



# Mainstreaming Equality Outcomes Progress Report



Scottish Funding Council  
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

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## Mainstreaming Equality Outcomes – Progress Report

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Summary:	This is the SFC equality mainstreaming progress report for the period 2021-23, following the publication of our Mainstreaming and Equality Outcome Report 2021-25. It details our activity to support the colleges and universities that we fund meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. It also details our own work as a public body to deliver on the Public Sector Equality Duty.
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## Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to update on progress made towards SFC's strategic equality outcomes set out in the Mainstreaming and Equality Outcome Report 2021-25 in order to advance equality and tackle inequality.
2. SFC works in partnership with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to enhance our leadership and oversight role in tackling persistent inequalities in the tertiary system. We are the first public body in Britain to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the EHRC. It clarifies the current working relationship and ongoing cooperation and collaboration between both organisations, particularly in relation to compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in the university and college sectors. This report is a key part of compliance with PSED.
3. Since publishing our Mainstreaming report, we have made good progress towards our strategic outcomes which relate to our activities as an employer, as a funder and as a sectoral oversight body. In particular, we have:
  - **Launched our National Equality Outcomes**  
As committed in our MoU and in our 2021 Mainstreaming Report, SFC set an equality outcome specifically about our oversight role- to create sector specific National Equality Outcomes to help colleges and universities make real improvements for the people who work and study in Scotland.
  - **Implemented changes to our approach to recruitment**  
These enhancements are aimed at improving the diversity of our workforce so that SFC better reflects the profile of staff and students that work and study in Scotland's colleges and universities.
  - **Conducted a review of the use of equality impact assessments**  
This review identified ways in which we can enhance and improve our approach to understanding and assessing the impact of our policies and practices on equality.
4. We are proud of the progress that we have made. However, we recognise that we have more to do to consider and enhance diversity and inclusion both within our organisation and in the colleges and universities we fund. We will lead by example, with our commitment to continual improvement being key to how we approach and embed equality in our work.
5. We will work in partnership with EHRC and colleges and universities to track impact, share good practice and strengthen and mainstream a focus on fulfilling our equality duties across all areas of our work, and in terms of our own organisational obligations.

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## Section 1: Context

### About this report

6. The purpose of this report is to update on progress made towards strategic equality outcomes set by SFC in the Mainstreaming and Equality Outcome Report.
7. We published our Mainstreaming Report in 2021 in which we set out our objectives to advance equality and tackle inequalities for the period 2021-2025. The purpose of this report is to update on progress made towards our strategic equality outcomes both internally as an organisation and externally by supporting colleges and universities to ensure good progress is being made towards equality.
8. This report has five distinct sections:
  - **Section 1** sets out the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and the context we are operating in.
  - **Section 2** outlines the progress we have made to mainstream equality in our work and deliver our published equality outcomes.
  - **Section 3** outlines progress made towards our internal equality outcomes.
  - **Section 4** sets out information on SFC as an organisation and our workforce, including key datasets on the profile and applicants for jobs at SFC.
  - **Section 5** sets out our plans for the next period 2023-25.

### Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

9. Publishing this progress report is a key part of our public sector equality duty. The public sector equality duty (PSED) consists of a general duty and specific duties. The general duty consists of three main needs. The specific duties support delivery of the general duties and provide a helpful framework for SFC to demonstrate compliance with the PSED.
10. The general duty requires SFC to have due regard to the need to:
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people from different equality groups.
11. The specific duties exist to help SFC develop evidence-based policies and practices, improve transparency and accountability, and deliver better outcomes for everyone in Scotland. In order to meet the specific duties, there are several requirements set out in our Mainstreaming Report, which include gathering data and publishing information on equality outcomes, policy and practices and board and staff diversity.

## Strategic direction

12. In 2022, we published SFC's Strategic Plan for the period 2022-2027 which sets out our ambition to make Scotland an outstanding place to learn, educate, research and innovate- now and for the future. The Plan presents our approach and priorities, which sets out how we will work and an organisation, guiding our activity over the next five years.
13. In 2021 we published a Review of Tertiary Education and Research that explored how we could collectively achieve a more connected, creative and agile tertiary education and research system that is sustainable and impactful now and for future generations. We set out a number of recommendations which were welcomed by Scottish Government and have now been mainstreamed into the activity we will take forward under our Strategic Plan.
14. Embedded throughout our strategic priorities and activities is our commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion with the institutions we fund to help address pressing and persistent inequalities.
15. Our Plan features a specific priority linked to this activity - We will promote equality and inclusion so that students are treated fairly and with respect, supporting colleges and universities to meet Public Sector Equality Duty Requirements and to tackle unlawful discrimination and persistent inequalities.

## Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

16. SFC was the first public body in Great Britain to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the EHRC hope that this model will be adopted by other public bodies.
17. The MoU was signed in March 2020 and committed SFC and the EHRC to working together to establish national equality outcomes for the tertiary education sector and to ensure that our activities take all reasonable steps to advance equality, tackle discrimination and foster good relations between groups.
18. It also clarifies the current working relationship and ongoing cooperation and collaboration between both organisations, particularly in relation to compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in the university and college sectors.
19. As part of the MoU, we committed to developing national equality outcomes using an evidence-based approach to the identification of the most persistent inequalities in the sector.

## Section 2: Our National Equality Outcomes

### External Equality Outcome

20. In 2021 and in our MoU with EHRC, we outlined out the following commitment:

We are in the process of developing additional equality outcomes that relate specifically to our oversight work. These will be published and referred to as our national equality outcomes. They will be evidence based, measurable equality outcomes that will aim to advance equality in the experiences and/or outcomes for students with protected characteristics.

### Progress

21. We are pleased to say that this work was completed in partnership with the EHRC and our National Equality Outcomes (NEOs) were published in January 2023. The report can be found [here](#). The NEOs are focused on action to address the inequalities which are evidenced to be persistent at a national scale. The intention was for these NEOs to be published at an earlier date, however our progress was unfortunately impacted by the pandemic, including through a purposeful decision to enable institutions to focus on their students and staff.
22. The publication of the NEOs report outlines the persistent inequalities in the tertiary system and asks institutions to address them by contributing to the NEOs as part of their Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The SFC and EHRC will jointly assess the PSED reports and consider progress.
23. The NEOs are provided in Annex B of the [publication](#) and were developed with a Persistent Inequality and Outcomes Group. This included the EHRC, SFC, Equality leads and planners from the sector and charities. It also included input from those with lived experience. The evidence considered was based on published reports and data and the NEOs strongly align to the data provided in SFC statistical publications including the [Report on Widening Access](#).
24. The NEOs include consideration of:
  - Success and retention rates of students and seeks improvements, at a national scale, for older students in the university sector and younger students in the college sector.
  - Satisfaction levels of disabled students in relation to the reasonable adjustments put in place to support their learning and student experience.
  - The imbalance on courses by sex.
  - The mental health of staff and students and seeks improvements in student

learning outcomes and assurances of access to mental health support.

- The safety of students and staff and steps taken to address harassment particularly in relation to disability, race, sexual orientation, trans identity and religion and belief.
- Responding to the [Scottish Government's Equally Safe strategy](#) particularly in relation to prevention, support and response mechanisms.
- Proportionate representation of staff, Boards and Courts particularly in relation to race and disability.

## What does this mean for institutions and SFC?

25. More detail on how these outcomes were developed and what this means for institutions in relation to their Public Sector Equality Duties is provided in the publication. Prior to publication we, the SFC and EHRC, consulted with the Persistent Inequality and Outcomes Group who had supported this work. We also consulted with Equality Leads, Universities Scotland, Colleges Scotland and NUS Scotland.
26. A key benefit to the work undertaken with the EHRC to date as part of the MoU is that the persistent inequalities stand as a key source of truth in relation to the inequalities within the sector at a national level and the National Equality Outcomes seek to address those issues. For this reason, the NEOs and associated reporting by institutions reduce or negate the need for any other equality reporting asks from the SFC or the EHRC e.g. through the Outcome Agreement process. We are hopeful that this will also remove the need for any additional asks of the sector in relation to equality matters, for example through Ministerial Letters of Guidance. Finally, this approach provides clarity to the sector on what the SFC and EHRC define as the persistent inequalities impacting on the sector at a national scale.
27. In relation to the SFC, this approach and our oversight role itself is now an Equality Outcome for the SFC.

## Next steps

28. Both the SFC and the EHRC are proud of the collective endeavour to date, and it is a significant step forward in our commitment to work together to publish the National Equality Outcomes.
29. However, there is still work to be delivered as we move into the next half of this reporting cycle. For 2023-25, we have set out a new Equality Outcome for the SFC which states that:

The tertiary system will make progress on the National Equality Outcomes through our support, monitoring and reporting.



30. Under this outcome, we will consider:

- How we monitor and report on the impact of the National Equality Outcomes at a national scale to identify how progress is being made.
- What areas we need to provide more input on and how can we use thematic reviews (a key commitment in the MoU) to drive progress. Examples of what this could include are reviews and advice on:
  - Reasonable adjustments for neurodiverse and disabled students.
  - Effective reporting and support systems for students and staff (both of which were key themes of our persistent inequality work).
  - A focus on retention and attainment by and between protected characteristics.
  - An in-depth study of the persistent inequality of young people's success rates in college including, as suggested at SEAL, of school/college.
  - How we can support the sector to work together collaboratively with each other, the SFC and the EHRC to achieve the greatest impacts on the NEOs.

31. This will be the focus of our external facing equality work in the final two years of this PSED reporting cycle and will inform our next PSED equality outcomes from 2025 to 2029.

## Section 3: Advancing Equality in SFC

### Organisation Equality Outcome 1

32. In 2021 we identified that disabled people and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people are less likely to apply and to be appointed to SFC positions. We looked at our workforce profile data combined with information from the wider public sector and education sectors in Scotland as well as relevant research reports. This told us that our own workforce does not benefit from the diversity that it should and that the organisations where our staff usually gain prior experience before coming to join SFC do not benefit from ethnic diversity or high proportions of disabled staff.
33. We set ourselves the following equality outcome:

Over a four-year period the diversity of SFC will improve so that SFC better reflects the profile of staff and students that work and study in Scotland's colleges and universities.

### Progress

34. Since publication we have been supporting a significant amount of organisational change, and during 2022 we have taken the opportunity to begin to test and implement several changes in our approach to recruitment. This work is ongoing and includes:
- Aiming for a broader reach in advertising vacancies. For example, we have widened our reach beyond traditional jobs boards and into the greater use of social media platforms to reach as wide and diverse a candidate pool as possible.
  - Providing specific guidance in the candidate pack on what to expect at interview and how to prepare for a competency-based interview with SFC using the STAR method. This is intended to help level the field for those who may be less familiar with this form of selection process.
  - Providing selection panels with anonymised CVs. Since January 2023 we have removed all personal data (as far as practicable) from candidate CVs and applications before sending them to the selection panel. Applications are now identified solely by a reference number at the shortlist stage.
  - Updated guidance for selection panels. Before beginning a campaign, panel members are asked to watch a 20-minute video to ensure they are well-briefed on matters of inclusion and unconscious bias at all stages in the recruitment and selection process.
35. Our current staffing profile (as of December 2022) suggests that we are still under-represented in terms of BAME applicants. However we know too that we need to improve the level of declaration: in relation to BAME fewer staff members have declared their race, from 17% in 2020 to 37% in 2022 which means we need to improve our data

capture from new members of staff in particular, in order to make an accurate assessment of progress.

## Next steps

36. We recognise we still have work to do to develop, implement and embed these changes; identify further steps that we might take; and evaluate their effectiveness. In particular, we plan to:

- Review relevant student and general population data to identify the size of gap we are still seeking to close.
- Take action to improve the rates of declaration across our workforce to ensure we are making as accurate an assessment as possible.
- Refresh our internal guidance on recruitment and selection, including the underpinning principles, to reinforce the principles of fairness and inclusion and to ensure the process is seen to be open, trusted and fair by everyone. Work on this has already started and been tested in live campaigns over the last 6 months.
- Further develop our training for selection panels to ensure all panel members have an appropriate grounding in the core principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in recruitment.
- Identify appropriate ways to seek feedback on the candidate experience and use this feedback to further improve.
- Roll out refreshed equality, diversity and inclusion training to all colleagues in the organisation, and continue to promote equalities through all aspects of our work: this will be reinforced by the actions we take to deliver on our other Equality Outcomes.
- Review our current SFC values, refresh them and embed into working practices across the organisation.

## Organisation Equality Outcome 2

37. In our Mainstreaming Report 2021, we set out our commitment to embedding equality in our work. Delivering on this commitment requires us to improve our approach to understanding and assessing the impact of our policies and practices on equality. One mechanism by which we assess the equality impact is through Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs).

38. In 2021, we set ourselves the following equality outcome:

Over a four-year period SFC will improve its approach to equality impact assessment (EIA). We will produce reports that identify the how effective EIA has influenced and informed the development of our policy and guidance. We will publish this analysis annually from September 2022.

## Progress

39. Since setting this outcome, we invited the EHRC to deliver equality training to directorates which was delivered to two out of four directorates. Attendees at these sessions reported that the EHRC training session was a good reminder of the purpose of the PSED and they appreciated using practical live examples. In terms of feedback, staff reported that they often found they had limited capacity or time to develop equality impact assessments. At the time of the assessment the SFC was facing significant staffing pressures across the organisation: this has since been addressed by measures to create capacity across the workforce which should help to ease this pressure.
40. We also began an assessment of the use of EIAs and their effectiveness in influencing policy and guidance. The assessment was undertaken through a series of focus groups with staff who use the EIA forms and guidance. The assessment was designed to directly respond to the equality outcome but a key finding from the work was we needed to address some foundational issues in relation to how staff find information on how to undertake EIAs and how we can support them to build up evidence. This became more of a focus for the work rather than how influential they felt their EIAs had been at developing policy and guidance. Some findings are outlined below:
  - New staff reported that the expectations around EIAs should be outlined in the induction processes for the organisation.
  - Difficulties sourcing the correct EIA forms and guidance (this is partly explained by a migration of our filing structure onto SharePoint at the same time).
  - Concerns over how to reflect lived experience given the remit of the SFC (the SFC does not support students directly) and how to find relevant information.
  - Low confidence on understanding what “good” looks like.
41. The findings of this work led to updated forms and guidance for EIAs and the development of a resource bank on equality research relevant to the tertiary sector to support staff in considering specific protected characteristics. These updated resources are available to all staff on the landing page for the staff intranet which leads to a new dedicated MS Teams site.
42. Following this exercise, it was not possible to publish an analysis as we had planned to do in September 2022, however we remain committed to producing reports on an annual basis from September 2023.

## Next steps

43. We recognise we still have work to do to meet the equality outcome in full in relation to how effective EIAs have been in informing the development of our policy and guidance. To progress this further we intend to:
44. Instigate mandatory equality training for all SFC staff.
45. Strengthen the governance and support for staff around the completion and publication of EIAs under our new Deputy Director Governance and Planning.
46. Develop standardised processes to regularly evaluate the use and effectiveness of EIAs and identify areas for improvement.

## Section 4: Our Diverse Workforce

### Overview

47. In 2021-22 SFC had an average of 110 full time equivalent (FTE) employees, excluding secondees and agency staff. Our headcount can vary depending on secondments, use of agency staff and factors such as extended leave. Employees work across four Directorates with a small team working in the Chief Executive's Office. More details on the profile of the SFC workforce and applicants for vacancies with SFC are provided at the end of this section.
48. Within this report we provide data on the gender pay gap for 2021-22 and workforce profile data by calendar year to 31 December 2022.

### Our approach and culture

49. In our Mainstreaming Report we set out some of the ways in which SFC supports its employees to build equalities into their work and the ways in which our culture and values promote dignity, respect and inclusion across the workforce. This included our range of flexible working policies and continued use of the Working Families.org "Happy to talk flexible working" messaging in our recruitment adverts.
50. Since then, following our experience of working remotely from home during the pandemic and in addition to the measures we described in our 2021 report, we have introduced a hybrid working protocol to support a mix of home and office working and we are in the process of reducing our standard working week from 37 to 35 hours. At the time of writing it is too soon to evaluate the impact of these changes, but we anticipate that among other benefits, these changes will help to make SFC more inclusive and accessible as an employer for a range of people including those with disabilities and those with caring responsibilities.

### Gender pay gap

51. A gender pay gap analysis is given below for April 2019-March 2022. The figures for 2022 are based on the 2021-22 salaries and do not take account of the 2022-23 pay award and the impact of pay progression on earnings as negotiations had only just concluded at the time of writing.

Hourly Rate for SFC Employees	Average 30 March 2019	Median 30 March 2019	Average 31 March 2020	Median 31 March 2020	Average 30 March 2021	Median 30 March 2021	Average 31 March 2022	Median 31 March 2022
Female	£21.63	£19.37	£21.95	£19.08	£22.91	£19.66	£22.95	£20.32
Male	£24.30	£22.26	£24.67	£23.22	£25.77	£23.92	£27.34	£24.16
All	£22.60	£20.39	£22.99	£21.00	£24.03	£22.89	£24.56	£22.61
Gender Pay Gap	12%	13%	11%	18%	11%	18%	16%	16%

52. Our average gender pay gap was stable from 2019 to 2021 but widened slightly in 2022. One factor is the composition of our senior leadership team, which saw an increase in female representation prior to 2022 but had low female representation as at March 2022. A woman has subsequently been appointed to one of the Director posts, and this will be reflected in the 2023 data. Another factor which consistently affects our gender pay gap is the proportion of women in the lower administrative grades and among student interns. As an illustration, if our student interns in 2022 were removed from the data the median pay gap would reduce from 16% to 14% and the average from 16% to 15%.
53. The profile of our senior management team has changed since our last mainstreaming report in 2021. As at March 2022 we had a gender balanced senior management team.

Staff	March 2020	March 2021	March 2022
Chief Executive	Female	Female	Female
Chief Operating Officer	Male	Male	-
Director of Finance	Female	Female	Male (seconded)
Director of Research & Innovation	Male	Male	Male
Director of Access, Learning and Outcomes	Female	Male	Male
Director of Policy, Insight and Analytics	-	Male	Male
Deputy Director Access, Learning and Outcomes	Female (temporary role)	-	-
Deputy Director, Skills & Economic Recovery	Female (temporary role)	Female (temporary role)	-
Deputy Director, Assurance and Outcomes	-	-	Female
Deputy Director, Policy	-	Female	Female
Chief Information Officer	-	-	Male
Head of External Affairs	Female	Female	Female
Chief Funding and Information Officer	Male	Male	-
Deputy Director, Tertiary Education Funding	-	-	Male
Deputy Director, Institutional Sustainability and Capital	-	-	Female
Deputy Director, Finance and Operations	-	-	Female
Assistant Director of HR & OD	Female	Female	Female

## Profile of Workforce and Applicants

### Staff workforce

54. Our employed staff update their own HR record and this includes information related to protected characteristics. The declaration levels vary by protected characteristic. It is notable that the percentage of staff choosing not to disclose information has risen slightly since 2020. This is likely to have been influenced by the significant numbers of new staff that have joined us in that period and the fact that we have been largely working remotely during that time. During 2023 we will give renewed emphasis to working with staff to increase declaration levels and improve the quality of the staffing data that we hold.

55. Scottish Funding Council directly employed staff:

	2020	2021	2022
<b>Age</b>			
Up to 25	3%	0%	3%
26-35	17%	20%	22%
36-45	22%	21%	21%
46-55	36%	30%	30%
56-65	23%	28%	24%
Over 66	1%	1%	0%
<b>Disability</b>			
Yes	12%	12%	10%
No	82%	82%	85%
Not Disclosed	6%	6%	6%
<b>Race</b>			
BME	0%	0%	0%
Any white	83%	77%	63%
Not disclosed	17%	23%	37%
<b>Religion</b>			
Any Christian	30%	29%	27%
Other religion	2%	2%	2%
Not disclosed	27%	39%	42%
None	41%	30%	31%
<b>Sex</b>			
Female	61%	59%	63%



Male	39%	41%	37%
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>			
Heterosexual	68%	65%	55%
Gay/Lesbian	4%	3%	2%
Other*	0%	0%	0%
Not disclosed	28%	32%	43%
<b>Caring Responsibilities</b>			
None	35%	33%	28%
Not disclosed	40%	46%	57%
Primary carer - child	20%	17%	14%
Primary carer – adult	3%	3%	2%
Secondary carer	3%	2%	0%

56. Aside from the increase in non-disclosure rates in 2022, the data shows a marginal drop in numbers declaring a disability and in those caring for a child; and a slight change in age profile - partly as a result of the 2021 Voluntary Exit scheme and partly due to an increase in the number of student internships during this period. These are marginal changes: with a relatively small organisation such as ours these percentages are sensitive to small changes in numbers.

## Applicant profile

57. In 2021 we had 237 applicants, and in 2022 the number grew to 321 applicants. Applicants are asked to complete an equality monitoring form. Completion of this form is optional. In the 12 month period to December 2022 around 65% of applicants returned the monitoring form, a drop from 73% in 2021. This drop was in large part due to changes in recruitment methods, including the move to CV-based applications rather than application forms and the greater use of third party recruitment partners. These do not need to act as barriers and we are working to improve these systems from 2023 onwards so as to achieve a better return rate.

58. The table below provides information about the profile of applicants for posts with SFC.

59. Scottish Funding Council Applicant Data

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\* When collecting data from our workforce we provide 'other' as a possible response which allows individuals who do not identify with any of the other response options to describe their sexual orientation in their own words. As the numbers in this category are low we cannot segregate this any further in the report for risk of identifying individuals.

	Jan-Dec 2020		Jan-Dec 2021		Jan-Dec 2022	
<b>Age</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>
16-24	7%	3%	10%	8%	2%	2%
25-34	32%	31%	32%	31%	19%	15%
35-44	19%	19%	15%	18%	18%	16%
45-54	9%	12%	11%	13%	20%	24%
55+	4%	7%	4%	3%	7%	5%
Information missing	29%	27%	27%	27%	36%	37%
<b>Disability</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>
Yes	5%	9%	6%	10%	8%	11%
No	64%	66%	62%	60%	53%	50%
Not Disclosed	31%	25%	32%	30%	39%	39%
<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>
Cohabiting/In a relationship	19.6%	25.9%	19%	21%	13%	8%
Separated/Divorced/Dissolved	2.4%	3.4%	2%	1%	3%	4%
Single	21.2%	8.6%	24%	18%	12%	14%
Not disclosed	29%	28%	29%	31%	37%	40%
Marriage/Civil Partnership	28%	35%	26%	30%	34%	34%
<b>Race</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>
Black & Minority Ethnic	5%	3%	9%	4%	8%	8%
Any white	65%	72%	62%	66%	55%	54%
Not disclosed	30%	24%	29%	30%	37%	38%
<b>Religion</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>
Christian	19%	19%	19%	21%	19%	24%
Other religion/belief	4%	2%	5%	2%	4%	3%
Not disclosed	33%	33%	31%	33%	39%	42%
No religion/belief	44%	47%	44%	44%	38%	31%
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>
Female	53%	59%	40%	42%	39%	41%
Male	30%	19%	32%	29%	27%	21%
Information missing	28%	22%	28%	30%	35%	38%
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>
Bisexual	3%	4.7%	5%	3%	3%	2%
Gay Man	3.3%	0%	3%	3%	2%	1%
Gay Woman/ Lesbian	0.4%	0%	1%	2%	0%	0%

	Jan-Dec 2020		Jan-Dec 2021		Jan-Dec 2022	
Heterosexual	60%	66%	59%	56%	55%	54%
Other *	0.8%	0%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Not disclosed	33%	30%	32%	33%	39%	42%
<b>Caring Responsibilities</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Shortlisted</b>
None	53%	60%	54%	30%	36%	35%
Not disclosed	30%	22%	29%	49%	38%	38%
Primary carer: Child	14%	12%	11%	13%	21%	22%
Primary carer: Adult	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Secondary Carer	3%	2%	5%	7%	5%	5%

60. While this level of disclosure is lower than in previous years, it still allows us to conduct meaningful analysis.
61. Our applicant data in 2020 showed that people who identify as Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) were less likely to be shortlisted for positions with SFC. A similar situation existed for applicants who had disclosed a religion or belief that is not Christian. For these reasons we set a specific equality outcome to address the under representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff in the SFC workforce. While we still have work to do to address this gap in the workforce (see Section 3 of this report), the 2022 recruitment data indicates that we are making some progress towards closing the gap for those who identify as BAME in terms of the numbers of applicants and the proportion of those who are shortlisted: from the available data, 8% of applicants identified as BAME in 2022 (compared with 9% in 2021 and 5% in 2020) while 8% of those shortlisted identified as BAME (compared with 4% and 3% in 2021 and 2020 respectively). The proportion shortlisted therefore represents an improvement on previous years.
62. In terms of other characteristics, and on the basis of the available applicant data: there remains a gap in the proportion of applicants identifying as male (this group made up 27% of applicants in 2022 but only 21% were shortlisted); while on the other hand the proportion of applications from those with disability which translated to interview was relatively strong – with this group making up 8% of applicants and 11% of those shortlisted. This may be in part due to our continued application of the Disability Confident Scheme.

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\* When collecting data from applicants we provide 'other' as a possible response which allows individuals who do not identify with any of the other response options to describe their sexual orientation in their own words. As the numbers in this category are low we cannot segregate this any further in the report for risk of identifying individuals.

## Section 5: Next Steps

63. Since the launch of our Mainstreaming Equality and Outcome Report 2021 we, SFC, have delivered a significant milestone through the launch of our National Equality Outcomes in partnership with the EHRC.
64. Equality, diversity and inclusion are central to SFC's mission and values. We are proud to be the first public body to set this type of outcomes in partnership with the equality regulator. The NEOs which will set as a key source of truth on the persistent inequalities in Scotland, which we will seek to address at national and local level.
65. However, there is still work to be delivered as we move into the next half of this reporting cycle. Our new outcome will be the key focus of our external activity - The tertiary system will make progress on the National Equality Outcomes through our support, monitoring and reporting.
66. As an organisation, we are going through a period of transformation, building our structures, processes and systems, to develop and grow our staff and enhance and improve our outputs and outcomes. In this next reporting period, we will have a clear focus on improving the diversity of our workforce and will implement changes to more formally assess the equality impact across all our activities.
67. In 2025 we will publish our next Mainstreaming and Equality Outcome Report 2025-29 which will provide an update on the strategic outcomes and set the context and priorities for the next period. As we look to the coming years, we look forward to continuing to work in partnership with colleges, universities and the EHRC to identify how progress is being made and drive improvement to address persistent inequalities and to drive forward equality in tertiary education.

## Further information

68. Please contact Erica Russell-Hensens, email: [erussellhensens@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:erussellhensens@sfc.ac.uk) or Ryan Bell, email: [rbell@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:rbell@sfc.ac.uk)



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