" how disabled they were. It was recommended that assessments be improved as the process can be "degrading to have to disclose very personal information to a complete stranger". It was also recommended that long waits for appointments be improved.

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft outcomes

Equality Outcome 1

Social Security Scotland will deliver a seamless service that is inclusive and where our clients are able to access the support they need.

How does it meet the general duty?
- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations.

Impacted protected characteristics
This outcome cuts across all the protected characteristics

Link to strategic objectives
- Delivering a service with dignity, fairness and respect at its core
- Promoting equality and tackling poverty
- Ensuring efficiency and aligning our services with the wider public sector for the benefit of the people we serve.

How will we measure success?
- Client Insights Research
- Equality and Feedback Monitoring Form
- Client experience data
- Application journey measures (e.g. Number of applications measured against projections, application drop offs)
- Measurements associated with Social Security Charter
- Feedback from representative groups
- Requests for information in other forms
- Published Equality Impact Assessments.

Activities that could support achieving this outcome

- Inclusive communication project – key client materials and publications provided in various formats at the same time (e.g. BSL, Easy Read and various languages)

- Engagement with equality groups to inform decisions on physical environment for Social Security Scotland locations

- Ensuring feedback from delivery feeds back into service design being led by Social Security programme

- Roll out of the Social Security Scotland's Equality Impact Assessment process, with assurance checking to ensure recommendations are followed up

- Delivery of the Social Security Charter

- Tailored pre-application support delivered throughout local delivery areas

- Creation and delivery of Equality and Diversity training, ensuring every contact with our clients aligns to the strategic objectives.

Equality Outcome 2

Social Security Scotland will have a culture built on inclusivity where differences are supported, our people feel valued and they have opportunities to reach their full potential.

How does it meet the general duty?
- Eliminate discrimination

- Advance equality of opportunity

- Foster good relations.

Impacted protected characteristics

This outcome cuts across all the protected characteristics

Link to strategic objectives

- Delivering a service with dignity, fairness and respect at its core

- Promoting equality and tackling poverty.

How will we measure success?

- Staff survey

- Analysis across protected characteristics

- Staff Insights research

- Self-declaration (eHR data on protected characteristics)

- Retention rates

- Number of grievances

- Analysis of Human Resource data

- Organisational rewards

- Success of staff networks

- Reporting supporting specific equality duties

- Board member information.

Activities that could support achieving this outcome

- Creation of staff networks focused on equality

- Training and development opportunities that go further than mandatory e-learning e.g. staff awareness sessions. (Learning and Development to develop a programme of training)

- Overall culture work

- Communications - specific awareness weeks to highlight issues, raise awareness and engage staff

- Proactive outreach work targeting groups with protected characteristics

- Promotion of e-hr self-declaration

- Mental health first aiders

- Human Resource policies in place to support staff in attending religious commitments, medical appointments etc.

- Consideration given within estates facilities e.g. – prayer room, equipment for expressing mothers

- Reasonable adjustment process

- Inclusive communications

- Use Scottish Government Board reporting information to inform recruitment of Executive Advisory Body members.

Equality Outcome 3

Social Security Scotland will be an employer of choice and through our recruitment process we will look to build a workforce that is representative of the population of Scotland.

How does it meet the general duty?

- Eliminate discrimination

- Advance equality of opportunity

- Foster good relations.

Impacted protected characteristics

This outcome cuts across all the protected characteristics

Link to strategic objectives

- Delivering a service with dignity, fairness and respect at its core

- Promoting equality and tackling poverty

How will we measure success?

- Analysis of Human Resource data across protected characteristics

- Staff Insights research

- Feedback on recruitment process

- Recruitment research.

Activities that could support achieving this outcome

- Social Security Scotland recruitment policy

- Stakeholder input into recruitment materials

- Targeted workshops/roadshows with under-represented groups

- Insights research investigating experiences with the recruitment process specifically

- Mentoring opportunities

- Targeted Internships supporting equality groups

- Fair assessment process

- Representative workforce

- Early identification and actioning of possible reasonable adjustments required to improve employee's journey and experiences following recruitment.

Equality Outcome 4

Social Security Scotland uses the equality data (evidence) collected from clients, our people and other sources to respond to feedback and continually improve the service provided to all clients.

How does it meet the general duty?

- Eliminate discrimination

- Advance equality of opportunity

- Foster good relations.

Impacted protected characteristics

This outcome cuts across all the protected characteristics

Link to strategic objectives

- Delivering a service with dignity, fairness and respect at its core

- Promoting equality and tackling poverty.

How will we measure success?

- Equality Monitoring and Feedback Form

- Human Resource data

- Client and Staff Insights research

- Benefit take up rates

- Client experience data.

Activities that could support achieving this outcome

- Development and application of the Clients Insights Research programme.

- Development of accessible client surveys on individual interactions and overall experience when engaging with Social Security Scotland.

- Social Security Scotland reporting on Specific duties (Workforce/Gender/Disability Pay Gap)

- Workforce data analysis – using this to support specific reviews of staff polices

- Implementation of 'All ideas matters' staff suggestion scheme

- Supporting Scottish Government analysts to design and measure benefit take up

- Developing and embedding a continuous improvement culture

- Action plan following staff survey results

- Quality checks in place and performance improvement action plans for staff not achieving the desired standard.

Equality Outcome 5

Social Security Scotland service is delivered through having established partnerships with relevant public sector, third sector and community bodies providing clients person centred advice no matter their circumstances.

How does it meet the general duty?

- Eliminate discrimination

- Advance equality of opportunity

- Foster good relations.

Impacted protected characteristics

This outcome cuts across all the protected characteristics

Link to strategic objectives

- Delivering a service with dignity, fairness and respect at its core

- Promoting equality and tackling poverty

- Ensuring efficiency and aligning our services with the wider public sector for the benefit of the people we serve.

How will we measure success?

- Feedback from organisations

- Client experience feedback

- Equality and Feedback Monitoring Form

- Stakeholder consultations.

Activities that could support achieving this outcome

- Local delivery partnerships established – developing Social Security Scotland's services in close partnership with stakeholders and those with direct lived in experience

- Delivery of our Engagement and Relationships Strategy

- Tailored pre-application support based on local needs

- Developing clients referral arrangements with a range of other advice and support services

- Appropriate design, analysis and reporting of stakeholder consultations

- Providing enough resources to support people

- Ensure support systems and person-centred advice.

Appendix B – Consultation questions

1. The following questions were asked for each outcome.

2. Do you feel this outcome meets the needs of protected groups? (Yes/No)

3. If you answered No, can you please outline how the outcome could be improved to meet their needs? (If appropriate, please make clear, which protected characteristic you are referring to?)

4. Do you feel that the supporting activities stated will help achieve the stated outcome (Yes/No)

5. If you answered No, what types of activity are missing that we could do to make an impact on delivery of this outcome?

6. Do you feel that the measures of success stated will help Social Security Scotland measure the progress of this outcome? (Yes/No)?

7. If you answered No, what are your concerns, and can you identify any further measures we should use?

8. More general questions were asked to inform the wider development of the Equality Strategy

9. Do the outcomes stated target the areas of most relevance for Social Security Scotland (Yes/No)

10. If you answered No, what further outcomes would you suggest and why?

11. Are there any specific inequalities that you would wish to highlight that are relevant to the delivery of social security benefits? Any information or evidence you can provide or signpost us to will be greatly appreciated.

12. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on our approach to equality?

Appendix C – signposting

Question 17 of the survey welcomed respondents to provide any information or evidence related to the specific inequalities participants wished to highlight that were relevant to the delivery of social security benefits. Participants were also welcome to signpost Social Security Scotland to further information also.

7 participants (6 organisations and 1 individual) provided evidence and signposted Social Security Scotland to further information. This information has been collated by topic and is presented below.

Topic	Source	Link and/or description
Blind or partially sighted individuals	Scottish Vision Strategy 2013 to 2018	https://www.rnib.org.uk/sites/default/files/Scot_Vision_Strategy_refresh.pdf
	Johan Slade and Rose Edwards (2015) My Voice 2015: The views and experiences of blind and partially sighted in the UK	One organisation wished to highlight the reality of life as a blind or partially sighted person in the UK. Many blind and partially sighted people have needs which intersect with other issues such as unemployment and poverty and therefore relevant to the delivery of social security benefits.
Carers	Skills for Care (2012) Carers Matters – Everybody's business	https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Document-library/Skills/Carers/Partone.pdf
	Carers UK (2014) Caring and Family Finances Inquiry: Carers struggling with alarming levels of hardship	https://www.carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/press-release-rss/580-nation-s-carers-struggling-with-alarming-levels-of-hardship
	The National Carers Organisations (2013) Submission to the Expert Group on Welfare	https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/expert-comment/61-scotland/response/3286-national-carer-organisations-submission-to-the-expert-group-on-welfare
	Carers UK (2014) Caring and Family Finances Inquiry: Carers struggling with alarming levels of hardship	https://www.carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/press-release-rss/580-nation-s-carers-struggling-with-alarming-levels-of-hardship

	Close the Gap (2018) Close the Gap response to the Social Security Committee inquiry into social security and in-work poverty	These documents relating to carers highlight the specific inequalities carers face, despite not being a protected group. A number of organisations highlighted that the needs of carers are particularly relevant to the delivery of social security.
Disadvantage	Lankelly Chas (2019), Hard Edges Scotland	One organization wished to highlight the complexity of the lives of people facing multiple disadvantage. This report takes into account the lived experience of those experiencing inequalities, exclusion and multiple disadvantage.
Human Rights	Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) EHRC Public Sector Equality Duty guidance	https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/commission-scotland Participants were keen to signpost participants to the EHRC where measurable and specific outcomes can be seen.
LGBT	Stonewall Scotland	https://www.stonewallscotland.org.uk/ Stonewall Scotland is a charity which supports the LGBT community and campaigns for LGBT rights everywhere including the workplace. It carries out research and provides a number of resources about the experiences and treatment of those who are LGBT.
Welfare reform	Fife Council (2019), Let's leave no one behind: poverty and protected characteristics in Fife	https://know.fife.scot/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2020/01/Lets-leave-no-one-behind-Nov-2019-report-FINAL.pdf Respondents felt that universal credit and welfare reform were major issues which were relevant to the delivery of social security benefits. This is because changes to welfare reform impacts many groups and severely impacts on black minority ethnic households, women, households with at least one disabled adult, and lone parents were among the groups most affected.
Wider inequalities in society	Crisis (2017) Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan	This action plan provides recommendations on issues relating to homelessness and welfare

Women's experience	The Fawcett Society (2006) Who benefits? A gender analysis of the UK benefits and tax credit system	Several organisations highlighted the specific inequalities which women face – all which are directly relevant to the delivery of social security benefits.
	Close the Gap (2020) Gender pay gap statistics	https://www.closethegap.org.uk/content/resources/Close-the-Gap-response-to-Social-Secuirty-Committee---In-Work-Poverty-and-Social-Security.pdf
	Close the Gap (2018) Response to the Social Security Committee inquiry into social security and in-work poverty contains further evidence on women's different experiences of social security	
	Engender (2016) Securing Women's Futures: Using Scotland's New Social Security Powers to Close the Gender Equality Gap	https://www.engender.org.uk/content/publications/Gender-matters-in-social-security-individual-payments-of-universal-credit.pdf
	Women's Budget Group (2016) The impact on women of the 2016 Budget: Women paying for the Chancellor's tax cuts, citing House of Commons Library Analysis for Kate Green MP, April 2016.	
	Engender (2016) Gender Matters in Social Security: Individual Payments of Universal Credit	
	Engender (2017) Parliamentary Briefing: Child Tax Credit and Child Element of Universal Credit	

Figure 22 – Signposting and information provided by participants in relation to specific inequalities [Source: Rocket Science analysis of consultation data]

Appendix D – Easy read draft outcomes

Idea 1

Our benefits service will work well for everyone.

People who use the service will be able to get the support they need.

Some things we could do to make this idea happen:

- Make our main information easy for different groups of people to understand. For example, make information in easy read, sign language and other languages.

- Ask different groups of people how we can make our buildings easy for everyone to use.

More things we could do to make this idea happen:

- Look at new plans and rules first to check they are fair for all groups of people.

- Do what Our Charter says. This is a document about how people should be treated when they use our service.

- Help people in local areas to apply for benefits.

- Give our staff training about treating everyone fairly.

Idea 2

We will help make sure that all different groups of people are part of our work and no one is left out.

We will do our best for all our staff and make sure they can do the best they can.

- Some things we could do to make this idea happen:

- Set up new groups of staff that can support each other and make sure we are treating everyone fairly.

- Make sure all our staff know why it is important to treat everyone fairly and how they can help.

- **More things we could do to make this idea happen:**

- Work with different groups of people in the community to give them information and find out what they need.

- Give staff training about how to support people with their mental health.

- Make sure we have rules to support staff with their religion or health needs. For example, if they need to go to a health appointment or religious event.

More things we could do to make this idea happen:

- Look at other things we can have to support people. For example, places where people can go to pray or feed their babies.

- Make sure the information we give people is easy to understand.

Idea 3

People will want to work for Social Security Scotland.

We will have many different groups of people working for us

Some things we could do to make this idea happen:

- Make sure we have good rules about helping people get a job with us.

- Ask different groups of people to have a say in our job information to make sure it is fair for everyone.

- Have events for groups of people who may not usually work for us.

- Find out what people think about applying for a job with us and what needs to change.

More things we could do to make this idea happen:

- Help different groups of people work with us for a short time to see what we do and learn new skills.

- Find out what extra support disabled people who start working for us might need. And make this happen where we can.

Idea 4

We will use the information that people give us to keep making our service better for everyone.

Some things we could do to make this idea happen:

- Get information from people who use our service and staff about what they think of the service. This includes asking people some easy questions when they use our service.

- Write reports about how we are doing to treat everyone fairly. For example, how we are making sure all staff are paid a fair wage.

- Look at our rules for staff to see if they need to change.

More things we could do to make this idea happen:

- Set up a new way for staff to give us their ideas.

- Keep looking at how to make our service better. Make sure everyone who works for us can help with this.

- Keep asking staff what they think about working for us. Then make a plan about what we will do next.

- Check how staff are getting on and help them if they are not working in the best way. For example, make plans with them about how to work in the best way.

Idea 5

We will work with other organisations to make sure that everyone can get advice about benefits that is right for them and their lives

Some things we could do to make this idea happen:

- Work with other people and organisations in local areas to set up our services. This includes working with people who have used benefits services before.

- Start our plan about how to work with different groups of people and make sure they have a say in our work.

- Make sure people in local areas get the right support to apply for benefits.

More things we could do to make this idea happen:

- Make sure there is enough money and staff to support people

Appendix E – Easy Read questions

1. Do you think Idea 1 and the things we could do to make it happen is fair for all groups of people and will give them what they need?

2. If not, how could we make this idea fair for all groups of people?

3. Do you think Idea 2 and the things we could do to make it happen is fair for all groups of people and will give them what they need?

4. If not, how could we make this idea fair for all groups of people?

5. Do you think Idea 3 and the things we could do to make it happen is fair for all groups of people and will give them what they need?

6. If not, how could we make this idea fair for all groups of people?

7. Do you think Idea 4 and the things we could do to make it happen is fair for all groups of people and will give them what they need?

8. If not, how could we make this idea fair for all groups of people?

9. Do you think Idea 5 and the things we could do to make it happen is fair for all groups of people and will give them what they need?

10. If not, how could we make this idea fair for all groups of people?

11. Is there anything unfair about the way people get benefits at the moment? For example, are some groups of people treated less fairly than others?

12. Is there anything else you want to say about how we can make our work fair for everyone?

w w w . g o v . s c o t