

# **The Fairer Scotland Duty Guidance for Public Bodies**

**Easy Read**

**February 2022**

# The Fairer Scotland Duty Guidance for Public Bodies



**Easy Read Version**

## Important

This is an easy read version of the Fairer Scotland Duty Guidance for Public Bodies (the Guidance).

In this version you will see some difficult words that we have to include. This is because they are the words used in the law.



**Socio-economic disadvantage** means people who have a lower income than most people in Scotland. They have little or no money saved. They are less able to get basic goods and services, like food or heating. These people may be in poverty.



**Inequalities of outcome** mean differences we can measure. These differences can make people disadvantaged. For example, a child from a rich family may do better at school than a child from a poor family. Even if the child from the poor family is cleverer.



**Strategic decisions** are the important decisions that are made about how an organisation does its work. For example, when making changes that will affect people and communities.

## What is the Fairer Scotland Duty (the Duty)?



The Fairer Scotland Duty (the Duty) is a law that started in April 2018.



The Duty is about trying to make sure that people who live in poverty are not disadvantaged. They should have the same life chances as people who do not live in poverty.



It says that when certain public bodies in Scotland are making strategic decisions they have to think about how they can reduce inequalities of outcome. These inequalities are caused by socio-economic disadvantage.

The Scottish Government published the [Fairer Scotland Duty Guidance for Public Bodies](#) (the Guidance) which explains how they should follow the law. This booklet is about that Guidance.

## What are public bodies?

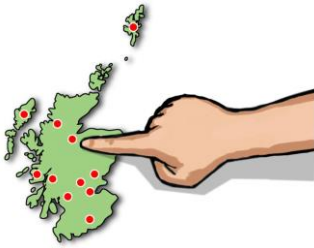


Public bodies include organisations that deliver public or government services. For example, councils or hospitals.

## What does socio-economic disadvantage mean?



Socio-economic disadvantage means people who have a lower income than most people in Scotland. They have little or no money saved. They are less able to get basic goods and services, like food or heating. These people may be in poverty.



People who live in certain areas or are part of certain groups can also be disadvantaged. For example, people who live in areas with fewer jobs or people who are disabled.

## What does inequalities of outcome mean?



Inequalities of outcome mean differences we can measure. These differences can make people disadvantaged. For example, a child from a rich family may do better at school than a child from a poor family. Even if the child from the poor family is cleverer.

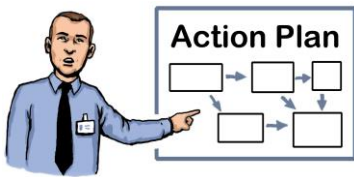


Growing up living in poverty can have life-long impacts. It can lead to inequality between that person's life and the life of someone who has not grown up in poverty. For example, their chances of staying healthy.

## What does strategic decisions mean?

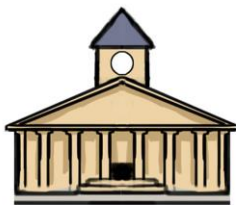


Strategic decisions are the important decisions that are made about how an organisation does its work. For example, when making changes that will affect people and communities.



Usually these are big plans and decisions that affect how work is done, often over a long period of time. But they can also be important plans or decisions that need to be made quickly for new situations.

## Which public bodies are covered by the Duty?



Not all public bodies are covered by the Duty. Some of the public bodies covered by the Duty are:

- Scottish Government
- Councils
- NHS Scotland Health Boards
- Integration Joint Boards
- The Scottish Police Authority
- The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service.

## How can public bodies meet the Duty?



Public bodies all work differently. Some will take decisions that are affected by the Duty a lot. Some will only make decisions that are affected by the Duty once a year.

~~OLD WORK~~  
NEW WORK

The work of public bodies can change. For example, if they are given new work to do by government. This means that the way public bodies follow the Duty can change.



This is why it is so important for public bodies to think about the impact their decisions have. Their decisions should make things better for people living in poverty. They should close the gaps that exist between people who live in poverty and those who do not.



Public bodies must think with an open mind about how they meet the Duty.



They must think about it seriously and as early as possible. It should be done by staff at every stage of the planning and decision-making process.



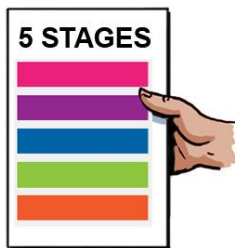


A good way to do this is to involve people who live in poverty. This will help to make sure that the plan or decision meets their needs and improves their lives.



The Duty does not mean that all plans and decisions must reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage.

Some decisions might have no impact on this or there might be good reasons why a plan or decision cannot do this.



The Guidance sets out a 5 stage process that public bodies can follow to meet the Duty on a day-to-day basis.



If it is possible to make changes to a plan or decision so that it will reduce these inequalities then those changes should be made.

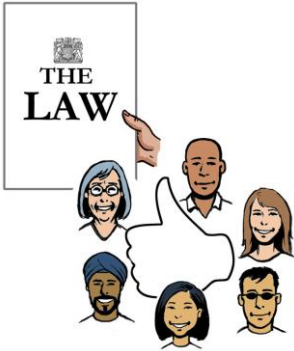


Public bodies should keep a written record of the decision-making process. This can show that they have done all they can to meet the Duty. This record should be made available to the public.





If a public body fails to meet the Duty, they could be taken to court.



Reducing disadvantage and inequality is an important part of public bodies' work. The Duty should not be hard for them to do.



The Scottish Government wants public bodies to test new ideas in how they can meet the Duty. However public bodies must take the Guidance into account when meeting the Duty.



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