

Integrated Equality Impact Assessment (IEIA)

Equality Impact Assessment, Island Community Impact Assessment and Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment

Prior to starting the Integrated Equality Impact Assessment (IEIA) we highly recommend that you complete (or review) the Integrated Equality Impact Assessment learning on the Academy. This provides a general overview of the IEIA process, as well as important information regarding our responsibilities regarding the completion and publication of IEIAs.

Other sources of guidance, general evidence, support and learning are available on the [Equality Evidence Hub](#) on Connect, which includes the Equality Evidence Review created by Evaluation and Research. This also includes a Frequently Asked Questions, which addresses initial questions about the IEIA. If something is underlined, but not a link, you can hover over the wording for a definition or additional information.

Please note, that while the IEIA form is long, it does include three previously separate impact assessments and significantly more guidance. You may not need to complete every impact assessment within the IEIA. If you have any questions, please email ieia@sds.co.uk.

More detailed external guidance for each of the individual impact assessments can be found below:

[Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance for Equality Impact Assessments in Scotland](#)

[Scottish Government Guidance for Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments](#)

[Scottish Government Guidance for Island Community Impact Assessments](#)

1.0 Project Overview

This document uses the term ‘project’ to describe the full range of our policies, provisions, projects, functions, practices and activities including the delivery of services – essentially everything we do that affects people.

Title of Impact Assessment

CIAG Transitional Changes – School Offer Recommendations

Name of Senior Responsible Officer

Dave McCallum

Does this project relate to any other published [EQIAs](#) or [ICIAs](#)?

Additional guidance

YES –
[Career Review](#)

Key Career Review Recommendations that have driven the Transitional Changes project include:
Recommendation 2: Developing skills and habits essential for the future world of work: career education and services should be designed to develop, recognise and accredit the skills and habits essential for the future world of work.
Recommendation 3: Creating person centred career services: individuals should be involved in identifying what they need from career services based on their own circumstances and context, which leads to a flexible and personalised service offer.
Recommendation 5: Community based services: career services should be delivered within communities in a way that is aligned to social justice values and provides access to consistent national services.
Recommendation 8: Clear roles for the delivery of career services: where appropriate, the roles across career services should be defined, to deliver the career development model in a coherent way.

[CIAG Bridgeheads Phase 1](#)
[Migration to local employability hubs](#)

Please provide an overview of your project including the names of any external partners and whether it is a new project. Consider the key objectives of the project.

Additional guidance

Background

Skills Development Scotland supports individuals through our all-age careers services, from school and through adulthood, with resources deployed where they are needed most. We continually look to develop and improve our staff, our reach, our resources, our service offer, our performance and our outcomes to ensure we meet our vision for Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) in Scotland as set out below:

- Participation – Scotland achieves improved and sustained participation rates, relative to other EU countries
- Career Management Skills – Individuals have the skills and confidence required to navigate through their careers successfully
- Informed individuals – Individuals are aware of the career opportunities that exist within the economy, and how to access them
- Tackling Barriers – Perceived and real barriers to participation for under-represented groups are addressed at a personal and societal level
- Delivering Excellence – We keep our approach to all aspects of service delivery under review, so that we may continuously develop and improve, for the joint benefit of customers, partners and colleagues

Our vision for CIAG is underpinned by 3 key delivery principles:

Equality of Opportunity

- To increase equality of opportunity for all, we target our resources at those customers who require the most support to transition into education, training or employment

Career Management Skills (CMS)

- SDS takes a coaching approach to career guidance
- We work within the [Career Management Skills Framework for Scotland](#) which sets out 17 competencies that enable individuals to successfully manage their career

Partnership Working

- Partnership working is key to achieving our ambitions as an organisation.
- We negotiate annual partnership agreements with maintained and non-maintained secondary schools (where appropriate) to agree and define our delivery in each school. Maintained schools are state-funded and run by local authorities. Non-maintained schools are independently run, often by charities or private providers, and typically support pupils with additional needs or alternative provision.

Current School Service offer:

We currently deliver a school service offer in all maintained secondary schools in Scotland and in all non-maintained secondary schools where appropriate. This service offer is underpinned by our 3 key delivery principles and support us to deliver our vision and service to secondary aged pupils.

All Secondary Pupils:

- Have access to our CIAG Web service <https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/> and support to use its tools and resources
- Drop-in sessions with the Careers Adviser

Broad General Education (BGE) Pupils (S1-S3):

- Group engagement for all pupils making P7-S1 transition
- Individual support and group sessions for all S2/S3 pupils making subject choices and their parents/carers
- Group work activity for all S2/S3 pupils not making subject choices, to ensure pupils are informed of their wider options and preparing them for their next step
- Increased support for those S3 pupils identified as having the greatest need of support. Pupils are identified through partnership discussions with the school.

Senior Phase Pupils (S4-S6)

- A range of group work options which help build CMS, including considering a range of post school options
- Targeted one to one coaching support for senior phase pupils identified as needing more intensive support to transition into education, training, or employment after school. Pupils are identified through a system generated level of support need. The system defines the level of need for pupils, those who are identified as having personal factors such as being care experienced or having an additional support need etc. will be entitled to more SDS support. This targeted group will then receive 3-5 engagements with an adviser throughout each year of senior phase. Validation conversations with the school should take place throughout the year to ensure the system generated level of need is still appropriate for pupils.
- 1:1 interview for non-targeted pupils available on request
- School leaver transition support to ensure continuity of CIAG services for those pupils leaving school without an opportunity into a positive destination (education, training or employment)

Supporting Parents

- SDS adviser attendance at Parents' Evenings and other events
- Dedicated area on CIAG Web service <https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/> for parent/carers

Supporting Teachers and Schools

- Support and CPD for teachers and other practitioners to play their complementary roles in delivering young peoples' entitlement to a meaningful career education

Review and proposed changes to the School Service Offer

In 2022 partners across Scotland came together to deliver the most comprehensive review of [Scotland's Careers Service](#) in a generation. Customer engagement during the Career Review revealed that some individuals desire more access to careers advisers in school, while others feel stigmatised by the current targeted service offer and do not always feel represented, prompting them to seek support elsewhere. These findings were reinforced by our consultation into the Corporate Parenting Plan.

Following the career review, SDS did further analysis of current leaver trends and school attendance trends as well as findings from our Pupil Voice research. This suggested that we improve flexibility in our service offer to ensure that the service meets individual need. This includes earlier engagement before key decision points in school start.

Based on this evidence, 5 key changes to the school service offer were proposed to improve our delivery to young people of school age whilst still ensuring that our delivery is underpinned by our key delivery principles:

1. By the end of S3 all pupils will be offered a 1:1 engagement. This can occur at any point from S1 through self-referral or partner referral.
2. During the option choice period (S2 or S3 dependent on school), the opportunity to opt into a 1:1 engagement will be highlighted to pupils and parents. For many, this 1:1 at option choice time will meet their entitlement of 1:1 support noted in the point above. However, our service will be customer led and therefore, those who have already received their 1:1 engagement at an earlier time, can receive further support where it is agreed between the customer and the adviser that this would be beneficial for the customer.

- 3. All senior pupils will be offered a 1:1 engagement during their anticipated year of leaving.
- 4. The level of support need will no longer be determined by a system and it will be customer led, alongside partners and careers advisers. Personal factors identified e.g. care experience will still show on the customer record system and will be used to inform discussions between pupils, partners and careers guidance practitioners to agree the appropriate level of support for customers.
- 5. There will be flexibility in the delivery of group interactions in collaboration with school and local partners. Group interactions may include interactive classroom group sessions and targeted bespoke workshop type activities tailored to the needs of the individual school. Presentations may be delivered at school assemblies where appropriate. All group interactions/presentations should also promote pupils’ entitlement to a 1:1 career guidance engagement and may also promote use of My World of Work.

Benefits of the proposed changes to the School Service Offer

The proposed changes to the school service offer have numerous benefits that enhance the support provided to pupils and ensure a more flexible, inclusive, and effective approach to career guidance in Scotland.

Personalised Engagement

By ensuring that all pupils receive a 1:1 engagement by the end of S3, the proposed changes promote personalised support tailored to individual needs. This allows for early identification of potential barriers and timely intervention, fostering better educational outcomes and smoother transitions. It also empowers pupils to take control of their engagement.

Increased Flexibility

Allowing pupils to opt into their entitlement of 1:1 engagements throughout their time at school empowers pupils to seek guidance when it is most relevant to their decision-making process. Pupils will be reminded of this entitlement to ensure support is available to them at key decision points for them such as option choice time and the year they are looking to leave school. This flexibility ensures that career guidance is more responsive to the unique needs of each student.

Comprehensive Support

The removal of the level of support being determined by a system and decisions around level of support being more collaborative than in the previous offer with pupils, partners and career guidance practitioners working together to agree the level of support needed for an individual, ensures that support is comprehensive and tailored to evolving needs. This approach eliminates the perceived stigma associated with targeted services and ensures that all pupils feel represented and supported.

Continuous Engagement

By providing all senior phase pupils with a 1:1 engagement, the changes ensure continuous support throughout the critical transition from school to post-school opportunities. This helps to reduce the risk of pupils leaving school without a clear path and increases the likelihood of successful transitions into education, training or employment.

Improved Understanding of Entitlements

Enhancing the flexibility of delivery around the group offer while ensuring pupils understand their entitlement each academic year promotes a clearer understanding of the available support and encourages pupils to take full advantage of the services provided.

Early Intervention

The emphasis on earlier engagement before key decision points in school allows for proactive support, addressing potential issues before they become significant barriers. This early intervention approach helps to improve overall engagement and participation rates for young people in education, training or employment.

More Inclusive Service Offer

By offering every pupil a 1:1 engagement by the end of S3, the service ensures that all young people are seen, heard, and supported. This removes the exclusivity of targeted support and makes personalised guidance a standard entitlement. Support is no longer determined by a system and is collaboratively agreed with pupils and partners, reducing stigma and better reflecting individual needs. Group sessions are tailored to each school, and entitlements are clearly promoted, ensuring all pupils feel supported at key decision points.

2.0 Gathering Evidence and Assessing Impact

It is important to remember our responsibilities regarding the Public Sector Equality Duty when completing this section. The starting point for assessing impact is the three needs of the Public Sector Equality Duty: ensuring that the project does not discriminate unlawfully; considering how the project might better advance equality of opportunity; and considering whether the project will affect good relations between different groups.

In Gathering Evidence and Assessing Impact you need to go through each of the characteristics in turn and address the following points.

- **Provide Context** – outlining how your project relates to this protected characteristic, such as population statistics. The [Equality Evidence Hub](#) is a good place to start looking for relevant evidence. The Equality Evidence Hub is a space on Connect to access relevant guidance for the IEIA and a range of equality evidence, both internal and external.
- **Additional Questions**- Some sections have additional questions, please ensure that you answer these appropriately. They are in reference to our reporting responsibilities for Children’s Rights and Wellbeing and Island Communities.
- **Impact**– Outline the potential disadvantage or barriers, as well as positive impacts, faced by this equality group in relation to this project. Cite evidence sources used, including consultation. Where a gap in evidence is observed, please note within this section.
- **Action**– Outline what we have already done to address disadvantage or promote equality, as well as what we’ll do to proactively promote equality and address any potential barriers raised in Evidence, including evidence gaps.

Please note that consultation is a requirement of Island Communities Impact Assessment and considered good practice in relation to Equality and Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments.

2.1 Age

Guidance for 2.1

Context:

Unless otherwise referenced, evidence within this section comes from the SDS [Equality Evidence Review 2025](#).

The recommended changes to the school offer impact on young people from S1 until they leave school and aim to offer a streamlined service supporting key transitions: starting secondary school, option choices, navigating senior phases, and post-school transitions.

Equality Evidence Review

- Young people starting out in employment and older workers tend to face the most labour market disadvantages and are more likely to experience age-based discrimination at work and in recruitment.
- Young people continue to be over-represented in precarious work.

Scottish Government Analysis

The [Infographic Evidence on School Leavers September 2024](#) document provides a comprehensive overview of the destinations and characteristics of school leavers. Here are the key points:

- 1. Positive Destinations:** In 2022-23, 92.7% of S4 leavers were in a positive follow-up destination. This compares to 93.7% of S5 leavers and 97.7% of S6 leavers
- 2. Initial vs. Follow-Up Destinations:** Overall, 95.1% of 2022-23 school leavers who were in a positive initial destination were also in a positive follow-up destination. However, S4 leavers were more likely to move from a positive destination to an 'other' destination between initial and follow-up than S5 or S6 leavers
- 3. Characteristics of S4 Leavers:** The analysis includes detailed information on the characteristics of S4 leavers, such as deprivation, sex, and additional support needs.
- 4. Trends and Patterns:** The long-term trend has been a reduction in the proportion of leavers leaving from S4, but in the last two years, this proportion has increased. For 2022-23 leavers, 14.4% left from S4.
- 5. Destinations Breakdown:** The majority of S4 leavers were in further education (over 50%) as an initial destination.

Consultation feedback from equality partners in October 2024 and May 2025, as well as Careers Adviser feedback from April 2024 can be found below in the Consultation Recording section (2.16).

Impact (Does this project have a negative, positive or no impact? Please include the evidence of why that is, citing appropriate sources)	Action (What activity have you done already and what was the impact? What do you need to do to address the evidence?)
This project has a positive impact for young people, who evidence shows are at the most disadvantage in the labour market. This is achieved through enabling all pupils, from S1-S3 an entitlement to a 1:1 engagement with a careers advisor.	By the end of S3 all pupils will have received a 1:1 engagement. This can occur at any point through self-referral or partner referral. The emphasis on earlier engagement before key career decision points in school for young people begin allows for proactive support, addressing potential issues before they become significant barriers. This early intervention approach helps to improve overall engagement and participation rates for young people in education, training or employment.
While transitioning from the current service model to the new early intervention-focused model, there may be a short period of time where advisers could spend more time with S1-3's and the current senior phase cohort receive less support. Whilst this is a challenge in the first year it will set the stage for sustainable improvements and enhanced support in earlier years moving forward.	Career Advisers will have the autonomy in collaboration with the school and partners. Advisers should continue to manage their workloads and plan as appropriate. Regular reflection and communication will be encouraged between team leaders and partners during the first year of implementing this approach to ensure that pupils with the greatest need are supported appropriately. This has been stated in all school service offer guidance and comms for staff. SDS will also monitor engagement levels for different year groups to make sure that the levels of engagement meet agreed performance measures.

2.2 Children's Rights and Wellbeing

See guidance for 2.2

Context:

Consultation feedback from equality partners in October 2024 and May 2025, as well as Careers Adviser feedback from April 2024 can be found below in the Consultation Recording section (2.16).

The delivery of Careers Information, Advice and Guidance in school is an important aspect of children’s education and this project has considered the children’s rights throughout the process of developing these changes.

Additional Questions:

Does this project impact on children and young people up to the age of 18?

☒ Yes☐ No☐ Don’t Know

If you have answered no to the question above, you do not need to complete the Children’s Rights and Wellbeing section of this form but please provide some justification for your decision below.

Which articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) does this project impact on? See [further guidance](#) for this question

Whilst this project is related to many articles within the UNCRC, there are three that this project fulfils to a higher degree.

Article 12: Respect for children’s views. At the heart of this project is the requirement to deliver a careers service that is led by the child. This requirement is based on evidence and previous commitments within the Career Review (Recommendation 3). Children will have entitlements and regular access to information from a range of sources. They will have the freedom and ability to access more targeted support at a time that suits them. SDS will continue to gather feedback via surveys and customer engagements and utilise this information as part of regular service delivery and development.

Article 23: Children with disabilities. A key driver for these changes was a review of evidence around the needs of disabled children regarding their transitions from school to post school destinations. The evidence, and consultation, showed the need to provide earlier access to 1:1 engagements. The project recognised that this offer would benefit other protected characteristic groups as well, and the changes were widened to other groups.

Article 29: The aims of education. Careers advice is a key part of developing a child’s personality, talent and abilities. Providing children with early, appropriate and responsive careers advice will help them to develop the skills they need for their adult life, as well as supporting them to improve their wider educational outcomes.

Impact (Does this project have a negative, positive or no impact? Please include the evidence of why that is, citing appropriate sources)	Action (What activity have you done already and what was the impact? What do you need to do to address the evidence?)
Positive fulfilment on Articles 12, 23 and 29 by enabling all S1-S3 pupils the entitlement to a 1:1 engagement. This is driven by the needs of the child and supports the development of their personality, talent and abilities.	By the end of S3 all pupils will have received a 1:1 engagement. This can occur at any point through self-referral or partner referral. The emphasis on earlier engagement before key career decision points in school for young people begin allows for proactive support, addressing potential issues before they become significant barriers. This early intervention approach helps to improve overall engagement and participation rates for young people in education, training or employment.

2.3 Care Experience

See guidance for 2.3

Context:
Unless otherwise referenced, evidence within this section comes from the SDS [Equality Evidence Review 2025](#).

Equality Evidence Review

Significant structural barriers mean that Care Experienced children have differential levels of attainment and outcomes from school. Care Experienced children tend to obtain fewer qualifications at school, partly due to earlier school leaving age and higher incidences of disrupted learning.

For example, at SCQF level 6 in 2022/23, 16% of those looked after obtained one qualification or more or better, compared to 58% of all school leavers. Evidence also shows that educational attainment varies across the types of accommodation in which Care Experienced children are living. Care Experienced school leavers looked after within the year who are placed in community settings showed broadly higher educational attainment when compared to those in residential settings. However, there is variation within these categories, and leavers looked after at home with parents had the lowest attainment levels of all placement types.

Care Experienced school leavers are less likely to go into positive destinations than school leavers in general – 86% compared with 96% of all pupils. The lower proportion of Care Experienced children going into higher education may be due to them leaving school at a younger age and having lower attainment levels whilst at school. It should be noted that the proportion of looked after leavers who leave school in S4 or earlier has declined substantially from 63% in 2009/10 to 34% in 2022/23.

[Pupil Voice Research](#): Care Experienced pupils’ views on careers services

SDS research on the views of pupils in Scotland (S4 to S6) highlighted that:

- Care Experienced young people were more likely to be satisfied with the careers services they received than those who are not Care Experienced.
- Careers advisers play an important role for care experienced young people with 76% identifying them as the most influential, compared to 59% of respondents overall.
- The most influential factors when deciding on careers for care experienced young people is the need to earn money (86%) and interests and hobbies (82%) this compares to 79% and 86% respectively for all respondents.

[Young People’s Career Ambitions \(YPCA\)](#): Care Experience

Care Experienced school leavers SDS research with school leavers carried out in 2022/23 highlights that:

- Care Experienced young people were highly likely to report that they were encouraged to explore a wide range of career options by careers advisers.
- Care Experienced young people were more likely to report that not having enough confidence in themselves and being discriminated against are barriers to their future careers.
- The top preferred sectors to enter for Care Experienced young people were health, social care and social work (21%); and art, culture, entertainment and sport (20%).

Once Care Experienced young adults leave education, there is a lack of evidence on their longer-term employment outcomes. Routine data collected about the Scottish or UK population does not traditionally record whether adults are Care Experienced.

Consultation feedback from equality partners in October 2024 and May 2025, as well as Careers Adviser feedback from April 2024 can be found below in the Consultation Recording section (2.16).

Impact (Does this project have a negative, positive or no impact? Please include the evidence of why that is, citing appropriate sources)	Action (What activity have you done already and what was the impact? What do you need to do to address the evidence?)
Positive impact. By the end of S3 all pupils will have received a 1:1 engagement. This can occur at any point through self-referral or partner referral. The emphasis on earlier engagement before key career decision points in school for young people begin allows for proactive support, addressing potential issues before they	SDS will monitor engagement levels for those who are care experienced to make sure that the levels of engagement meet service expectations.

become significant barriers. This early intervention approach helps to improve overall engagement and participation rates for young people in education, training or employment.	
Equality monitoring questions are currently asked at the end of customer feedback surveys, including gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, additional support needs and whether they are care experienced. The equality data is not currently disaggregated in customer feedback management information which means it is not available to teams to utilise in planning or performance monitoring. We will develop equality specific reporting within our management information as part of this project. This is a positive change that enables SDS to be more responsive to customer needs, considering their protected characteristics.	This equality data will be built into customer feedback reporting so teams can view and analyse customer feedback results specifically for care experienced customers. Teams should use equality data to identify gaps or disparities in service satisfaction and this insight should feed into service delivery improvements.
The removal of the level of support being determined by a system and decisions around level of support being more collaborative than in the previous offer with pupils, partners and career guidance practitioners working together to agree the level of support needed for an individual, ensures that support is comprehensive and tailored to evolving needs. This approach has a positive impact and eliminates the perceived stigma associated with targeted services that was highlighted through consultation, ensuring that all pupils feel represented and supported. Care experienced young people would have previously been part of the targeted model and would have been taken out of class for 1:1 engagements. The new system will allow for discussions to take place between the care experienced young person, advisers, schools, local authority partners and parents/carers (where appropriate) to together agree the most appropriate level of support for the customer.	We will now have customer feedback available and be able to view these results specifically for care experienced customers to monitor satisfaction levels for this group. We will regularly engage with care experienced customers throughout their time at school and continually check in to ensure their level of support is appropriate and offer further support where required. Any feedback can be feedback to Team Leaders and Area Managers, where they can notify the Operations Leadership Team who can review this feedback and make changes to the service where appropriate. This will be stated in all school service offer guidance and comms for staff. There is a national careers Community of Practice focused on our role as a corporate parent, which could be utilised to discuss any emerging evidence and promote best practice.
The removal of the level of support being determined by a system and decisions around level of support being more collaborative than in the previous offer with pupils, partners and career guidance practitioners working together to agree the level of support needed for an individual ensures that support is comprehensive and tailored to evolving needs. With this change comes the risk that a care experienced young person who might benefit from SDS support could decline it for a number of reasons, potentially affecting their progression towards a positive destination.	Personal factors identified e.g. customers who are care experienced will still show on the customer record system and will be used to inform discussions between care experienced customers, school, other partners and careers guidance practitioners to agree the appropriate level of support for customers. This group will no longer automatically be set a service level but they will still be flagged on the system and seen as a priority group for engaging with throughout their time at school. This will be stated in all school service offer guidance and comms for staff. As noted above, SDS will monitor engagement levels for those customers who are care experienced to make sure that the levels of engagement meet service expectations.

2.4 Disability

See guidance for 2.4

Context: Unless otherwise referenced, evidence within this section comes from the SDS Equality Evidence Review 2025. Disability across the Scottish population: Scotland's Census • The most common health condition reported in the census was a 'long term illness, disease or condition', by 21% of the Scottish population. This includes conditions such as arthritis, cancer, diabetes and epilepsy. • The second most common reported condition was a mental health condition with an increase from 4.4% in 2011 to 11% in 2022. This was the largest increase across all condition types. • The increase in the number of people reporting a mental health condition was driven by increases among young people. In 2022 15% of 16- to 24-year-olds reported a mental health condition compared to 2.5% in 2011. Equality Evidence Review According to the 2023 Pupil Census, 37% of pupils across special and mainstream schools have a recorded additional support need (ASN). Of those with ASN, 57% are male and 43% female. Almost half of pupils with recorded ASN, live in areas of Scotland classified as some of the most deprived. The number of pupils identified with ASN increases every year, likely due to continued improvements in recording and the range of definitions of ASN broadening out. The most reported ASN is 'social, emotional and behavioural difficulty' and the most reported disability is dyslexia. Pupils who are assessed or declared as having a disability account for 3% of all pupils at school. Of those assessed or declared as disabled 34% are female and 66% are male. The Participation Measure in 2024 for 16 to 19 year olds identifying as disabled, was 89.1% compared to 92.9% of those identifying as not disabled. Young people identifying as disabled were more likely to be in further education or training and less likely to be in employment or higher education than their non-disabled peers. Figures for 2024 show employment participation levels for disabled young people are at their highest since the measure was introduced in 2016, although still lower compared to those young people not identified as disabled. Attainment is lower for pupils who are declared or assessed disabled, and they are less likely to achieve SCQF levels 4 to 6 than pupils who are not. For example, 35% of declared or assessed disabled pupils obtained one or more qualification at level 6 compared to 59% of non-disabled pupils. Initial destination figures show that disabled school leavers from mainstream schools in 2022/23 are more likely to enter further education compared with leavers without a disability. Initial destinations also vary by type of disability. The highest rates of positive destinations are for those who are dyslexic (93%) and poorest for those with a mental health problem (86%). Young people who are autistic or have a mental health problem are most likely to be unemployed. The mental health of young people across the UK has received greater research interest in the last few years. As highlighted above from the 2022 census, 16% of those aged 16-24 report a mental health condition. A survey of over 3,000 school staff in Scotland reported that most do not feel well-equipped with mental health training to adequately support secondary school pupils. Staff felt they wanted more knowledge and understanding around mental health issues impacting upon school pupils as well as being taught strategies to support pupils. Pupil Voice Research: Additional Support Needs pupils' views on careers services Results for young people with and without ASN are broadly similar. However, young people with ASN are slightly less likely to be satisfied with the ability to access support when needed. Young People's Career Ambitions (YPCA): Disabled young people SDS research with over 1,400 school leavers (with 225 responses from young disabled people) in Scotland on career choices, influences and motivations found that disabled young people: • are highly influenced by their interests and hobbies for future career ambitions and were most likely to want to enter the arts, culture, entertainment and sports sector • perceive barriers to future career development including not having enough self-confidence, a lack of work experience and not knowing the right people • are twice as likely as non-disabled young people to say that discrimination would also be a potential barrier to their career development • report parents/carers as the biggest influence on their career decisions, followed by friends and careers advisers Equality Evidence Review Disabled people face multiple disadvantages in the UK labour market, including lower levels of employment, lower wages, fewer hours, precarious contracts and negative attitudes in the workplace. The employment rate for disabled people in Scotland is 53% compared to 83% for non-disabled. The disability employment gap (the difference between how many disabled people are in work compared to non-disabled people) of 30 percentage points is the narrowest gap since the Scottish government began publishing this data in 2014. Minority ethnic individuals experience the largest disability employment gaps in Scotland, with only 47% of disabled minority ethnic workers in employment. Disabled men in Scotland also have much lower employment rates than disabled women. Evidence suggests this may be due to men being less likely to report a disability until it actively affects their ability to work and they become economically inactive. Evidence focused on disabled workers in the gig economy suggests an increase in the proportion of disabled workers on zero-hours contracts in the UK, particularly for younger or minority ethnic disabled people. The disability pay gap in the UK was 12.7% in 2023, with disabled employees earning £13.69 per hour compared to £15.69 for non-disabled employees (median earnings). Men experienced a wider disability pay gap than women and pay gaps differed according to types of disabilities reported, with the largest being for autistic people, individuals with epilepsy and severe or specific learning difficulties. Almost half of disabled workers in Scotland are in the sectors of education, retail and health and social work – the sectors representing the largest employers across Scotland. Disabled people are significantly less likely to work in manufacturing, professional, scientific, and technical activities or construction. In the engineering and technology sector disabled people account for 11% of the UK workforce. Disabled people are more likely to be self-employed than non-disabled workers in the UK (13% versus 12%). Consultation feedback from equality partners in October 2024 and May 2025, as well as Careers Adviser feedback from April 2024 can be found below in the Consultation Recording section (2.16). In addition to the evidence above SDS consulted with disability partners and conducted a review of evidence around the needs of disabled young people, focusing on the transition from school to post school destinations. This evidence was used to inform changes to the school offer. The actions below have considered the Scottish Government's National Transitions to Adulthood Strategy for Young Disabled People, and also looks to address the findings and 9 recommendations of an internal short life working group looking at Disabled Young People and Transitions.	
Impact (Does this project have a negative, positive or no impact? Please include the evidence of why that is, citing appropriate sources) By the end of S3 all pupils will have received a 1:1 engagement. This can occur at any point through self-referral or partner referral. The emphasis on earlier engagement before key career decision points in school for young people begin allows for proactive support, addressing potential issues before they become significant barriers. This early intervention	Action (What activity have you done already and what was the impact? What do you need to do to address the evidence?) SDS will monitor engagement levels for disabled young people to make sure that the levels of engagement are maintained. This action achieves a recommendation from the Disabled Young People and Transitions short life working group report,

Impact (Does this project have a negative, positive or no impact? Please include the evidence of why that is, citing appropriate sources) By the end of S3 all pupils will have received a 1:1 engagement. This can occur at any point through self-referral or partner referral. The emphasis on earlier engagement before key career decision points in school for young people begin allows for proactive support, addressing potential issues before they become significant barriers. This early intervention	Action (What activity have you done already and what was the impact? What do you need to do to address the evidence?) SDS will monitor engagement levels for disabled young people to make sure that the levels of engagement are maintained. This action achieves a recommendation from the Disabled Young People and Transitions short life working group report,
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approach helps to improve overall engagement and participation rates for young people in education, training or employment.	to reduce the age that young people can access careers advice below the age of 14.
Equality monitoring questions are currently asked at the end of customer feedback surveys, including gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, additional support needs and whether they are care experienced. The equality data is not currently disaggregated in customer feedback management information which means it is not available to teams to utilise in planning or performance monitoring. We will develop equality specific reporting within our management information as part of this project. This is a positive change that enables SDS to be more responsive to customer needs, considering their protected characteristics.	This equality data should be built into customer feedback reporting so teams can view and analyse customer feedback results specifically for customers with additional support needs. Teams should use equality data to identify gaps or disparities in service satisfaction and this insight should feed into service delivery improvements.
There is going to be a change to make customer feedback automated which should increase the amount of feedback gathered. Whilst this could mean that SDS will have a more representative sample of feedback, there is a risk that the feedback survey is not as accessible for those with ASN.	The survey will be designed with inclusivity in mind, ensuring clear and simple language is used and that the survey is compatible with screen readers. Advisers can also offer support in completion of the survey at the end of the engagement or at the next appointment, for example, explaining the wording of the questions or offering assistance in completing the survey.
The removal of the level of support being determined by a system and decisions around level of support being more collaborative than in the previous offer with pupils, partners and career guidance practitioners working together to agree the level of support needed for an individual, ensures that support is comprehensive and tailored to evolving needs. This approach eliminates the perceived stigma associated with targeted services and ensures that all pupils feel represented and supported. Disabled young people would have previously been part of the targeted model and would have been taken out of class for 1:1 engagements. The new system will allow for discussions to take place between the young person with a disability, advisers, schools, local authority partners and parents/carers (where appropriate) to together agree the most appropriate level of support for the customer.	We will now have customer feedback available and be able to view these results specifically for disabled customers to monitor satisfaction levels for this group. We will regularly engage with customers with a disability throughout their time at school and continually check in to ensure their level of support is appropriate and offer further support where required. Any feedback can be feedback to Team Leaders and Area Managers, where they can notify the Operations Leadership Team who can review this feedback and make changes to the service where appropriate.
The removal of the level of support being determined by a system and decisions around level of support being more collaborative than in the previous offer with pupils, partners and career guidance practitioners working together to agree the level of support needed for an individual ensures that support is comprehensive and tailored to evolving needs. With this change comes the risk that a disabled young person who might benefit from SDS support could decline it for a number of reasons, potentially affecting their progression towards a positive destination.	Personal factors identified e.g. customers who have a disability will still show on the customer record system and will be used to inform discussions between disabled customers, school, other partners and careers guidance practitioners to agree the appropriate level of support for customers. This group will no longer automatically be set a service level but they will still be flagged on the system and seen as a priority group for engaging with throughout their time at school. This will be stated in all school service offer guidance and comms for staff. As noted above, SDS will monitor engagement levels for those customers who are disabled to make sure that the levels of engagement meet service expectations.
Young people with a disability are more likely to have high levels of absence from illness or attending medical appointments etc. meaning they could potentially miss out on careers education in school. Therefore there is a risk that they would not be able to receive the benefits offered by the service changes.	As noted above, this group will still be seen as a priority group and where a customer cannot attend school, partner discussions will still take place to decide how best to support each customer. In addition to this, SDS will look into developing a potential remote offer which would be for non-attenders and customers with high absence rates to ensure they still have support from SDS.

2.5 Gender Reassignment

See guidance for 2.5

Context: Unless otherwise referenced, evidence within this section comes from the SDS Equality Evidence Review 2025. Trans population in Scotland: Scotland's Census • According to Scotland's 2022 Census 19,990 people reported being trans or having a trans history - about 0.44% of people aged 16 and over. • Almost 45% of trans people in Scotland identify as non-binary. Equality Evidence Review Limited data is available on trans young people at school in Scotland and the UK in general, resulting in an evidence gap in relation to their experiences and attainment. Trans young people experience high levels of bullying and harassment at school and at higher levels than LGB young people. Research by LGBT Youth Scotland indicates that generally Scotland is a good place for LGBTQ+ young people to live with 65% of respondents agreeing that it is a good place to live. This figure is slightly lower for trans participants at 61%. Some participants suggest that increasing LGBTQ+ education and representation, both within schools and more widely across society, would ease the process of coming out for LGBTQ+ people. Despite this general positive outlook, Trans and LGBTQ participants shared their experiences of discrimination and LGBTQ+-related abuse ranging from individual cases in educational environment, to systemic issues faced within healthcare or legal situations. Research highlights that 45% of young people interviewed in the UK who identify with minority sexuality categories and 39% of those identifying as transgender reported unfair treatment or bullying by peers based on their sexual orientation and trans status
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respectively. Evidence from English secondary schools indicates that young people who are trans are less likely to report enjoying school (37% compared to 57% of heterosexual respondents) or that doing well at school means a lot to them (71% compared to 83% of heterosexual respondents).

Pupil Voice Research: LGBT pupils’ views on careers services

Although LGBT young people score highly across most CIAG support questions, they tend to score lower than non-LGBT young people. LGBT young people are also slightly more likely to be influenced by their teachers than non-LGBT young people.

Equality Evidence Review

Research highlights that trans and non-binary people have higher rates of unemployment than the general population and are more likely to be economically inactive. This may be due to discrimination during recruitment processes and from colleagues, employers, and customers after employment, making it difficult for trans and non-binary people to find and maintain employment.

Transgender and non-binary individuals are impacted by low pay as they experience more extreme pay gaps. Trans women are particularly at risk of low pay.

Some of the barriers to accessing employment include feeling unable to apply to jobs because of prejudice, application forms excluding non-binary identities, difficulties obtaining references, proof of qualifications matching gender and their new name, a lack of awareness and transphobia from interview panel members; and feeling unable to be open about a trans identity when applying for jobs.

Consultation feedback from equality partners in October 2024 and May 2025, as well as Careers Adviser feedback from April 2024 can be found below in the Consultation Recording section (2.16).

Impact (Does this project have a negative, positive or no impact? Please include the evidence of why that is, citing appropriate sources)	Action (What activity have you done already and what was the impact? What do you need to do to address the evidence?)
By the end of S3 all pupils will have received a 1:1 engagement. This can occur at any point through self-referral or partner referral. The emphasis on earlier engagement before key career decision points in school for young people begin allows for proactive support, addressing potential issues before they become significant barriers. This early intervention approach helps to improve overall engagement and participation rates for young people in education, training or employment. LGBT+ young people are more likely to leave school early and therefore this earlier intervention gives them the option to get support from SDS earlier and before they leave school.	SDS are unable to monitor engagement levels for transgender and non-binary customers as we do not consistently collect data on trans customers due to many being under the age of 16. Where a pupil discloses that they are transgender or non-binary, we have procedures in place update their files with their preferred name and gender.
The removal of the level of support being determined by a system and decisions around level of support being more collaborative than in the previous offer with pupils, partners and career guidance practitioners working together to agree the level of support needed for an individual, ensures that support is comprehensive and tailored to evolving needs. This approach eliminates the perceived stigma associated with targeted services and ensures that all pupils feel represented and supported. Transgender and non-binary young people would not previously have been targeted or given a higher level of need generated by the system and therefore, this change will particularly benefit transgender and non-binary young people as discussions will take place with these customers, advisers, schools, local authority partners and parents/carers (where appropriate) to together agree the most appropriate level of support for the customer.	As with other pupils, transgender and non-binary pupils will be informed of their entitlements to careers advice throughout their time in school. We will engage with the school and other partners to identify pupils who would benefit from intensive support and ensure the pupils are aware of this offer.
There is a process in place for recording name changes of young people transitioning to ensure transgender and non-binary customers are treated with respect and dignity throughout their SDS journey.	With changes being made to the service offer, SDS will ensure any changes to email templates or information sent out to customers uses the ‘Known As’ field when including a customer’s name.

2.6 Marriage/Civil Partnership

See guidance for 2.6

Context:

Not applicable as this project is not in reference to SDS’ role as an employer.

Impact (Does this project have a negative, positive or no impact? Please include the evidence of why that is, citing appropriate sources)	Action (What activity have you done already and what was the impact? What do you need to do to address the evidence?)
N/A	N/A

2.7 Pregnancy and Maternity

See guidance for 2.7

Context:

Unless otherwise referenced, evidence within this section comes from the SDS [Equality Evidence Review 2025](#).

Equality Evidence Review

Pregnancy data from Public Health Scotland highlights that teenage pregnancy rate increases can be observed across all levels of deprivation in 2022; however, the increases were greater in less deprived areas than in the most deprived. Despite this, the relationship between early pregnancy and economic deprivation remains significant. Teenage pregnancy rates were more than three times higher for those living in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived areas in 2022.

Teenage pregnancy can have a negative effect on the education of mothers attending school. It can lead to interruption of schooling and hinder return to school. Many teenage mothers are less likely to finish their education.

Following a decade of decline, figures from Public Health Scotland indicate that teenage pregnancy rates rose for the first time in over a decade, increasing from 23.2 per 1,000 women in 2021 to 27.1 in 2022. This increase was mostly driven by pregnancies between 17 and 19 years old.

Working mothers under 25 are more likely to be in in-work poverty and more likely to be lone parents. Two in five mothers under 25 in paid work are in relative poverty, with average hourly pay for low-income households with a mother under 25 at £7.20 compared to £8.20 for all low-income families.

Young women with dependent children are least likely to be in employment. The employment rate of White mothers is 5 percentage points lower than that of White women without children, while women of Indian, Black African, and Chinese heritage see employment gaps of up to 11 percentage points. Black Caribbean mothers see a marginal increase in employment rates compared to women without children.

Consultation feedback from equality partners in October 2024 and May 2025, as well as Careers Adviser feedback from April 2024 can be found below in the Consultation Recording section (2.16).

Impact (Does this project have a negative, positive or no impact? Please include the evidence of why that is, citing appropriate sources)	Action (What activity have you done already and what was the impact? What do you need to do to address the evidence?)
By the end of S3 all pupils will have received a 1:1 engagement. This can occur at any point through self-referral or partner referral. The emphasis on earlier engagement before key career decision points in school for young people begin allows for proactive support, addressing potential issues before they become significant barriers. This early intervention approach helps to improve overall engagement and participation rates for young people in education, training or employment. This early access to SDS support is particularly beneficial to pregnant young people as they are more likely to have poorer attainment and leave school early.	SDS are unable to monitor engagement levels for pregnant young people as we do not consistently collect data on pregnant young people. We could review the need for gathering this data and how this data could be used.
Pregnant young people are more likely to have high levels of absence and leave school early meaning they could potentially miss out on careers education in school.	Pregnant young people will still be seen as a priority group and where a customer cannot attend school, partner discussions will still take place to decide how best to support each customer. In addition to this, SDS will look into developing a potential remote offer which would be for non-attenders and customers with high absence rates to ensure they still have support from SDS.

2.8 Race

Guidance for 2.8

Context:

Unless otherwise referenced, evidence within this section comes from the SDS [Equality Evidence Review 2025](#).

[Ethnicity in Scotland: Scotland's Census](#)

Figures from the 2022 Scottish census show that:

- the proportion of people in Scotland with a minority ethnic background was recorded as 7.1% from the 2022 census. The proportion is higher in younger age groups and varies geographically. The increase in people from minority ethnic backgrounds was driven by increases across several groups
- the majority of people in Scotland identify as Scottish (77.7%) or ‘Other British’ (9.4%)

Equality Evidence Review

According to the Pupil Census 2023, 73% of pupils in Scotland were recorded as being White Scottish. The next largest categories were White Other British (6.5%), White Other 3.7%, White Polish 2.4% and Asian Pakistani 2.2%. In addition, a total of 2,155 pupils were recorded as asylum seekers and 6,556 as refugees.

The Annual Participation Measure shows that participation by those from minority ethnic groups was 3.6 percentage points higher than those identified as White. Those from minority ethnic groups were more likely to be in education (87.5% compared to those identified as White at 69.9%). Figures from the participation measure demonstrate the dominance of education as a post 16+ choice for those from Mixed or Multiple; Asian; African; Caribbean or Black; and Other ethnic groups.

School attainment levels are higher at SCQF Level 6 for all ethnic groups when compared to White – Scottish at 56%. Attainment data for 2022/23 shows that Asian-Chinese pupils continue to have high levels of attainment with 91% achieving one pass or more in a National Qualification at SCQF Level 6 or higher.

Minority ethnic groups are more likely to progress on to higher education than those from a White background. Those from an Asian-Indian and Asian – Chinese background progress to higher education at the highest rates.

Gypsy/Travellers have the lowest educational attainment rates of all ethnic groups in Scotland. They have the lowest school attendance rates of any ethnic group and the highest school exclusion rates. Both factors impact on attainment at school leaving age. School exclusion data from Scottish Government shows that cases of exclusion for Gypsy/Traveller pupils for 2022/23 was 33.3 per thousand pupils compared to 18.3 per thousand for White-Scottish pupils. Many children in this ethnic group do not

make the transition from primary to secondary school. Continuous mobility and bullying have been identified as major reasons preventing children from Gypsy/ Traveller communities attending school.

Pupil Voice Research: Minority Ethnic pupils’ views on careers services

BME young people score slightly more positively across the CIAG support questions than White young people. In terms of key influences on career plans, BME young people are more likely to be influenced by the need to earn money than White young people.

Equality Evidence Review

Minority ethnic individuals do not receive the labour market advantages which should be expected when considering their positive educational outcomes. The employment rate of those from minority ethnic groups in Scotland is consistently lower than the White population. The employment rate for minority ethnic groups aged 16 to 64 was estimated at 62% in January to December 2023 compared to 76% for White groups.

The minority ethnic employment rate gap is the difference between the employment rates for minority ethnic groups and White groups aged 16 to 64. In 2023, the estimated gap between the employment rate for White groups compared with minority ethnic groups was 13.8 percentage points. The UK employment rate gap between White and minority ethnic women was estimated at 13.3 and 14.1 percentage points for minority ethnic men respectively. The biggest ethnicity employment rate gap was for those aged 16 to 24 (26.8 pp) followed by those aged 25 to 34 (13.5 pp).

Minority ethnic people are over-represented in certain sectors. They are more likely to work in the Accommodation and Food Services sector than the White population. Minority ethnic individuals are disproportionately more likely to work in low-paying sectors and less likely to hold managerial or senior positions in business.

Young people from minority ethnic backgrounds are more likely to be in low paid, insecure employment than their White peers, including a higher likelihood of being on a zero-hours contract and an increased need to have two jobs.

In Scotland, in 2019, the ethnicity pay gap was 10.3%. There has been no sustained progress in reducing Scotland’s ethnicity pay gap over recent years. White British people, White Irish people and Indian people were more likely to work in high-pay occupations in 2016/17, while Black people and those in the Other White group were more likely to work in low-pay occupations.

Research by Close the Gap, highlights the complex intersection of inequalities faced by minority ethnic women in the labour market. Their research highlights that many minority ethnic women face racial discrimination and bias in the labour market which negatively impacts on their outcomes. Minority ethnic women are more likely to face microaggressions from colleagues including being treated as less intelligent and stereotypical assumptions about the positions they hold. In addition, CRER highlight that minority ethnic women in Scotland continue to face barriers in accessing the labour market, including racist and sexist attitudes and discrimination.

Intersectionality: Religion, Race and Ethnicity

People of all groups find it difficult to express their faith at work for fear of exclusion and discrimination. Studies show that Muslims are more likely to express their religion in the workplace compared to Jews. This is partly because their religion is more identifiable by name and some aspects of dress. However, Jewish workers might want to hide their religious identity because of previous experiences with antisemitism. Both Muslims and Jews have a generally positive feeling that their religion impacts positively on their professional relationships, though a small percentage feel it has a negative effect. The ongoing Israel-Gaza war makes it difficult for Jews and Muslims to openly express their religious identity as they worry about discrimination and lack of organisational support.

Consultation feedback from equality partners in October 2024 and May 2025, as well as Careers Adviser feedback from April 2024 can be found below in the Consultation Recording section (2.16).

Impact (Does this project have a negative, positive or no impact? Please include the evidence of why that is, citing appropriate sources)	Action (What activity have you done already and what was the impact? What do you need to do to address the evidence?)
By the end of S3 all pupils will have received a 1:1 engagement. This can occur at any point through self-referral or partner referral. The emphasis on earlier engagement before key career decision points in school for young people begin allows for proactive support, addressing potential issues before they become significant barriers. This early intervention approach helps to improve overall engagement and participation rates for young people in education, training or employment.	SDS will monitor engagement levels for minority ethnic pupils to make sure that the levels of engagement meet service expectations.
Equality monitoring questions are currently asked at the end of customer feedback surveys, including gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, additional support needs and whether they are care experienced. The equality data is not currently disaggregated in customer feedback management information which means it is not available to teams to utilise in planning or performance monitoring. We will develop equality specific reporting within our management information as part of this project. This is a positive change that enables SDS to be more responsive to customer needs, considering their protected characteristics.	This equality data should be built into customer feedback reporting so teams can view and analyse customer feedback results by ethnicity group. Teams should use equality data to identify gaps or disparities in service satisfaction and this insight should feed into service delivery improvements.
BAME young people are underrepresented in post-16 work-based training such as Modern Apprenticeships. Some studies suggest more could be done to raise the esteem of apprenticeships in BAME communities. SDS have a role in this to engage with minority ethnic parents to support raising the esteem of work-based learning. Whilst work is being done to improve parental engagement, SDS do not monitor engagement levels specifically with minority ethnic parents.	SDS will look into developing a process to better engage with parents through mechanisms like the school partnership agreement to ensure there is discussion around the specific people in the school who are responsible for parent engagement. This would result in clearer communication of SDS’ sessions with parents such as attendance at upcoming parents evenings or parents webinars.
Partners had concerns about how groups would be formed (not having a group just for minority ethnic young people) and ensuring that minority ethnic young people were able to fully and safely participate, without fear of discrimination. The changes being made to the service offer allow for greater flexibility of delivery of group work.	Advisers can work with their school to suggest and agree the best appropriate groups. Where appropriate, advisers could offer group work specifically for minority ethnic young people. However, this would need to be done with considerations of not wanting to isolate certain groups as feedback from all young people has been that they do not like the stigma of being taken out of their class and away from their classmates for careers appointments.

2.9 Religion or Belief

See guidance for 2.9

Context:

Unless otherwise referenced, evidence within this section comes from the SDS [Equality Evidence Review 2025](#).

Religion or belief across Scotland: Scotland's Census

The 2022 Census data for Scotland shows that the number of people describing themselves as having no religion has increased to 51% (up from 37% in 2011). However, there are still substantial numbers of people in Scotland identifying with a religious faith.

Equality Evidence Review

Limited evidence exists in relation to the religion or belief of school pupils in Scotland. Scottish Government states that as of April 2022, most schools (85%) in Scotland are non-denominational. For the remaining schools identifying as having faith elements, 15% are Roman Catholic, 0.3% inter-denominational, 0.1% Episcopalian and 0.04% Jewish.

Limited evidence is available on the relationship between employment and religion or belief. However, evidence suggests that there is a religious (Muslim) penalty in the UK labour market. Muslims experience the greatest faith penalty compared to other religious groups even after accounting for other factors such as education and age that impact on employment. Muslim men and women are among those with highest risk of being unemployed or inactive and are workers from religious minorities are more likely to be in insecure employment compared to non-religious workers. However, the proportion of Muslim workers in highly paid occupations has grown from 31% in 2010/11 to 45% in 2019/20, so that they now make up a significantly higher proportion than those with no religion.

Intersectionality: Religion, Race and Ethnicity

People of all groups find it difficult to express their faith at work for fear of exclusion and discrimination. Studies show that Muslims are more likely to express their religion in the workplace compared to Jews. This is partly because their religion is more identifiable by name and some aspects of dress. However, Jewish workers might want to hide their religious identity because of previous experiences with antisemitism. Both Muslims and Jews have a generally positive feeling that their religion impacts positively on their professional relationships, though a small percentage feel it has a negative effect. The ongoing Israel-Gaza war makes it difficult for Jews and Muslims to openly express their religious identity as they worry about discrimination and lack of organisational support.

Consultation feedback from equality partners in October 2024 and May 2025, as well as Careers Adviser feedback from April 2024 can be found below in the Consultation Recording section (2.16).

Impact (Does this project have a negative, positive or no impact? Please include the evidence of why that is, citing appropriate sources)	Action (What activity have you done already and what was the impact? What do you need to do to address the evidence?)
By the end of S3 all pupils will have received a 1:1 engagement. This can occur at any point through self-referral or partner referral. The emphasis on earlier engagement before key career decision points in school for young people begin allows for proactive support, addressing potential issues before they become significant barriers. This early intervention approach helps to improve overall engagement and participation rates for young people in education, training or employment.	SDS are unable to monitor engagement levels for customers based on their religion or belief as we do not consistently collect data on these groups. We could review the need for gathering this data and how this data could be used.

2.10 Sex

See guidance for 2.10

Context:

Unless otherwise referenced, evidence within this section comes from the SDS [Equality Evidence Review 2025](#).

Equality Evidence Review

At school, girls continue to out-perform boys in terms of attainment and positive post school destinations. In 2024, young women (16 to 19 years) were more likely to be taking part in education, training, or employment than young men (93.2% compared to 92.3%) and much more likely to be in education (76.5%) compared to young men (66.3%).

Differences continue in the subject choices made by girls and boys. Subject choice impacts on future educational and career opportunities available to both boys and girls and is associated with gender segregation in the labour market. For example, the gender imbalance in the STEM sector, can partly be linked to the subject choices made at school which continue into further and higher education. Figure 5 compares entries for the five most popular STEM subjects at National 5 level and shows that although there is parity for maths and chemistry, girls are more likely to choose biology, and boys are more likely to choose physics or computing.

Girls have higher levels of attainment, at SCQF Level 4, 5 and 6 than boys and this gap increases at the higher SCQF levels. Girls tend to score higher than boys across all subjects and levels. In STEM subjects, such as, physics and computing, where girls are underrepresented, their attainment is above that of boys.

Sexism and gender stereotypes can impact on girls’ experiences of school. Over half of girls aged 11 to 16 years (58%) who responded to the UK Girls’ Attitudes Survey reported either seeing or experiencing sexism at school or in their daily life, leading them to feel reduced levels of safety and confidence, potentially impacting on girls learning and thriving at school. A snapshot of

girls' attitudes across Scotland reported that almost one in five girls and young women (aged 11-21) felt that gender stereotypes held them back at school. High levels of sexual violence and sexual harassment are reported in UK schools, with teachers and staff in schools stating that they do not feel well equipped to deal with these issues. Nearly one third of girls responded that school does not make them feel safe from sexual harassment. Black and minority ethnic young women report experiencing racialised sexual harassment in school where comments are made about their ethnicity and religious clothing. Feelings of safety at school declined when exploring combined equality characteristics with gender. For example, 19% of all girls and young women reported feeling completely safe in educational settings which decreased to 11% for LGBT girls and young women, to 10% for disabled girls and young women and 8% for girls and young women with a mental health condition.

Young People’s Career Ambitions (YPCA): Gender

SDS asked school leavers across Scotland about their career ambitions, influences and motivations and found that:

- both young men and women stated that parents or carers were their primary influence on their career aspirations.
- young women were more likely to say that the qualifications they achieved in school had an influence on their future career choices than young men.
- over half of young women respondents (54%) said that not having enough confidence in themselves was a barrier to career development, compared to 40% of young men.
- young women were three times more likely to say that they wanted to enter a career in the health, social care or social work sectors than young men. With young men ten times more likely to say they wanted to go into construction and engineering than young women.

Pupil Voice Research: Gender

Males were slightly more positive than females about the careers services they received. Although key influences on career plans are similar for both males and females, females are slightly more likely to be influenced by the qualifications they achieved at school.

Equality Evidence Review

Women’s experiences and participation in the labour market continues to differ from men’s in terms of pay, progression, and conflicts between work and caring responsibilities. Women are affected by low pay and the continuing gender pay gap, meaning they will earn significantly less than men over their entire careers. Scotland however has a narrower gender pay gap for full time and all workers than the UK overall in 2024.

Women continue to be less likely to be in employment than men, with an employment rate in 2024 of 71%. Women make up the majority of part-time workers with 42% of all women in employment the week prior to the 2022 Census working part-time (30 hours or less), compared to 16% of men.

Economic inactivity rates are higher for women than men. Just over one quarter (26%) of women in Scotland (aged 16-64) are classed as economically inactive, compared to 21% of men. Reasons for inactivity differ between men and women, with more women stating they were looking after family/home than men, although the largest reason stated for both men and women is long-term sickness. The unequal division of unpaid care for both children and adults continues to result in gender inequalities in the UK workplace.

Insecure work is a continuing concern for both men and women, with evidence suggesting that the job ‘insecurity score’ for UK women is 25% higher than for men. Women are also more likely than men to be on zero-hours contracts across the UK, adding to issues of precarity in employment. Women are also more likely to be in jobs at a higher risk of automation across the UK.

The occupational segregation of men and women in certain kinds of jobs and in different levels of employment remains a key labour market issue. Women tend to be disproportionately affected by occupational segregation, impacting on their potential pay and career progression. Both women and men continue to be segregated into certain occupations and industries. Most notably men are concentrated in construction and women in health and social work industries. In terms of occupation, Scottish census figures highlight that women continue to be underrepresented in managerial and senior roles in the workplace, occupying 40% of these roles.

Women are under-represented in STEM sectors despite continued interventions and efforts to improve women’s participation and experiences. In engineering, women comprise only 16% of the workforce in the UK. At the current slow rate of progress in increasing diversity in UK engineering, it will take more than a century for there to be equal numbers of women as men in engineering jobs.

Emerging evidence suggests there is a gender gap in use and adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the workplace. Research carried out with over 25,000 working adults worldwide found 56% of men using generative AI at least once a week at work, compared to 51% of women. For younger workers the gender gap appears to increase, with 71% of men aged 18-24 using AI weekly compared to 59% of young women. A study of over 100,000 workers in Denmark where AI is an option for usage within their daily work found that women are 20 percentage points less likely to use ChatGPT compared with men working in the same occupation. Nearly half of women said that the main reason preventing them using ChatGPT is a lack of training.

Research by Close the Gap, highlights the complex intersection of inequalities faced by minority ethnic women in the labour market. Their research highlights that many minority ethnic women face racial discrimination and bias in the labour market which negatively impacts on their outcomes. Minority ethnic women are more likely to face microaggressions from colleagues including being treated as less intelligent and stereotypical assumptions about the positions they hold. In addition, CRER highlight that minority ethnic women in Scotland continue to face barriers in accessing the labour market, including racist and sexist attitudes and discrimination.

Consultation feedback from equality partners in October 2024 and May 2025, as well as Careers Adviser feedback from April 2024 can be found below in the Consultation Recording section (2.16).

Impact (Does this project have a negative, positive or no impact? Please include the evidence of why that is, citing appropriate sources)	Action (What activity have you done already and what was the impact? What do you need to do to address the evidence?)
By the end of S3 all pupils will have received a 1:1 engagement. This can occur at any point through self-referral or partner referral. The emphasis on earlier engagement before key career decision points in school for young people begin allows for proactive support, addressing potential issues before they become significant barriers. This early intervention approach helps to improve overall engagement and participation rates for young people in education, training or employment.	SDS will monitor engagement levels by gender to make sure that the levels of engagement meet service expectations.
Equality monitoring questions are currently asked at the end of customer feedback surveys, including gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, additional support needs and whether they are care experienced. The equality data is not currently disaggregated in customer feedback management information which means it is not available to teams to utilise in planning or performance monitoring. We will develop equality specific reporting within our management information as part of this	This equality data should be built into customer feedback reporting so teams can view and analyse customer feedback results by gender. Teams should use equality data to identify gaps or disparities in service satisfaction and this insight should feed into service delivery improvements.

project. This is a positive change that enables SDS to be more responsive to customer needs, considering their protected characteristics.	
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2.11 Sexual Orientation

See guidance for section 2.11

Context: Unless otherwise referenced, evidence within this section comes from the SDS Equality Evidence Review 2025. Sexual orientation across the Scottish population: Scotland's Census The 2022 Scotland census indicates that: • of the 16+ population 4% were LGB+ • around two in every five LGB+ people identified as bisexual and a similar number of people identified as gay or lesbian • the number of LGB+ people varies across age groups. There are more LGB+ people in younger age groups than in older groups. Almost half of bisexual people and a quarter of gay or lesbian people were aged 16 to 24. Equality Evidence Review At school, evidence highlights the negative impact bullying has on future education and career plans. A report by LGBT Youth Scotland indicates that LGBTI young people’s educational experiences have not improved significantly compared with previous years. The report highlights that: ■ only 10% of those who participated in the research rated the experience of school as ‘Good’, with 44% rating it as ‘OK’, 46% of respondents rated it as ‘Bad’ ■ 70% of LGBTI young people think homophobia, biphobia and transphobia had a negative effect on their educational experience and attainment. Some have left education, because of homophobia, biphobia, or transphobia ■ there are moves to ensure better representation of LGBTI issues in the curriculum. Pupil Voice Research: LGBT pupils’ views on careers services Although LGBT young people score highly across most CIAG support questions, they tend to score lower than non-LGBT young people. LGBT young people are also slightly more likely to be influenced by their teachers than non-LGBT young people. Equality Evidence Review An evidence gap exists in relation to sexual orientation in work. However, survey and qualitative research provide some insights. LGBTQ+ professionals may not feel safe and comfortable in their workplaces. Those who had experienced bullying at work reported it had negatively impacted their mental health. LGBTQ+ professionals also report that homophobia, biphobia or transphobia had negatively impacted their employment opportunities. A 2024 report by the Trade Union Congress (TUC) highlights that: ■ LGBTQ+ employees have experienced at least one form of bullying or harassment at work in the last five years. ■ most LGBTQ+ individuals are not open with anyone at work about their sexual orientation. ■ due to workplace discrimination, exclusion and harassment, LGBTQ+ employees show poorer average employment outcomes than heterosexual colleagues and slower career progression. ■ homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are driving some LGBTQ+ people from the workplace. As a result, some have considered leaving or have left their job due to discrimination. Consultation feedback from equality partners in October 2024 and May 2025, as well as Careers Adviser feedback from April 2024 can be found below in the Consultation Recording section (2.16).
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Impact (Does this project have a negative, positive or no impact? Please include the evidence of why that is, citing appropriate sources)	Action (What activity have you done already and what was the impact? What do you need to do to address the evidence?)
By the end of S3 all pupils will have received a 1:1 engagement. This can occur at any point through self-referral or partner referral. The emphasis on earlier engagement before key career decision points in school for young people begin allows for proactive support, addressing potential issues before they become significant barriers. This early intervention approach helps to improve overall engagement and participation rates for young people in education, training or employment. LGBT+ young people are more likely to leave school early and therefore this earlier intervention gives them the option to get support from SDS earlier and before they leave school.	SDS are unable to monitor engagement levels for customers based on their sexual orientation as we do not consistently collect data on this. We could review the need for gathering this data and how this data could be used.
Equality monitoring questions are currently asked at the end of customer feedback surveys, including gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, additional support needs and whether they are care experienced. The equality data is not currently disaggregated in customer feedback management information which means it is not available to teams to utilise in planning or performance monitoring. We will develop equality specific reporting within our management information as part of this project. This is a positive change that enables SDS to be more responsive to customer needs, considering their protected characteristics.	This equality data should be built into customer feedback reporting so teams can view and analyse customer feedback results by a customer’s sexual orientation. Teams should use equality data to identify gaps or disparities in service satisfaction and this insight should feed into service delivery improvements.

2.12 Poverty

See guidance for 2.12

Context: Unless otherwise referenced, evidence within this section comes from the SDS Equality Evidence Review 2025. Poverty across the Scottish population • In Scotland, there are over a million people living in poverty, including about one quarter of a million children. • One in four children are currently living in poverty. • Over half of children in minority ethnic families (53%) are in poverty. Equality Evidence Review Poverty has a significant impact on all aspects of children’s lives depriving children of resources and opportunities central to their early development and widening inequalities between those children and their peers. Inequality in childhood can create multifaceted and long-lasting damage on children that can persist into adolescence and adulthood. The Annual Participation Measure shows that in 2024: ■ those living in the most deprived areas are less likely to be participating in learning, training, and work (88.4%), compared to of those living in the least deprived areas (96.6%) ■ those in the most deprived areas are less likely to be in education – 65% compared to 81.6% of those in the least deprived ■ the participation gap between those who lived in the 20% most deprived areas and those in the 20% least deprived areas was 9.1 pp, compared to 9.3 pp in 2022 and 12.9 pp in 2016. This is narrowest gap on record. Pupils from the most deprived areas have consistently lower levels of attainment. This attainment gap widens as pupils move through the school system. For example, at SCQF Level 6 or higher, the attainment gap was 36.9 percentage points in 2022/23. The percentage of school leavers in a positive initial destination has increased for leavers from the (20%) most deprived areas and slightly decreased for those from the (20%) least deprived areas, compared to 2021/22. Together this has led to a narrowing of the deprivation gap, from 4.4 percentage points in 2021/22 to 3.7 percentage points in 2022/23. The narrowing of the deprivation gap between 2021/22 and 2022/23 is mainly due to the ratios of school leavers in higher education. However, it should be noted that those from the most deprived areas are still less likely to go to higher education from school. Pupil Voice Research: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) pupils’ views on careers services Young people who live in the most deprived areas in Scotland (SIMD 1) score more positively across all CIAG support questions than those living in the least deprived areas of Scotland (SIMD 5). Those in the SIMD 1 group are also more likely to be influenced by their Careers Adviser and the need to earn money. Equality Evidence Review Research on poverty in childhood highlights that: ■ there has been a 26% increase in relative child poverty in Scotland ■ pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to experience mental health struggles; bullying and exclusion; have poorer attendance; and are less likely to feel part of their school’s community ■ families with intersecting protected characteristics such as households with disabled children and minority ethnic households are at risk of living in poverty ■ child poverty is family poverty. When parents are exposed to in-work poverty, their access to services and resources that are vital for them like money, food, housing, gas and education are all affected ■ poverty and deprivation can affect pupils’ regular attendance and concentration at school, and opportunities to join in social and cultural activities. Extra costs for trips, events, and uniform can act as a barrier to school participation. Data shows that almost a third of children with a disabled person in the household, were in relative poverty after housing costs. For families without a disabled member, the comparative figure was a fifth. A fifth of children in families with a disabled member were in severe poverty after housing costs compared to only 14% of children in families without a disabled member. Poverty remains a challenge across the labour market. Research suggests that it is now more common in Scotland to be working in poverty than it is to be in poverty and out of work. Over 10% of workers in Scotland are trapped in permanent low pay as they are paid below the real Living Wage and 72% of workers trapped in low pay are women. Five high-priority industries are responsible for maintaining in-work poverty – retail, hospitality, manufacturing, health and social work, and the administration and support services. Young People’s Career Ambitions (YPCA): Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation • Young people from the most deprived areas are more likely to be influenced by the need to earn money. • Young people from the most deprived areas were more likely to report that they were encouraged to explore a wide range of options. • Young people from most deprived areas are more likely to report that not having enough confidence in themselves is a career barrier Consultation feedback from equality partners in October 2024 and May 2025, as well as Careers Adviser feedback from April 2024 can be found below in the Consultation Recording section (2.16).	
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Impact (Does this project have a negative, positive or no impact? Please include the evidence of why that is, citing appropriate sources)	Action (What activity have you done already and what was the impact? What do you need to do to address the evidence?)
By the end of S3 all pupils will have received a 1:1 engagement. This can occur at any point through self-referral or partner referral. The emphasis on earlier engagement before key career decision points in school for young people begin allows for proactive support, addressing potential issues before they become significant barriers. This early intervention approach helps to improve overall engagement and participation rates for young people in education, training or employment.	SDS will monitor engagement levels by those who live in the most deprived areas to make sure that the levels of engagement meet service expectations.
The removal of the level of support being determined by a system and decisions around level of support being more collaborative than in the previous offer with pupils, partners and career guidance practitioners working together to agree the level of support needed for an individual, ensures that support is comprehensive and tailored to evolving needs. This approach eliminates the perceived stigma associated with targeted services and ensures that all pupils feel represented and supported. Young people from deprived areas would have previously been part of the targeted model and would have been taken out of class for 1:1 engagements. The new system will allow for discussions to take place between the young person, advisers, schools, local authority partners and parents/carers (where appropriate) to together agree the most appropriate level of support for the customer.	We will regularly engage with customers from deprived areas throughout their time at school and continually check in to ensure their level of support is appropriate and offer further support where required. Any feedback can be feedback to Team Leaders and Area Managers, where they can notify the Operations Leadership Team who can review this feedback and make changes to the service where appropriate. This will be stated in all school service offer guidance and comms for staff.

Are there any existing design features or mitigations in place? If yes, please describe

The changes described within this project have been designed to be flexible to local need. Local management teams, schools and staff can make decisions about how to deliver the service in a way that suits their needs.

If you are consulting, is your consultation robust, meaningful, and demonstrating that SDS has regard for island communities when carrying out its functions?

Guidance

As part of this project we consulted with all CIAG staff and have also utilised consultation with CIAG management that was used for the Equality and Diversity Mainstreaming Report. Staff members living and working on the islands we invited to ask questions and raise any issues with the proposed changes.

Impact (Does this project have a negative, positive or no impact? Please include the evidence of why that is, citing appropriate sources)	Action (What activity have you done already and what was the impact? What do you need to do to address the evidence?)
All pupils on the islands will receive the same service offer as those on the mainland and other islands. This ensures that every pupil, regardless of their location, has equal access to career services. By providing consistent and equitable services, we aim to eliminate disparities and promote fairness in educational outcomes across different regions.	To achieve this, we will allocate resources to ensure that all islands are equipped to provide the same level of service as the mainland and other islands.

Please complete the following questions after the impact assessment above.

Does the evidence show any different circumstances, expectations, needs, experiences or outcomes (such as levels of satisfaction or participation)?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Are these different effects likely?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Are these effects significantly different?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Could the effect amount to disadvantage for an island community compared to the mainland or between other groups?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If the answer is no to all of the above, please provide justification for not completing the full ICIA below.

If the answer is yes to any of the above, complete the Full Island Community Impact Assessment below before submitting the form for publication

Full Island Community Impact Assessment

Assess the extent to which you consider that the project can be developed or delivered in such a manner as to improve or mitigate any resulting outcomes for island communities.

Consider alternative delivery mechanisms and whether further consultation is required.

Describe how these delivery mechanisms will improve/mitigate outcomes for island communities?

Identify resources required to improve/mitigate outcomes for island communities.

Should delivery mechanisms/mitigations vary in different communities?

Do you need to consult with island communities in respect of mechanisms or mitigations?

Have island circumstances been factored into the evaluation process?

Have any island-specific indicators/targets been identified that require monitoring?

How will outcomes be measured on the islands?

How has the project affected island communities?

How will lessons learned in this ICIA inform future project making and service delivery?

2.14 Rural Communities

See guidance for 2.14

Context:

“Over 5.46 million people live in Scotland, with over 930,000 of them living in rural areas. Rural Scotland accounts for 17% of the total population in Scotland (6% in remote rural and 11% in accessible rural) and has consistently done so since 2011.”
(<https://www.gov.scot/publications/rural-scotland-key-facts-2021/pages/2/>)
“Rural areas have a lower proportion of the population in the age range 16 to 44 but a higher proportion of people aged 45 and over. This is particularly true for the age range of 65 and over in remote rural areas. Indicating that when people get to retirement age they are more likely to live in rural areas.” & “Evidence suggests that factors influencing migration decisions of young people moving out of rural areas could be higher education and employment opportunities, housing and public transport availability.”

Consultation feedback from equality partners in October 2024 and May 2025, as well as Careers Adviser feedback from April 2024 can be found below in the Consultation Recording section (2.16).

Impact (Does this project have a negative, positive or no impact? Please include the evidence of why that is, citing appropriate sources)	Action (What activity have you done already and what was the impact? What do you need to do to address the evidence?)
All pupils on rural areas will receive the same service offer as those in more urban areas. This ensures that every pupil, regardless of their location, has equal access to career services. By providing consistent and equitable services, we aim to eliminate disparities and promote fairness in educational outcomes across different regions.	To achieve this, we will allocate resources to ensure that all rural areas are equipped to provide the same level of service as the central belt.

2.15 Other

See guidance for 2.15

Context:

Impact (Does this project have a negative, positive or no impact? Please include the evidence of why that is, citing appropriate sources)	Action (What activity have you done already and what was the impact? What do you need to do to address the evidence?)

2.16 Consultation Recording

Consultation is an excellent source of evidence and can offer insight that cannot be gathered in any other way. It is important to be well prepared when consulting with partners, ensuring you do not take too much of their time and that you efficiently gather the information you need. However, it is also easy to over consult with our partners, so sharing key learning is important to mitigate that risk. It is also important to inform your consultees about changes that have been made (or not made) based on their input. Please use this space to share key learning from your consultations and how you have fed back to the consultees.

Further information on our National Approach to Equality Stakeholders can be found [here](#).

Focal Point Groups can also be useful for consultations, further information can be found [here](#).

See guidance for 2.16

Stakeholder(s) consulted	Key feedback from stakeholder(s)	What changes were made based on the feedback? (if none, explain why)	How was this fed back to stakeholders? (including date provided)
Equality and Diversity Mainstreaming Report Glasgow (October 2024): • Pachedu • CELCIS • SCLD • Scottish Refugee Council • The Prince’s Trust • Mwamba • Close the Gap • SUSE • Datakirk	Group Work and Inclusivity: ◦ Consideration of different starting positions for young people based on the barriers they face. ◦ Challenges in forming groups, especially with individuals with learning disabilities, autism, or ADHD. ◦ The need for staff to be equipped to handle vulnerabilities in group settings. Support for Vulnerable Groups: ◦ Addressing the needs of asylum seekers and refugees, particularly those with disabilities. ◦ Balancing person-centred approaches with avoiding stigmatisation. ◦ Building relationships and providing bonding experiences. Educational and Career Pathways: ◦ The importance of experiential career learning and addressing gender bias. ◦ The need for systemic solutions and collective action in education and career guidance. ◦ The role of community-based delivery and the importance of partnerships. Accessibility and Inclusivity in Services: ◦ Ensuring services are accessible to all, including those with language barriers and disabilities. ◦ The importance of trauma-informed approaches and co-design with affected groups. ◦ The need for long-term funding and systemic change to support disabled young people. Feedback and Continuous Improvement: ◦ The importance of collecting and sharing equality data. ◦ The need for continuous improvement and learning from past experiences. ◦ The role of peer support and self-advocacy models in career guidance.	Group Work and Inclusivity • Group sessions are now more flexible, tailored to individual needs and barriers (e.g. learning disabilities, autism, ADHD). • Staff will receive training to handle vulnerabilities and ensure all young people feel safe and included in group settings. Support for Vulnerable Groups • Person-centred support is agreed collaboratively to avoid stigmatisation, with a focus on building trusting relationships. Educational and Career Pathways • Stronger partnerships and community-based delivery to provide systemic, collective support for young people. Accessibility and Inclusivity in Services • Services are accessible for all, including digital options and support for those with language barriers or disabilities. • Staff are trained in trauma-informed approaches, and service design is co-produced with affected groups. Feedback and Continuous Improvement • Enhanced use of equality data to monitor and improve engagement and satisfaction.	CIAG Planning & Performance Manager to feedback through the focal point groups following a period of changes being embedded to show impact. March 2026.
Equality and Diversity Mainstreaming Report Edinburgh (October 2024): • Celcis • Equate Scotalnd • MCR Pathways • ELREC • Sikh Sanjog • Enable Works • Capability Scotland • Datakirk			
Equality and Diversity Mainstreaming Report online (October 2024): • WSREC • VIAS • MCR Pathways • Glasgow City Council HSCP			
Careers Adviser Roadshow Feedback (April 2025)- Included careers advisers from across Scotland (including rural and island-based staff)	Parental Engagement • Advisers highlighted the importance of the role of parents in influencing young people • Recognise that parents are not always aware of the CIAG offer ‘Safety Net’ • Advisers highlighted the risk of moving away from a targeted offer- that those most in need may	Parental Engagement • The service offer now includes a stronger focus on engaging parents/carers, recognising their key influence on young people’s decisions. This includes developing inclusive communication strategies and providing more information to parents about the CIAG offer.	The rollout of updated service offers. August 2025

Stakeholder(s) consulted	Key feedback from stakeholder(s)	What changes were made based on the feedback? (if none, explain why)	How was this fed back to stakeholders? (including date provided)
	not ask to access the service - Advisers are unsure in how they can prioritise their caseloads to ensure that pupils who need the service are being given priority Partner Engagement (including schools) - Schools are essential for delivering effective careers guidance, support for staff and the embedding of careers education in the curriculum would be advantageous. - There was an acknowledgement that increased local partnership working with third and public sector organisations would be beneficial to progressing customers into positive destinations. Measures and data - Advisers would like more access to more data, including parental contact information. - They would like to know how the impact of their work will be measured at a local level. Planning and Resources - Advisers would like more information on group work and updated group work sessions. - Concerns about how they will manage their time effectively given the changes to the service offer. Marketing - Increased use of social media required to promote SDS CIAG offers.	'Safety Net' - To address the risk of missing those most in need, the new model maintains a "safety net" by ensuring regular validation conversations with schools and partners, so vulnerable pupils are still identified and prioritised for support. - The level of support is now customer-led and decided collaboratively, rather than by a system, to ensure those who may not self-refer are not overlooked. Partner Engagement - There is a renewed focus on local partnership working with third and public sector organisations to help young people progress into positive destinations. Measures and Data - Equality data reporting is being implemented in customer feedback dashboards, allowing for better tracking and continuous improvement. - All measures and reporting will be available to all advisers Planning and Resources - Guidance and support are being offered to help advisers manage their time and caseloads effectively under the new, more flexible service model.	
Focal Point Group Consultation (May 2025): - WSREC - Scottish Refugee Council - Barnardo's - Capability Scotland - Hub for Success - CEMVO - Into work - Close the gap - Through care and after care forum - Engage Renfrewshire - SUSE - King's Trust - MCR - ELREC - ARC - Mental Health Foundation	Safety Net - There needs to be a safety net in place to ensure relationships can still be built with those young people who do not attend school - Need to ensure young people are making an informed choice around the level of service they want and they understand the impact of not engaging Engagement with Parents/Carers - CIAG Advisers should get inclusive communication training so they have the necessary tools in order to work with pupils and parents/carers with language/communication support needs - Should be a concerted effort to engage with parents because young people are influenced by them. Marketing - Many pupils and parents don't understand the education system - parents can often not fully understand the role of a careers service - Advisers should have knowledge of the barriers different protected groups face when leaving school	Safety Net - A "safety net" is maintained for young people who do not attend school, including the development of remote or digital CIAG offers and ongoing partner discussions to ensure these individuals can still build relationships and access support. Engagement with Parents/Carers - There is a stronger, more proactive effort to engage parents, recognising their influence on young people's decisions and aiming to ensure all parents understand the CIAG offer. Working in Partnership - The importance of regular 16+ meetings with careers advisers and partners is reinforced, with an aim to make these meetings more consistent across the country. Consultation - There is a commitment to ongoing consultation with young people and their parents/carers, ensuring their voices shape the service and that feedback is used for continuous improvement.	CIAG Planning & Performance Manager to feedback through the focal point groups following a period of changes being embedded to show impact. March 2026.

Stakeholder(s) consulted	Key feedback from stakeholder(s)	What changes were made based on the feedback? (if none, explain why)	How was this fed back to stakeholders? (including date provided)
	Working in Partnership 16+ meetings with careers advisers to discuss young people at risk of not achieving a positive destination are great but they do not happen consistently across country - Opportunity to better use partners as a way of engaging with young people Holistic Approach - Need to have a holistic approach to ensure employers are ready to take young people on, not just young people being 'job ready' - Work being done on MyWoW should be shared with employers and other partners Service Delivery - Opportunity to better use partners as a way of engaging with young people - How can positive action be used to support those from care experienced or disabled backgrounds Consultation - Importance of consulting young people, and their parents/carers, who will be the ones accessing this service		

3.0 Action Plan

A key part of every impact assessment is the action plan. This is where you state the actions that you will take in response to the impact assessment you have completed. The actions should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound (SMART).

Once the IEIA has been signed off by the SRO, actions within the Action Plan should be added to the relevant team’s Continuous Improvement Action Plan.

See guidance for 3.0

What is the action you will take in response to the impact assessment?	Which characteristics/groups does it apply to?	What is the intended impact?	When will this be completed?
We will continue to develop ways to include and expand on equality messaging through groupwork by taking the following actions: - Introduce a digital CIAG offer for pupils unable to attend in-person groupwork, ensuring accessibility features. - Pilot co-designed groupwork sessions with young people from protected groups. - Pilot targeted groupwork sessions for minority ethnic pupils, with safeguards to avoid stigma. - Strengthen messaging around occupational segregation and gender stereotypes in groupwork and 1:1 engagements. - Ensure groupwork flexibility is clearly communicated and tailored to local/school needs. - Review and expand MyWoW lesson plans to	All groups	Taking these actions will do the following: - Reinforce entitlement to CIAG services - Reinforce equality messaging and broaden career horizons - Encourage informed career choices and challenge stereotypes - Increase engagement - Ensure relevance of provision and safety of customers. - Address under-representation	By end of 2026/2027academic year

include equality-focused content and LMI.			
We will further develop how we use communications to engage with a variety of partners who are supporting customers during their careers journey in school by: • Develop inclusive communication training for CIAG practitioners, especially for engaging parents/carers with language or communication support needs. • Establish a feedback loop with stakeholders consulted during the IEIA process. • Develop a communications plan to clarify the new service offer to pupils, parents, and partners. • Engage with external partners (e.g. social work) for coordinated support for pupils with complex needs. • Develop a process to engage minority ethnic parents through school partnership agreements. • Create a standardised protocol for validation discussions with schools.	All groups	Taking these actions will do the following: • Improve parental engagement and understanding of CIAG services • Reduce barriers to access • Reduce confusion • Increase uptake in CIAG services • Strengthen wraparound support and improve outcomes • Maintain transparency and build trust • Ensure continuity of support and consistency of service delivery.	By end of 2025/2026 academic year
We will utilise the data that we have (or could gather) to ensure that those from protected characteristic groups continue to deliver an excellent service by: • Implement equality data reporting in customer feedback dashboards, disaggregated by protected characteristics. • Monitor engagement levels for pupils previously categorised to have targeted support, with quarterly reviews and school-level validation. • Establish baseline engagement data for all protected characteristics. • Include island and rural-specific indicators in monitoring frameworks.	All groups	Taking these actions will do the following: • Enable monitoring of engagement and satisfaction levels by group. • Prevent disengagement during transition to pupil-led engagement model. • Improve monitoring and responsiveness. • Address geographic disparities and ensure equitable access. • Provide reference points for evaluating impact of changes.	By end of 2025/2026 academic year
We will provide our careers advisors with the training and CPD required to ensure that customers with protected characteristics are safeguarded within group settings and that intersectional experiences are considered by: • Ensure CIAG practitioners are trained to challenge misogyny, racism, and homophobia in group settings. • Include intersectionality prompts in CIAG practitioner training. • Develop a safeguarding framework for small group settings, including training on managing discriminatory behaviour and trauma-informed practice.	All groups	Taking these actions will do the following: • Protect vulnerable pupils and equip staff to respond appropriately. • Improve awareness and responsiveness to overlapping barriers. • Create safe and inclusive environments.	By end of 2026/2027 academic year

4.0 Approval and Publication

- Will you be making this IEIA available in different formats/languages?

Guidance

SRO (Print)	SRO Signature	Date	Review Date
Dave McCallum		3 rd October 2025	July 2026

5.0 Review (To be completed at the review date, not at the same time it is submitted)

This section should be completed as part of the review on the date listed above under the sign off.

Guidance for 5.0

Were the actions taken completed? If not, why not?

Did the actions achieve what they intended? If not, why not?

What actions would you continue/stop or reconsider for future projects?

Has any evidence been identified that may be useful for similar future projects?

If this is a review for an ongoing project, are there any additional actions to add to the project going forward?