



### **SFC Equality Outcomes annual report**

- To inform the Board we will be publishing an Equality Mainstream Report and updated set of Equality Outcomes by April 30 2017, in line with the expectations of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. This paper summarises the key messages of those reports.

### **Recommendations**

- The Board is asked to note the progress report.

### **Financial implications**

- There are no financial recommendations resulting from this paper.



## Annual Equality and Diversity Update for SFC Council Board

### Purpose

1. To inform the Board we will be publishing an Equality Mainstream Report and a new set of Equality Outcomes (EOs) by April 30 2017, consistent with the expectations of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, and the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. This paper summarises the key messages of those reports.

### Context

2. This paper builds on an initial paper presented to [SFC Board in June 2015](#), followed by our first annual update to the [SFC Board in March 2016](#), in which we reported progress to deliver our EOs for 2015-17 (noted below).
3. By April 30 2017, we will publish our progress in statutory Mainstreaming and Equality Outcome reports. Through this process of review we are developing new EOs for the period 2017-21.
4. The SFC's EOs aim to remove or minimise disadvantages associated with protected characteristics that might be experienced by a) students and staff in our institutions; and (b) SFC staff. There are four external facing EOs and two internal facing EOs. These are:
  - *Equality Outcome 1 (External)* - More even patterns – at both a sectoral and an institutional level - of participation, retention and success by different groups of learners, from protected characteristic groups and including those from areas of deprivation and care backgrounds where they interact.
  - *Equality Outcome 2 (External)* - Understand the diversity of college and university staff, management and governing bodies leading to specific Equality Outcomes for improvement by AY 2017-18.
  - *Equality Outcome 3 (External)* - An improved and aligned evidence base for equality, informed by increased rates of disclosure across protected characteristics.
  - *Equality Outcome 4 (External)* - Advancement in the mainstreaming of equality and diversity within colleges and universities within the outcome agreement process.
  - *Equality Outcome 1 (Internal)* - We will better understand and improve equality and diversity within our workforce through increased disclosure and positive action initiatives.

- *Equality Outcome 2 (Internal)* - Equality and diversity consideration is central to SFC policy development, decision making and delivery.

## Looking back

5. In the March 2016 report, we identified two priorities to progress our EOs: improvements to data and analysis; and more focus on the use of Equality and Human Right Impact Assessments (EHRIA) to inform and drive policy changes. In addition, we wanted further to embed equality into SFC functions across the organisation.

## Using data

6. Improvements in this area have been helped by the duty placed on SFC to conduct reviews of widening access every three years as outlined in [Section 16 of the Post-16 Education \(Scotland\) Act](#) 2013. The data and analysis developed through this process takes account of protected characteristic groups independently, and with consideration to the impact of socio-economic status.
7. We have a robust 4 year data analysis that examines entrants to both colleges and universities by socio-economic background and by selected protected characteristics: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), age, disability, ethnicity and gender. The scope includes successful completions in colleges and college leaver destinations, as well as retention within universities and university-graduate destinations by the above characteristics.
8. Additionally, the creation of our [Gender Action Plan \(GAP\)](#) demonstrates effective data scrutiny and policy development delivered over 2015-17 in which our teams worked together on the data required to underpin the plan.
9. We will build on these strengthened team links to drive forward our GAP, and improve understanding of equality and diversity more broadly across the organisation. For example:
  - We have organised all-staff events to understand the issues underpinning gender imbalances and what more colleges and universities can do to address them.
  - We also organised a specific briefing session for outcome agreement managers focused on the same theme and have committed to use our corporate training plan to improve understanding of gender inequality across our policy and practice both as an employer and funder for all SFC staff and Board members.
  - From November 2016, institutions began to use the analysis within their

2015-16 OAs (which identified underrepresentation by gender in their institution) to identify what key actions in what subject areas are required to make change. This analysis will now feed into institutional or regional GAPs. These plans are a key focus of SFC's national plan due to the need to ensure better join up, partnership and strategic oversight of policy and practice focused on tackling gender imbalances at a national, regional and institutional level.

### ***Equality and Human Right Impact Assessments***

10. We have designed and implemented an improved EHRIA process across all SFC functions. Led and supported by an internal Equality and Diversity Group (EDG), this improvement effort has included training opportunities for all staff. Further details on the EDG are in the next section.
11. Substantive achievements from this work include an EHRIA process for our Outcome Agreement and funding processes, and a requirement for all Strategic Funding requests to include an EHRIA. Moreover, we are also considering how we might regularly report progress to the Access and Inclusion Committee.
12. In relation to our internal EOs, EHRIAs are required for any changes to HR policies and procedures (as part the consultation/negotiation process between HR and Unite) and a completed EHRIA must be signed off by the Chief Operating Officer whenever a new HR policy/procedure is ratified. An EHRIA is currently being conducted on our accommodation review project.
13. This improved EHRIA process has helped support our HR processes: we have revised our equality and diversity policy; taken consideration of protected characteristics in our Fair Absence Management Guidance; introduced Gender Reassignment Guidelines; and matched contractual shared parental leave pay with maternity pay to allow parents to share leave more flexibly. Additionally, we have:
  - Refreshed our equality and diversity monitoring processes to enhance our understanding and allow better benchmarking with other NDPBs
  - Revised our Style Guidelines to be more accessible
  - Participated in Edinburgh Council's Job Education Training scheme for school students to improve our communication with and understanding of young people in the workplace.
14. We have also migrated from the national "*Positive about Disabled People*" scheme to the "*Disability Confident*" scheme. And we have a responsive training and development strategy: 91% of staff have completed our introductory e-learning; and 58% of our staff have had some kind of additional equality and

diversity training. We have promoted significant calendar dates relating to equality and diversity and consulted with staff about how best to continue this.

### ***Supporting equality work across all of the SFC functions***

15. The EDG meets monthly to drive forward action on equality and diversity. Our Interim Chief Executive and Interim Director of Access, Skills and Outcome Agreements are both fully involved in the group which provides a helpful link to, and from, our SMT.
16. The EDG includes a Coordinator for each of our EOs who works with colleagues across the SFC to progress their allocated EO. They also provide progress reports on their EO to the EDG which, in turn, informs our mainstream report.
17. We should note that the EDG evolved from a group of volunteers who were keen to improve our approach to equality across the SFC. Their input has been invaluable, enabling us significantly to advance our EOs. In future, we want to ensure that the role of EO Coordinators is included in forward job plans so that time is defined further to develop our commitment to equality.
18. Finally, we provide funding to the Equality Challenge Unit, the College Development Network and the Higher Education Academy so that they can support our external facing EOs. Funding is allocated separately to each organisation with an over-arching work plan to ensure activity is coordinated. SFC is also a member of a Non-Departmental Public Bodies Equality Forum.

### **Looking forward**

19. In terms of focus, our current EOs are broadly right, but we plan to make some adjustments to enable us to focus on key issues. We want:
  - Universities to consider the under-representation of socio-economic groups, particularly in relation to our school leavers, as evidenced by the *Blueprint for Fairness*.
  - Colleges to achieve an improved parity of outcome (defined as successful completions and destinations) between socio-economic groups and other protected characteristics.
  - We have identified different issues for staff in colleges and universities that require specific EOs

### **Monitoring and evaluating progress**

20. We will publish a mainstream report and EOs by 30 April and provide the Board with a further progress report in spring 2018. We will also work to ensure that

the matter of equality features in the remit of all our Committees.

21. To encourage leadership in this area and to embed equality in our work, we will sustain and support our EDG, including senior membership and Coordinators. We will also ensure these responsibilities are included in the job planning and appraisal processes.

#### **Next steps**

22. We welcome comments from the Board on our equality work to date. We also intend to share our draft EOs for 2017-20 with NUS, ECU, Universities Scotland, Colleges Scotland, Equality and Human Rights Commission.
23. The Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming reports will be published by 30 April 2017, and the SFC Access and Inclusion Committee will consider our equality work at its meeting on the 16 May 2017.

#### **Risk assessment**

24. There are no risks associated with this paper but our improved EIA process does reduce the risk of unintended consequences in our policies and funding.

#### **Equality and diversity assessment**

25. There is no equality and diversity assessment for this paper but it does outline improvements to our EIA processes.

#### **Financial implications**

26. There are no financial recommendations resulting from this paper.

#### **Recommendations**

27. The Council is invited to note to this paper.

#### **Publication**

28. This paper will be published on the Council website.

#### **Further information**

29. Contact: Michael Cross, tel: 0131 313 6637, email: [mcross@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:mcross@sfc.ac.uk).

