

A diversity and inclusion employer strategy for Scottish Government



April 2024

**In the service
of Scotland**



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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Throughout this strategy we have embedded profile pieces which reflect the strong foundations we have already established. We alternate these between looking forward to where we want to get to and reminding us of the journey we have travelled so far.

Our ambition

To be a diverse and inclusive organisation where everyone feels welcome and respected. And which better reflects the communities we serve.

Where our actions live up to our values and where we identify and overcome the barriers that can stop us from realising our full potential.

Our in the service of Scotland vision

To be a dynamic, diverse and connected organisation serving Scotland now and in the future.

Foreword

Permanent Secretary

JP Marks



Diverse experience, skills, thinking and background are essential to delivering better policies, services and decisions. We want to enable an empowered and inclusive culture allowing each of us to fulfil our potential and deliver at our best for the people of Scotland.

This strategy puts equality and inclusion at the heart of our workplace. It is for each of us to own these ambitious goals and take responsibility to affect positive change through clear and meaningful action. Our strategy is underpinned and informed by the most comprehensive data and insight ever gathered from our increasingly diverse workforce. It builds on the learning and experience from our previous disability, race and socio-economic diversity action plans. It has also been shaped by our diversity staff networks and their valuable work over many years in building a more progressive and inclusive organisation.

With an iterative supporting action plan we will take forward focused effort to advance key game changer themes, shifting the dial where and when we need it most. I encourage everyone to engage with and champion this work in your area. We need to attract and retain diverse talent which represents the communities we serve. I am proud of the progress we are making through our graduate programme and in senior appointments. But we still have work to do as we better understand barriers and focus on change where it is needed most.

In a diverse workplace we will have different needs and experiences and it's vital that our systems, processes and behaviours enable all of us to realise our full potential. As we work together to build a dynamic, diverse and connected organisation I want you to feel empowered to raise your voice, challenge with psychological safety and be the change you want to see. I am determined that we measure our success not by ambition but by impact and outcomes as we take the right steps, listening to diverse voices, to build an inclusive workplace that we can all be proud of.



Introduction

Public sector equality duties make every one of us responsible for a work environment where everyone feels empowered, valued and able to perform at their best.

Our two employer equality outcomes for an inclusive culture and representative workforce set out our goals for the future. Inclusion is one of our core organisational values. And we are setting a new precedent in our approach to identifying and delivering change where it is needed most. An inclusive work culture will naturally attract and retain the diverse talent we need and that is essential in delivering for all the people of Scotland.

Equality impact assessments should be automatically integrated into decision-making processes. And we have a mandatory diversity and inclusion objective and annual learning for every employee. This sets an expectation that all of us will identify and then take individual action throughout the year.

Delivery and review of previous employer action plans and initiatives which had a single equality group focus, has given us insight into what has and has not worked. And we know there's more to be done. To further identify organisational barriers faced, we've worked to improve our workforce data to better understand:

- different experiences at work of employees sharing the same protected characteristic
- where experiences are common or differ across those characteristics
- how intersectionality of characteristics can compound disadvantage in our workplace

This learning and experience are built into this single diversity and inclusion strategy, replacing all earlier plans. Shifting focus from single equality group action plans to an inclusive and intersectional approach to address areas of poorest employee experience to achieve positive, measurable improvements.



Profile piece: workforce data and insights

Listening to diverse voices for better outcomes

To make this strategy data driven, we broadened and deepened our workforce data. Applying equal weighting to qualitative data we heard directly from employees and quantitative data from workforce statistics.

Our Diversity + inclusion dashboard

A digital dashboard setting out a single set of key performance indicators, to measure progress towards targets.

Drawing on improvement work to join up our qualitative data on workforce and culture. It provides a red, amber and green impact status report for each target.

Updated every six months for review and discussion by our Executive Team. It is supplemented by data and insight now searchable by protected characteristic, business area or aspects of the employee journey.

“Data is an enabler of change, when it creates discussion and can be used to inform meaningful action.”

Head of Corporate Analytical Services Team

Our Employee insights series

An initiative to fill gaps in qualitative data for Equality Impact Assessments on employer policies.

Co-designed by diversity staff networks and delivered by the Strategy and Insights Team. Employees from all equality groups used focus groups, surveys and interviews to share experience at work.

They also shared perceptions and expectations around inclusion issues - and what they'd like to see in the future.

Enablers

Three key organisational enablers are fundamental to delivering our employer equality outcomes. This strategy, In the service of Scotland and our People strategy. Collectively they drive improvements and deliver the best for the people of Scotland.



In the service of Scotland

Our mission - To improve the lives of the people of Scotland.

Our vision - To be a dynamic, diverse and connected organisation serving Scotland now and in the future.

Our values:

- We act with integrity
- We are inclusive
- We are collaborative
- We are innovative
- We are kind

Our improvement priorities:

- Creating an empowering and enabling organisational culture
- Building a sustainable and outcomes-focused organisation
- Nurturing respectful and trusting partnerships
- Developing high quality business processes
- Providing a flexible workplace, enabling technology and usable data

People strategy – a programme of change

Aim: a more flexible workforce, engaged and capable of responding to current and future priorities.

Outcomes:

- we consistently help our people to thrive
- we are organised to respond flexibly to priorities
- we are building our professional capability for the future
- we are confident in managing people and performance



Profile piece: our two flagship inclusion initiatives

Practical and user centred support

To achieve improved outcomes, solutions need to be inclusive and take account of how intersectionality can compound experience.

Our Mutual mentoring programme

In its fifth year, the programme will extend to all traditionally under-represented equality groups.

Leaders, and individuals with a protected characteristic share experience for mutual benefit.

Hearing personal experiences grows more inclusive leadership and allies to remove barriers stopping our diverse talent make their best contributions.

Matching that talent with senior leaders creates a unique space to share career advice, helping increase representation at all levels

Our Employee passport

Launched in 2022 and being adopted by all our agencies.

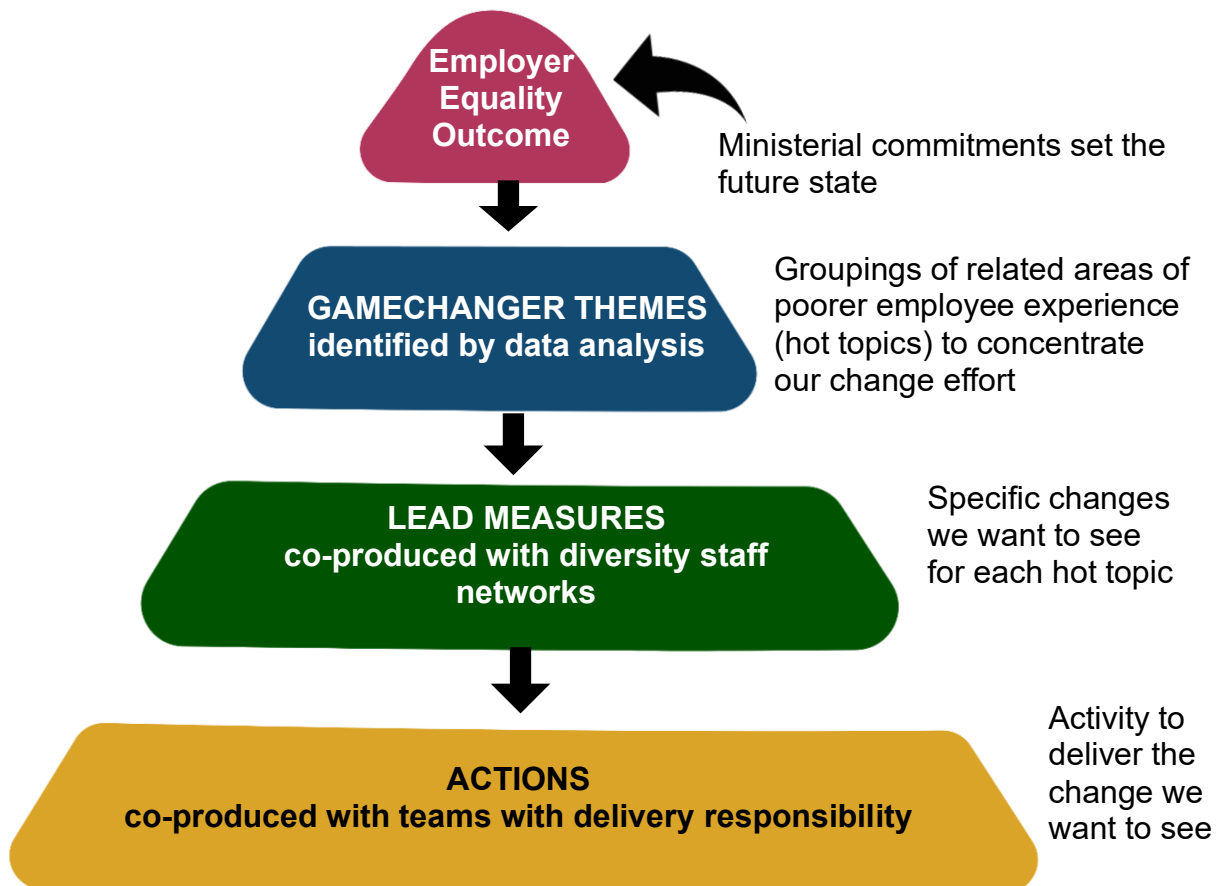
Taking a new approach to support employees to perform at their best. Recognising everyone, at some point in their career, will face circumstances that impact on them at work.

Facilitating conversation between individuals and managers, it offers a framework to agree informal adjustments, and creates a direct entry route to the HR Workplace Adjustments Service team when more formal or more complex reasonable adjustments are needed.

83% of participants agreed the Mutual mentoring programme opens up new ideas for personal and professional development.

Our approach to change

Listening to diverse voices creates a dynamic rationale for change. Building consensus where we focus effort for maximum impact. And ownership of actions that will deliver the changes we want to see.



Our theory of change model ensures only actions that will directly contribute to delivering our two employer equality outcomes are included.

Its purpose is to concentrate our collective efforts on the changes needed now. And to use this approach iteratively to make substantive progress and then refocus effort on what changes are needed next.

Adopting this model has created:

- better opportunity for employee voice to shape the change we want to see
- a shared understanding and agreement of the changes we are prioritising
- synergy in using different teams and expertise to focus on common goals



Profile piece: inclusive culture and learning

Shifting mindsets and behaviour

Our Diversity and inclusion curriculum contains over 100 learning resources offering digital and live learning.

Digital curriculum learning

Opportunities cover each equality group as well as learning for specific roles.

Approaches combine guidance and case studies along with sharing employees' lived experience.

It includes:

- inclusive culture training
- inclusive recruitment
- inclusive communication
- social model of disability case studies
- employee passport storytelling animation
- Islam awareness storytelling animation
- network development support framework

Live learning

Has included mandatory inclusive culture training for all staff. Coupled with the opportunity to participate in a range of topic specific learning, including:

- anti racism learning for senior civil servants
- disability equality for line managers
- diversity objective setting
- Equality impact assessment improvement programme
- LGBT allyship
- trans awareness
- relationship based training

“The models used to share the learning were a good example of inclusivity. A well put together and valuable course.”

From theory to practice

Our equality impact assessment used data to scrutinise the entire employee lifecycle. Meaning we could identify particular stages of that lifecycle where people were having a consistently poorer experience.

Improved qualitative and quantitative data enabled in depth analysis from the perspective of the employee journey from applying for post to retirement. Four data sources informed the equality impact assessment:

- Diversity and inclusion dashboard – our workforce data
- iCIMS – our recruitment data
- People survey – our annual employee engagement survey
- Employee insights – our deep dive into people survey topics with staff across equality groups

The EQIA identified hot topics. These are particular aspects or points of the employee journey where two or more data sources identified a consistently poorer experience for one, some or all equality groups.

Hot topics are:

- grouped into broader gamechanger themes – to inspire collaborative and connected delivery of actions
- broken down by equality group – to identify whether change is needed for specific equality groups or all equality groups
- used to identify the lead measures for the change we want to see for each hot topic - to drive and inform action planning

We fully expect hot topics to change over time as the actions they drive deliver the change we want to see. Creating an action plan that is responsive to emerging need, ensuring continuous improvement and avoiding complacency.



Profile piece: recruitment and progression

Diverse leaders at all levels

We are continuously improving how we embed diversity and inclusion into recruitment and talent management.

Our Developing diverse leadership programme

2022 saw this programme launch with 73 employees from equality groups underrepresented at three leadership levels - B3, C1 and deputy director.

The programme includes support with:

- personal development
- personal impact and self-belief
- application and interview masterclasses
- “in conversation with” sessions with senior leaders
- exposure to diverse role models
- mentoring + sponsorship
- peer and self directed learning

Our recruitment experience

Offers targeted support for candidates and hiring managers at every stage.

Making it easier to request adjustments empowers candidates to get the support they need. Greater flexibility and choice in candidate assessments enables hiring managers to create assessments which are inclusive and accessible for all.

Constantly adapting our service to deliver a better candidate experience based on their feedback.

“When I see leaders at all levels representing Scotland’s communities, I’ll know we’ve made an impact.”

Nicky Richards, People Director



Shaping the strategy

Our strategy has been shaped by diverse backgrounds, diverse talent and diverse experience of delivering previous disability, race and socio-economic diversity (SED) plans.

Diverse background

Lived experiences have given us greater insight and understanding of staff from equality groups. With their expectations then shaping the changes we want to see.

Diverse talent

Action owners working collectively, bringing together their different expertise to identify actions and solutions which are most likely deliver the changes we want to see. Creating a synergy in our actions and shared and individual ownership from the outset.

Diverse experience

Broadening our approach should not dilute impact for any group. To ensure this we are taking the underlying principles of previous Disability, Race and SED plans into our single strategy:

- an anti-racist approach to tackle racial inequality and redistribute power
- a social model of disability approach to identify environmental, attitudinal, communication and systemic barriers
- an intersectional approach to socio economic diversity



Profile piece: diversity staff network support framework

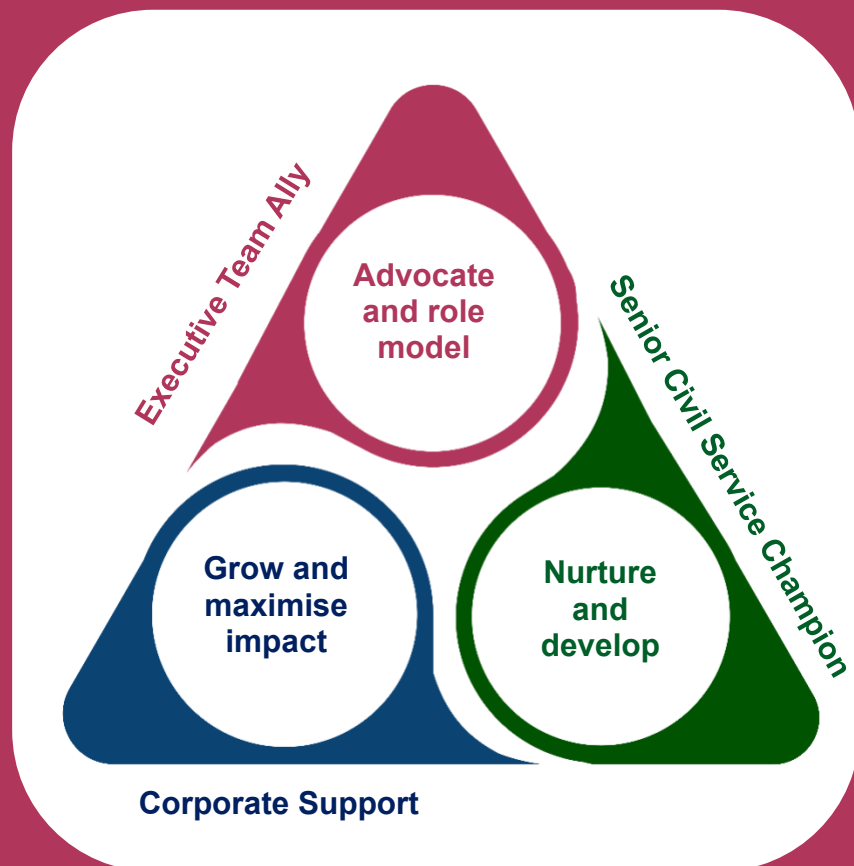
Enabling voice

Diversity staff networks provide peer support and make connections that build the sense of belonging, a core aspect of inclusion.

The Scottish Government has a long history of supporting diversity staff networks. Introduced in 2022, the network support framework offers corporate support along with an Executive Team Ally and a Senior Civil Servant (SCS) Champion.

Designated diversity staff networks represent the collective interests of their network members in corporate engagements.

Helping us make our best and most inclusive employer policies and services. Raising awareness of issues and challenges relating to employee experience in the workplace. And recognised for the valuable role they play in driving positive change.



“Active and engaged diversity staff networks are a hallmark of progressive, inclusive organisations.”

Lesley Fraser, Executive Team Ally for Diversity and Inclusion



Strategy focus and future delivery

Building a more inclusive workplace is not down to one individual, team or directorate. It takes everyone, working together, to realise our vision and be an organisation led and driven by our values.

The strategic journey towards achieving our legal commitments and our organisational values and ambitions will be underpinned by a corresponding equality action plan.

The plan is:

- iterative – reviewed and renewed regularly as we make progress
- concentrated – on up to four gamechanger themes at any one time
- crosscutting – grouping hot topic areas of employee experience into a gamechanger theme, to create synergy and maximise effect for change
- multi-strand – lead measures and actions targeted at all equality groups combined with some that focus on one, two or three specific equality groups
- intersectional – recognising poorer employee experience can be compounded by intersectionality and creating solutions to address this
- inclusive – covering all protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010. And extending our scope to Socio Economic Background as far as possible to recognise the Fairer Scotland duty

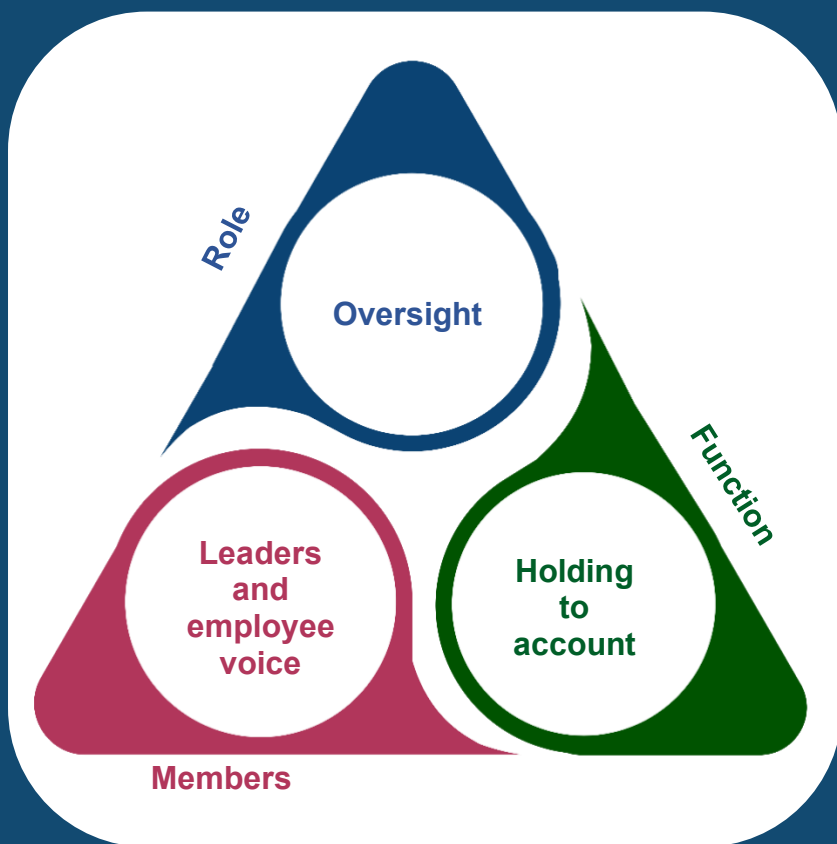
The plan will be delivered, updated and reproduced on a three year to four year cycle, adopting the same change theory approach.



Profile piece: Diversity and inclusion governance group

Creating accountability

To successfully implement this strategy, accountability and ownership of actions has to be, and be seen to be at the right levels.



The Diversity and inclusion governance group is a key internal point of accountability for employer diversity and inclusion efforts.

Diverse voices are at the table, with representation from diversity staff networks. And the Council of Scottish Government Unions to represent employee collective interests.

So too are external equality group organisations and senior leaders accountable for delivery of actions in their functional areas and role modelling the changes we want to see.

“We want to ensure that achieving progress is driven from commitment and action from the top down.”

Claire Marr, Deputy Director Capability + Talent, Governance Group Member

Chaired by the Executive Team Ally for diversity and inclusion, this group challenges and supports one other, action owners and the wider organisation. It will oversee successful implementation of this strategy, monitoring the pace and scale of impact our actions achieve.



Reporting

A rolling programme of monitoring and evaluation will ensure that the actions delivered by this strategy are making a positive impact towards achieving the changes we want to see.

Monitoring delivery

To ensure delivery, action owners and their senior leaders will report quarterly to the Diversity and Inclusion Governance Group on progress against the Action Plan.

Measuring impact

- **Every quarter**

Diversity and Inclusion Governance Group. Oversight of the strategy impact dashboard, measuring the scale and pace of progress toward the specific changes we want to see.

- **Every six months**

Executive Team. Deep dive review of delivery and impact and any issue escalated by Governance Group.

- **Every year**

Scottish Government publication of diversity data and inclusion information about our workforce.

- **Every two years**

Scottish Government publication of Equality mainstreaming report.

- **Every four years**

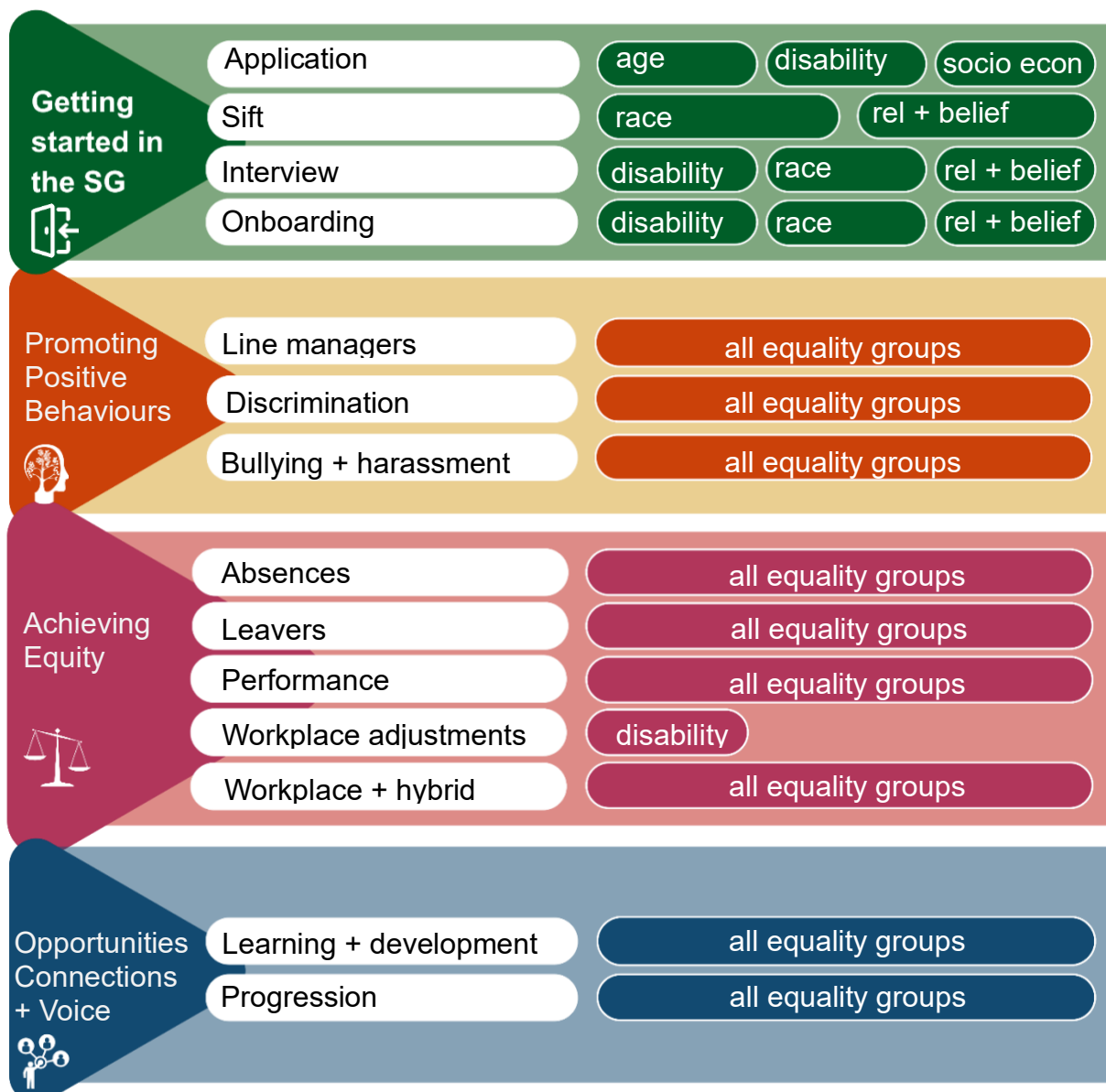
Scottish Government Employer Equality Outcomes are revised and renewed.

Annex A

Gamechanger themes and hot topics 2024 – 2027

Analysis of the employee journey has identified significant poorer experience for some or all equality groups in 14 different areas.

Grouped into four gamechanger themes, these hot topics areas are where our collective efforts will be focused until 2027. For some hot topics effort needs to be targeted to one, two or three equality groups. Other hot topics show a poorer experience for more groups. These require broader solutions responding to needs of all equality groups, recognising how intersectionality can compound experience.



Diversity and inclusion governance group members

The Diversity and inclusion governance group will oversee the successful implementation of this strategy and associated action plan.

Diverse voice

Council of Scottish Government Unions as the legal employee voice, external organisations bringing specific expertise and the following diversity staff networks are members of the Group:

- Disabled Staff Network
- Faith and Belief Network
- LGBTI+ Network
- Race Equality Network
- Socio Economic Development Network
- Women's Development Network

Ensuring accountability

The deputy director for every corporate team with an identified action is a member of the group. This reflects their responsibility for driving forward and reporting on action.

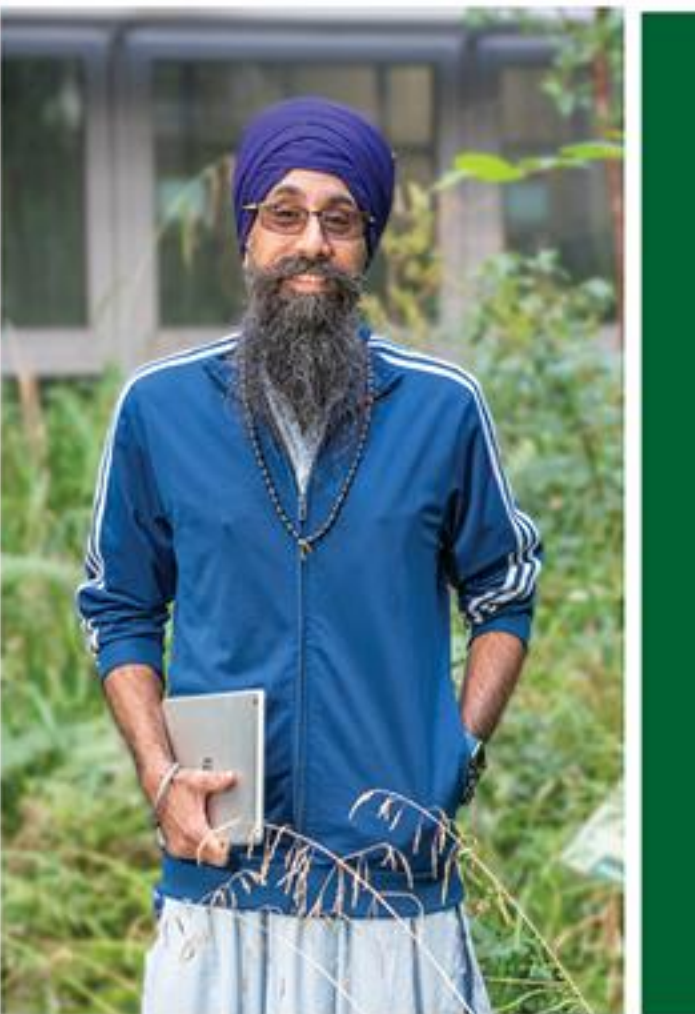
Visible senior leadership

The group is chaired by the Executive Team Ally for diversity and inclusion who is also DG Corporate, with invitations extended to:

- all Executive Team Allies for our equality groups, with one covering each protected characteristic and socio economic background
- Directors from across DG Corporate
- plus Director for Equalities, Inclusion and Human Rights and Director for Fair Work, supporting connections and sharing learning

Resources

- Scottish Government Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2023, including our Employer Equality Outcomes
- Annual corporate analytical services official publication on diversity and inclusion of our workforce
- Fairer Scotland Duty
- Public Sector Equality Duty in Scotland
- Diversity and inclusion employer strategy for Scottish Government – Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)





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