Full Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

## Skills Development Scotland has a legal duty to consider the impact of any new ‘policy’ on equality groups. A ‘policy’ in this context is taken to mean any new activity, function, policy or product, essentially anything that SDS does. Assessing impact includes considering relevant evidence, including evidence received from equality groups and the likelihood of a positive or negative impact on equality groups of introducing that new product, project or policy. The final section of this form requires us to think about how negative consequences can be mitigated against or removed, and how potential positive impacts can be encouraged. Equality impact assessment helps SDS meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. In addition, SDS took the decision to use the impact assessment process to make progress as a Corporate Parent in relation to care experienced young people, which is a component part of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The process might also be used to consider other groups that SDS has evidence of experiencing discrimination or underrepresentation.

For more detailed information about equality impact assessment, please see EHRC guidance here:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/assessing-impact-and-public-sector-equality-duty-guide-public-authorities>

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| **Name of EqIA** (e.g. directorate, large project or service) | SDS Employer Hub |
| **Senior Responsible Officer (SRO):** name and job title | George Boag Director of Digital Services |
| **Does your project link to any other** [**published EqIAs**](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/publications-statistics/publications/?page=1&topic%5b%5d=3-6&order=date-desc)**?**  If so please provide the name of the EqIA (e.g. WBL) | [Apprenticeships.scot](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/48921/sds-eqia-appscot-final.docx) |

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| **Approved by:** | **Director of:** | **Date approved:** | **Review date:** |
| Signed:A close-up of a signature  Description automatically generated | Digital Services | 10 August 23 |  |

1. **Purpose of project, policy or product**

**The Skills Development Scotland Employer Hub**

The employer hub will replace Our Skillsforce (OSF) in July 2023. After a significant review the decision was taken to retire Our Skillsforce and create a leaner, skills-focussed area for employers as part of the Skills Development Scotland website.

For context the Employer Hub is part of the wider Skills Development Scotland employer offer which includes face to face and contact centre support, PACE, labour market intelligence and Apprenticeships.

**The purpose of the SDS Employer Hub**

The purpose of the employer hub is to engage employers in our full suite of SDS services and provide access to workforce planning tools. The site also allows employers to connect with SDS via ‘Get in touch’ facility, for example, if employers want to speak to an executive about skills planning and/or apprenticeships.

**Evidence based approach**

Digital Services has taken the opportunity to review the content strategy for Our Skillsforce.

1. Limited natural search demand for the content featured on Our Skillsforce
2. Majority of OSF page usage for funding offers
3. Employers want personalised content, not wider long-form content articles
4. Employers want answers to their questions quickly
5. Employers find value in speaking to a subject matter expert in the area of skills and workforce planning

In 2022 as part of the content and purpose review Digital Services carried out a problem statement workshop with members of SDS equality team. We worked with the team to define the problem statements we believe employers are facing. We then spoke to employers (not currently engaged with SDS) to validate/invalidate these statements. Whilst the number is small the findings echo the findings in Scottish Apprenticeships Advisory Boards [The Gender Commission.](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/49618/gender-commission-report-and-recommendations.pdf)

**What we’ll do differently on the Employer Hub**

From a review of analytics, previous research with employers and employer interviews carried out in 2022 we took the decision to approach equalities, and indeed, the majority of our content in a different way. The main aim of the content strategy is to move from broad ‘catch all’ content to in-person webinar content. Equalities will be woven through every webinar delivered and feature live case studies where employers can talk to their fellow peers about breaking down bias and barriers. This pilot programme of work will be developed jointly by:

* Critical Skills and Occupations – Kirstine Hale (Employer Services Manager)
* Growth and Inward Investment – Gary Gray (Skills for Growth Manager)
* SDS Equalities team – Craig Peoples-Simpson (Equality Executive)

We are also trialling new ‘Ask a question’ functionality (Yext). Links to relevant equalities content features throughout.

SDS is currently developing a pilot webinar programme we will utilise the inclusive recruitment guides via Apprenticeships.scot.

The guides will offer support on:

1. inclusive recruitment;
2. candidate attraction,
3. job descriptions advertising job
4. interviewing and supporting employees.

A directory of ED&I partners will be published to offer wider support to employers from partner organisations. The use and success of the guides and directory will be reviewed periodically. We also link to Scottish Enterprise’s Fair Work Tool within the Skills Management Tool.

We may utilise third party imagery as appropriate to reflective of our diverse nation in workplace settings and relevant quotes from case studies across the site. Previously on OSF written case studies had low engagement. Content of this nature will be limited, however we will use impactful statistics and quotes to encourage employers to think about their culture and approach to equality and diversity.

We will utilise video case studies on social channels which could be more effective to change the dialogue and conversation around protected characteristics and highlight the support available via the SDS Employer Hub and SDS offline service offer. A piece of research is currently underway to find out where employers are online and how we might best engage with them in the future.

**Business Support Partnership (BSP)**

We will continue to work with and build deeper working relationships within the Business Support Partnership. In terms of building an evidence base, sharing best practice and defining solutions that work best for employers. This will aid us in making the most of budgets, co-design web solutions, provide more connected services for employers and manage our internal resources more effectively.

This will help us avoid duplication across the wider partner services in Scotland and reduce our digital carbon footprint.

1. **Evidence and Impact**
   1. **Age**

**Context:** Employer Hub will be a resource used by employers of all ages . Those at the younger and older ends of the labour market tend to face the most labour market disadvantages. Upskilling is key to growth – for example - unfilled digital roles cost the UK up to £150 billion a year in lost [**GDP**](https://www.scotsman.com/topic/gdp).

In addition, Generation Z often have specific workplace preferences that differ from older workers. According to 2022 research by workplace training company Talent LMs, 82% of Gen Zers surveyed want mental health days, 77% consider it important that their company supports diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, and 74% would opt for either hybrid or totally remote work.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Younger and older workers are at the most risk of facing barriers in the workplace | SDS Equality evidence review 2022 | No activity to date | This will be woven through webinars. As part of the web services and should be considered as part of our wider employer offer. |

* 1. **Disability**

**Context:** In addition to the legal duty employers have there is value in diversity that should be highlighted to employers of recruiting the best person for the job.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| If the site is not accessible it will have mean that some disabled customers will not be able to make best use of the website. | https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/ | Testing to Accessible WCAG 2.2 AA has been ongoing in the development of the employer hub. | Ensure webservice is WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility compliant and that additional testing with customers |
| If our customers are not represented visually, they will be less likely to engage with the website. | https://wid.org/the-importance-of-authentic-media-representation-of-people-with-disabilities/ | Any visuals are checked to ensure there is fair representation of different disabilities.  Ensuring imagery doesn’t propagate negative stereotypes.  Employees are up to date on E&D mandatory learning.  Recruitment guide | Any visuals are checked to ensure there is fair representation of different disabilities.  Implementation of webinar content which will include live case studies instead of written content.  Ensure skills management tool content is relevant and up to date. |

* 1. **Gender reassignment**

**Context: it is important that the language is correct and up to date around trans customers and that signposting is available.**

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Content around language and terminology should be checked and consistent so as not exclude any of our customers. | https://www.futurelearn.com/info/courses/understanding-gender-inequality/0/steps/66842 | Consideration is given to language Equalities landing page and recruitment guide. | Ensure skills management tool content is relevant and up to date.  Ensure representation of as diverse employers through the webinar content as possible (responsibility for this will sit with the Gii team) |

* 1. **Marriage and civil partnership**
  2. **Context:** This protected characteristic requires no actions at this time
  3. **Pregnancy and maternity**

**Context:** Information for employers around their responsibilities and employees around their rights should be made available.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| If there is no signposting for employers and employees to inform them of fair work practices and rights it may disadvantage staff. | https://www.acas.org.uk/your-maternity-leave-pay-and-other-rights | Equalities landing page and recruitment guide | Recruitment guide and webinar follow up.  Webinar content – women returning – reskilling succession planning (responsibility for this will sit with the GII team) |

* 1. **Race, religion and belief**

**Context:** Employers will be of all races religions and beliefs – it is important that they receive the correct legal information and support, and that diversity is represented.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| If information on cultural awareness and diversity training is not made available, then employers will miss out and opportunities for improvements will be lost. | https://www.agcas.org.uk/cultural-awareness-resources | Ensuring imagery doesn’t propagate negative stereotypes.  Employees are up to date on E&D mandatory learning.  Recruitment guide | Updated recruitment guide  Encourage employers of all races to co-design our product and features.  Ensure skills management tool content is relevant and up to date. |
| If our customers are not represented visually, they will be less likely to engage with the web service. | https://thewitnessbcc.com/representing-race-why-do-images-matter/ | Ensuring imagery doesn’t propagate negative stereotypes.  Employees are up to date on E&D mandatory learning.  Recruitment guide | Implementation of webinar content which will include live case studies instead of written content.  Ensure skills management tool content is relevant and up to date. |

* 1. **Sex** (or gender)

**Context:** It is important that employers have relevant up to date information on their duties towards different genders and stereotyping is avoided

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| If our customers are not represented visually, they will be less likely to engage with the website. | https://www.themuse.com/advice/you-cant-be-what-you-cant-see-how-to-get-more-women-in-tech | Ensuring imagery doesn’t propagate negative stereotypes.  Employees are up to date on E&D mandatory learning.  Recruitment guide | Ensuring language doesn’t propagate negative stereotypes.  Sessions with equality team to understand developments in this area.  Ensure skills management tool content is relevant and up to date.  Implementation of webinar content which will include live case studies instead of written content. |

* 1. **Sexual orientation**

**Context:** Information on support and rights should be made available

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Supportive and inclusive imagery and content – within a guide through signposting will help create message of inclusivity | https://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/news/why-workplace-inclusion-matters | Ensuring imagery doesn’t propagate negative stereotypes.  Employees are up to date on E&D mandatory learning. | Ensuring language doesn’t propagate negative stereotypes.  Sessions with equality team to understand developments in this area.  Ensure skills management tool content is relevant and up to date. |

1. Assessing impact on other groups

This section is the same as above only considers the impact of groups not covered in the Equality Act (2010), e.g., care experience, carers, socio-economic disadvantage). Add sections as required.

* 1. **Care experience**

**Context:** Specific funding and support is given to care experienced people – employers should be made aware of this

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| If information for care experienced employees is unavailable this would have an adverse consequence for users. | https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/effective-practice/care-experienced/ | Links to relevant organisations for employers previously within landing pages now with search results and inclusive recruitment guide | Do more on our social channels on the promotion and content around this area.  Ensure skills management tool content is relevant and up to date.  We require more stats in this area to understand how to better target employers and with what messages. |

* 1. **Fair Work**

**Context:** Specific funding and support is given to care experienced people – employers should be made aware of this. In a [[meta-analysis](https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/businessreview/2019/07/15/happy-employees-and-their-impact-on-firm-performance/)](https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/businessreview/2019/07/15/happy-employees-and-their-impact-on-firm-performance/) of over 339 independent research studies, a report by the London School of Economics Centre for Economic Performance on employee wellbeing, productivity and business performance, found a significant, strong positive correlation between employees’ satisfaction with their company, wellbeing at work and employee productivity.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| If employers are made more aware or fair work practices this could have a positive effect or culture and working conditions for employees | https://www.gov.scot/publications/fair-work-action-plan-becoming-leading-fair-work-nation-  2025/pages/5/https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/businessreview/2019/07/15/happy-employees-and-their-impact-on-firm-performance/ | Fair work is linked to on Apprenticeships.scot. No current links on The Employer Hub | Information to go into Information sections on Fair Work and Bute House agreement – rights. |

1. **Action Plan**

The SRO is responsible for all actions. Throughout the EqIA process you will have identified actions which need to be taken forward. These actions should be added to your workplan and Risk Register where appropriate. Some examples of action you may have identified throughout the EqIA process are:

* Build in equality monitoring / evaluation.
* Make amendments to your policy.
* Build in additional support mechanisms to your policy if required.
* Consult with staff, customers or stakeholders.
* Involve staff/customer groups in developing aspects of your policy.

| **What is the action?** | **Which group(s) does it relate to?** | **What is the anticipated outcome?** | **What method is used to measure it?** | **Timescale** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| We continue to ensure the webservice is WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility compliant | Disability | Accessible hub that can be used by employers with disabilities. | Feedback from site users | Ongoing, collated and analysed periodically (every 6 months). |
| Incorporate insight on the hub when other employment engagement is happening. | All | Greater understanding of our audiences | Feedback and focus groups | Annual review |
| Include a directory of specialist organisations to signpost through Yext. | All | Allow employers to access support equality partners as and when required. | Feedback and analytics | Annual review |
| Monitor web service offer with diverse employers to ensure imagery/illustration doesn’t misrepresent protected characteristic groups | Disability, gender and race | Content is representative and does not exclude protected characteristic groups.  Any visual representation included of all protected characteristic groups avoids perpetrating stereotypes. | Ongoing feedback | Ongoing review of webinar pilot programme. Ensure representation with regards to disability, gender and race. |
| Web service solutions are co-designed with employers | All | Service is appropriate for end users | Monitor success in engaging employers in co-design activities | Ongoing |
| Review skills management tool content is relevant and up to date. And includes key message/info to include info on care experienced employees. | Care experienced | Employers have access to this information which improves their understanding of hiring, working with care experienced people. | Feedback | Reviewed as part of skills management tool developments. |
| Content is checked for inclusive language | Gender reassignment  Sex(gender) | Content language is unbiased and feels inclusive and relevant to employers. | Ongoing feedback | Annual review of any new additions to content (e.g. webinars). |
| Embed equality and diversity into webinars through discussion with product owner to ensure inclusiveness | All | Employers are exposed to a diverse webinar content offer. | Ongoing feedback | Reviewed with each new webinar |
| Embed equality and diversity into updates to YEXT Questions section to ensure inclusiveness | All | Employers have access to relevant equality information at the appropriate time. | Ongoing feedback, search term analysis | Reviewed with any updates to content |
| Add information on Fair work, Bute house agreement | All | Employers and employees are informed on their rights and responsibilities | Monitor usage as well as through surveys and engagements | Annual review |
| Content  Develop and maintain an inclusive content strategy | All | All content across the site will meet high standards of inclusivity | Feedback from partners and employers regarding the content of the site | Ongoing |