

# Annex A: Recent Progress and the Current Equality Evidence Base



March 2023

Since the launch of Scotland's previous Equality Evidence Strategy in 2017, progress has been made by the Scottish Government to strengthen the equality evidence base. This complements improvement work undertaken across the wider public sector.

A major development in this time was the modernisation of the Scottish Government's [Equality Evidence Finder](#) platform. Following engagement with users, the platform was refreshed in 2018. The modernised website has a range of improved features, including better navigation and interactive graphics. In addition to being the first port of call for equality data, the site also includes information on socio-economic status and a National Performance Framework (NPF) Data Explorer. Further user feedback was received in 2022 as part of the Equality Evidence Strategy 2023-2025 consultation work and the site will continue to evolve to meet user requirements.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 affected equality data collection and highlighted important gaps in Scotland's equality evidence base. In response to the pandemic, and to inform key decision making, Scottish Government analysts produced a series of reports examining the impacts on equality.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the work carried out to inform COVID-19 decision making, the past couple of years have seen Scottish Government analysts gather new evidence and produce a number of outputs to make best use of existing equality data. This includes projects where they:

- worked together with expert partners in women's organisations to produce Scotland's first [Gender Equality Index](#) which will measure progress through time towards gender equality in Scotland. Gender equality is measured across a range of indicators, covering Work, Money, Time, Knowledge, Power and Health. The first release, showing baseline data, was published in 2020
- used ONS online time use data to produce a report [Time Use in Scotland 2020](#) describing the way that women and men spent their time in Scotland in 2020
- used data collected from the Scottish Social Attitudes (SSA) 2019 survey module to look at how couples organise their income and financial responsibilities and how they conduct financial decision-making and produced a [report of the findings](#)
- used data collected from the SSA 2019 survey module to examine attitudes of the Scottish public to the following forms of violence against women: sexual violence, domestic abuse (physical, verbal, mental and emotional), sexual harassment and commercial sexual exploitation and produced a [report of the findings](#)
- commissioned research into different approaches to redress the [undervaluation of women's work and assess their applicability to the Scottish employment context](#)

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<sup>1</sup> These include [COVID-19: impact on equality](#); [COVID-19: health and social impact assessment](#); [COVID-19: economic impact of labour market effects](#); [COVID-19 - disabled people: health, social and economic harms - research report](#); [COVID-19: at risk groups - estimates](#).

- commissioned an evidence review and case-study [research to explore effective ways of bring about greater gender equality within Scottish agriculture businesses](#)
- carried out a [review of evidence related to equality in adult social care in Scotland](#) focussed on groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, as well as those with socio-economic disadvantage
- carried out evidence reviews of available literature on the [housing needs and experiences of minority ethnic groups](#) in Scotland and the [accommodation needs of Gypsy/Travellers](#)
- carried out a [survey of candidates standing](#) in the 2022 local government elections to gather data on their demographic characteristics, previous experience and any caring responsibilities they may have
- produced a series of briefings which present a summary of current evidence on the spotlight topics chosen by the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls (NACWG): [Poverty](#); [Enterprise](#); [Masculinity and Femininity](#); [STEM](#); [Participation](#); [Education](#); [Justice](#); [Health](#); [Older Women](#); [Early Years](#); [Sport](#); [Carers](#); [Disability](#); [Race equality](#); [Fair work](#); [Body image](#); [Mental health](#); [Digital spaces and industries](#); [Creative industries](#); [Climate change](#); [Poverty update](#)

## **Equality Data Improvement Programme (EDIP) Projects**

A number of improvement actions have been taken forward within the EDIP since its launch in April 2021. Many of these actions have helped lay the foundations for this Equality Evidence Strategy. The projects were framed by the two broad programme aims of sharing good practice and priority data development.

### **1. Sharing good practice**

This aim was achieved through actions (a) to understand the barriers to data collection, analysis and reporting and (b) build immediate capacity through the sharing of evidence-based learning and good practice. Key achievements are detailed below.

In 2021, the Scottish Government's Equality Analysis team organised a series of 'analytical gatherings' and the audience for these events comprised of analysts across the Scottish Government. At these workshops analysts presented good practice in the collection, analysis and presentation of equality data. This included boosting the size of small subsets by pooling data and data linkage.

Scottish Government analysts refreshed their [guidance on the collection of equality data](#). This refreshed guidance for data collectors in the public sector utilised Scotland's Census 2022 questions and the ONS harmonised questions. It also recommended use of the [Scottish Government's guidance on the collection of data on sex, gender identity and trans status](#).

The Scottish Government commissioned case studies (of [Highland Council](#), [Skills Development Scotland](#), [The Open University](#), [Social Security Scotland](#), [Sports](#)

[Scotland, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration](#)) looking at how public bodies have implemented good practice in the collection and use of equality data.

## 2. Priority data development

This aim was achieved through actions to (a) improve the accessibility, robustness and use of existing equality data, (b) establish new equality datasets to fill gaps and (c) undertake domain-specific equality data improvements. Key achievements are detailed below.

A large-scale equality data linkage project is currently underway in Scotland, led by [Research Data Scotland \(RDS\)](#) under the Scottish Government's former Chief Statistician, linking Population Census data to administrative data in order to improve the equality data breakdowns available from these sources.

The Population Census remains the gold standard for producing granular equality data and the upcoming results of the 2022 edition will provide analysts with a range of new data for intersectional equality analysis. National Records of Scotland (NRS) carried out an [outputs consultation](#), which closed on 10 February 2023, to give users an opportunity to contribute their views on what they need from the new Census. As part of the consultation, NRS published a [spreadsheet containing details on the content they plan to publish as part of Census outputs](#), which includes equality variables.

As part of the consultation and stakeholder engagement events carried out to inform the development of the Equality Evidence Strategy 2023-2025, we received feedback from users that the [Equality Evidence Finder](#) should present data in a more intersectional manner and this will be something that the Scottish Government will progress as part of the new Equality Evidence Strategy (see Action 19 in Annex D for details).

The [Scottish Surveys Core Questions \(SSCQ\)](#) is an annual official statistics publication. SSCQ is a result of a harmonised design across the three major Scottish Government household surveys. The SSCQ publishes intersectional equality data by several characteristics in its reporting.

Scottish Government analysts are currently collaborating with the ONS on their [Inclusive Data Taskforce Implementation Plan](#), particularly on Data Principle 1 which seeks to create an environment of trust and trustworthiness which allows and encourages everyone to count and be counted in UK data and evidence.

Where actions within the [original EDIP project plan](#) have not been achieved in full during phase one, and there is still a user requirement, these are now reflected in the list of actions contained within Annex D, to be progressed throughout the lifetime of the this strategy.