

Covid Recovery Strategy: For a fairer future

Equality Impact Assessment - Results

October 2021

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT - RESULTS

Title of Policy

Covid Recovery Strategy: For a fairer future

Summary of aims and desired outcomes of Policy

The vision for the strategy is that, by working together, we will:

- Address the systemic inequalities made worse by Covid
- Make progress towards a wellbeing economy
- Accelerate inclusive person-centred public services.

To achieve this, we will focus on actions within three key outcomes to deliver:

- Financial security for low income families
- Wellbeing of Children and Young People
- Good, green jobs and fair work.

Covid Recovery Directorate: Strategy Unit

Executive summary

The Covid Recovery Strategy: For a Fairer Future sets out how the Scottish Government will ensure Scotland's recovery from the impacts of Covid, by working collectively towards a genuine renewal and resilience that improves the lives of everyone in society. We know the impacts of the pandemic have not been felt equally – in fact, Covid has worsened many of the pre-existing structural inequalities, including for groups of people with protected characteristics. The Strategy will address these inequality gaps – it will help us take targeted steps to recover and renew from Covid, while advancing equality and inclusion and embedding human rights. It is informed by a range of engagement activity with people and communities across Scotland and organisations from all sectors to understand the sort of recovery they want.

The vision for the strategy is that, by working together, we will:

- Address the systemic inequalities made worse by Covid
- Make progress towards a wellbeing economy
- Accelerate inclusive person-centred public services.

To achieve this, we will focus on actions within three key outcomes to deliver:

- Financial security for low income families
- Wellbeing of Children and Young People
- Good, green jobs and fair work.

This assessment sets out, on the basis of evidence, key ways in which inequalities for those with protected characteristics could be impacted by the Covid Recovery Strategy; and how actions and measures were considered in relation to this evidence to ensure the Strategy addresses those impacts. It sets out targeting of prioritised actions in the Covid Recovery Strategy intended to address these inequalities, foster good relations and prevent discrimination against the groups affected.

Background

This strategy sets out how the Scottish Government will ensure Scotland's recovery from the impacts of Covid, by working collectively towards a genuine renewal and resilience that improves the lives of everyone in society. We know the impacts of the pandemic have not been felt equally – in fact, Covid has worsened many of the pre-existing structural inequalities, including for groups of people with protected characteristics. The Strategy will address these inequality gaps – it will help us take targeted steps to recover and renew from Covid, while advancing equality and inclusion and embedding human rights. This strategy is driven by a clear vision for what we want to achieve and the way we want to do it. It is informed by a range of engagement activity with people and communities across Scotland and organisations from all sectors to understand the sort of recovery they want.

The vision for the strategy is that, by working together, we will:

- Address the systemic inequalities made worse by Covid
- Make progress towards a wellbeing economy
- Accelerate inclusive person-centred public services.

To achieve this, we will focus on actions within three key outcomes to deliver:

- Financial security for low income families
- Wellbeing of Children and Young People
- Good, green jobs and fair work.

We will ensure services are centred around the people who use them, because we will also ensure people are involved as deeply as possible at every stage of designing and delivering those services, and the approach we take are intensively targeted at those in the most need. Considering the particular impacts of the pandemic on groups with protected characteristics, in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, is a crucial part of achieving this.

The Scope of the EQIA

This document sets out evidence of the impact of the Covid pandemic on groups with protected characteristics, and describes how measures have been arrived at to address negative impacts or promote positive impacts and advance equality or good relations.

Covid has highlighted existing structural inequalities in society and economy.¹ Tackling inequality is already central to Scottish Government policies, with many actions already taken forward or planned and as set out in documents including the Race Equality Action Plan; the Gender Pay Gap action plan; A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People; A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan; our British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan; A Fairer Scotland for Older People; A Connected Scotland (our strategy for tackling social isolation and loneliness); Equally Safe (our strategy for tackling violence against women and girls); Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan; and the Fair Work Action Plan.

This assessment focuses on evidence of inequalities, experienced by groups with protected characteristics, that have been introduced or worsened by the pandemic. The Scottish Government published a substantial review of the impacts of Covid on groups with protected characteristics in July 2020, and associated inequalities.² Evidence here summarises and updates those findings in relation to the various protected characteristics.

The document sets out, on the basis of evidence, key ways in which those inequalities could be impacted by the Covid Recovery Strategy; and how actions and measures were considered in relation to this evidence to ensure the Strategy addresses those impacts. Actions within the Strategy will be subject individually to the Public Sector Equality Duty and dedicated assessments of their particular impacts on inequalities for groups with protected characteristics will be carried out as those policies are developed.

Key Findings

Evidence for impacts is covered here in consideration of the 4 Harms model of: direct health impacts, indirect health impacts, social impacts and economic impacts.

AGE

Direct health impacts of the pandemic have disproportionately affected older people. Of those who died from Covid, most (72%) were aged 75 or over.³ Long COVID has also been found to become increasingly likely with age.⁴ Older people reported decreased wellbeing as a result of lockdown (due to isolation and shielding). Age UK's 'Big Survey'⁵ and the Centre for Aging Better⁶ found older people reported

¹ [Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment: Evidence gathered for Scotland's Route Map through and out of the Crisis \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2020/07/Equality_and_Fairer_Scotland_Impact_Assessment_Evidence_gathered_for_Scotland's_Route_Map_through_and_out_of_the_Crisis.pdf)

² [Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment: Evidence gathered for Scotland's Route Map through and out of the Crisis \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2020/07/Equality_and_Fairer_Scotland_Impact_Assessment_Evidence_gathered_for_Scotland's_Route_Map_through_and_out_of_the_Crisis.pdf)

³ [statistics.gov.scot : Deaths involving coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](https://www.statistics.gov.scot/articles/deaths-involving-coronavirus-covid-19)

⁴ [Risk factors for long COVID: analyses of 10 longitudinal studies and electronic health records in the UK | medRxiv](https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.07.27.20161442v1)

⁵ [Big Survey \(ageuk.org.uk\)](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/big-survey/)

⁶ [experience-of-people-approaching-later-life-lockdown.pdf \(ageing-better.org.uk\)](https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/experience-of-people-approaching-later-life-lockdown.pdf)

various issues caused by the pandemic related to loneliness, family life, mental health and finances.

Other disproportionate impacts are observed for younger age groups. Higher levels of anxiety and loneliness are reported by people aged 18-24 than other age groups, with girls and young women, minority ethnic groups and disabled people amongst those most affected.^{7,8,9} Young carers in particular have reported lower levels of physical and mental health during the pandemic.¹⁰ It is not clear to what extent these reported mental health impacts for young people will translate into clinical need. For instance, an anticipated upsurge in referrals to CAMHS and psychological services following the schools returning in August 2020 did not manifest in the statistics. The pressure placed on young carers in Scotland during the pandemic has also impacted negatively on their wellbeing and education, leaving a greater number worried about their future than before the pandemic.¹¹

Vulnerable children and young people have been hit hard by the pandemic. They have struggled with school work, which was made worse during the initial lockdown by a lack of access to technology. Vulnerable children with additional support needs particularly struggled. The families of vulnerable children and young people were also more likely to suffer added financial difficulties during the pandemic.¹²

While labour market impacts of the pandemic are continuing to emerge, evidence suggests that there are unequal impacts, with effects being felt disproportionately for a number of groups, including young people & older adults.¹³ Young people are also more likely than other age groups to be earning less than the Real Living Wage.¹⁴ At a UK level, young people are more likely to have been furloughed, lost working hours or lost their job.^{15,16,17} In 2020, UK employees aged 16 to 17 and 18 to 21 years were more impacted than other employees in terms of hours paid for, which fell 5.7% and 3.4% respectively compared with 2019; the average number of hours paid across all jobs fell by 1.5% from 2019 to 2020.¹⁸ The unemployment rate of 16-24 year olds increased by 3.6 percentage points to 12.5% over the year to April 2020-March 2021, a larger unemployment rate rise than any other age group. Over the same period, employment rates in Scotland fell by 1.8 percentage points to 52.8% among

⁷ [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) impact on wellbeing: wave 3 - survey summary - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-impact-on-wellbeing-wave-3-survey-summary/pages/10.aspx)

⁸ [Lockdown Lowdown, Demographic Exploration of Results, January 2021, Young Scot](https://www.gov.scot/publications/lockdown-lowdown-demographic-exploration-of-results/pages/10.aspx)

⁹ [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - experiences of vulnerable children, young people, and parents: research - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-impact-on-wellbeing-wave-3-survey-summary/pages/10.aspx)

¹⁰ [Lockdown Lowdown, Demographic Exploration of Results, January 2021](https://www.gov.scot/publications/lockdown-lowdown-demographic-exploration-of-results/pages/10.aspx)

¹¹ <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/scotlands-wellbeing-impact-covid-19-chapter-5-children-education>

¹² [Experiences of vulnerable children, young people, and parents during the Covid-19 pandemic: Children and Families Analysis \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/experiences-of-vulnerable-children-young-people-and-parents-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/pages/10.aspx)

¹³ <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/scotlands-wellbeing-impact-covid-19-chapter-4-communities-poverty-human-rights>

¹⁴ [Annual survey of hours and earnings: 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/annual-survey-of-hours-and-earnings-2020/pages/10.aspx)

¹⁵ [Rainy-Days.pdf \(resolutionfoundation.org\)](https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/rainy-days)

¹⁶ [Uneven steps • Resolution Foundation](https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/uneven-steps)

¹⁷ [Poverty-and-the-Impact-of-Coronavirus-on-Young-People-and-Families.pdf \(includem.org\)](https://www.includem.org/publications/poverty-and-the-impact-of-coronavirus-on-young-people-and-families)

¹⁸ [Employee earnings in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/people-and-work/earnings-and-payments/bulletins/employee-earnings-in-the-uk)

16-24 year olds; employment rates also fell in the same period by 2.6 percentage points to 68.2% among 50-64 year olds.¹⁹

Due to the nature of the crisis, customer facing businesses – e.g. the hospitality industry – have often been most impacted by restrictions. The sectors most affected have the highest share of employment of 16-24 year olds and this group has therefore been impacted disproportionately by job losses, reduced hours and pay, and periods out of work²⁰. For instance, in 2019, 36% of workers in the tourism sector (which includes substantial portions of Accommodation & Food Services) and 26% of the retail sector workforce were aged 16-24, compared to 12% overall for Scotland. In accommodation and food services, paid hours across the UK fell by 12% and weekly pay fell by 18.1% compared with 2019.²¹

The crisis has also had a substantial impact on employment in the older workforce. Between Q4 2019 and Q4 2020, the employment rate among those age 50 to 69 in the UK has fallen by 1.4 percentage points, compared to a 0.7 percentage point fall among those age 25 to 49. Employment rates fell over the year to April 2020-March 2021 by 2.6 percentage points to 68.2% among 50-64 year olds, a larger decrease than other age groups.²² Once out of work, older people struggle more than younger people to return to employment; and when they do, they typically earn less than before.²³

The above evidence highlights a number of key impacts of the pandemic on different age groups in Scotland:

- older people are more likely to have died from Covid-19, and are more likely to be affected by Long Covid.
- young adults, particularly young carers, have reported greater impacts on their mental wellbeing than other age groups; while older adults have reported greater impacts related to isolation and shielding.
- vulnerable children and young people, particularly those with additional support needs, have faced particular challenges in terms of school work and financial impacts on their families.
- young people and older adults in the workforce are more likely to have experienced negative impacts on their employment.

DISABILITY

Of those who died from COVID-19, nearly all (93%) had an underlying health condition; disabled people were more likely to die than those who are not

¹⁹ [Labour market monthly briefing: August 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/labour-market-monthly-briefing-august-2021/pages/11-employment-rates-by-age-group-and-education-levels-2019-2020-2021-2022-2023-2024-2025-2026-2027-2028-2029-2030-2031-2032-2033-2034-2035-2036-2037-2038-2039-2040-2041-2042-2043-2044-2045-2046-2047-2048-2049-2050-2051-2052-2053-2054-2055-2056-2057-2058-2059-2060-2061-2062-2063-2064-2065-2066-2067-2068-2069-2070-2071-2072-2073-2074-2075-2076-2077-2078-2079-2080-2081-2082-2083-2084-2085-2086-2087-2088-2089-2090-2091-2092-2093-2094-2095-2096-2097-2098-2099-2100-2101-2102-2103-2104-2105-2106-2107-2108-2109-2110-2111-2112-2113-2114-2115-2116-2117-2118-2119-2120-2121-2122-2123-2124-2125-2126-2127-2128-2129-2130-2131-2132-2133-2134-2135-2136-2137-2138-2139-2140-2141-2142-2143-2144-2145-2146-2147-2148-2149-2150-2151-2152-2153-2154-2155-2156-2157-2158-2159-2160-2161-2162-2163-2164-2165-2166-2167-2168-2169-2170-2171-2172-2173-2174-2175-2176-2177-2178-2179-2180-2181-2182-2183-2184-2185-2186-2187-2188-2189-2190-2191-2192-2193-2194-2195-2196-2197-2198-2199-2200-2201-2202-2203-2204-2205-2206-2207-2208-2209-2210-2211-2212-2213-2214-2215-2216-2217-2218-2219-2220-2221-2222-2223-2224-2225-2226-2227-2228-2229-2230-2231-2232-2233-2234-2235-2236-2237-2238-2239-2240-2241-2242-2243-2244-2245-2246-2247-2248-2249-2250-2251-2252-2253-2254-2255-2256-2257-2258-2259-2260-2261-2262-2263-2264-2265-2266-2267-2268-2269-2270-2271-2272-2273-2274-2275-2276-2277-2278-2279-2280-2281-2282-2283-2284-2285-2286-2287-2288-2289-2290-2291-2292-2293-2294-2295-2296-2297-2298-2299-2300-2301-2302-2303-2304-2305-2306-2307-2308-2309-2310-2311-2312-2313-2314-2315-2316-2317-2318-2319-2320-2321-2322-2323-2324-2325-2326-2327-2328-2329-2330-2331-2332-2333-2334-2335-2336-2337-2338-2339-2340-2341-2342-2343-2344-2345-2346-2347-2348-2349-2350-2351-2352-2353-2354-2355-2356-2357-2358-2359-2360-2361-2362-2363-2364-2365-2366-2367-2368-2369-2370-2371-2372-2373-2374-2375-2376-2377-2378-2379-2380-2381-2382-2383-2384-2385-2386-2387-2388-2389-2390-2391-2392-2393-2394-2395-2396-2397-2398-2399-2400-2401-2402-2403-2404-2405-2406-2407-2408-2409-2410-2411-2412-2413-2414-2415-2416-2417-2418-2419-2420-2421-2422-2423-2424-2425-2426-2427-2428-2429-2430-2431-2432-2433-2434-2435-2436-2437-2438-2439-2440-2441-2442-2443-2444-2445-2446-2447-2448-2449-2450-2451-2452-2453-2454-2455-2456-2457-2458-2459-2460-2461-2462-2463-2464-2465-2466-2467-2468-2469-2470-2471-2472-2473-2474-2475-2476-2477-2478-2479-2480-2481-2482-2483-2484-2485-2486-2487-2488-2489-2490-2491-2492-2493-2494-2495-2496-2497-2498-2499-2500-2501-2502-2503-2504-2505-2506-2507-2508-2509-2510-2511-2512-2513-2514-2515-2516-2517-2518-2519-2520-2521-2522-2523-2524-2525-2526-2527-2528-2529-2530-2531-2532-2533-2534-2535-2536-2537-2538-2539-2540-2541-2542-2543-2544-2545-2546-2547-2548-2549-2550-2551-2552-2553-2554-2555-2556-2557-2558-2559-2560-2561-2562-2563-2564-2565-2566-2567-2568-2569-2570-2571-2572-2573-2574-2575-2576-2577-2578-2579-2580-2581-2582-2583-2584-2585-2586-2587-2588-2589-2590-2591-2592-2593-2594-2595-2596-2597-2598-2599-2600-2601-2602-2603-2604-2605-2606-2607-2608-2609-2610-2611-2612-2613-2614-2615-2616-2617-2618-2619-2620-2621-2622-2623-2624-2625-2626-2627-2628-2629-2630-2631-2632-2633-2634-2635-2636-2637-2638-2639-2640-2641-2642-2643-2644-2645-2646-2647-2648-2649-2650-2651-2652-2653-2654-2655-2656-2657-2658-2659-2660-2661-2662-2663-2664-2665-2666-2667-2668-2669-2670-2671-2672-2673-2674-2675-2676-2677-2678-2679-2680-2681-2682-2683-2684-2685-2686-2687-2688-2689-2690-2691-2692-2693-2694-2695-2696-2697-2698-2699-2700-2701-2702-2703-2704-2705-2706-2707-2708-2709-2710-2711-2712-2713-2714-2715-2716-2717-2718-2719-2720-2721-2722-2723-2724-2725-2726-2727-2728-2729-2730-2731-2732-2733-2734-2735-2736-2737-2738-2739-2740-2741-2742-2743-2744-2745-2746-2747-2748-2749-2750-2751-2752-2753-2754-2755-2756-2757-2758-2759-2760-2761-2762-2763-2764-2765-2766-2767-2768-2769-2770-2771-2772-2773-2774-2775-2776-2777-2778-2779-2780-2781-2782-2783-2784-2785-2786-2787-2788-2789-2790-2791-2792-2793-2794-2795-2796-2797-2798-2799-2800-2801-2802-2803-2804-2805-2806-2807-2808-2809-2810-2811-2812-2813-2814-2815-2816-2817-2818-2819-2820-2821-2822-2823-2824-2825-2826-2827-2828-2829-2830-2831-2832-2833-2834-2835-2836-2837-2838-2839-2840-2841-2842-2843-2844-2845-2846-2847-2848-2849-2850-2851-2852-2853-2854-2855-2856-2857-2858-2859-2860-2861-2862-2863-2864-2865-2866-2867-2868-2869-2870-2871-2872-2873-2874-2875-2876-2877-2878-2879-2880-2881-2882-2883-2884-2885-2886-2887-2888-2889-2890-2891-2892-2893-2894-2895-2896-2897-2898-2899-2900-2901-2902-2903-2904-2905-2906-2907-2908-2909-2910-2911-2912-2913-2914-2915-2916-2917-2918-2919-2920-2921-2922-2923-2924-2925-2926-2927-2928-2929-2930-2931-2932-2933-2934-2935-2936-2937-2938-2939-2940-2941-2942-2943-2944-2945-2946-2947-2948-2949-2950-2951-2952-2953-2954-2955-2956-2957-2958-2959-2960-2961-2962-2963-2964-2965-2966-2967-2968-2969-2970-2971-2972-2973-2974-2975-2976-2977-2978-2979-2980-2981-2982-2983-2984-2985-2986-2987-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²⁰ [Low Pay Britain 2021 • Resolution Foundation, Long Covid in the labour market • Resolution Foundation](#)

²¹ [Employee earnings in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

²² [Labour market monthly briefing: August 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/labour-market-monthly-briefing-august-2021/pages/11-employment-rates-by-age-group-and-education-levels-2019-2020-2021-2022-2023-2024-2025-2026-2027-2028-2029-2030-2031-2032-2033-2034-2035-2036-2037-2038-2039-2040-2041-2042-2043-2044-2045-2046-2047-2048-2049-2050-2051-2052-2053-2054-2055-2056-2057-2058-2059-2060-2061-2062-2063-2064-2065-2066-2067-2068-2069-2070-2071-2072-2073-2074-2075-2076-2077-2078-2079-2080-2081-2082-2083-2084-2085-2086-2087-2088-2089-2090-2091-2092-2093-2094-2095-2096-2097-2098-2099-2100-2101-2102-2103-2104-2105-2106-2107-2108-2109-2110-2111-2112-2113-2114-2115-2116-2117-2118-2119-2120-2121-2122-2123-2124-2125-2126-2127-2128-2129-2130-2131-2132-2133-2134-2135-2136-2137-2138-2139-2140-2141-2142-2143-2144-2145-2146-2147-2148-2149-2150-2151-2152-2153-2154-2155-2156-2157-2158-2159-2160-2161-2162-2163-2164-2165-2166-2167-2168-2169-2170-2171-2172-2173-2174-2175-2176-2177-2178-2179-2180-2181-2182-2183-2184-2185-2186-2187-2188-2189-2190-2191-2192-2193-2194-2195-2196-2197-2198-2199-2200-2201-2202-2203-2204-2205-2206-2207-2208-2209-2210-2211-2212-2213-2214-2215-2216-2217-2218-2219-2220-2221-2222-2223-2224-2225-2226-2227-2228-2229-2230-2231-2232-2233-2234-2235-2236-2237-2238-2239-2240-2241-2242-2243-2244-2245-2246-2247-2248-2249-2250-2251-2252-2253-2254-2255-2256-2257-2258-2259-2260-2261-2262-2263-2264-2265-2266-2267-2268-2269-2270-2271-2272-2273-2274-2275-2276-2277-2278-2279-2280-2281-2282-2283-2284-2285-2286-2287-2288-2289-2290-2291-2292-2293-2294-2295-2296-2297-2298-2299-2300-2301-2302-2303-2304-2305-2306-2307-2308-2309-2310-2311-2312-2313-2314-2315-2316-2317-2318-2319-2320-2321-2322-2323-2324-2325-2326-2327-2328-2329-2330-2331-2332-2333-2334-2335-2336-2337-2338-2339-2340-2341-2342-2343-2344-2345-2346-2347-2348-2349-2350-2351-2352-2353-2354-2355-2356-2357-2358-2359-2360-2361-2362-2363-2364-2365-2366-2367-2368-2369-2370-2371-2372-2373-2374-2375-2376-2377-2378-2379-2380-2381-2382-2383-2384-2385-2386-2387-2388-2389-2390-2391-2392-2393-2394-2395-2396-2397-2398-2399-2400-2401-2402-2403-2404-2405-2406-2407-2408-2409-2410-2411-2412-2413-2414-2415-2416-2417-2418-2419-2420-2421-2422-2423-2424-2425-2426-2427-2428-2429-2430-2431-2432-2433-2434-2435-2436-2437-2438-2439-2440-2441-2442-2443-2444-2445-2446-2447-2448-2449-2450-2451-2452-2453-2454-2455-2456-2457-2458-2459-2460-2461-2462-2463-2464-2465-2466-2467-2468-2469-2470-2471-2472-2473-2474-2475-2476-2477-2478-2479-2480-2481-2482-2483-2484-2485-2486-2487-2488-2489-2490-2491-2492-2493-2494-2495-2496-2497-2498-2499-2500-2501-2502-2503-2504-2505-2506-2507-2508-2509-2510-2511-2512-2513-2514-2515-2516-2517-2518-2519-2520-2521-2522-2523-2524-2525-2526-2527-2528-2529-2530-2531-2532-2533-2534-2535-2536-2537-2538-2539-2540-2541-2542-2543-2544-2545-2546-2547-2548-2549-2550-2551-2552-2553-2554-2555-2556-2557-2558-2559-2560-2561-2562-2563-2564-2565-2566-2567-2568-2569-2570-2571-2572-2573-2574-2575-2576-2577-2578-2579-2580-2581-2582-2583-2584-2585-2586-2587-2588-2589-2590-2591-2592-2593-2594-2595-2596-2597-2598-2599-2600-2601-2602-2603-2604-2605-2606-2607-2608-2609-2610-2611-2612-2613-2614-2615-2616-2617-2618-2619-2620-2621-2622-2623-2624-2625-2626-2627-2628-2629-2630-2631-2632-2633-2634-2635-2636-2637-2638-2639-2640-2641-2642-2643-2644-2645-2646-2647-2648-2649-2650-2651-2652-2653-2654-2655-2656-2657-2658-2659-2660-2661-2662-2663-2664-2665-2666-2667-2668-2669-2670-2671-2672-2673-2674-2675-2676-2677-2678-2679-2680-2681-2682-2683-2684-2685-2686-2687-2688-2689-2690-2691-2692-2693-2694-2695-2696-2697-2698-2699-2700-2701-2702-2703-2704-2705-2706-2707-2708-2709-2710-2711-2712-2713-2714-2715-2716-2717-2718-2719-2720-2721-2722-2723-2724-2725-2726-2727-2728-2729-2730-2731-2732-2733-2734-2735-2736-2737-2738-2739-2740-2741-2742-2743-2744-2745-2746-2747-2748-2749-2750-2751-2752-2753-2754-2755-2756-2757-2758-2759-2760-2761-2762-2763-2764-2765-2766-2767-2768-2769-2770-2771-2772-2773-2774-2775-2776-2777-2778-2779-2780-2781-2782-2783-2784-2785-2786-2787-2788-2789-2790-2791-2792-2793-2794-2795-2796-2797-2798-2799-2800-2801-2802-2803-2804-2805-2806-2807-2808-2809-2810-2811-2812-2813-2814-2815-2816-2817-2818-2819-2820-2821-2822-2823-2824-2825-2826-2827-2828-2829-2830-2831-2832-2833-2834-2835-2836-2837-2838-2839-2840-2841-2842-2843-2844-2845-2846-2847-2848-2849-2850-2851-2852-2853-2854-2855-2856-2857-2858-2859-2860-2861-2862-2863-2864-2865-2866-2867-2868-2869-2870-2871-2872-2873-2874-2875-2876-2877-2878-2879-2880-2881-2882-2883-2884-2885-2886-2887-2888-2889-2890-2891-2892-2893-2894-2895-2896-2897-2898-2899-2900-2901-2902-2903-2904-2905-2906-2907-2908-2909-2910-2911-2912-2913-2914-2915-2916-2917-2918-2919-2920-2921-2922-2923-2924-2925-2926-2927-2928-2929-2930-2931-2932-2933-2934-2935-2936-2937-2938-2939-2940-2941-2942-2943-2944-2945-2946-2947-2948-2949-2950-2951-2952-2953-2954-2955-2956-2957-2958-2959-2960-2961-2962-2963-2964-2965-2966-2967-2968-2969-2970-2971-2972-2973-2974-2975-2976-2977-2978-2979-2980-2981-2982-2983-2984-2985-2986-2987-2988-2989-2990-2991-2992-2993-2994-2995-2996-2997-2998-2999-3000)

²³ [A U-shaped crisis • Resolution Foundation](#)

disabled.^{24,25} Pre-publication research indicates that Long COVID is more likely in those with poor pre-pandemic mental health, and those with poor general health.²⁶

Across the UK, disabled people and people who were on the highest risk (shielding) list are more likely to report that their access to healthcare was affected.²⁷ ONS survey data from September 2020²⁸ indicate that disabled people were much more likely than non-disabled people to report that their health was being affected (27.8% of disabled people vs 6.7% of non-disabled people) and 42.7% of disabled people reported that their access to healthcare and treatment for non-coronavirus related issues had been disrupted; for 27%, treatment continued as normal compared with 44% of non-disabled people.²⁹ Levels of psychological distress and depression have been higher amongst those with an existing physical or mental health diagnosis.^{30,31} Higher levels of anxiety and loneliness are reported by disabled people than others.³²

In February 2021, it was reported that disabled people in Great Britain had less access to health care, groceries, medication and essentials than non-disabled people. More disabled people reported that their relationships and wellbeing were being affected by the pandemic compared to non-disabled people.³³ Almost half (45.4%) of disabled people who had experienced reduced access to treatment reported that their health had become worse as a result. COVID-19 has also had a greater negative impact on the wellbeing of disabled people relative to non-disabled people (62.2% vs 42.0%).

Although Scotland's disability employment gap (the difference between employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people based on the Annual Population Survey) fell each year between 2015 and 2019, it widened again by 0.7 to 33.4 percentage points in 2020.³⁴ Recent analysis by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation³⁵ estimated that around 56% of disabled people in the UK who were employed at the start of 2020 had reported a loss of earnings by the middle of the year. This is two percentage points higher than the proportion of non-disabled people who reported a loss of earnings. Disabled people were also more likely to report they had zero earnings by mid-year (45% of disabled people compared to 41% of non-disabled people). Participation in employment, education or training amongst 16-19 year olds

²⁴ [Deaths involving coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in Scotland, Week 11: Report \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://nrsotland.gov.uk/deaths-involving-coronavirus-covid-19-in-scotland-week-11-report)

²⁵ [Deaths involving coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in Scotland, Report \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://nrsotland.gov.uk/deaths-involving-coronavirus-covid-19-in-scotland-report)

²⁶ [Risk factors for long COVID: analyses of 10 longitudinal studies and electronic health records in the UK | medRxiv](https://medrxiv.org/abs/2021.02.18.21021111)

²⁷ [COVID-19 Shielding programme - COVID-19 data and intelligence - COVID-19 - Our areas of work - Public Health Scotland](https://www.healthscotland.com/news/2021/02/18/covid-19-shielding-programme-covid-19-data-and-intelligence-covid-19-our-areas-of-work-public-health-scotland)

²⁸ [Coronavirus and the social impacts on disabled people in Great Britain - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/peopleandpopulation/disabilityandaccessibility/coronavirusandthesocialimpacts)

²⁹ [Coronavirus and the social impacts on disabled people in Great Britain - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/peopleandpopulation/disabilityandaccessibility/coronavirusandthesocialimpacts)

³⁰ [RESULTS | COVID Social Study](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/94444/RESULTS_COVID_Social_Study.pdf)

³¹ [Scotland's Wellbeing: The Impact of COVID-19 | National Performance Framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/94444/Scotland's_Wellbeing_The_Impact_of_COVID-19_National_Performance_Framework.pdf)

³² [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) impact on wellbeing: wave 3 - survey summary - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/topics/health/coronavirus/covid-19-impact-on-wellbeing-wave-3-survey-summary)

³³ [Unequal pandemic, fairer recovery | The Health Foundation](https://www.healthfoundation.org.uk/inequality/inequality-reports/unequal-pandemic-fairer-recovery)

³⁴ [Labour market monthly briefing: August 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/topics/employment/labour-market/labour-market-monthly-briefing-august-2021)

³⁵ [UK Poverty 2020/21 | JRF](https://www.jrf.org.uk/our-work/uk-poverty-2020-21)

identified as disabled decreased by 0.8 pp between 2020 and 2021 from 89.0% to 88.3%.³⁶ This was mainly driven by decreased participation in employment and an increase in unemployed not seeking employment. The participation gap between those identified as disabled and not disabled has widened to 4.1 pp, an increase of 0.9 pp from 2020. This is the first year that the participation rate for those identified as disabled has decreased compared to the previous year. The 2021 figure remains higher than all years prior to 2020.

Survey evidence from the ONS³⁷ (September 2020) on how work was being affected by COVID-19 showed that disabled people were much more likely to be worried about their health and safety at work than non-disabled people (24.3% vs 13.7%), were more likely to have experienced a decrease in hours worked (22.6% vs 18.8%), and were also more likely to report being asked to take leave – which includes unpaid leave (3.6% vs 1.4%). In Scotland in February 2021, disabled women were more likely to believe they would be in more debt at the end of the crisis (38%) than non-disabled women (32%).³⁸

For pupils with ASN who are not eligible to attend school in person while remote learning was in place, there is a risk that they will have been impacted by not receiving face-to-face teaching more than their peers without ASN. This impact may be greater for pupils who usually benefited from the support of Learning Support Assistants when in school.

The above evidence highlights a number of key impacts of the pandemic on disabled people in Scotland. Compared with those who are not disabled:

- they are more likely to have died from Covid-19, and families with a disabled relative are more likely to have suffered bereavement;
- there has been a greater negative impact on their mental and physical wellbeing and relationships, including as a result of Long Covid or limited access to healthcare;
- they have experienced greater isolation and lack of access to services; and
- they are more likely to have experienced negative impacts on their income and employment.

SEX

Age-standardised rates of death from COVID-19 for males were significantly higher than for females (169 compared with 115 per 100,000 population in the period from

³⁶ [annual-participation-measure-2021-report.pdf \(skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk\)](#). The report notes that “Due to the lack of Universal Credit data, unemployed seeking and related status results should be treated with a degree of caution”

³⁷ [Coronavirus and the social impacts on disabled people in Great Britain - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

³⁸ [Close-the-Gap-and-Engender-Joint-briefing-on-the-impact-of-COVID-19-on-womens-wellbeing-mental-health-and-financial-security.pdf](#)

March 2020 to July 2021).³⁹ Research has found that Long COVID is more common amongst women than amongst men.⁴⁰

Levels of psychological distress and depression have been higher amongst women than amongst men^{41,42} and higher levels of anxiety and loneliness are reported by women than by men.⁴³ In February 2021, women were almost twice as likely as men to report that their mental health had got worse since the start of the pandemic (59% of women compared to 30% of men), while almost two-thirds of women (65%) were finding social isolation difficult to cope with, compared to one-third of men.⁴⁴ Disabled women (37%) were significantly more likely to be seeking more support for their mental health than non-disabled women (17%), disabled men (11%) and non-disabled men (5%). Women were more likely than men to report that their diet, nutrition and level of exercise had got worse during the pandemic. Evidence shows that children in single-adult households (parents in such households are predominantly female) have experienced poorer emotional wellbeing.^{45,46,47} A disproportionate share of caring responsibilities is borne by women in Scotland, with around 4 times as many women as men reporting being inactive in the labour market due to looking after family/home (ONS, Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2020). In February 2021, women were more likely to report a decrease in support from their employer. The number of Domestic Abuse incidents recorded in Scotland in June 2021 (5,331) was lower than the level seen in June 2020, but higher than June 2019.⁴⁸

While labour market impacts of the pandemic are continuing to emerge, evidence suggests that there are unequal impacts, with effects being felt disproportionately for a number of groups, including lone parents.⁴⁹ Labour market impacts have been distributed unevenly across the workforce, with those most directly affected sectors employing relatively larger portions of female workers. For example 61% of the retail workforce and 52% of the tourism workforce were female. During the pandemic, the share of lone parents who were not working also rose sharply, reflecting an increase in furlough rather than unemployment and inactivity.⁵⁰ However, decreases in employment have been greater among men than among women between 2019 and

³⁹ [Deaths involving coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in Scotland, Report \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/deaths-involving-coronavirus-covid-19-in-scotland-report)

⁴⁰ [Risk factors for long COVID: analyses of 10 longitudinal studies and electronic health records in the UK | medRxiv](https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.02.18.21257811v1)

⁴¹ [RESULTS | COVID Social Study](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/results-covid-social-study)

⁴² [Scotland's Wellbeing: The Impact of COVID-19 | National Performance Framework](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/scotland-s-wellbeing-the-impact-of-covid-19-national-performance-framework)

⁴³ [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) impact on wellbeing: wave 3 - survey summary - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-impact-on-wellbeing-wave-3-survey-summary/pages/1-introduction.aspx)

⁴⁴ [Close-the-Gap-and-Engender-Joint-briefing-on-the-impact-of-COVID-19-on-womens-wellbeing-mental-health-and-financial-security.pdf](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/close-the-gap-and-engage-joint-briefing-on-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-womens-wellbeing-mental-health-and-financial-security). Analysis of survey data on the impacts of COVID-19 on women's wellbeing, mental health, and financial security in Scotland, gathered in February 2021 from 509 adults in Scotland and a booster sample of 401 Black and minority ethnic (BME) adults.

⁴⁵ [COVID-19 Early years resilience and impact survey \(CEYRIS\) \(1\) - Publications - Public Health Scotland](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/covid-19-early-years-resilience-and-impact-survey-ceyris-1)

⁴⁶ [Cost of Learning in Lockdown 2021 Scotland findings.pdf \(cpag.org.uk\)](https://www.cpag.org.uk/cost-of-learning-in-lockdown-2021-scotland-findings)

⁴⁷ ['Covid Conversations': experiences of the pandemic in Scotland - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-conversations-experiences-of-the-pandemic-in-scotland/pages/1-introduction.aspx)

⁴⁸ [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Justice Analytical Services data report - June 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-justice-analytical-services-data-report-june-2021/pages/1-introduction.aspx)

⁴⁹ <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/scotlands-wellbeing-impact-covid-19-chapter-4-communities-poverty-human-rights>

⁵⁰ [Living standards, poverty and inequality in the UK: 2021 - Institute For Fiscal Studies - IFS](https://www.institute-for-fiscal-studies.org.uk/living-standards-poverty-and-inequality-in-the-uk-2021)

2020; during that period, Scotland's gender employment gap narrowed by 0.4 percentage points (from 6.3 percentage points to 5.1 percentage points). In 2021, women remained more likely to be economically inactive than men (24.7% of 19.9%).⁵¹

Women are more likely than men to be earning less than the Real Living Wage⁵². In February 2021, almost twice as many women (32%) as men (17%) believed that they would come out of the pandemic in more debt. Disabled women were more likely to believe they will be in more debt at the end of the crisis (38%) than non-disabled women (32%), disabled men (30%) and non-disabled men (15%); and 39% of young BME women believe that they would come out of the pandemic in more debt than before.⁵³ However, Scotland's gender pay gap, for full-time employees, decreased from 7.2% in 2019 to 3.0% in 2020; the median gender pay gap for all employees (including full- and part-time employees) in Scotland also fell from 14.4% in 2019 to 10.9% in 2020.⁵⁴

The above evidence highlights a number of key impacts of the pandemic on women in Scotland. Compared with men:

- there has been a greater impact on their mental wellbeing, and greater again among disabled women
- women are more likely to experience Long Covid, and report a more widespread decline in positive health behaviours
- they have experienced increased demands, including on their time available for employment, associated with caring and domestic responsibilities
- they are likely to have been at increased risk of domestic violence
- they are less likely to have experienced negative impacts on their income and employment, although gender gaps persist in employment and pay that favour men
- they are more likely to be concerned about their financial security, with even greater levels of concern among disabled women and women from ME groups

GENDER REASSIGNMENT

In June 2020, a number of potential health and social impacts for trans people resulting from the Covid pandemic were identified:⁵⁵

- Health service backlogs limiting or deferring access to gender-affirming health care potentially deemed non-essential, which could lead to negative mental health outcomes for those intending to use it.

⁵¹ [Labour market monthly briefing: August 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

⁵² [Annual survey of hours and earnings: 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

⁵³ [Close-the-Gap-and-Engender-Joint-briefing-on-the-impact-of-COVID-19-on-womens-wellbeing-mental-health-and-financial-security.pdf](#)

⁵⁴ [Labour market monthly briefing: August 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

⁵⁵ [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): health and social impact assessment - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

- Limited availability of hormone prescriptions, some of which require administration by a practice nurse, may not be readily available. This can lead to anxiety and unwanted side-effects of hormonal changes, and could potentially contribute to unsafe self-injection or use of unverified drugs.
- Abuse from unsupportive families or partners who some trans people may be required to spend time with due to the 'lockdown'. This could contribute to increased stress or distress, and increased risk of abuse or exacerbation of existing abuse, with less likelihood that others will identify the abuse or be able to intervene.
- Increased levels of mental health problems including depression, anxiety and self-harm, which are already prevalent amongst the trans community, at a time when many NHS and third-sector mental health services have less capacity to offer support.

A July 2021 systematic review on the impact of the pandemic on the health and well-being of UK sexual and gender minority people concluded there was a dearth of robust comparative evidence, but noted that four small studies by charities had consistently found poorer or worse outcomes for LGBT+ groups than heterosexual/cis gender comparators in mental health and well-being, health behaviours, safety, social connectedness and access to routine healthcare.⁵⁶

The above evidence suggests that:

- While impacts of Covid on the inequalities faced by trans people in Scotland are likely, dedicated research would be required to establish the extent of any such impacts over the course of the pandemic.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

In July 2020, a number of potential health and social impacts for LGBT+ people resulting from the pandemic were identified:⁵⁷

- Around 3% of adults responding to Scottish Government core surveys self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other. However, it is likely this undercounts the number of adults self-identifying as LGBO. LGBO respondents may not feel comfortable being open with a survey interviewer, and some respondents might see this question as intrusive and personal.
- A news report highlighted that, due to the collapse of employment opportunities and closure of colleges and universities, some LGBT people have been forced to return home to self-isolate with family opposed to their sexuality
- Data from England and Wales showed a reported increase in the use of domestic abuse helplines and websites since the introduction of social distancing measures. Self isolation and the current jobs crisis had disrupted livelihoods and household incomes, increasing stress and the potential to

⁵⁶ McGowan VJ, Lowther HJ, Meads C. Life under COVID-19 for LGBT+ people in the UK: systematic review of UK research on the impact of COVID-19 on sexual and gender minority populations. *BMJ Open* 2021;11:e050092. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2021-050092

⁵⁷ [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): health and social impact assessment - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2020/07/Coronavirus_COVID-19_health_and_social_impact_assessment.pdf)

exacerbate conflicts and violence. Increasing domestic abuse may lead some into homelessness.

- Young LGBT people may also be at particular risk of homelessness, often due to parental rejection, familial physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and familial aggression and violence. Almost a third (29%) of respondents to the UK LGBT survey in 2017, for example, reported having experienced a negative incident involving someone they lived with in the last year because they were LGBT. The most common types were verbal harassment (14% experienced this), disclosure of their LGBT status without permission (14%) and coercive or controlling behaviour (9%). Many young LGBT people may be less able to draw on the support of family in cases of loss of income or being unable to meet housing costs in the wake of the pandemic.
- LGBT young people are disproportionately represented in the young homeless population. As many as 24% of young homeless people are LGBT, and 77% state that their LGBT identity was a causal factor in becoming homeless, with 69% of homeless LGBT young people having experienced violence, abuse or rejection from the family home. The current lockdown can exacerbate this situation.
- Stonewall has reported that for some LGBT people, existing inequalities such as restricted access to healthcare will deepen as a result of the health crisis. The LGBT Foundation found that 34% of LGBT people responding to its online survey have had a medical appointment cancelled, and 23% have either been unable to access medication or were worried that they might not be able to access medication.
- Results from the online survey conducted by the LGBT Foundation showed that 42% of LGBT people would like to access support for their mental health, with the number rising to 66% for BAME LGBT people.

Dedicated research would be required to establish the extent of inequalities faced by LGBT+ people in Scotland by 2021 as a result of the pandemic. However a review from March 2021 flags up some indicative evidence.⁵⁸ A July 2021 systematic review on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the health and well-being of UK sexual and gender minority people concluded there was a dearth of robust comparative evidence, but noted that four small studies by charities had consistently found poorer or worse outcomes for LGBT+ groups than heterosexual/cis gender comparators in mental health and well-being, health behaviours, safety, social connectedness and access to routine healthcare.⁵⁹ One online survey in mid-2020 of a convenience sample of 310 LGBTQ+ respondents aged 18+ identified high levels of depression, stress and discrimination experienced during the coronavirus pandemic; regression analysis identified that these were partially explained by experiences of

⁵⁸ [How covid-19 has exacerbated LGBTQ+ health inequalities | The BMJ](#)

⁵⁹ McGowan VJ, Lowther HJ, Meads C. Life under COVID-19 for LGBT+ people in the UK: systematic review of UK research on the impact of COVID-19 on sexual and gender minority populations. *BMJ Open* 2021;11:e050092. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2021-050092

discrimination, which had a large, consistent and pernicious impact on mental health.⁶⁰

The above evidence suggests that:

- There are likely to have been disproportionate impacts on the mental health of LGBT+ people in Scotland as a result of the pandemic.
- This may reflect economic and other pressures to be locked down with family members, and the exacerbated domestic stresses and conflicts of life under lockdown; and heightened levels of discrimination experienced.
- Access to health care for this group may have been restricted.
- Dedicated research to establish the extent of any such impacts and associated needs in Scotland would be valuable.

RACE

There is evidence that the health of minority ethnic (ME) groups has been disproportionately directly affected by COVID-19 because of differential exposure to COVID-19 itself, existing health vulnerabilities, and access to treatment and other forms of support.⁶¹ ME groups are over-represented in UK COVID-19 severe illness and deaths. Between March and June 2020, deaths in Scotland amongst people in the South Asian ethnic group were almost twice as likely to involve COVID-19 as deaths in the White ethnic group.⁶² Levels of psychological distress and depression have also been found higher during the pandemic amongst people from ethnic minority communities than amongst other groups.^{63,64}

People in the UK from ethnic minority communities provided more hours of unpaid care, experienced higher levels of income loss and were twice as likely to have experienced food insecurity throughout the pandemic.⁶⁵ There is evidence that UK ethnic minorities suffered greater economic hardship during the pandemic. The proportion of people belonging to ethnic minorities who are in arrears on bills rose from 12% in 2018–19 to 21% in April–May 2020 (compared with a rise from 5% to 6% for white people) and there were also increases in people from ethnic minorities reporting financial difficulties. By early 2021, there was a partial recovery for ethnic minorities, with 15% behind on their bills, but the gap remained wider than pre-pandemic.⁶⁶

The Intercultural Youth Scotland (IYS) survey report suggested that from analysis of sixty-two responses from ME young people, 75 per cent expressed difficulties in continuing their learning outwith the classroom environment. The study reported

⁶⁰ Kneale D, Bécares L. Discrimination as a predictor of poor mental health among LGBTQ+ people during the COVID-19 pandemic: cross-sectional analysis of the online Queerantime study. *BMJ Open* 2021;11:e049405. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2021-049405

⁶¹ [Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and Ethnicity: recommendations to Scottish Government - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot)

⁶² [Report \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://nrscotland.gov.uk)

⁶³ [RESULTS | COVID Social Study](#)

⁶⁴ [Scotland's Wellbeing: The Impact of COVID-19 | National Performance Framework](#)

⁶⁵ [Unequal pandemic, fairer recovery | The Health Foundation](#)

⁶⁶ [Living standards, poverty and inequality in the UK: 2021 - Institute For Fiscal Studies - IFS](#)

perceptions about teacher estimates and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) moderation process, highlighting concerns about intersectional disadvantage.⁶⁷

For minority ethnic groups, the gap in employment rates compared with the white population is sizable and particularly large for minority ethnic women⁶⁸ Studies highlighted by the Expert Reference Group on Covid-19 and ethnicity⁶⁹ indicate that discrimination and unfair practices towards minority ethnic people have taken place.^{70,71} Before the onset of Covid-19 (Q2-Q4 2019), one-in-four (25 per cent) economically active Black 16-24-year-olds in the UK were unemployed, compared to one-in-ten (10 per cent) of their White counterparts. By Q2-Q4 2020, the unemployment rate rose to 34 per cent (a 9 percentage point increase) among UK Black young people and to 13 per cent (a 2 point rise) among White young people.⁷² ME women were more likely to lose working hours over the course of the crisis, with 39% of ME women reporting losing working hours compared to 14% of white women.⁷³ Nevertheless, Scotland's ethnicity employment gap narrowed by 6.7 percentage points (from 16.4 percentage points to 9.7 percentage points) between 2019 and 2020. From 2020 to 2021 rate of participation in employment, education or training amongst 16-19 year olds from Minority Ethnic groups (95.4%) remained higher than for those from a White ethnic group (92.0%).⁷⁴ This difference was mainly driven by a higher rate of participation in education (89.0% versus 73.8%).

The above evidence highlights a number of key impacts of the pandemic on minority ethnic groups in Scotland. Compared with the majority ethnic group:

- they are more likely to have died or suffered negative impacts to their health as a result of Covid-19, and ME families are more likely to have suffered bereavement
- there has been a greater negative impact on their mental wellbeing, including as a result of Long Covid or limited access to healthcare;
- they have experienced greater negative impacts on their income, employment and financial security
- they have experienced greater isolation and lack of access to services
- they are more likely to have experienced negative impacts on their income and employment, particularly women from ME groups

⁶⁷ [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): impact of school building closures - equity audit - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Coronavirus-(COVID-19):-impact-of-school-building-closures--equity-audit--gov.scot)

⁶⁸ [Labour market monthly briefing: August 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/labour-market-monthly-briefing-august-2021)

⁶⁹ [Systemic+Issues+and+Risk+-+Initial+Advice+and+Recommendations+from+the+Expert+Reference+Group+on+COVID-19+and+Ethnicity+%28002%29.pdf \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/systemic-issues-and-risk-initial-advice-and-recommendations-from-the-expert-reference-group-on-covid-19-and-ethnicity-2800229.pdf)

⁷⁰ Hudson, M., Netto, G., Noon, M., Sosenko, F., de Lima, P. & Kamenou-Aigbekaen, N., 17 Jan 2017, Ethnicity and low wage traps: Favouritism, homosocial reproduction and economic marginalization Work, Employment and Society. p. 1-28 28 p

⁷¹ Netto, G., Hudson, M., Noon, M., Sosenko, F., De Lima, P. & Kamenou-Aigbekaen, N.(2015) 'Migration, Ethnicity and Progression from Low-Paid Work: Implications for Skills Policy' Social Policy and Society. 14, 4, p. 509-522 14 p

⁷² [Uneven steps • Resolution Foundation](https://www.resolution-foundation.org.uk/uneven-steps)

⁷³ [Close-the-Gap-and-Engender-Joint-Briefing-on-the-impact-of-COVID-19-on-women-with-childcare-responsibilities-in-Scotland.pdf](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/close-the-gap-and-engage-joint-briefing-on-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-with-childcare-responsibilities-in-scotland.pdf)

⁷⁴ [annual-participation-measure-2021-report.pdf \(skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk\)](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/annual-participation-measure-2021-report.pdf)

- young people from ME groups have experienced greater challenges to learning and attainment than young people from majority ethnic groups.

RELIGION OR BELIEF

In July 2020, a number of potential impacts on religious groups resulting from the lockdown restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic were identified:⁷⁵

- worship services of various faiths were cancelled and Sunday Schools closed
- religious groups were forced to sacrifice major festivals that punctuate their practice over the year: Christians were unable to attend Holy Week services, Muslims experienced Ramadan without communal Iftar meals each day, the Jewish community experienced Passover without extended Seders, and Sikhs were unable to mark the festival of Vaisakhi.
- Despite exceptions being made for funerals, broadcasts of acts of worship or provision of essential voluntary services or urgent public support services, the majority of faith communities in Scotland closed their places of worship to all services during lockdown, including funeral services.

Most religions are structured around congregating for regular prayer and worship in community buildings such as churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples. For some religions this building or centre has a much broader role in the community, providing food and support throughout the week. Closure of buildings is disruptive to religious communities, and while many offered worship through livestream amidst the pandemic, some people will have been excluded if they did not have suitable digital access. This could have had negative impacts on wellbeing for people who rely heavily on their religious community. There may also be significant given the key role centres often play in other service provision such as community food provision and broader help and support.

The above evidence suggests that:

- There may have been particular negative social impacts for members of religious groups in Scotland arising from lockdown restrictions on places of worship and on social gatherings
- Dedicated research to establish the extent of any such impacts and associated needs in Scotland would be valuable.

PREGNANCY & MATERNITY

In July 2020, a number of potential impacts on pregnant women resulting from the lockdown restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic were identified:⁷⁶

- Pregnant women, particularly those over 28 weeks pregnant, are deemed to be of higher risk of severe illness and were asked to strictly follow physical

⁷⁵ [Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment: Evidence gathered for Scotland's Route Map through and out of the Crisis \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

⁷⁶ [Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment: Evidence gathered for Scotland's Route Map through and out of the Crisis \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

distancing guidance. For some women this may have led to increased anxiety and loneliness at a crucial life-stage.

- Maternity services have continued throughout the pandemic, although the way that some of those services are delivered has changed. It is likely that for some pregnant women the reduced socialisation and added stress during the COVID period caused by concerns about health and employment will likely have had a negative impact on their physical and mental health.
- A review looking at pregnant women during infectious disease outbreaks which suggests they are more vulnerable to anxiety and disruption. In the context of COVID-19, we know that women's mental health is more likely to be negatively impacted by COVID-19, and women as a group already had lower levels of mental health before the pandemic. Those with high childcare duties have shown noticeable deteriorations in well-being, with women more affected than men.
- New mothers and single parents, in particular, are most likely to have been impacted by the isolation and reduced social contact driven by the pandemic. Loneliness is also a risk factor for poorer mental health and wellbeing, which might be particularly relevant for single parents.

MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

Evidence does not suggest particular health or social impacts of the pandemic associated with marriage and civil partnerships.

Recommendations and conclusions

The above evidence highlights a number of key impacts of the pandemic on different groups with protected characteristics in Scotland:

- Older people, men, disabled people and minority ethnic groups are more likely to have died from Covid. This reflects a more extensive experience of bereavement among particular groups. Older people and women are more likely to experience Long Covid.
- Greater impacts on mental wellbeing have been reported for young adults (especially young carers), disabled people, women, minority ethnic groups and LGBT+ groups, while the reported experience of isolation has been greater among disabled people, older people and minority ethnic groups.
- Disabled people and older people have experienced loss of, or reduction in, access to services, with associated impacts on their wellbeing.
- Women have experienced an increased burden of domestic and caring responsibilities, and have been at heightened risk of domestic violence.
- There have been disproportionate negative impacts on the employment of young people, older adults in the workforce and disabled people. Women and ME groups are less likely to have experienced negative impacts on their income and employment than men and majority ethnic groups, although gaps persist in employment and pay.

- Disabled people, women and minority ethnic groups have reported greater concerns with their financial security as a result of the pandemic, with the greatest concerns among disabled women and women from ME groups.
- Negative impacts on learning have been greater for disabled and minority ethnic groups.

These impacts have been considered throughout the development of the Covid Recovery Strategy, including discussions at cross-government workshops of policy teams and ministerial group meetings, and have shaped key aspects of this decision. These include the central vision that the Strategy will address the systemic inequalities made worse by Covid through the actions we will take, and a commitment to person-centred public services that recognise and respond to the distinct needs of different groups.

The three outcomes identified for prioritising actions in the Strategy directly address at a population level key issues in the evidence reviewed for this EqIA. A strong equality-led approach will ensure that the benefits of these actions reach the groups with protected characteristics who have been disproportionately impacted, included those with more than one protected characteristic.

Women, disabled people and minority ethnic households have experienced greater impacts on their financial security. Their greater level of need will be addressed through focused measures. Six priority family types were identified in the Tackling Child Poverty Plan: large families, ME families, lone parent families, families with a disabled adult or child, families with young parents and families with a child under 1. Targeting to support these families will be applied to:

- the **pilot community level systems of school age childcare** (in 2022-23)
- the provision of £8.65 million for the **Parental Employability Support Fund** (and further investment of £15 million across 2022-24), as part of which we are taking forward work to explore the creation of a bespoke Lone Parent offer,

Our second **Benefit Take-up Strategy**, to be published in October 2021, will set out our approach to maximising the take-up of Scottish benefits; advice provision focused on schools will increase reach of this advice to women, since mothers take on the bulk of interactions with schools. Changes to low income benefits for unpaid carers will particularly benefit women and families with a disabled household member, and the introduction of Adult Disability Payment will provide further targeted support. We are developing an ethnicity pay gap strategy, which will support employers to evidence how different minority ethnic groups are represented in an organisation, across different pay bands. Development work is underway and we aim to publish this strategy in the Spring of 2022. Discussions are also ongoing around building more large homes within the 110k Affordable Homes target, which will better meet the needs of some ME families. Women, disabled people and ME groups will particularly benefit from a Living Wage increase because these groups are all over-represented among people in low-paid jobs

The commitment to create good green jobs in the Strategy can have most benefit to disadvantaged groups if their ability to access such employment is ensured, and

there are a range of measures to support this for disabled groups, women and ME groups.

Connecting Scotland will support disabled children and adults by helping them develop digital skills. Phase 3 of the initiative focuses on improving employability and is funding organisations working with digitally excluded disabled people who are out of work. The **Young Person's Guarantee** also contains provisions to tackle the disability employment gap. Through the development and implementation of the Equality Impact Assessment and Activity Plan to support the Guarantee, we are committed to taking additional actions and improvements to support young people with protected characteristics, along with those with experience of the care system and those from low socio-economic backgrounds. We recognise that these young people may require more intensive, personalised and specialist support than others. To help deliver this, up to £45 million is being provided to local partnerships to deliver employability programmes, as well as providing training and employer recruitment incentives. In addition to specialist provision and supported employment programmes that are designed to tackle the disability employment gap, the vast majority of local partnerships' delivery plans are also outlining support for young people's mental health, citing the impact of the pandemic for the rise in demand for services. Specific funding has also been allocated to Enable Works, to provide over 1,100 opportunities for young disabled people, for whom the impact of the pandemic has been keenly felt. Additionally, £3.5 million has been allocated to the Graduate Talent Programme, where one of the aims is to support graduates furthest from the labour market, tackling disadvantage and discrimination – this includes young disabled graduates. Within our programme for government, we also committed to establish a scheme to remove the barriers many disabled people face in attaining leadership positions, building on the success of the Minority Ethnic Leadership and Development Programme.

Providing a **wraparound childcare system** of year-round care before and after school, where the least well-off families will pay nothing, will be of proportionately greater benefit to the employability of women, who devote more of their time to childcare than men and are less likely to be in full-time work. Establish a **Women's Business Centre**, backed by £50 million across this Parliament, will support the provision of accessible, relevant advice and support to women-led businesses, including support for **100 women per year** to develop pioneering business ideas. Work under our **Gender Pay Gap Action Plan** to tackle the drivers of the gender pay gap in Scotland will support 2,000 women to make the transition back to work following a career gap, backed by up to £2 million this year.

Promoting inclusion and equity of opportunity forms part of our employer engagement strategy for the Young Person's Guarantee. Employers signed up to the Guarantee are expected to demonstrate that they are committed to a fair and inclusive workplace. We are seeing evidence from employers around activity focused on supporting young people with protected characteristics, along with care experienced and young people from low socio economic backgrounds. The development of an **ethnic pay strategy** will also help employers to understand if

there are unfair disparities and help drive strategies for the recruitment, retention and progression of people from minority ethnic communities. Publish a **Fair Work statement on race** for employers that considers the Fair Work principles specifically through the lens of race equality. It is designed to help employers think about the specific issues in relation to race in the workplace and where the Fair Work dimensions could be considered to address those issues. It contains helpful advice and examples that employers can refer to in order to improve minority ethnic representation and retention in their workforce.

There are also key commitments in the Strategy to giving a voice to those groups that have been hit hardest. Refreshing **A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People – Employment Action Plan** during 2021-22 will ensure that disabled people's experiences directly feed in, and that the impact of COVID-19 is having on disabled people on the labour market is recognised. In work to establish a new **National Care Service (NCS)** treating people with dignity and respect at its heart, we will ensure care is focused on the individual and is human rights based by taking a user-led approach, properly recognising the value and insight of lived experience. Consultation towards an NCS has, for example, sought input from a wide range of stakeholder organisations representing disabled people. We will also deepen our engagement on work to **embed equality, inclusion and human rights across policy and delivery**, through collaboration with local government on the development of a strategy and key workstreams within such as the development of the new Human Rights Bill and the review of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Other issues identified in this EqIA would benefit from further research in the longer term, particularly in wellbeing impacts associated with LGBT+, religious and gender realignment groups. Further research could also inform factors underlying trends in the employment and pay gaps by sex and ME group.

This document has reviewed the evidence around inequalities for groups with protected characteristics that might be particularly affected by the actions in the Covid Recovery Strategy. It has set out targeting of prioritised actions in the Strategy intended to address these inequalities, foster good relations and prevent discrimination against the groups affected. The measures are consistent with many of the actions called for in our engagement with stakeholder groups and listening to the voices of those impacted by the pandemic in Scotland.



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