

# Policy and Sustainability Committee

10 am, Tuesday, 11 March 2025

## Equality and Diversity Framework 2021- 2025 – Final Progress and Mainstreaming Report and Future Development

Executive/routine  
Wards

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 To note the final report summarising the City of Edinburgh Council's 2021-2025 [Equality and Diversity Framework](#) (EDI Framework).
- 1.2 To note the work undertaken to date on the new EDI framework 2026-2030, including approval of interim equality outcomes (2025-2026) as recommended by Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- 1.3 To approve a funding allocation of £50,000 to Volunteer Edinburgh to continue the delivery of the Equality and Rights Network (EaRN) and associated outcomes in 2025-2026.

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**Chief Executive**

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## Equality and Diversity Framework – Final Report and Interim Equality Outcomes 2025-26

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report responds to the Council's statutory requirements under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) by providing the final progress report on the current [Equality and Diversity Framework](#) for 2021–2025.
- 2.2 It also sets out evidence-based recommendations for the Council's interim equality outcomes for 2025-2026 while further work is undertaken to deliver the next four-year framework covering 2026–2030.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 The purpose of the EDI Framework is to build a single picture of all equalities work across the Council to highlight, monitor, and embed good practice, but to also identify gaps and seek to develop interventions. Following EHRC guidance, where work is embedded, it is removed from the framework and becomes a mainstream activity. As far as possible, the framework should be data and citizen led.
- 3.2 The current Equality and Diversity Framework covered 2021–2025 and progress was reported annually with the last update to committee in March 2024. Since then, officers have continued to monitor progress across all current equality outcomes and [mainstreamed equality activities](#). The findings in this report show progress and will support the development of the new framework for 2026–2030.
- 3.3 During the interim year, the Equality and Human Rights Commission has advised that the Council should publish a one-year set of equality outcomes to run from April 2025 to March 2026. In August 2024, the Member Equality Working Group (MEWG) agreed on this approach, and officers commenced the development of the new interim equality outcomes for 2025-2026 along with the new EDI Framework 2026-2030.
- 3.4 Since then, Officers have provided quarterly progress updates on this work to the MEWG and provided members with bulletins on the [new EDI Framework – pre engagement activity](#), [inclusive communications](#) and other relevant EDI workstreams cited in this report.

## 4. Main report

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- 4.1 This final report reflects and draws conclusions on the delivery of the current equality outcomes for 2021-2025 and seeks approval of the interim equality outcomes for 2025-2026 alongside the ongoing development of the new EDI Framework 2026-2030.

### **Summary of the Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-2025:**

- 4.2 There has been progress made across all equality outcomes set out in the 2021-2025 EDI Framework to deliver on our statutory duties to advance equal opportunity, foster good relations, and eliminate discrimination. A high-level summary is set out below and full details on the progress of each outcome is at appendix A.
- 4.3 All the equality outcomes have progressed against their original purpose since 2021. However, with equalities presenting an ever-changing landscape, some outcomes have been able to go further. In particular, the importance of improved accessibility across the city and council estate has moved forward since the current EDI framework with the creation of the Accessibility Commission and the audit of the accessibility of the council estate.
- 4.4 Overall, the delivery of the current framework has progressed the [Council's Business Plan 2023-2027](#) objectives to create good places to live and work across Edinburgh and by taking local actions needed to end poverty in this city. However, it is recognised that there is an immediate need to strengthen the link between equalities and becoming a net zero city by 2030.
- 4.1 As part of the PSED, public sector bodies must report on [mainstreaming activity](#). In 2024-2025, good progress has been made across mainstreaming equalities workstreams including in human resources, procurement, and licensing (details are provided in Appendix B), but in particular, the Council:
- 4.1.1 continues to go beyond the statutory pay gap reporting, voluntarily reporting ethnicity and disability, as well as gender pay gap data.
  - 4.1.2 is progressing the Scottish Women's Budget Group's recommendations in its organisational review of Integrated Impact Assessments to improve the intersectional analysis of budgetary, strategic, and service delivery decision making.

### **Equality and Rights Network**

- 4.2 A key partner in the delivery of the council's equality work to date, is Volunteer Edinburgh who have been funded to deliver [the Equality and Rights Network](#) (EaRN) to support the ongoing engagement with communities across the city. In 2024/25 this work has included:
- 4.2.1 Co-facilitating the engagement of over 47 equality and rights organisations across Edinburgh to support the development of the Council's future equality outcomes

- 4.2.2 Supporting Council service areas including housing, transport/active travel, and the physical activity and sport strategy team with engagement and consultation activity
- 4.2.3 Representation of equality and rights organisations on the Women's Safety in Public Places CIP, the Accessibility Commission, Edinburgh Partnership and the Edinburgh Poverty Network
- 4.2.4 Growing the membership of the EaRN to 231, an increase of nearly 10% compared to the year before and delivering Building Diversity into Volunteering training to members

4.3 It is recommended that the council continues to fund Volunteer Edinburgh in 2025-2026 to continue to support the development of the new EDI Framework and foster good relations with partners through delivery of the Equality and Rights Network.

**Development of the Interim Outcomes 2025-2026 and EDI Framework 2026-2030:**

- 4.4 Officers have maintained regular engagement with the EHRC throughout 2024-2025, and they recommend that the Council recognise the importance of the third duty, to foster good relations. This requires linking equalities with citizen experience, before setting longer-term outcomes.
- 4.5 The EHRC have therefore recommended that we focus on three current tangible issues over the next 12 months - whilst we consult and engage on the longer-term approach for the EDI framework 2026-2030.
- 4.6 To support this development, officers have continued to engage with stakeholders, colleagues, and communities, identifying areas for improvement. To date, officers have:
  - 4.6.1 Engaged with 47 specialist organisations in 2024-2025 through the Equality and Rights Network to better understand the day-to-day needs and challenges that residents and visitors from protected groups face in Edinburgh when engaging with council services.
  - 4.6.2 Conducted additional equalities engagement work across 2024-2025 on [Tackling Hate Crime and Islamophobia](#), [Supporting LGBT+ Communities](#), [Gender Reassignment](#), [Rainbow Cities](#), [Pride](#) and [Inclusive Communications](#).
  - 4.6.3 Improved relationships with the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) (EHRC), [the Scottish Government](#) Equality and Human Rights Directorate, COSLA (People Policy Unit), the Regional Equalities Working Group, the Scottish Councils Equality Network and the [UK Core Cities](#) Equalities Network to discuss cross cutting equality matters and prepare recommendations for the interim equality outcomes.
  - 4.6.4 Conducted ongoing desk research of equality related publications and research to better understand the national and local level challenges protected groups face.

- 4.6.5 Conducted a review, which is ongoing, into the positioning and alignment of EDI across current and emerging strategies in the Council such as the Local Housing Strategy and British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2024-2030.
- 4.7 Collectively, the above has highlighted priority areas for immediate improvement in 2025-2026:
- 4.7.1 The need for an improved and consistent approach to inclusive communications has been raised by stakeholders working with protected groups and colleagues across the organisation, including the importance of alignment of this to the Council's BSL Plan.
- 4.7.2 Discussions with services and stakeholders across the Islamophobia and Supporting LGBT+ Communities workstreams highlighted the need for better understanding of local level data on [hate crime reporting](#) to enable more targeted interventions and improve the support for victims.
- 4.7.3 During all the equalities engagement activity across 2024-2025, there was frequent mention of the Council's [Edinburgh Poverty Commission](#) work, but none raised the impact of the climate and nature emergencies on the groups they support. This highlights the need to engage with stakeholders and people from protected groups to raise awareness of the [Climate Ready Edinburgh Plan](#) and the [2030 Climate Strategy](#), to make them aware of the support that is available to those at higher risk of the impact of these dual emergencies.
- 4.8 Based on the above, Officers recommend that the interim equality outcomes for 2025-2026 are as follows:
- 4.8.1 Outcome 1: People with communication needs find it easier to engage with council services through improved and standardised approaches to Inclusive Communications across the organisation.
- 4.8.2 Outcome 2: People in Edinburgh feel more confident reporting hate crime and victims of hate crime are supported.
- 4.8.3 Outcome 3: People in Edinburgh are aware of the impact of the climate and nature emergencies on their needs and understand what support is available to them.
- 4.9 Full details regarding the evidence, rationale, delivery, and measurement of the proposed interim equality outcomes 2025-2026 can be found in appendix D.

## 5. Next Steps

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- 5.1 Officers will begin delivery of the interim equality outcomes and actions for 2025-2026 and progress will be reported to the Member Equality Working Group and committee throughout the year.
- 5.2 A final report on the Interim Outcomes 2025-2026 will be submitted to Policy and Sustainability Committee in March 2026.

- 5.3 Officers will continue to foster good relations and any key findings from this work will underpin the development of the new EDI Framework 2026-2030, ensuring an intersectional approach to supporting all communities and visitors in the city.
- 5.4 Officers will host an engagement session with members in Q1 of 2025-2026, to further support the development of the new EDI Framework 2026-2030.
- 5.5 Officers will seek committee approval in August 2025 for the recommended equality outcomes and actions for 2026-2030, with the fully accessible version of the EDI Framework 2026-2030 being published by April 2026.
- 5.6 Officers will work to align the delivery and reporting of the BSL Plan 2024-2030 and the EDI Framework 2026-2030 to strengthen and unify the Council's reporting on equality matters.
- 5.7 Officers will continue to manage the grant award to Volunteer Edinburgh for 2025-2026 and ensure that quarterly reporting and monitoring are in place to support the Council's EDI agenda.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 Actions arising from this report will require budget for delivery.
- 6.2 Assuming approval of the recommendations, there will be a total budget requirement for EDI delivery in 2025-2026 of £216,153. This is broken down as follows:
  - 6.2.1 £116,153 for the delivery of the British Sign Language Plan 2024-2030 (BSL Plan). This is a recurring requirement to cover costs of joint BSL posts with delivery partners and additional deaf awareness courses;
  - 6.2.2 £10,000 to continue to fund our commitment to Volunteer Edinburgh to deliver the Equalities and Rights Network (aligning to our Public Sector Equality Duty). £40,000 will be allocated from existing budget to cover the full grant award of £50,000;
  - 6.2.3 £20,000 to fund ad-hoc legal advice;
  - 6.2.4 £25,000 to ensure that the development and publication of the new framework is accessible in line with our Public Sector Equality Duty;
  - 6.2.5 £5,000 for staff development to support more complex and evolving equality matters as they arise.
- 6.3 Recurring funding to support the grant payment to Volunteer Edinburgh is included within the existing service budget.
- 6.4 It is proposed that funding for delivery of the BSL Plan be met from the Reform Fund to be created through re-alignment of the Council's current reserves. Subject to member approval, sums for legal fees and development and publication of the EDI framework, including staff development, can also be met on a one-off basis in 2025-2026 from the Reform Fund.
- 6.5 Officers will review the above costings for 2026-2027 onwards in line with the implementation of the new EDI Framework 2026-2030. Any recurring liabilities for

which corresponding provision is not currently included in the budget framework will be considered as part of the 2026/2027 budget process.

## 7. Equality and Poverty Impact

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- 7.1 An interim Integrated Impact Assessment has been developed and published. This IIA is for the interim outcomes and will be built upon whilst developing the future equality outcomes. The needs of all [protected characteristic groups](#) (including care-experienced young people) have been considered through an [intersectional lens, considering socio-economic impacts](#).
- 7.2 The work set out in this report is relevant to our PSED, the development of the new interim equality outcomes for 2025-2026, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2026-2030, and our broader intention to better embed equality across service delivery and become a prevention-led organisation.

## 8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

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- 8.1 The ongoing impact of the twin climate and nature emergencies has been assessed via the interim IIA assessment process, recognising that the impact of the effects of the twin emergencies is higher for those in protected characteristic groups.
- 8.2 As noted in both the 2030 Climate Strategy and Climate Ready Edinburgh Plan, the transition to a low carbon, climate ready city must embed the principles of a Just Transition and support climate justice as a priority.
- 8.3 A Just Transition is how we get to a net zero and climate resilient economy, in a way that delivers fairness and tackles inequality and injustice. A Just Transition is underpinned by a fair distribution of the costs and benefits.
- 8.4 Climate justice is defined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as ‘justice that links development and human rights to achieve a human-centred approach to addressing climate change, safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable people and sharing the burdens and benefits of climate change and its impacts equitably and fairly.’
- 8.5 The city declared a Nature Emergency in 2023. The forthcoming Nature Vision will set out ways to respond to the nature emergency, whilst considering the impacts to human health and wellbeing, prioritising those in protected groups who are most likely to be disadvantaged and unable to access high quality nature and greenspace.
- 8.6 As those in protected characteristic groups are most likely to be impacted by both the effects of climate change and the nature emergency and a transition to net zero, the Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-2025 – Final Progress Report and Interim Equality Outcomes 2025-2026 recommends that further consideration must be given to this area. Engagement with priority groups will help to embed climate justice as a core theme for developing the forthcoming framework.

- 8.7 Further impacts and evidence relating to the proposed climate interim equality outcome can be found in Appendix B.

## 9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

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- 9.1 On-going engagement with protected characteristic communities and stakeholders through the Equality and Rights Network has been essential to developing the interim equality outcomes outlined in this report.
- 9.2 This engagement will continue to help shape the Council's future equality outcomes to further understanding of our diverse population and visitors to the city, and the challenges they face when accessing and engaging in services.

## 10. Background reading/external references

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- 10.1 [Item 7.3 Equality Diversity Framework - March 2024 Update](#)
- 10.2 [Item 7.4 - Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-2025 - March 2023 update](#)
- 10.3 [Item 7.4 - Equality and Diversity Framework - March 2022 Update](#)
- 10.4 [Equality and Diversity Framework 2021 to 2025 – The City of Edinburgh Council](#)
- 10.5 [Item 7.6 - Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-2025.pdf](#)
- 10.6 [The Public Sector Equality Duty](#)

## 11. Appendices

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### Appendix A:

#### Equality and Diversity Framework – Equality Outcome Progress 2024-2025

**Equality outcome: People at risk from harm through poverty and deprivation, hate crime or discrimination, violence against women, children and young people, or of becoming involved in crime, are protected and supported.**

- 11.1.1 [Capital City Partnership's Whole Family Equality Project](#) continues to support over 230 families a year from ethnically diverse backgrounds at risk of poverty.
- 11.1.2 Services that cater specifically to women in the justice system, have been established including the Women's Centre at Newkirkgate which encompasses the delivery of the [Willow service](#) delivering a one-stop shop/hub for vulnerable women in the justice system. Positive feedback on the impact of this service was reported to [committee](#) in January 2024.
- 11.1.3 The Young People's Service is working with [includem](#) to identify local test cases for restorative justice for local young people.



11.1.4 Justice Services have funded a new project delivered by [Cyrenians](#) to tackle food poverty. Two food pantries in the West and East of Edinburgh have been established supporting people to access fresh food for a small membership fee. Other services to support vulnerable people are provided alongside the pantries including digital technology help, home energy advice, blood pressure checks, and lunch clubs.

11.1.5 Research shows that access to English as a Second Language (ESOL) support continues to be a significant barrier to employment and so, through the [New Scots Integration Strategy 2024](#) officers have a working group underway to review ESOL demand and the current provision/gaps in the city in partnership with Edinburgh College.

**Equality outcome: Museum stakeholders, visitors and staff perceive greater fairness, representation and justice in their communities and local authority area.**

11.1.6 Our Museums, Galleries Edinburgh Team have continued to implement the museum's anti-racist action plan and the recommendations of the [Edinburgh Slavery and Colonialism Legacy Review Group](#).

11.1.7 Exhibitions such as '[Disrupting the Narrative](#)' and the '[Keep the Faith](#)' are currently live, and whilst footfall of individual exhibitions isn't recorded, December admission figures for Museum of Edinburgh, Writers' Museum and Museum of Childhood have been in place for a few months now. Adding up the Winter admission figures for the three sites this comes to 73,029 in total.

11.1.8 Our Museums and Galleries are taking part in the national [Anti-Racist Museums](#) programme with the Museums Association, working with National Museums Wales, Birmingham Museums and Galleries and Bristol Museums and Galleries.

11.1.9 In partnership with writers of colour, Museums and Galleries have created new pamphlets of their written work explaining that our aim is to be an anti-racist organisation, but we understand that we need to do this collaboratively. Officers have committed to continue to build this partnership.

**Equality outcome: People can access the facilities and support they need within their communities.**

11.1.10 The [Corporate Property Strategy](#) has conducted 12 accessibility audits in 2024-2025 across schools and offices. A further 13 audits are to take place at depots, museums, libraries and community centres in 2025-2026. The findings will be used to develop an inclusive design guide that will cover a range of building uses and architectural types.

11.1.11 The newly established [Accessibility Commission](#) is leading the development of accessible environments across the city. The commission membership is reflective of Equality and Rights network stakeholders to ensure the needs of protected groups of people are considered throughout.

**Equality outcome: Stakeholders experience easier access to services through increased digital inclusion and alternative access to services.**

11.1.12 Following an internal accessibility service review, officers [reported](#) the successful Empowered Learning rollout and the People's Network which provided 44,736 iPads to pupils in schools, and 184 desktops across 33 libraries, consisting of 154 general devices and 30 devices locked down for catalogue searches.

11.1.13 To further promote inclusion for all, work has continued in 2024-2025 to ensure that services will continue to provide non-digital access to citizens who are facing digital exclusion or need an alternative reasonable adjustment.

11.1.14 [The Digital Smart City programme](#) continues to advance opportunity for all and [improve access to services](#) through the implementation of digital tools and reports to Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee (GRBV) on a quarterly basis.

**Equality outcome: Ensuring all applicants including those with specific needs or who are vulnerable can use and access the housing application and choice based letting process as required as we move to having more services online.**

11.1.15 This specific outcome was introduced in 2022/23 so did not cover the full four-year period. It replaced the priority outcome focusing on pathways for those at risk of homelessness on leaving hospital or prison, which was reported on and mainstreamed in 2022.

11.1.16 The [EdIndex during the Housing Emergency](#) report to Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on 27 August 2024 responded to a motion to address what support could be put in place to trial a programme of application support – for example, via scheduled drop-in sessions in libraries, community centres or over the phone to ensure consistency in support for applicants from the point of application through to offer and post-offer support/tenancy sustainment, with a trauma informed approach.

11.1.17 The Housing Emergency Action Plan includes an action to review the Council Allocations Policy. The EdIndex report, referred to above, noted opportunities arising from the Allocations Policy review to engage with customers and further improve support for applicants who do not have online access or require additional support in relation to the allocations process.

11.1.18 Local Housing Strategy consultation has involved engaging with groups such as the Edinburgh Learning Disability Advisory Group where feedback reinforced the desire for additional support to apply and bid for homes rather than having to do everything online and an ask for more accessible, easy to read information overall.

**Equality outcome: Children and young people have improved health and wellbeing because there is a reduction in bullying and prejudice-based incidents**

- 11.1.19 On [23 January 2024](#), education officers reported on work to better communicate the bullying and prejudice reporting process to pupils.
- 11.1.20 Data from schools show that there has been an increase in the number of reported and recorded hate incidents which indicates a greater awareness and confidence to report incidents. Officers will work to develop a consistent understanding across all schools - exploring all forms of prejudice and the impact on those experiencing it, and how to address it in a standardised way.
- 11.1.21 Work has taken place to raise Islamophobia Awareness for colleagues (in partnership with [Educate Against Islamophobia](#)) alongside promotion of [Edinburgh Inter Faith Association Roadshows](#) and panel discussions in schools.

**Equality outcome: A more diverse and inclusive working environment is experienced by colleagues who share protected characteristics and colleagues are supported by an inclusive workplace culture and feel confident to challenge prejudice-based incidents.**

- 11.1.22 On [22 October 2024](#), Health and Safety officers reported the development of a system to enable better reporting of workplace prejudice-based incidents.
- 11.1.23 A colleague campaign was launched to raise awareness about the existence of the process and how to record and report via internal communications, NewsBeat and Managers' News and further promoted through Equality, Diversity and Inclusion focused communications on other subjects.
- 11.1.24 As part of the [Workforce EDI Strategy](#) and [People's Strategy 2024-2027](#), officers have been working to create a more inclusive culture and increase reporting levels. Officers in HR will continue to explore colleagues' perceptions of the value in reporting as well as ways to build trust in the organisation's ability to handle the reports sensitively, effectively, impartially and confidentially.

**Equality Outcome: Colleagues are supported by a holistic and preventative approach to financial, mental and physical wellbeing.**

- 11.1.25 Officers are currently in the final stages of developing an updated health and wellbeing plan aligned to the [People Strategy 2024-2027](#).
- 11.1.26 Progress on this outcome to date has included:

- 11.1.26.1 An update to the reasonable adjustments toolkit as part of our continued effort to create an inclusive culture for colleagues. We have also launched associated workshops for managers to provide learning on reasonable adjustments, the legislative

underpinning, changes to the toolkit and the expectation on supporting colleagues.

11.1.26.2 The development of a suicide prevention and postvention toolkit, outlining the Council's commitment to preventing death by suicide. It provides information for colleagues to recognise the signs of distress and crisis and what steps can be taken in each scenario. Further, it provides information about how colleagues can be supported following a death by suicide. With the rollout of this toolkit, we have also contracted workshops which are delivered by [Scottish Action for Mental Health](#).

11.1.27 Both toolkits have been progressed alongside several other wellbeing events, initiatives (including the launch of [Able Futures](#)) and colleague communications focusing on certain protected characteristics such as Men's Health, Healthy Aging, Menopause and Neurodiversity celebration week.

## Appendix B:

### Human Resources – Statutory Reporting

- 11.1.28 In [December 2024](#), officers asked committee to approve the Council's Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy for the period 2024-2028.
- 11.1.29 The Council continues to go beyond the statutory pay gap reporting by voluntarily reporting ethnicity and disability, as well as gender pay gap data.
- 11.1.30 Officers have developed a 'heatmap' to monitor the above information to review the impact of intersecting identities on pay gap outcomes such as the pay gap for a part-time black female as opposed to a full-time white male.

### Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs)

- 11.1.31 To improve the IIA process and outcomes, the Council is currently conducting a review based on the Scottish Women's Budget Group recommendations in 2023.
- 11.1.32 To date, this has included engagement with council colleagues who had been trained and conducted IIAs in the past, and Elected Members who used the outputs of IIAs to inform decision-making. The review focuses on experience of training, experience of conducting an IIA, impact on change processes, and reporting of IIA outcomes. Further details can be found in Appendix C.
- 11.1.33 From March 2024-December 2024 the Council has published 42 IIAs on the Council website [IIA Directory](#). The Directorate breakdown of these is as follows:
  - 11.1.33.1 Corporate Services – 20
  - 11.1.33.2 Children, Education, and Justice Services – 9
  - 11.1.33.3 Place - 13
- 11.1.34 IIA training was delivered by officers via five training courses during this period. There were 105 attendees across regional partners with 58 colleagues from the City of Edinburgh Council. Additional resources to support the completion of IIAs have also been uploaded to MyLearningHub for all colleagues.

### Procurement

- 11.1.35 Commercial and Procurement Services continue to use community benefits, supported business contracts and evaluation techniques to mainstream equalities through the Council's purchasing power.
- 11.1.36 Our Community Benefits fit into 4 broad priorities:

11.1.36.1 Employability & Skills

11.1.36.2 Education & Outreach

11.1.36.3 Community Engagement, Environment and Nature

11.1.36.4 Supply Chain & Business Collaboration

11.1.37 The focus on the first two categories aim to help those in priority groups into work through the creation of career pathways and support into work. By working together with our employability partners through Joined up for Business (JUfB), which is coordinated by Capital City Partnership and others we can help employers identify candidates quickly. In the past two years, 140 Modern Apprentices, 320 work placements and 228 new employees all from Priority Groups have been delivered through community benefits in council contracts.

11.1.38 The introduction of a Fair Work First question in procurement is used to evaluate a contractor's approach to implementing [fair work practices](#) including tackling labour market inequalities. The question is regularly reviewed and widened to broaden its scope, including a requirement to look at reducing not just the gender pay gap but the pay gap for Priority Groups.

### **Licensing**

11.1.39 The Licensing Board focuses on alcohol licensing across the city and has a separate legal status from the Council and therefore publishes its own [Equalities policy](#) and [outcomes](#). Officers have agreed that, considering it's close links with the Council, any future equality outcomes will be reviewed and aligned where possible.

## **Appendix C:**

### **Integrated Impact Assessment Review**

The following actions from the Integrated Impact Assessment review were agreed and are underway:

- Introduce form to help managers determine and record when IIAs are not necessary
- Reduce documents by:
  - Embedding the evidence section and checklist in the IIA report template
  - Adding a section to demonstrate how relevant evidence has impacted on the proposal and how impacts will be measured
  - Combining guidance document and supporting information document
- Strengthen the network of Equality, Diversity and Rights Advisors to support colleagues in services areas to carry out IIAs
- Additional training for policy / strategy / finance colleagues to raise awareness, and provide support and advice to services
- Additional training for Elected Members
- Promote access to consultation feedback as an evidence resource
- Improve quality assurance:
  - Consultations going through the Consultation Advisory Panel process must publish their draft IIA or a statement saying why IIA is not necessary. The CAP will provide a check to ensure this happens.
  - Heads of Service will move from one IIA sign-off to two stage-based signoffs. Draft IIAs must be approved as accurate prior to consultation and must be re-approved to ensure that consultation feedback has been included.

## Appendix D:

### Recommended Interim Equality Outcomes 2025-2026

**Outcome 1: People with communication needs find it easier to access services through improved and standardised approaches to Inclusive Communications across the organisation.**

#### **What will we deliver in 2025-2026?**

We will agree a definition of Inclusive Communication across the organisation and develop a clear Inclusive Communications guidance document that demonstrates our commitment to improving inclusive communications across all our services.

#### **Who will benefit from this outcome?**

- Children and young people
- People with communication difficulties (e.g. mental illness, stroke, dementia, neurodivergence, head and neck injuries)
- People with learning disabilities
- People whose first language is not English
- BSL users
- People with sensory impairment (i.e. visual/hearing loss)
- People who experience digital exclusion (e.g. older people)
- People experiencing poverty and deprivation
- People who experience trauma

We anticipate that improving inclusive communications across the council will benefit all protected groups however, research and findings highlighted that the above groups will be most positively impacted.

#### **Why does it matter and what is our evidence base?**

The Scottish Government's 2022 review of the Public Sector Equality Duties proposed a new duty to embed inclusive communication across the work of listed authorities.

Subsequently, the Scottish Government Minister for Equalities, Kaukab Stewart MSP issued an update on 14 August 2024 sharing the decision to not introduce a formal duty at this stage. Instead, the Scottish Government aims to produce new guidance, tools and training to support public authorities to improve their use of inclusive communications with timescales for completion still to be determined. This would build on or replace existing information on Principles of Inclusive Communication: An information and self-assessment tool for public authorities published by the Scottish Government in 2011.



However, members will be aware that against this backdrop and considering internal issues raised with accessibility of council information, there is an immediate need to improve the Council's inclusive communications in the meantime.

The [Communication Inclusion People](#) say that 'inclusive communication means including as many people as possible in any communication. It means enabling people to understand and express themselves:

- in ways they need to or prefer to
- through communication channels and in situations that work for them
- at every stage of a process or pathway (communication journey)

To communicate effectively people will use:

- different ways to understand information and what is going on around them
- different ways to express their needs and views.

Some ways of communicating are easier to use than others. Inclusive communication means using the ways that people prefer and find easiest. We want to get better at using this kind of inclusive communication across all the services the council provides.

Inclusive communication means always giving all people with multiple communication needs a choice of communication channel: in person, online, on paper or by phone.

Our communications still present barriers for our customers and recent local engagement with 47 stakeholders from the Equality and Rights Network identified improvements as follows:

- The need for council information to be accessible to the public throughout the customer journey - from finding out about a council service to exiting.
- Alternative access to information about services for those who, for a variety of reasons (not just disability), may not be able to access information and services digitally.
- The use of appropriate tone and use of Plain English across all communications.
- Engagement and development of guidance with lived experience groups as work progresses.
- Having a trauma informed approach.

Further national research shows:

- Analysis of the 2019 Scottish Household Survey found almost all (99%) younger people aged 16–24 and over 90% of adults aged 16–59 reported using the internet, compared with 78% of the 60–74 age group and 43% of people of 75 and over.
- In 2019, 94% of adults aged 45–59 reported using the internet, decreasing to 43% of adults aged 75 and over. Across all online security measures, there was no other age that reported they were less likely to implement them than the over 75 age group (Scottish Government, 2020b)

- 71% of adults with some form of limiting long-term physical or mental health condition or illness reported using the internet. This was lower than for adults who reported some form of non-limiting condition or illness (90%) and those who had no reported condition or illness (94%). (Scottish Government 2020 & Scottish Household Survey 2019).
- Scotland has an ageing population, caused by people born in the post-war 'baby boom' years from 1946 to 1964 getting older, the number of births dropping since the 1960s, and generally higher life expectancy (National Records of Scotland, 2022a). Women outnumber men in the older age groups, reflecting longer female life expectancy.
- Older adults (aged 60 years and over) are still less likely to use the internet and online security measures than other age groups. In 2019, 43% of people aged 75 and over used the internet, compared with 99% of 16–24-year-olds.
- Findings from the Health and Care Experience Survey (Scottish Government, 2022e) show that, between 2019/20 and 2021/22, fewer people of all ages felt they had a choice in how their social care was arranged, and more of them said they were not offered any choices/not communicated to them.

### **What actions will we take to deliver this outcome effectively?**

Officers will:

- Define 'Inclusive Communications'
- Understand what tools and guidance are currently available to our staff in our organisation
- Identify existing strengths and areas for development
- Involve those with lived experience of barriers to communication who can help us identify what action we need to take to improve what we do
- Align the BSL Plan 2024-2030 actions
- Work with third party organisations who can help support and advise us on good practice
- Use what we discover to develop Inclusive Communication guidance
- Host a series of sessions for colleagues to support them to embed the Inclusive Communications Guidance into their service delivery

### **How will we monitor our effectiveness of this outcome?**

In line with best practice, [Communication Inclusion People](#) recommend that organisations should measure their success against the following 5 areas:

1. Leadership and commitment to be communication inclusive across the organisation
2. Involvement of people who communicate in different ways
3. Inclusive communication policies and ways of doing business
4. Knowledge, skill, and confidence so everyone knows how to communicate inclusive
5. Inclusive communication resources available throughout buildings and available to everyone

Officers will measure the development and implementation of our new Inclusive Communication guidance against these and provide progress updates to the Member Equality Working Group and committee throughout 2025-2026.

**Partners who will contribute to achieving this outcome:**

We will seek to work with organisations who will be able to contribute specialist expertise, such as:

- FAiR
- People First
- Disability Equality Scotland
- PAMIS
- Internal colleagues leading or delivering the actions in the BSL Plan, Trauma Information Practice and Translation Services
- Communication and Inclusion People
- Other DPOs that support other protected groups
- Equality and Rights Network
- The Regional Equalities Group
- NHS Lothian

**Outcome 2: People in Edinburgh feel more confident reporting hate crime and victims of hate crime are supported.****What will we deliver in 2025-2026?**

The Edinburgh Community Safety and Justice Partnership is currently reviewing the Joint Community Safety and Antisocial Behaviour Strategy. As part of this, a multi-agency working group will form to review improvements to reporting and monitoring of hate crime data at a local level through Household and Advice Services. This will be complemented by upskilling officers around Hate Crime and coordinating multiagency support to victims of hate crime (in accessible formats to those that require it).

**Who will benefit from this outcome?**

- People with learning disabilities
- People with disabilities
- Young people at transition to adulthood (including care experienced young people)
- People from different races
- People of different religions
- People from LGBT+ communities

We anticipate that improvements to the recording of hate crime will benefit all protected groups however, research and findings highlighted that the above groups will be most positively impacted.

**Why does it matter and what is our evidence base?**

There is a need to improve hate crime reporting in a more coordinated way across the partnership and improve the promotion of support for victims that are at higher risk of hate crime i.e. those from protected characteristic groups that may already have mental health support needs or are higher risk of bullying or harassment.

Our recent engagement with local organisations as set out in [7.2 Supporting the LGBT Community.pdf](#) and [Tackling Hate Crime and Islamophobia](#) highlights that there is still concern of under reporting of hate crime and therefore a need to improve:

- Reporting and data accuracy on hate crime across the partnership – to work towards a data driven approach to tackling hate crime in local communities
- A holistic community safety approach – by facilitating ongoing engagement with Police Scotland and communities to build trust around reporting Hate Crime
- Officers understanding of Hate Crime and how to support victims that are engaged in council services

Further national research shows:

- In a national survey of LGBT young people aged 13–25 in 2022, nearly half (49%) of the 1,279 self-selecting participants identified as trans (including non-binary) ([LGBT Youth Scotland, 2023](#)). This survey found 57% of 526 trans respondents reported experiencing transphobic bullying at school.
- 62% of trans respondents to the same survey said they did not feel confident reporting transphobic bullying to staff.
- In the academic year 2020/21, there were 1,198 instances of racially motivated bullying reported in Scottish schools – up from 409 in 2016-17. These are the highest recorded figures to date (since 2007/08) ([Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights, 2022](#)).
- Police-recorded race hate crime in Scotland has declined over time. Between 2014/15 and 2020/21 there was an 18% fall in the number of race hate crimes recorded by police from 5,178 to 4,263 (Scottish Government, 2023).
- A Scottish Government study into the characteristics of police-recorded hate crime revealed that, in 36% of race hate crimes, the words or actions used by the perpetrator suggested an anti-Black prejudice. In 27% of cases, the prejudice was shown towards the Pakistani community (Scottish Government, 2023).
- Anti-Catholic prejudice was the most common form of prejudice expressed in religion hate crimes in 2020/21, when almost one in two (47%) police-recorded hate crimes aggravated by religion involved prejudice towards the Catholic community (Scottish Government, 2023).
- The proportion of hate crimes showing anti-Catholic prejudice, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are disproportionately large compared with the population identifying with these religions in Scotland.
- For example, anti-Semitic hate crimes accounted for 9% of religious hate crimes recorded in 2020/21, despite just 0.1% of the Scottish population identifying as Jewish in 2011 (Scotland's Census, 2021).
- Hate crime data is unlikely to capture the full extent of religion-aggravated abuse and its disproportionate impact on certain groups with intersecting identities. Research undertaken for a cross-party inquiry into Islamophobia in Scotland revealed evidence that Islamophobia has a disproportionate impact on Muslim women (Hopkins, 2021).

- A Scottish survey based on a self-selecting sample of 1,279 LGBT young people aged 13–25 found that 70% of gay and lesbian participants had reported homophobic bullying at school and 58% of bisexual participants had faced biphobic bullying at school. ([LGBT Youth Scotland, 2023](#)).
- The organisation, Scottish Trans published a [report](#) in July 2024 which examined the experiences of 571 trans and non-binary people living in Scotland. They found that:
  - 61% of respondents had avoided at least one of the public services they were asked about due to fear of being harassed, being read as trans, or being outed
  - 54% of respondents had had at least one negative experience in at least one public service
- Discrimination can profoundly affect an individual's mental health and overall wellbeing. It has been associated with various psychological issues, including trauma, depression, anxiety, social isolation and diminished self-esteem, all of which can severely compromise one's quality of life. ([The Impact of Hate Crime and Discrimination on Mental Health](#), Stop Hate UK)
- Ethnic minority communities are over-represented in mental health admissions. Analysis of Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland research reveals that, of detentions that took place in 2020/21, the proportion of detentions for people from ethnic minority groups was 6.0% for emergency detentions, 7.4% for short term detentions, and 7.6% for compulsory treatment orders.
- In the period 2010/11 to 2020/21, when compared with the ethnic distribution of the general population, a higher proportion of detentions under the Mental Health Act were recorded for White Other, Black, Mixed or multiple ethnicities, and other ethnic groups ([Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland, 2021](#)).
- Scottish Government-commissioned research exploring mental health, suicide and the experiences of 'adversely racialised' people<sup>51</sup> in Scotland found that research participants placed significant emphasis on the effect of racism on exacerbating their mental health illnesses, increasing their propensity towards suicide ([Jackson et al., 2022](#)).

**What actions will we take to deliver this outcome effectively?**

- The creation of a Hate Crime working group to agree a multi-agency approach to the reporting and monitoring of Hate Crime across the city. This work will include establishing a baseline for measuring improvement of Hate Crime reporting throughout the year
- Training for officers on their awareness of Hate Crime and how to record/report appropriately, and how to support victims
- A series of community-based workshops will be held in partnership with Equality and Rights Network members to explain how the council and partners record/report incidents
- Engaging with partners and citizens to explore what support should be available to victims of Hate Crime
- Creation of an accessible Hate Crime information webpage on the council website with a partnership campaign

**How will we monitor our effectiveness of this outcome?**

By the end of 2025-2026:

- We will engage with 50 specialist partners from the Equality and Rights Network, to ensure that the needs and voices of those experiencing Hate Crime are embedded throughout
- The Hate Crime working group will establish a baseline measurement for monitoring Hate Crime reporting
- The Hate Crime working group will meet quarterly and report quarterly to the Edinburgh Partnership and the Member Equality Working Group on progress
- 50% of Household and Advice officers will be trained on Hate Crime and supporting victims
- There will be an improvement of reporting of Hate Crime on council data systems e.g. ensuring that Hate Crimes are not underreported as 'harassment'
- Delivery of a successful Hate Crime campaign

**Partners who will contribute to achieving this outcome:**

We will seek to work with organisations who will be able to contribute specialist expertise, such as:

- Internal colleagues leading on Trauma Information Practice and Equally Safe
- The Equality and Rights Network
- The Regional Equalities Group
- The Edinburgh Community Safety and Justice Partnership including:
  - Lothian Buses & Lothian Trams
  - NHS Lothian
  - Police Scotland
  - Victim Support
  - Scottish Fire and Rescue

**Outcome 3:** People in Edinburgh are aware of the impact of the climate and nature emergencies on their needs and understand what support is available to them.

**What will we deliver in 2025-2026?**

Aligned to the Climate Ready Edinburgh Plan, 2030 Climate Strategy and the forthcoming Nature Vision for the city. Officers will engage with over 50 stakeholders and 200 people with lived experience in the city to highlight the impact of the above and raise awareness of support that is available to them to ensure they can make an informed decision in line with their needs.

**Who will benefit from this outcome?**

Communities across the city are vulnerable to a whole range of impacts from the above. Climate and nature impacts are frequently felt most by the poorest and most marginalised groups in society, who may also suffer from reduced health and wellbeing in particular:

- People with disabilities
- Older people

- People with health conditions
- Women
- People from different races.

There is further economic impact on the above groups when reviewing the impact of the move towards a Just Transition e.g. in particular those in employment or out of employment who need to reskill and upskill to ensure they can continue to sustain employment that aligns to the requirements of green skilled jobs.

### **Why does it matter/what is the issue?**

People from all protected groups understand the impact of climate change and systems, services and policies are designed to promote equality ensuring 'A Just Transition'. A 'just transition' means moving to a more sustainable economy in a way that's fair to everyone.

Recent engagement with 47 stakeholders from the Equality and Rights Network locally, highlighted that many people from protected groups around the city are not aware of the impacts of climate change or the support available to them. This highlighted the immediate need to:

- Improve awareness of climate impacts on protected groups of people through community and stakeholder engagement
- Understand and promote the support that is available to those impacted by climate change from protected groups

Further research shows:

A just transition addresses various dimensions of inequality, vulnerability and opportunity. It frames the transition with a human rights lens with the aim of eliminating existing inequalities, enabling social inclusion and promoting different forms of equity.

From the climate justice perspective, relevant issues include: the disproportionate impacts of climate change on underrepresented and vulnerable communities; the injustices incurred by richer countries being the significant contributors to historical greenhouse gas emissions and poorer countries being the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; intergenerational injustices; loss and damage from climate change impacts; and unequal access to clean and affordable energy, green finance and to a sustainable and healthy diet.

Inequitable access to nature and green spaces is also more pronounced in disadvantaged communities, exacerbating impacts of extreme weather events and mental health conditions, including stress from simply the threat of damage to property and livelihoods from extreme weather events such as flooding.

Additionally, a Just Transition can be assisted by the fact that increased access to nature, is associated with the adoption of more pro-environmental behaviours among residents. People from all protected groups value and need nature, however, how they interact with and utilise it, and the type of nature / greenspaces they prefer is entirely dependent on their needs. It is vital to understand this when retrofitting nature or new

build sites, to ensure all groups receive the benefits provided by nature-based solutions in a Just Transition.

The Just Transition is a crucial enabler to implementing the net zero transition: involving all affected parties and responding to injustices serves to ensure political acceptability for climate action, mitigate the risk of 'Just Transition litigation', and ultimately avoid delays in achieving net zero globally. To achieve its varied aims, a Just Transition is considered to require fundamental restructuring of the socioeconomic systems that have created these inequalities and the climate crisis.

Examples of climate impact on protected groups are as follows:

A severe storm in 2023 where a town had a call to evacuate due to the predicted flooding of the river. Some of the most vulnerable stayed behind for a variety of reasons. The town was Brechin in Angus. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-67157991>

Storm Babet hit around 19/20 October 2023. You can watch any of the videos just after this time to get any idea of the experiences of the people impacted.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/cerlz4j556nt>

People in flood prone areas struggle to cover the costs of home and contents insurance, so don't take the insurance out.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-67193047>

'Angus Council said 60 households were rescued in the town in the early hours of the morning, while about 80 people had gone to special centres that were set up for evacuated people in Brechin and nearby Montrose and Forfar.' If we assume most households had more than one person living there, more people stayed and had to be rescued than left for the special centre. Exploring why that was is significant in health and social care (the man interviewed had a dog, I recall other residents said they didn't leave because animals weren't allowed at the relief centre).

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-67193587>

Mental health and financial impacts on council tenants when displaced by extreme weather and moved to emergency accommodation.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-scotland-67433812>

### **What actions will we take to deliver this outcome effectively?**

Officers will engage with and consider the needs of protected groups and the inequality they face from the climate crisis, and highlight adaptation actions available to them (supporting a Just Transition). This will be done through hosting accessible Climate Ready community-based sessions with:

- 50 stakeholders that support protected groups of people in the city
- 200 people from protected characteristic backgrounds

### **Partners who we collaborate with to achieve this outcome:**



We will seek to work with organisations who will be able to contribute specialist expertise, such as:

- Equality and Rights Network
- NHS Lothian
- Police Scotland
- Lothian Buses
- Scottish Fire and Rescue
- Net Zero Edinburgh Leadership Board
- Sustainability Board
- Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal