



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY

Title of policy, project or function:

Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers (SNSIAP).

Is the policy, project or function new (proposed) or already exists?

Already exists.

Has a screening exercise been carried out before this full assessment?

Yes. Issues addressed include:

- Accessibility issues taken into account in written communications. For example, we ensured our Privacy Statement was written in plain English.
- Accessibility issues taken into account when holding events.
- Equal opportunities forms developed and used during recruitment of peer reviewers, who are independent contractors.
- Updating self-assessment and guidance to reflect Equalities Act 2010.

Key findings from the assessment:

Actions as a result of the assessment:

We continue to monitor the content of our SNSIAP webpage for accessibility, including font size and the use of plain English.

We have adapted the Equal Opportunities form to ensure we are following good practice in relation to equalities monitoring. The adapted form is currently being used in the next round of recruitment for additional peer reviewers.

We continue to seek information on any reasonable adjustments required by individuals or improvements we could make for any equality group, whether they are applying to be peer reviewers or attending an event we are holding.

Date impact assessment published:

26/10/2018

Lead official(s) responsible for assessment:

Sarah Hamer, Policy Officer

Department:

Policy and Development



Name of sponsor/ Director who has signed off that the policy/ function has been sufficiently assessed against the needs of the equality duty:

Anne Dickson, Director of Strategic Development

Date of sign off:

25/10/2018



Step 1 - Examine the information available to assess likely impact of the function/ policy on different equality groups

1.1 Describe the policy, project or function. What does it aim to do? What and who will it affect?

The aim of this project is to continue to implement and review the new model of accreditation for the SNSIAP, including peer review of case-files and audit against organisational standards. The Standards are owned by the Scottish Government. It affects how agencies providing money/debt, housing and welfare benefits advice are accredited to the SNSIAP.

The accreditation process is available, currently without charge, to all not-for-profit agencies delivering advice at different levels, for example information and signposting or casework.

1.2 What is known about each of the equality groups who might use or be affected by this policy? For evidence see [Scottish Government equality finder](#) (contains information on equality groups and the justice system), the SLAB shared drive - information on the different groups (contains other information on equality groups) and [SLAB's research webpage](#) for information on the demographics of applicants of legal aid and solicitors providing work under legal aid.

Our target market is advice agencies providing not-for-profit advice and therefore the project could potentially cover all the equalities groups. We do not actively collect data about equality groups from advice agencies, but instead focus on ensuring our processes and procedures, communications and events are accessible.

When recruiting peer reviewers as independent contractors we use an Equalities Monitoring form and ensure we make reasonable adjustments for any disclosed disabilities, for example dyslexia.

1.3 Are there any gaps in understanding of your policy/ function in relation to equality groups? *You should think about opportunities to fill any gaps in evidence through your consultation plans for the policy/ function at Step3.*

Yes there are gaps as we are not in a position to collect personal data about those who work in advice agencies. This data isn't collected anywhere else by any other body.

We have engaged with the advice sector in a number of ways as referred to in Step 3 below.



Step 2 - Impacts on priority characteristics and suggested steps to address these

Does the policy/ function have any impacts (whether intended or unintended, positive or negative) on any of the equality groups? Describe for each group the ways in which the policy, as it is planned or as it operates, might have negative and/or positive impacts. You should answer these three questions for each group:

- 1) Is there potential for discrimination?
- 2) Is there potential for developing good relations?
- 3) Is there potential to advance equality of opportunity?

Race

Is there any potential impact on this group? No

Please explain your answer:

- 1) We use our Equalities Monitoring forms to check that our selection process is fair when we recruit independent contractors.
- 2) Yes, by ensuring we understand the Types of advice being delivered by projects working with particular communities. Also by ensuring all SLAB staff complete Equalities training.
- 3) By ensuring accreditation is an option for any agency delivering the types of advice covered by the SNSIAP. We seek feedback from agencies who have completed peer review via an on-line survey and agencies are sent a post audit feedback questionnaire.

Sex (gender)

Is there any potential impact on this group? No

Please explain your answer:

- 1) We use our Equalities Monitoring forms to check that our selection process is fair when we recruit independent contractors.
- 2) Ensuring all SLAB staff complete Equalities training.



- 3) By ensuring accreditation is an option for any agency delivering the types of advice covered by the SNSIAP. We seek feedback from agencies who have completed peer review via an on-line survey and agencies are sent a post audit feedback questionnaire.

Gender reassignment

Is there any potential impact on this group? No

Please explain your answer:

- 1) We use our Equalities Monitoring forms to ensure our selection process is fair, when we recruit independent contractors.
- 2) By ensuring all SLAB staff complete Equalities training.
- 3) By ensuring accreditation is an option for any agency delivering the types of advice covered by the SNSIAP. We also seek feedback from agencies who have completed peer review via an on-line survey and agencies are sent a post audit feedback questionnaire.

Disability

Is there any potential impact on this group? Yes

Please explain your answer:

- 1) Part of the process is completed remotely and there is the potential for access issues in relation the use of technology and our website. We use our Equalities Monitoring forms to ensure our selection process is fair, when we recruit independent contractors.
- 2) We work with the Communications Department and IS department to ensure our processes are accessible and user friendly and our written communications are accessible. By ensuring all SLAB staff complete Equalities training.
- 3) We seek feedback from agencies who have completed peer review via an on-line survey and agencies are sent a post audit feedback questionnaire. We always ask if any reasonable adjustments are required when we recruit and hold events.

Pregnancy and maternity

Is there any potential impact on this group? No

Please explain your answer:



- 1) We use our Equalities Monitoring forms to ensure our selection process is fair, when we recruit independent contractors.
- 2) Ensuring all SLAB staff complete Equalities training.
- 3) As above, by ensuring accreditation is an option for any agency delivering the types of advice covered by the SNSIAP.

Religion and belief

Is there any potential impact on this group? No

Please explain your answer:

- 1) We use our Equalities Monitoring forms to ensure our selection process is fair, when we recruit independent contractors.
- 2) Yes, by ensuring we understand the Types of advice being delivered by projects working with particular communities. Also by ensuring all SLAB staff complete Equalities training.
- 3) As above, by ensuring accreditation is an option for any agency delivering the types of advice covered by the SNSIAP. We also seek feedback from agencies who have completed peer review via an on-line survey and agencies are sent a post audit feedback questionnaire.

Age

Is there any potential impact on this group? No

Please explain your answer:

- 1) We use our Equalities Monitoring forms to ensure our selection process is fair, when we recruit independent contractors.
- 2) Ensuring all SLAB staff complete Equalities training.
- 3) As above, by ensuring accreditation is an option for any agency delivering the types of advice covered by the SNSIAP. We also seek feedback from agencies who have completed peer review via an on-line survey and agencies are sent a post audit feedback questionnaire.

Marriage and civil partnership

Is there any potential impact on this group? No

Please explain your answer:

- 1) We use our Equalities Monitoring forms to ensure our selection process is fair, when we recruit independent contractors



- 2) Ensuring all SLAB staff complete Equalities training.
- 3) As above, by ensuring accreditation is an option for any agency delivering the types of advice covered by the SNSIAP. We also seek feedback from agencies who have completed peer review via an on-line survey and agencies are sent a post audit feedback questionnaire.

Sexual orientation

Is there any potential impact on this group? No

Please explain your answer:

- 1) We use our Equalities Monitoring forms to ensure our selection process is fair, when we recruit independent contractors.
- 2) Ensuring all SLAB staff complete Equalities training.
- 3) As above, by ensuring accreditation is an option for any agency delivering the types of advice covered by the SNSIAP. We also seek feedback from agencies who have completed peer review via an on-line survey and agencies are sent a post audit feedback questionnaire

Where there is potential for indirect/ direct discrimination, what can you do to reduce or eliminate this risk?

Monitor the feedback from agencies who have completed peer review and audit.

Do you need to make changes to your policy or function on the basis of this assessment?

No

What is the likely impact of these changes on the plans for the policy/ function? (resources, cost, timings etc.)

n/a



Step 3 - Consultation and stakeholder engagement

Do you/did you have any consultation/ involvement planned for the policy/ function?

Yes

A reference group of key stakeholders from the advice sector were involved throughout the development of the new accreditation process. We now ask all agencies to complete an on-line feedback form. We ask questions related to the accessibility of the process, the forms, our guidance, the peer review reports and Moderation Committee decision letter. This feedback is currently being compiled by the research team

What do you hope to achieve from your consultation/ involvement?

We will continue to review and continuously improve the process in response to feedback received, including any equalities related issues highlighted by agencies.

We will use this feedback to continuously improve the process, including addressing any equalities issues. List the main stakeholder agencies that you intend to or have already discussed this policy with. Give details of any equality groups represented.

The reference group included representatives from Shelter, Scottish Association of Law Centres, Rights Advice Scotland, Child Poverty Action Group, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Citizens Advice Scotland, Money Advice Scotland, AdviceUK and the Money Advice Service.



Step 4 - Discuss and review the assessment with decision makers and governance structures

You **must** discuss the results with senior decision makers before you finalise the assessment.

Give details of the governance structures you will report, or have already reported, to about this assessment. For example, but not limited to, the Project Board, Executive Team or Board members.

Project Board
Executive Team

If you have presented the results of the assessment to the groups you have listed above please include the date you presented to each group listed.

Executive Team - 25 October 2018

Will there be any changes made to the plans for the policy/ function or actions as a result of this assessment?

Yes

If yes, give details of likely changes and actions arising from this assessment.

See actions noted above:

We continue to monitor the content of our SNSIAP webpage for accessibility, including font size and the use of plain English.

We have adapted the Equal Opportunities form to ensure we are following good practice in relation to equalities monitoring. The adapted form is currently being used in the next round of recruitment for additional peer reviewers.

We continue to seek information on any reasonable adjustments required by individuals or improvements we could make for any equality group, whether they are applying to be peer reviewers or attending an event we are holding.



Step 5 - Publication and review of EQIA

All assessments must be published as early as possible after the decision is made to implement a new policy or function.

Date of publication:

26/10/2018

Review date:

30/04/2022