

# Equality Outcomes 2022-26

May, 2022

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## Our equality outcomes

Equality outcomes are commitments to work to address long-standing or significant issues of inequality or underrepresentation, requiring us to take action and go beyond basic compliance in mainstreaming equality.

We have produced the following outcomes for the 4-year period from 2022 to 2026:

**Equality outcome 1** - We have increased the number of people from currently underrepresented groups in our applicants, our staff and those who progress within the organisation.

**Equality outcome 2** - People with lived experience of inequality, related to a protected characteristic or socioeconomic status, access and use SEPA's services without barriers.

**Equality outcome 3** - Staff with lived experience of inequality and barriers, and with a wide variety of needs, feel listened to and respected as SEPA meets those needs.

**Equality outcome 4** – We have decreased our gender pay gap and occupational segregation related to gender, disability and ethnicity.

## Equality outcome 1

**We have increased the number of people from currently underrepresented groups in our applicants, our staff and those who progress within the organisation.**

This outcome is focused on:

- Black, Asian and minority ethnic people
- disabled people
- young people
- women
- people from lower income backgrounds.

<p><b>Sub-outcomes</b></p>	<p>Specific steps that we need to have fulfilled to achieve equality outcome</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We have a better understanding of the communities which are underrepresented in SEPA.</li> <li>2. We have a better understanding of the staff journey, including barriers, of different communities in SEPA.</li> <li>3. We have more people from underrepresented communities applying for our internal and external vacancies.</li> <li>4. We have evaluated and improved our job design, job evaluation and recruitment systems to remove barriers and bias</li> <li>5. We have collected, analysed and used data related to protected characteristics in planning work and decision-making.</li> <li>6. We have worked with partners to create new routes into employment with SEPA, such as Jobcentre Plus, Skills Development Scotland, Inclusion Scotland and others.</li> </ol>
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<b>Evidence and justification</b>	<p>This outcome will help us to address underrepresentation of applicants, employees and promoted employees.</p> <p>We know from our own staff data that we have an underrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic, disabled and young people in our workforce compared to the wider Scottish population. We also recognise the need for an intersectional lens on these matters.</p> <p>We know from our own staff data that women and Black, Asian and minority ethnic and disabled individuals have been underrepresented at senior grades in our organisation.</p> <p>Through internal consultation as part of our Staff Ideas Group, we are aware that the main areas for concern related to these areas are felt to be around recruitment and selection, direct and indirect discrimination and communication.</p> <p>We have also engaged with our recognised trade union, Unison, as well as with expert equality organisation Close the Gap to inform this outcome and the related sub-outcomes and actions.</p> <p>It was also clear from our internal consultation that some of these concerns are also apparent for other groups such as neurodiverse individuals and people with lived experience of poverty or lower income backgrounds. It is important for us to investigate the barriers for these groups by better collecting and analysing information related to them, to make informed decisions on solutions.</p>
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## Equality outcome 2

**People with lived experience of inequality, related to a protected characteristic or socioeconomic status, access and use SEPA's services without barriers.**

This outcome is focused on:

- Black, Asian and minority ethnic people
- disabled people
- neurodiverse people
- people from lower income backgrounds.

<b>Sub-outcomes</b>	<p>Specific steps that we need to have fulfilled to achieve equality outcome 2.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We have developed partnerships with expert organisations who represent the communities who we need to reach.</li> <li>2. We are collecting the right information about our service users</li> <li>3. We have adapted our communications approach to an inclusive communication approach to reflect the needs of the wider Scottish population.</li> <li>4. We have developed specific projects to build positive relationships with communities who we have a negative or no existing relationship with.</li> <li>5. We have considered the needs of all communities as we design our products, projects and communications.</li> <li>6. We handle complaints in a consistent manner, treating all individuals and communities with respect and dignity.</li> </ol>
<b>Evidence and justification</b>	<p>This outcome will help us to identify and address the barriers to accessing our services (flooding and regulation) faced by different communities.</p> <p>Across our flooding and regulation services, there are regular queries from staff about the best ways to engage with some communities. Often this is related to Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, disabled individuals and neurodiverse individuals.</p>

Through internal engagement with our Staff Ideas Group (SIG) we are aware that there are concerns about a range of communities' awareness of who SEPA is and what we do. There are also concerns about how we communicate and who we communicate with.

Equality impact assessments of SEPA services (particularly digital services) regularly identify concerns around how to reach disabled people, older people, Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and people in areas of multiple deprivation. These are considered in how we communicate but also need to be built into the services more effectively.

External user and accessibility testing of SEPA's flood services in December 2019 demonstrated that accessibility had not been adequately considered in the design of our services. This has been improved in subsequent flooding products but issues could remain in other SEPA services.

## Equality outcome 3

**Staff with lived experience of inequality and barriers, and with a wide variety of needs, feel listened to and respected as SEPA meets those needs.**

This outcome is focused on:

- Black, Asian and minority ethnic employees
- disabled employees
- female employees
- young employees.

<p><b>Sub-outcomes</b></p>	<p>Specific steps that we need to have fulfilled to achieve equality outcome.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We effectively listen to the different needs of those who have faced barriers or inequality in SEPA.</li> <li>2. We have created an environment where our staff are confident to share issues and barriers.</li> <li>3. We will have built people's different needs into the first steps of work, project or product design.</li> <li>4. Our managers manage work and individuals inclusively.</li> <li>5. We have the right policies and procedures in place.</li> <li>6. We collect, analyse and use equality data effectively.</li> <li>7. We will have workspaces and equipment that meets the needs of all of our staff.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Evidence/justification</b></p>	<p>This outcome will help us to make better decisions that meet the needs of our staff who have lived experience of inequality and barriers. It will make their experience and opinions much more central to our decision making by providing a framework for those opinions and experiences to inform decision making.</p>



	<p>Through internal consultation as part of our Staff Ideas Group (SIG) on equality, we are aware that many staff are keen to share their experiences to help improve policies, procedures and services.</p> <p>Staff members have been particularly keen to share experiences based upon disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.</p> <p>SEPA currently has one active lived experience group, focused on addressing barriers around digital accessibility, but AMT agreed that this work should be broadened in future to address a wider range of issues. To achieve this, we can learn from our previous group for EU staff and from our informal, self-organised group for staff with long Covid.</p> <p>We understand and address the barriers facing our staff in relation to protected characteristics and other groups.</p>
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## Equality outcome 4

**We have decreased our gender pay gap and occupational segregation related to gender, disability and ethnicity.**

This outcome is focused on:

- Female employees
- Disabled employees
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic employees

<p><b>Sub outcomes</b></p>	<p>Specific steps/sub outcomes that we need to have fulfilled to achieve equality outcome.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We have developed partnerships with expert organisations on race, gender, disability and other forms of equality to develop our policy and practice.</li> <li>2. We understand the barriers to progression for women, disabled people and Black, Asian and minority ethnic people.</li> <li>3. We have removed bias and barriers from our job design, job evaluation and selection systems.</li> <li>4. We have the right policies, procedures and guidance in place.</li> <li>5. We have flexible working and development opportunities offered at all levels of the organisation.</li> <li>6. We have improved progression opportunities from areas of the organisation with limited opportunities, particularly lower grades and those with an overrepresentation of women.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Evidence and justification</b></p>	<p>This outcome will help us to remove our gender pay gap. It will also address occupational segregation in the organisation, where some groups are underrepresented in parts of the organisation or at certain grades in the organisation.</p>

	<p>SEPA continues to demonstrate a gender pay gap. While our pay gap is lower than an overall Scottish average, and has reduced over time, it is still a concern.</p> <p>There is a wider public sector and societal need to address this issue. Gender equality is a sustainable development goal, a central Scottish Government priority and brings significant benefits to the organisation.</p> <p>Post Covid/Cyber-attack and with future of work programme, there are opportunities to address this.</p> <p>The primary focus of this is to remove pay disparities for women, including by tackling areas where women are being held back which lead to these pay disparities. However, the work on occupational segregation will also provide positive impacts on Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff, disabled staff and young staff.</p> <p>There is also demonstrable occupational segregation across gender, race and disability. We can see from our staff data that women are underrepresented at our higher grades and overrepresented at lower grades. This is also true for disabled and Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff.</p>
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