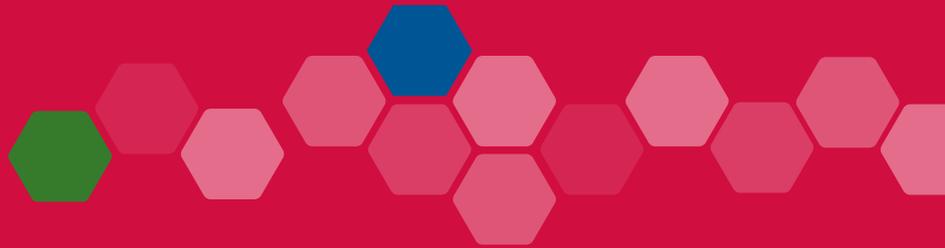




Consultation on the socio-economic duty: analysis of responses - Easy Read Version



EQUALITY, POVERTY AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The Socio- Economic Duty Consultation Analysis Report

Easy Read Version

List of words

Socio-economic duty and **Fairer Scotland Duty** are different names for the same thing. The duty will ask councils and other public bodies to do more to tackle poverty and inequality in their local areas.

Public Body - an organisation which delivers public services in Scotland. It includes organisations like local councils and the NHS, and many more.

Equality Impact Assessments – a check that public bodies must do to make sure that a new policy will not have a negative impact on any equality group. For example to make sure that it won't make things worse for someone with a disability, or who belongs to a certain religion.

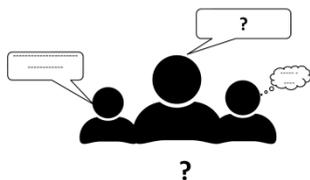
Equality Duty - The public sector equality duty means that what the Scottish Government and public bodies do, should help to end discrimination and promote good relationships between people with different protected characteristics.

Protected characteristics – are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, sex, sexual orientation and religion and belief.

Duty - being required by law to do something

We – means the Scottish Government

You – means the people and organisations who told us what they thought about our plans



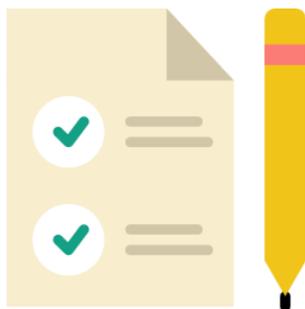
We are introducing a new 'socio-economic duty' in Scotland. We have called it the 'Fairer Scotland duty'. The Fairer Scotland duty asks councils and other public bodies to do more to tackle poverty and inequality in their local areas.

We asked people what they thought about our plans. And we got answers from 123 people and organisations.

This is a summary of the main things you told us.

We asked

1. Is there anything you don't agree with in this paper? If there is, tell us about it.



You said

A lot of you liked the **definitions** we used to explain what the Fairer Scotland duty means. You said that we explained things clearly. And that they are similar to ones already used.

But some of you thought some of the words we used could be easier to understand. Some of you thought that the 'socio-economic duty' was a complicated name.

Some of you asked if public bodies would be allowed to make up their own definitions?

Some of you wanted public bodies to be able to choose when to use the Fairer Scotland duty. You thought this would help them give their money and staff to where they are needed most.

Others wanted public bodies to be told when they had to use the Fairer Scotland duty. This would mean that all public bodies would do things the same way.

Some of you wanted more to be done about the causes of poverty (for example employment and social security), not just dealing with the results of poverty (for example, worse health or education results).

Some of you felt it was important to look at how the causes and results of poverty might be different for different groups of people. For example, minority ethnic women compared to minority ethnic men, or disabled people compared to people who don't have a disability.

We will

We will write and publish information to help public bodies. This information will be based on what you have told us.

We will call the duty the 'Fairer Scotland duty' from now on, and not the 'socio-economic duty'.

We asked

2. Have we missed out any of the important public bodies - perhaps a public body that you've had dealings with?

You said



You agreed that all of the public bodies we listed in the consultation document should be included in the socio-economic duty.

You told us the names of other public bodies that you wanted to include. Some of you thought that all public bodies in Scotland should be included.

Some of you said that the organisations who are included should be the same organisations that are included in other similar duties. For example, the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Community Empowerment Act 2015, and the Human Rights Act, 1998.



We will

We will add other public bodies to the list, where we can. Sometimes we won't be able to, because the public bodies in Scotland must be similar to the English public bodies listed in the Act.

We asked

3. What other actions could public bodies take to demonstrate that they are meeting the duty?

You said

Actions



Many of you liked the actions we listed in the consultation paper to show that public bodies are meeting the Fairer Scotland duty. You thought the actions were helpful and clear. Some of you said that the actions should be similar to those already used for the equality duty.

Fairness Commissions



You liked the fairness commissions that have already been set up. But you did not think that public bodies should be made to set up a fairness commission. You worried that this might be expensive. And you said that there are other ways of finding out about inequality.

Involving people who have lived in poverty to help make the big decisions

You agreed that it is very important to involve people who have lived in poverty. They should be involved in a way that makes a difference. You told us some ways to do this.



Some of you thought that public bodies might need help to involve people in poverty. They might need extra money or more information on how to do this. Some of you spoke about “seldom heard” groups who might need help to make sure they can get involved. Not listening to them might make things worse for them.

You said that decisions about how money is spent are important. And you had ideas about how to make these decisions better.

We will



We will say more about fairness commissions in the progress report on the Fairer Scotland Action Plan. We will publish the progress report soon.

We asked

4. What else do we need to think about?

You said

Measuring change



You thought it was important to check if what public bodies are doing is making a positive difference. And that we need to make sure that we have the right information to help us to do this. Some of you said we need to use different kinds of information to give a clear picture of what is going on. Some of you thought some of the positive differences will take a long time to happen. So you thought that we should also check from time to time what positive changes are being made.

Public bodies said that they would like to know what they will be asked to report on. And they wanted to know when they would be asked to report.

Reporting on what has been done



You said that reports should be easy to read and understand, and easy to find on the internet. Some of you wanted public bodies to have to publish a special report, just looking at the Fairer Scotland duty. Others thought that information about the duty could be added to reports that are already being published, like annual reports. Some of you wanted reports 4 times a year. Others wanted reports every 2 years.

Most of you thought that information about socio-economic decisions should be added into existing equality impact assessments. This would make it easier to see links between poverty and equality issues, such as religion or being disabled.



Some of you wanted an outside organisation to monitor how well the duty is being done. You suggested that Audit Scotland or the Equality and Human Rights Commission could do this monitoring.

Guidance and support



Some of you thought guidance for public bodies was important. You thought that the guidance on the equality duty was helpful. And you wanted something similar for the Fairer Scotland duty.

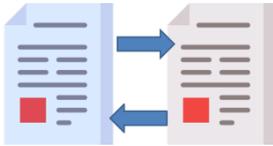
Some of you also wanted an organisation to be set up to help public bodies with the Fairer Scotland duty. This organisation could tell public bodies how well they are doing, and suggest ways they could do things better.



Many of you liked the case studies in the consultation paper. You wanted more of them.

You thought that organisations would need training around the Fairer Scotland duty. And some of you said that public bodies would need money to do the duty.

Links to other duties



You liked that we recognise the links between the Fairer Scotland duty and other duties. But some of you thought we could make these links clearer.

Public authorities liked the idea of adding socio-economic inequality into the impact assessments they already do. Some public authorities told us that they already did this. And that it worked well.

We will



We will use what you told us to help us write the guidance.

We will write more case studies.



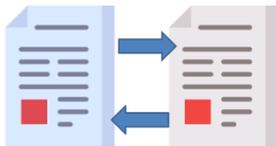
We will see if we can make information and evidence about socio-economic circumstances more easily available. We will try to do this through our “Equality Evidence Finder” website.



We will ensure training is provided for public bodies.



We want to find out more from public authorities who said that they already include socio-economic inequality in their impact assessments. We will use information from them to help us write the guidance.



We will try to make the links between equality and socio-economic issues stronger.



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