

Skills
Development
Scotland

Equality & Diversity Mainstreaming Report 2023

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Foreword

Two years ago, our 2021-2025 Equality and Diversity Mainstreaming Report set out ambitious new equality outcomes designed to refocus the work of Skills Development Scotland (SDS) in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

This, our 2023 Report, summarises the actions we have taken since then and highlights the areas where we still have important work to do.

The cost-of-living crisis is hitting the most vulnerable members of our society the hardest, exacerbating inequalities, particularly those related to intersectionality. This is happening at a time where the long-term social and economic impacts of Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic are still unfolding, and uncertainty remains high.

SDS is committed to helping Scottish Government achieve their vision to create a wellbeing economy that delivers prosperity for all of Scotland's people and places, as set out in the National Strategy for Economic Transformation.

Our new Strategic Plan, Skills for a Changing World, published in November 2022, set out a vision for a Scotland in which all people have the skills, adaptive resilience and personal agency to thrive in a vibrant and inclusive labour market. Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, tackling poverty and achieving a just transition to net zero is embedded throughout the ambition of that plan.

The publication of this Report provides an opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved in the last two years and, as always, I am grateful for the passion and hard work of my colleagues at SDS and the network of expert partners and stakeholders with whom we collaborate across Scotland. This work has never been more needed or important.

There is so much still to do. We do not underestimate the nature or size of the challenge ahead, but we remain ambitious for Scotland and all its people. We recommit to doing all we can, in partnership with Scottish Government and others, to help create a fairer, wealthier, and more inclusive society.

Damien Yeates

Chief Executive, Skills Development Scotland

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In this report, the term ‘minority ethnic’ is used wherever possible and when referring to people from a Mixed or Multiple; Asian; African; Caribbean or Black; and Other ethnic group, in line with reporting official statistics. We recognise that any one term will not resonate with everyone and we support everyone’s right to define themselves.

1. Introduction

About Skills Development Scotland

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is the national skills agency. Our ambition is that skills contribute to a thriving, productive and inclusive Scotland.

Collaborating extensively, we work to deliver our vision for an agile, dynamic, and employer-led skills and careers ecosystem which enables all people to develop the skills, adaptive resilience, and personal agency to thrive in a vibrant and inclusive labour market.

Through intelligence-led delivery of Scotland's Career Service, apprenticeships and other learning and skills interventions, and the sharing of expertise and insight, we aim to inspire and enable people and businesses to develop the right skills for a changing world. In doing so, we aim to generate the change that will lead to inclusive growth, greater productivity, a more prosperous and skilled workforce, and a fairer, more equal society.

Further details on SDS's strategic approach and operational activities can be found in our [Strategic Plan 2022-27](#).

Our Responsibilities as a Public Body

This Equality and Diversity Mainstreaming Report (or 'Mainstreaming Report') provides an update on progress made against the equality outcomes we set for 2021-25. It demonstrates how, through a wide range of policies, initiatives, and continuous improvement activities, SDS is working to embed equality and diversity throughout our organisation and meet our responsibilities as a public sector body.

As set out in the Equality Act 2010 public sector organisations, including SDS, have a duty to have due regard when carrying out their public functions as a service provider, policy maker and an employer, with a need to: eliminate discrimination; advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations. In addition to this, as a listed authority in The Specific Duties (Scotland) Regulations 2012 SDS has a duty to:

- Report progress on mainstreaming the equality duty
- Publish equality outcomes and report progress
- Equality Impact Assess (EqIA) and review policies and practices
- Gather and use employee information
- Publish gender pay gap information
- Publish statements on equal pay
- Publish occupational segregation information in relation to gender, race and disability
- Consider award criteria in relation to public procurement
- Consider other matters, as specified from time to time by Scottish Ministers
- Publish gender breakdown of the Board
- Publish in an accessible format

This, our sixth Mainstreaming Report, fulfils our reporting duties under these regulations for 2023; and in line with these requirements, our employee information, and pay gap information are published in Annex A and B of this document.

In addition to this core equality legislation, a range of other Scottish Government strategies and policies impact and inform our work on equality. We are also mindful of the specific requests of public bodies listed in our annual Letter of Guidance, and of possible future obligations on SDS from recent or anticipated publications.

Our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion is embedded across all our goals in our [Strategic Plan 2022-27](#).

Board Diversity

The Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 sets an objective for public boards that they have 50% of non-executive members who are women. SDS has worked proactively with Scottish Government for several years to improve the diversity and gender balance of the SDS Board. We achieved greater than 50% female representation on our non-executive Board for the first time in 2018 and have sustained this position into 2023, with 64% of board members self-identifying as women.

As of 31st March:	Men	Women
2021	8	9
2022	7	9
2023	5	9

📄 CASE STUDY

Women in Forestry

Forestry and Land Scotland report that 11 of its current cohort of 40 apprentices are women, with ten more female workers joining its work-based learning programme in the last three years.

As role models for women in the industry, Rachel and Victoria say they're determined to change perceptions.



“ We need to convince people that forestry is not only for big, bearded, 6ft 7in men. Victoria and I are trying to help change this narrative by sharing our work.

Rachel Orchard,
Forestry Apprentice



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2. Our Approach to Mainstreaming

Our ambition is to go beyond the requirements set out in equality legislation and to lead by example within the public sector. We use the social model of disability¹ to inform our actions and approach and remain committed to proactively addressing disadvantages faced by anyone on their learning and career journey. This covers groups who are not specifically covered by the Equality Act 2010, but may also experience poorer outcomes, for example, those who are care experienced, veterans and the wider armed forces community, young carers or those with lived experience of the justice system. This section provides detail of our continuing approach to mainstreaming within SDS, including information on:

- Mainstreaming equality at SDS
- Governance
- Policy and Service Development
- Procurement
- Development of Our Workforce
- Marketing and Communications
- Equality Evidence Review

Mainstreaming Equality at SDS

A Team SDS approach is essential for embedding equality since it is woven throughout our goals in the new SDS Strategic Plan 2022-27. Delivering the SDS Equality and Diversity Mainstreaming Outcomes is taken forward by colleagues from across the organisation. Cross-business groups, including our Equality Management Group (EMG), Equality Champions and our employee networks contribute to mainstreaming equality at SDS. Our EMG brings together colleagues from across the organisation, including Service Development and Delivery and Enabling Services, to embed equality across all areas of work and to share information and learning. Our networks also play a vital role in highlighting and communicating key equality information throughout the business and provide a platform to allow consultation and involvement, and effective employee voice.

SDS's first internal Equality Festival was held in 2022 to showcase the important role colleagues play from across the organisation in embedding equality in our service development and delivery. Highlights included sessions on how we include equality in procurement of national training programmes, embed equality in digital sector skills planning and utilise an inclusive service-design approach within the Career Review.

¹ The Scottish Accessible Information Forum states that “through the social model, disability is understood as an unequal relationship within a society in which the needs of people with impairments are often given little or no consideration. People with impairments are disabled by the fact that they are excluded from participation within the mainstream of society as a result of physical, organisational and attitudinal barriers. These barriers prevent them from gaining equal access to information, education, employment and social/ recreational opportunities”.

CASE STUDY

LGBTI+ Allies network

The LGBTI+ Allies network raises awareness of LGBTI+ issues and provides a forum for action and discussion.

With representation from across the business, it ensures a wide range of perspective, experience and skill sets to feed into discussion and work.



“ Communication is a key part of the network’s role, with an active Yammer community and involvement with the marking of key equality awareness days, supporting intranet articles and blogs.

Engagement with external partners continues to develop, exchanging best practice ideas through guest speakers at events and network meetings. Focus this year will be to work closely with Research and Evaluation colleagues on the findings of a recent Stonewall UK Workplace Equality Index.

The network is keen to dig into the top line findings and look at further action to ensure LGBTI+ colleagues feel safe and supported to be themselves at work.

Emma McVey, Chair, LGBTI+ Allies network



Governance

Our Board and Committees consider equality and diversity in setting SDS’s strategic direction, reviewing performance and good governance of the organisation. Since the publication of our last mainstreaming report, we have established a Committee Chairs’ Equality Forum (CCEF) to further mainstream equality in Board and Committee business. Board Committee Chairs meet regularly with the Board Equality Champion and executive leads for equality and diversity to review equality matters identified at Committee meetings.

Furthermore, we have aligned executive reporting to our Board and Committees with our SDS Equality and Diversity Mainstreaming Outcomes and have a specific agenda item to capture equality matters arising at each Board and Committee meeting. Our 2022 equality and diversity Board deep dive ‘Race Talk: Towards an Anti-Racist Organisation’ was facilitated by the Chair of the SFC/Advance HE Steering Group, Tackling Racism on Campus Project. Further equality and diversity spotlight sessions have been planned for each Board Committee on a range of topics relevant to each committee.

Policy and Service Development

Any new, or significant changes to existing policies, products, or services within SDS cannot be signed-off or implemented without consideration of the impact on equality and diversity. We ensure focused engagement with external equality stakeholder organisations to inform such development of our services and equality outcomes.

In addition, we have developed a revised approach to equality stakeholder engagement, through the development of Equality Focal Point Groups. This recognises the need to take a Team Scotland approach to creating effective partnerships with stakeholders

representing equality groups across Scotland and to ensure that evidence and advice is actively considered in reaching our objectives.

We have also created a range of resources to support project managers in completing the assessments which ensure the needs of all groups are considered, including care experienced people. We review our approach to conducting EqlAs on an ongoing basis to ensure quality and consistency. We are committed to increasing the number of opportunities for equality stakeholder organisations to be consulted as part of the process, where possible.

Procurement

SDS works to adhere with Public Contracts Regulations and the Equality Act in our procurement practices and seeks to address underrepresentation, where possible. Any award criteria and contract performance conditions must, in accordance with the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations, be related and proportionate to the subject matter of the contract or framework agreement. The inclusion of award criteria and contract performance conditions is assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure that full consideration is given to the needs of, and likely impact on, all those who will be affected by the contract. The decision to include equality-related selection criteria takes into account the subject matter of the contract.

Following earlier trialling of the approach, from 1 April 2021, SDS has been applying Fair Work First criteria to procurement for all training programmes, grants, funding streams and public contracts deemed appropriate in line with published guidance.

🔍 CASE STUDY

Modern Apprenticeship has broken barriers for Ross

Nineteen-year-old Ross Henderson got into the Customer Services apprenticeship after his parents found the vacancy with ScotRail on [apprenticeships.scot](https://www.scotrail.co.uk/apprenticeships).

ScotRail's Early Careers strategy outlines a commitment to increase the number of apprenticeships and diversity of apprentices.



“ I might be deaf, but, because you've got disabilities, it doesn't make you different to everyone else.

If you feel like your anxiety is really bad, or if you're deaf or if you have a disability, don't let that bring you down.

My Modern Apprenticeship has shown me what it's like to work and proven to me that I can do the job.

Ross Henderson, Modern Apprentice, Scotrail



For more info visit [skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk)

Afro Hairdressing Project

SDS initiated a project in partnership with Ambition Training Scotland and hairdresser Mavis Daniels to address the under-representation of Black and Minority Ethnic communities (BME) in hairdressing apprenticeships (1.32% of starts in 2019/20).



“ I’ve completed my SVQ3 and will be starting my hairdressing assessor qualification to become the first hairdressing assessor to specialise in Afro hair in Scotland.



I’m looking forward to helping create a more inclusive learning environment for BME apprentices and encourage more BME hairdressing salons to uptake Modern Apprenticeships.

Mavis Daniels,
Hairdressing Assessor Candidate



Mavis has also worked with Habia and successfully added diverse hairdressing units to the current hairdressing framework which have been available to use since 2022.

Development of Our Workforce

SDS aims to be an employer of choice, with a highly motivated, engaged, and productive workforce who take responsibility for their own personal development, wellbeing and fulfilment at work. We are committed to enabling fulfilling working lives, through our demonstration of fair work practices.

SDS is dedicated to equality of opportunity for colleagues within our organisation, including a commitment to support 21 hours (pro-rata) of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) each year for each member of staff. Mandatory CPD on equality and diversity includes managing diversity e-learning and a managing equality and diversity workshop for people managers. Every employee has a digital personal learning record which they can use to record their development activities. This supports informed discussions with their manager, as part of our ‘My Contribution’ approach to managing development and performance. Details on the average employee annual CPD undertaken, disaggregated by protected characteristic are given in the tables in Annex A.

We make a considerable commitment to the sponsorship of employees to undertake professional qualifications which have been agreed through analysis of learning needs. The main focus of this training remains on qualifications in Career Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG), particularly to support new entrants to the sector. However, other professionally recognised accreditations such as CIPD and CIMA are also supported.

Marketing and Communications

Equality, diversity and inclusion are important themes in our communications and marketing activity. Our approach is to mainstream diversity and inclusion across all our communications channels and marketing materials. This includes use of photography, representation, case study selection, messaging, and ensuring the highest standards of accessibility. Communications support for SDS interventions includes media handling, event management, promotional resources, web and social media content, and colleague engagement. Specific interventions include our work in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across the career service, apprenticeships, in targeted sectors, and through support for partner activity.

Equality Evidence Review – a summary of key points

The 2023 SDS Equality Evidence Review, produced by the Evaluation and Research Team, provides up-to-date evidence to support the SDS Equality Outcomes. For each of the protected groups, evidence is provided on participation in the education and skills system. Evidence is also provided on care experienced people, poverty, young carers, veterans, and individuals with experience of the justice system, reflecting the considering the definition of a broader range of factors contributing to inequality. Where available, evidence on intersectionality is included in recognition that the interaction of different protected characteristics can create the greatest inequality. Gaps in evidence are identified, such as the lack of granular data on disability and ethnicity and the lack of evidence in relation to lived experience and intersectionality.

Key findings are given in relation to each of the equality outcomes.

🔍 CASE STUDY

The Scottish Crannog Centre

The Scottish Crannog Centre, based on the banks of Loch Tay in Kenmore, Perthshire, believes that tapping into a diverse talent pool by offering opportunities for young people who face different barriers to work ensures they can engage with a diverse audience.



The Centre has worked to widen opportunities for young people by working with Developing the Young Workforce Perth and No One Left Behind, as well as taking on Modern Apprentices in partnership with Perthshire Autism Society.

“ Apprenticeships are a central pillar to the way we work, a way of working that is museum-wide, with shared values. Only by having a diverse workforce can we best connect to the diverse audiences outside our doors.”

Mike Benson, Managing Director,
Scottish Crannog Centre



For more info visit skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk

3. Progress against our Equality Outcomes for 2021-2025

In our fifth Mainstreaming Report we set out the five equality outcomes we would focus our efforts on achieving over the period 2021-25. The following section looks at the progress made against each of these outcomes since 2021. SDS's five equality outcomes are:

Equality Outcome 1

Page 12

People with lived experience of poverty, and from protected characteristic groups known to face inequality, have increased participation and improved progression in learning and employment.

Equality Outcome 2

Page 20

Women and girls can access and sustain learning and careers which reflect their skills and interests, enabled by the adoption of gender-sensitive approaches from employers and key influencers.

Equality Outcome 3

Page 26

Lived experience of people from protected characteristic groups is a fundamental component of the design and development of SDS services, improving their customer experience and outcomes.

Equality Outcome 4

Page 34

Businesses are aware of the benefits of diversity and fair work practices and increasingly adopt and embed them, improving the well-being of people from protected characteristic groups.

Equality Outcome 5

Page 39

SDS benefits from increased diversity throughout our workforce, particularly in relation to gender, race and disability, and colleagues with protected characteristics feel heard, respected and fulfilled at work.

CASE STUDY

Hamid's support helps apprentices to break barriers

Hamid Jamali, who arrived in Scotland from Iran, works for Glasgow-based training provider Esteem Training. In the two years he has worked there, Hamid has completed his Assessor and Internal Verification qualifications and an accelerated learning session with Esteem, which trains all employees up to understand how to educate all people with different learning styles.

Through the training Hamid has been able to support apprentices who are neurodiverse.

“ I supported one apprentice who had dyspraxia. I quickly realised he could not do two different things at the same time. For example, when I asked him to read something and to write about it he was very confused and stressed.

I split his programme into different, smaller sessions to give him the time to finish a course he did alongside his Modern Apprenticeship. In the end he finished the course earlier than others which was amazing.

Hamid Jamali, Esteem Training



For more info visit skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk

Equality Outcome 1: People with lived experience of poverty, and from protected characteristic groups known to face inequality, have increased participation and improved progression in learning and employment.



Equality Evidence Review

The Equality Evidence Review highlights that individuals across the protected groups and with lived experience of poverty can face some of the greatest barriers and poorest outcomes in relation to participation and progression in learning and work. Poverty interacts with other protected characteristics to produce some of the greatest inequalities.

Minority ethnic groups and women face challenges of low pay due to underrepresentation, discrimination, and occupational segregation despite better educational performance at school and higher education. Disabled people are underrepresented in the labour market at all levels and are more likely to be in low paid, insecure employment. They are also more likely to have lower levels of educational attainment, although this varies significantly according to disability. Care experienced young people face challenges in relation to educational attainment and labour market progression and their outcomes tend to be poorer than the rest of the population, which can lead to poverty.

2021 Actions

We identified the following actions for 2021-25 for this equality outcome:

- Review the Career Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) Needs Matrix to determine additional factors that may lead to the need for targeted CIAG support
- Use further data analysis to identify key groups, with consideration of intersectionality, and monitor and evaluate progress
- Increase awareness of the wide range of pathways into learning and employment amongst these groups and provide support to access them, including piloting new pathways into apprenticeships
- Map customer journeys for individuals in these customer groups, through the effective use of data and evidence, identifying and addressing barriers and enablers including interdependencies across the education and skills system
- Focus on upskilling and reskilling as a means to addressing in-work poverty
- Identify any skills gaps and build capability of colleagues across services through a programme of needs assessed, equality focused CPD

2021 Measures

Our identified key measures for 2021-25 for this equality outcome are:

- Annual Participation Measure
- Targeted S4-S6 pupils improving their career management skills
- 'Next Steps' customers improving their career management skills
- 'Next Steps' customers progressing to and sustaining in learning, training or employment
- Apprenticeship Starts
- Apprenticeship Achievement Rates

Table 1.1: Annual Participation Measure

Characteristic	Annual Participation Measure Rate (% people participating)					Overall change 2018-2022 (pp)
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
All aged 16-19	91.8%	91.6%	92.1%	92.2%	92.4%	+0.6
Gender						
Females	92.5%	92.2%	92.9%	93.2%	93.2%	+0.7
Males	91.2%	90.9%	91.4%	91.2%	91.6%	+0.4
Ethnicity						
Asian; African; Caribbean or Black; and Other ethnic groups	95.2%	95.1%	95.2%	95.4%	95.5%	+0.3
White ²	91.8%	91.4%	92.0%	92.0%	92.2%	+0.4
Disability						
Identified as disabled	86.3%	87.0%	89.0%	88.3%	88.7%	+2.4
Not identified as disabled	92.1%	91.8%	92.3%	92.4%	92.5%	+0.4

Table 1.2 Career Management Skills and Positive Destinations

Measure	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Targeted S4-S6 pupils improving their career management skills	81%	84%	84%
'Next Steps' customers who were assessed improving their career management skills	68%	64%	66%
'Next Steps' customers progressing to learning, training or employment and sustained it for at least six months	64%	62%	63%

² Note: The White ethnicity group includes young people from the following ethnicity categories:
White – Scottish, White – Other British, White – Irish, White – Polish, Gypsy/Traveller and White – Other

Table 1.3: Apprenticeship Starts

Customer Group	Starts	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Overall change 2017-22 (pp)
People who self-identified as being from a Mixed or Multiple; Asian; African; Caribbean or Black; and Other ethnic group	Modern Apprenticeships	2.3%	2.4%	2.7%	3.1%	+0.8
	Foundation Apprenticeships (SCQF L6)	6.2%	6.6%	6.6%	7.5%	+1.3
	Graduate Apprenticeships	3.5%	4.3%	5.1%	4.1%	+0.6
People who self-identified as care experienced	Modern Apprenticeships	1.5%	1.7%	1.7%	2.0%	+0.5
	Foundation Apprenticeships (SCQF L6)	5.1%	2.4%	2.7%	2.8%	-2.3
	Graduate Apprenticeships	-	0.4%	0.4%	*	-
People who self-identified an impairment / health condition or learning difficulty	Modern Apprenticeships	14.1%	15.4%	13.0%	13.3%	-0.8
	Foundation Apprenticeships (SCQF L6)	7.1%	16.4%	17.5%	19.7%	+12.6
	Graduate Apprenticeships	7.8%	10.0%	9.6%	9.6%	+1.8

Table 1.4: Modern Apprenticeship Achievement Rate

Customer Group	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Overall change 2018-22 (pp)
People who self-identified an impairment / health condition or learning difficulty	68.8%	71.1%	69.9%	66.9%	-1.9
People who self-identified as being from a Mixed or Multiple; Asian; African; Caribbean or Black; and Other ethnic group	74.9%	70.3%	75.2%	71.6%	-3.3
People who self-identified as care experienced	58.8%	64.4%	66.3%	58.6%	-0.2
Overall Achievement Rate	76.4%	76.6%	76.4%	71.8%	-4.6

Our equality outcomes are for four years and our progress so far on Outcome One is given on the following pages.

Key Activity since 2021

SDS's Parental Engagement Strategy aims to increase understanding amongst parents and carers of what SDS services they and their young people are entitled to and how to access them. We are committed to improving access to SDS resources which equip parents and carers in their role as career influencers. An example of how we are doing this is through Parents and Carers webinars on topics such as Scottish Apprenticeships and Option Choices. We run an ongoing programme to raise awareness of routes and pathways, particularly to parents and carers as key influencers of young people, including our first national webinar in Gaelic to help parents and carers of pupils considering learning, or currently studying, the language. Young people can access one-to-one engagement with a careers adviser earlier at option choice time (S2 and S3), which can include their parent or carer. Colleagues are delivering workshops and offering one-to-one support on Career Management Skills to a group of parents in areas of deprivation, as part of the Clyde Gateway Family Project.

The SDS Helpline was expanded to become a CIAG Helpline during the pandemic to support those whose job, learning or training had been affected. We have created a series of ongoing webinars that have now been promoted and offered to all post school customers.

SDS are working on the project Embedding Equality in Apprenticeship Framework Development. When an apprenticeship framework is reviewed, equality and diversity data for that framework is analysed to identify key trends of underrepresentation over a five year period. Inclusive language resources have been developed to encourage the use of inclusive terms when developing a framework.

We have also worked with Technical Expert Groups to insert an equality statement within each published framework document highlighting the areas of underrepresentation which are a priority to address for that framework. Taking an evidence-based approach and improving equality and diversity considerations within the frameworks will contribute to removing barriers for underrepresented groups and tackling existing unconscious bias.

A funding incentive is offered to support entry to the MA programme for individuals from minority ethnic communities who have further barriers to entry to the MA programme. This is one of the measures aimed at tackling underrepresentation from those with protected characteristics and acknowledges that minority ethnic individuals are more likely to experience intersectionality, facing discrimination on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or disability, in addition to race. MA starts from minority ethnic groups have increased since the incentive was launched.

To increase representation of minority ethnic groups in the hairdressing apprenticeship programme, SDS is supporting an individual to gain their assessor qualification specialising in Afro texture. This will address a gap in infrastructure relating to the assessment of minority ethnic hairdressing and improve knowledge and training of minority ethnic textured hair in the industry to encourage a more diverse uptake of the framework.

SDS ran a webinar to help tech employers understand what neurodiversity is, the strengths and challenges associated with neurodiverse conditions and what reasonable adjustments and changes to processes employers could make to better support neurodiversity and neurodivergent people in their teams.

2021-22 was the first year that Learning Disability and Specific Learning Difficulty have both been offered as a selection in our MA equality monitoring and reporting. The addition of a

separate category for Learning Disability was added in response to consultation and feedback from our disability stakeholders. We use this information to inform our strategy to address under-representation, including supporting more individuals with physical and learning disabilities to undertake a Modern Apprenticeship.

In 2022, SDS held its first internal Equality Festival to celebrate the achievements and work that is underway on equality, diversity, and inclusion across the organisation. There were two sessions on the day, with the first aimed at managers and senior leaders and the second session focused on equality in practice.

SDS has developed an Equality Practice Coach Network pilot to support colleagues across CIAG to consider their professional practice in relation to equality. This includes Equality Practice Coaches with a specific focus on poverty and the creation of a learning resource to understand the impact of poverty on individuals in their engagement with SDS and on their careers. The Equality Practice Coach Network are developing bite-size learning with the key information needed to support the delivery of career services to equality groups. Furthermore, SDS is supporting career practitioners to take advantage of further resources on equality, diversity and inclusion being developed through collaboration with the Career Development Institute new EDI co-ordinator.

SDS colleagues undertake mandatory CPD on Corporate Parenting which is currently being reviewed and updated to reflect key messages and The Promise principles.

Work in Partnership

As part of the Young Person's Guarantee, Scottish Government commissioned an independent review of Scotland's career services. Led by SDS, the Career Review Programme Board published Careers by Design, containing ten recommendations for the development

of Scotland's career services which were accepted by Scottish Government.

The review of the Needs Matrix falls under this comprehensive review and implementation work, particularly the recommendation on 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.

Poverty was a key focus in the EqIA of the Career Review, with note of intersectionality. It will continue to be a focus in the next phase of the review considering how organisations across the skills ecosystem can help individuals to access support to "survive" so they can then "thrive" through engagement with career services.

We have been contributing to Child Poverty Groups and Action Plans at Local Authority levels. There has been a focus on learning and creating partnerships in local teams to address the increased impact COVID-19 has had on those living in poverty, particularly digital poverty. We are working in partnership with Social Security Scotland to increase understanding of funds and grants available to customers through CDP for advisers and the promotion of services. Work is ongoing within SDS to understand how we maximise our contribution to tackling poverty in Scotland.

SDS conduct a large-scale study into recent school leaver's career pathways, choices, influences, and motivations through the Young People's Career Ambitions survey. The latest research indicates that young people from the most deprived areas (SIMD 1) and those who are care experienced are more influenced by their Careers Adviser in comparison to young people overall.

SDS has developed a key partnership with Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN), alongside the Scottish Government, to promote IFAN's Cash First approach to help people access any existing financial entitlements and support them out of poverty. This information is shared with colleagues from across the organisation.

We partnered with Data Education in Schools, the Data-Driven Innovation Skills Gateway and the Scottish Sensory Centre to create new BSL signs specifically for skills and jobs in digital technology. More than 500 words and terms have been created covering computer science, cyber security, data science and software development to help the deaf community access qualifications and careers in one of the fastest-growing sectors in the country.

SDS has worked in collaboration with DFN Project SEARCH, who support individuals with learning disabilities and/or autistic spectrum conditions into secure and sustainable employment. The partnership aims to develop a more integrated pipeline approach and has created a [methodology guide](#) to support more individuals with complex disabilities into apprenticeships. Raising awareness of and making connections between the 18 DFN Project SEARCH delivery sites across Scotland and National Training Providers will create more alignment and increase opportunities for those completing DFN Project SEARCH to progress into a Modern Apprenticeship.

We work with Focal Point Groups and other organisations to define and demonstrate the impact of poverty on entry, retention and progression in apprenticeships and employment. SDS currently works with groups focusing on the barriers facing disabled people, women and girls and care experienced people and are in the planning stages for a minority ethnic group.

Focus towards 2024

The SDS Equality Evidence Review provides evidence that poverty interacts with other protected characteristics to produce some of the greatest inequalities and that poverty has a significant negative impact on labour market and educational outcomes. During the remaining period of this EMR and in relation to Outcome One in particular, SDS will bring greater focus to the interaction between poverty and the following protected groups:

- Disabled people, who are underrepresented in the labour market at all levels and are more likely to be in low paid, insecure employment. They are also more likely to have lower levels of educational attainment, although this varies significantly according to disability. We will disaggregate this focus and any associated activity where possible.
- Care experienced young people, who face challenges in relation to educational attainment and labour market progression and their outcomes tend to be poorer than the rest of the population.
- Minority ethnic groups, who face challenges of underrepresentation, discrimination, and low pay despite better educational performance at school and higher education.

This focus will inform ongoing initiatives to improve the participation and achievement of underrepresented groups in apprenticeships.

Equality will remain a key focus when designing and implementing a revised service offer in line with our Strategic Plan and the Career Review recommendations. We will use co-design approaches and collaborate with changemaker groups to ensure that revised service models are accessible to all.

Career Service Support

Out of a routine for a while and lacking in confidence, Logan wasn't sure about the future, but Stirling-based Careers Adviser Christine was determined to help him find his pathway to a better life and career.

Logan Neilson, who is care experienced, really struggled at school. After leaving, he sought help from Christine at the same time as joining the Workstart programme at Forth Valley College. After they met, Christine discovered that Logan was bright and extremely eager to learn and develop new skills.

Over time, Christine and Logan's one-to-one career guidance meetings helped the teenager evolve into a mature, confident, articulate, caring and helpful individual

Logan was encouraged to try different options to help build and develop his Career Management Skills, undertaking a successful placement in administration with Plus Forth Valley, before deciding to study creative industries at college. He is now studying photography, film production and writing, and says he couldn't have achieved any of it without SDS help.

“ My experience with Skills Development Scotland was an amazing one. Without them I doubt I would have got as far as I did with work and education. Their support has been second to none.

Christine made me believe in myself, and my confidence has never been stronger. All I can say is that she has changed my life and made me believe I can do anything.

Skills Development Scotland is nothing short of amazing, and I owe them everything.

Logan Neilson

”



For more info visit skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk

Equality Outcome 2: Women and girls can access and sustain learning and careers which reflect their skills and interests, enabled by the adoption of gender-sensitive approaches from employers and key influencers.



Equality Evidence Review

The Equality Evidence Review highlights that gender inequality is apparent throughout the education and skills system. Girls and women have strong outcomes in the education system in terms of attainment and progression. However, in the labour market women are disproportionately affected by low pay, poor progression, and underrepresentation at higher levels. Intersectionality is key in fully understanding gender inequality with the interplay between gender, race, poverty, and disability creating some of the greatest inequalities.

2021 Actions

We identified the following actions for 2021-25 for this equality outcome:

- Use further data analysis to identify key groups from intersectional data and monitor and evaluate progress
- Consider and implement recommendations from the Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board (SAAB) Gender Commission for SDS and its partners
- Learn from sectors where progress has been made, like digital/technology and apply learning to growth sectors

- Support young women and girls, and their influencers, to pursue opportunities and pathways in male-dominated / "traditional" industries, should this be their choice
- Work with partners to develop guidance for employers to support them to have inclusive workplaces and address occupational segregation based on gender (and race)
- Identify any skills gaps and build capability of colleagues across services, including relevant gender equality training

2021 Measures

Our identified key measures for 2021-25 for this equality outcome are:

- % senior phase pupils self-identified as female agreeing their Careers Adviser:
 - ‘challenged me to explore a wide range of career options’
 - ‘encouraged me to aim high for my future career’
 - ‘supported me to make my own decisions and take control of my career path’
- Average effectiveness rating given by senior phase pupils self-identified as female to SDS career services in helping them to:
 - ‘Think about all of the learning, work and career options open to you’
 - ‘Challenge stereotypes, such as ideas of "traditional" male or female jobs’
- Gender balance in apprenticeship starts and achievement rates

Table 2.1: Feedback from Senior Phase Pupils

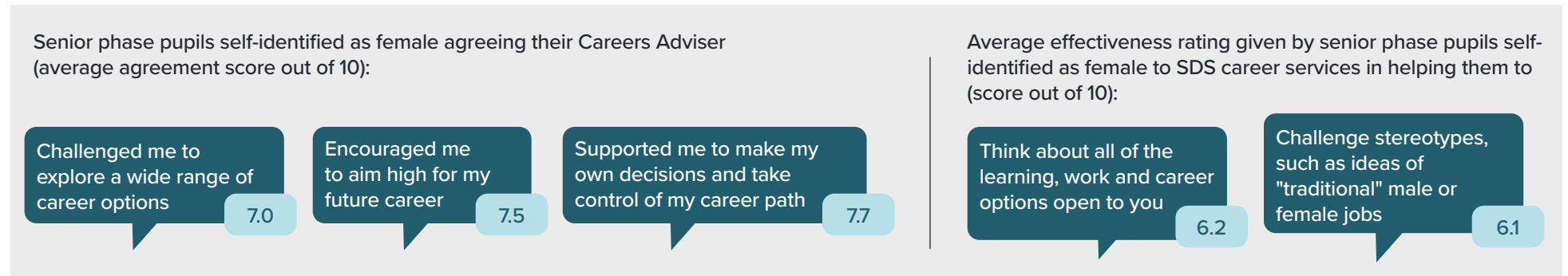


Table 2.1: Gender Balance in Modern Apprenticeship Starts and Achievement Rates

Modern Apprenticeships Starts	17/18	18/19	19/20	21/22
Female	38.5%	40.3%	39.8%	38.8%
Male	61.5%	59.7%	60.3%	61.2%

Modern Apprenticeships Achievement Rate	17/18	18/19	19/20	21/22
Female	75.6%	76.7%	76.2%	71.6%
Male	77.0%	75.5%	76.6%	71.9%

Our equality outcomes are for four years and our progress so far on Outcome Two is given on the following pages.

Key Activity since 2021

As part of Embedding Equality in Apprenticeship Framework Development project, SDS review frameworks to ensure they are inclusive for all. This includes reviewing statistics broken down by gender and ensuring that inclusive and non-gendered language is used throughout the framework. While girls achieve as well as boys in the apprenticeships, they participate at a lower rate. Therefore marketing, case studies, and visual images of girls in apprenticeships is key and continues to be promoted.

To support girls in their employment, we raise awareness of external opportunities such as networking with Equate and the mentoring circles for girls, which is especially valuable when there are few girls in the framework.

SDS works to ensure gender considerations are recognised in any documents we fund, for example the Rural Employers Toolkit, a practical guide on apprenticeships, training, and placement support for rural employers, which specifically references challenging gender stereotypes.

SDS received input from law firm Anderson Strathern to develop inclusive recruitment guides on positive action for employers which is available on our website. This has also helped raise awareness of positive action for colleagues working with businesses to ensure they are confident in their knowledge of the legal process of positive action, and ability to encourage employers and providers to take positive action.

SDS colleagues undertook CPD to become more aware of the importance of inclusive language and gender competency. This will help build employer and provider capacity to promote their vacancies and opportunities in a more inclusive way to increase the uptake of women and girls.

SDS has evaluated the benefit of flexible workplace practices to encourage women into the role. We have identified practical steps that employers and providers can do to become more flexible.

Work in Partnership

The work of the SAAB Gender Commission was led by employers from key sectors, such as engineering, tech, and care, as well as government, education, and academia, and was facilitated by SDS. The aim of the commission was changing long-term societal and workplace attitudes around gender in apprenticeships. The Commission looked at the challenges of gender inequality in the workplace and, crucially, what can be done collectively to address them to ensure fairer and more equal economic opportunities. The Commission made twelve recommendations in total centered around business-ready, practical solutions employers can do now; what government can do, working closely with employers, in the medium term; and what training, further and higher education providers, regulators and professional bodies with responsibility for the care and education of children and young people can do in the long term.

SDS continues to work closely with the SAAB Equality Employer Group and stakeholders. We are designing a detailed implementation stage, covering action planning, stakeholder engagement and communications.

SDS is taking forward our actions from the SAAB Gender Commission report, along with Education Scotland, to:

- Develop criteria for high quality professional learning and inspection frameworks for teaching and career guidance staff.
- Review existing resources available for career guidance in schools to ensure there is a consistent approach to gender diversity, and to ensure that young people, their parents, and carers are clear about the impact of occupational segregation.
- SDS funded the Gender Imbalance in Digital Technology project to develop a framework that supports people to run inclusive outreach activities, especially using role models to encourage women and girls to consider careers in tech. A pilot of the framework brought together women in tech at different stages in their careers in women only spaces and provided support such as peer mentoring. All the resources to run such events are now available to partners. The project builds on SDS's ongoing work to understand the causes of the current gender imbalance in digital technology roles in Scotland and to identify which activities work to address this imbalance.

SDS continues to take a cross-sector approach in tackling the gender imbalance in Scotland's tech sector. Led by SDS, the Gender Diversity Workstream of Scotland's Digital Economy Skills Group consists of a broad range of technology and public sector representatives working in collaboration to improve the gender balance in technology roles and develop a robust evidence base to helping employers attract, recruit, and retain more female talent.

SDS continues to liaise with the Improving Gender Balance and Equalities programme within Education Scotland, to ensure we are sharing resources and developing areas of work. For example, we supported the development of a guide for schools on gender bias

and identified areas to consider in supporting girls in their career choices in a bid to improve gender stereotypes and improve gender balance in subject uptake and learner pathways.

SDS works with partners and stakeholders to support women and girls to pursue opportunities in male-dominated industries. Some examples of our work include:

- A Women and Girls Focal Group has recently been established to bring together key stakeholders and influencers to discuss the policies and practices and to get feedback from partners regarding any barriers they face in terms of accessing our services. From these discussions we will be able to improve our services.
- A working group is aiming to set up a Women in STEM Charter, along with Equate, Heriot Watt University and Scottish Government. Women in STEM pilots have been undertaken to establish the best way to enter these traditional routes. We procured three organisations in different geographic areas to develop sustainable local pipelines to recruit, prepare and progress women aged 16-24 into STEM careers including progression into Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships. It is intended that the projects will encourage collaboration amongst key stakeholders. A key feature of the projects was that they should be informed by the findings of a scoping exercise to identify the perceived barriers and challenges for young women entering STEM careers, including apprenticeships as an effective pathway.
- Initial conversations took place with Close the Gap to explore gender competency CPD training, specifically in relation to professional practice in career guidance.

- SDS administer and procure Scottish Government funded Women Returners programme which support women returners across Scotland who have had a career break of six months or more or have multiple barriers to employment. The programme aims to help reduce the gender pay gap, improve women's economic position in the labour market and deliver fair and inclusive economic growth. There are 11 providers contracted to deliver the initiative, each offering unique training and support to suit women from all walks of life. For example, Code Division was created with the goal of reducing gender inequality in tech by helping women develop their digital skills. Recently, they helped 29 women refugees fleeing war in Ukraine improve on their digital and English skills to help them into work in Scotland.
- As part of the Embedding Equality in Framework Development project, inclusive language resources were created to support Technical Expert Groups. These are short-life working groups made up of employers, industry and professional bodies, qualification and education experts and social partners to develop apprenticeships. Equate Scotland, the national expert in gender equality in STEM sectors, delivered CPD for framework writers on inclusive language. The sessions focussed on how to practically review language choice and improve participants' understanding of the language of equality.

Focus towards 2024

The SDS Equality Evidence Review reinforces that girls and women have strong outcomes in the education system in terms of attainment and progression. However, in the labour market women are disproportionately affected by low pay, poor progression, and underrepresentation at higher levels. SDS will work with partners and do everything we can to influence change in this area through the implementation of the SAAB Gender Commission recommendations, the Career Review and lessons learned from STEM pilots in relation to sustainable pipelines into apprenticeships.

The Women Returners Project

SDS administer and procure the Scottish Government funded Women Returners project which supports women across Scotland who have had a career break of six months or more or have multiple barriers to employment.

The programme aims to help reduce the gender pay gap, improve women's economic position in the labour market and deliver fair and inclusive economic growth. There are 11 providers contracted to deliver the initiative, each offering unique training and support to suit women from all walks of life.

One provider, Code Division, was created with the goal of reducing gender inequality in tech by helping women develop their digital skills. Recently, 29 female refugees from war-torn Ukraine were given dedicated help to enhance their digital and English skills to help them into work in Scotland.



**Code
Division**

Equality Outcome 3: Lived experience of people from protected characteristic groups is a fundamental component of the design and development of SDS services, improving their customer.



Equality Evidence Review

The Equality Evidence Review provides evidence to support the design and development of SDS services. Evidence from the Equality Evidence Review helps SDS to understand the lived experience of those from across the protected characteristics, highlighting the challenges and barriers these groups face. The Equality Evidence Review identifies that qualitative data on lived experience is a significant data gap.

2021 Actions

We identified the following actions for 2021-25 for this equality outcome:

- Embed lived experience in co-design and co-production in our programmes from start to finish – to include diverse representation, where possible, on project teams across SD&D including the Career Review, to ensure the inclusion of diverse, lived-experience
- Collect and utilise intersectional data and robust evaluation to inform our programmes and services
- Take a systematic approach to user-testing with equality groups to ensure access and continually improve the universal digital service offer for customers with protected characteristics

- Further develop and adopt good practice in relation to equality impact assessment
- Identify any skills gaps and build capability of colleagues across services through a programme of needs assessed, equality focused CPD

2021 Measures

Our identified key measures for 2021-25 for this equality outcome are:

- Percentage of customers with protected characteristics who are satisfied with SDS services
- Percentage of customers with protected characteristics who would recommend SDS services to others [Outcomes for these customer groups will be monitored through Outcome One]

Data provided gives an overview of the latest surveys undertaken with customers in receipt of SDS career information, advice, and guidance services. Results have been segmented into four customer groups to differentiate between our school and post-school service offers. Within these categories, customers have been segmented to present results for those SDS targets and those that benefit from a broader service offer.

Customer feedback presented here covers our CIAG offer. In future we will report on other areas of our delivery, including work-based learning.

The mean point score (rated from 1 to 10) is calculated by adding all the scores together and dividing by the number of respondents.

The net promoter score (ranging from -100 to 100) is calculated by subtracting the percentage of respondents who scored the likelihood question 1-6 (“detractors”) from the percentage of those who scored it either 9 or 10 (“promoters”). A NPS above zero illustrates a higher proportion of promoters relative to detractors.

Table 3.1: Senior Phase Pupils (Targeted) Feedback

Senior Phase targeted pupils		Satisfied with SDS services	Likelihood to recommend SDS services to others	
		2021/22	2021/22	
		Mean point score	Mean point score	Net Promoter score
All aged 16+ S4-S6 targeted pupils		9.1	8.8	60
Gender	Female	9.1	8.9	64
	Male	9.1	8.8	58
Race	Asian; African; Caribbean or Black; and Other ethnic groups	9.4	9.1	70
	White	9.0	8.8	56
Disability	Identified as disabled	9.0	8.7	56
	Not identified as disabled	9.2	8.9	62
Care Experience	Identified as care experienced	9.0	8.7	58
	Not identified as care experienced	9.1	8.9	61

Table 3.1: Senior Phase Pupils (Not Targeted) Feedback

Senior Phase targeted pupils (not targeted)		Satisfied with SDS services	Likelihood to recommend SDS services to others	
		2021/22	2021/22	
		Mean point score	Mean point score	Net Promoter score
All aged 16+ S4-S6 targeted pupils (not targeted for SDS support)		9.3	9.1	51
Gender	Female	9.3	9.1	71
	Male	9.4	9.2	74
Race	Asian; African; Caribbean or Black; and Other ethnic groups	9.6	9.4	79
	White	9.4	9.3	76
Disability	Identified as disabled	9.4	9.2	70
	Not identified as disabled	9.3	9.1	70
Care Experience	Identified as care experienced	9.6	9.9	100
	Not identified as care experienced	9.3	9.1	69

Table 3.1: Adult Universal Customers Feedback

Adult Universal Customers Services available to all adults, regardless of age or circumstance		Satisfied with SDS services	Likelihood to recommend SDS services to others	
		2021/22	2021/22	
		Mean point score	Mean point score	Net Promoter score
All Universal customers		9.6	9.6	83
Gender	Female	9.6	9.7	86
	Male	9.6	9.5	80
Race	Asian; African; Caribbean or Black; and Other ethnic groups	9.5	9.7	90
	White	9.6	9.6	83
Disability	Identified as disabled	9.4	9.5	79
	Not identified as disabled	9.6	9.6	85
Care Experience	Identified as care experienced	9.6	9.3	72
	Not identified as care experienced	9.6	9.6	84

Table 3.1: Next Steps Customers Feedback

Next Steps Customers Young people aged 16-18.5 years (or 16-25 years with care experience) who are unemployed and seeking work		Satisfied with SDS services	Likelihood to recommend SDS services to others	
		2021/22	2021/22	
		Mean point score	Mean point score	Net Promoter score
All Next Steps customers		9.4	9.0	67
Gender	Female	9.3	9.2	73
	Male	9.4	9.0	65
Race	Asian; African; Caribbean or Black; and Other ethnic groups	9.3	9.1	73
	White	9.4	9.0	65
Disability	Identified as disabled	9.4	8.9	60
	Not identified as disabled	9.5	9.3	77
Care Experience	Identified as care experienced	9.2	8.8	61
	Not identified as care experienced	9.4	9.1	68

Our equality outcomes are for four years and our progress so far on Outcome Three is given on the following pages.

Key Activity since 2021

SDS carried out research to ensure the content and language of the Cyber Security section of Digital World is inclusive for women and non-binary customers to identify improvements we could make to encourage them to apply for qualifications and careers in this sector. All users who took part in the insight sessions felt the language on our website was inclusive, but recommendations were made on how to improve our colour, layout, and imagery choices to be more inclusive. The insight from this project will be used to inform all of our digital services.

SDS has established a Lived Experience Community of Practice of all protected characteristic groups and care experienced people. The aim of the group is to develop a deeper understanding of the lived experience of protected groups and to use this evidence to improve SDS products and services. The group brings together internal practitioners who gather customer insight and ensure we have a consistent approach.

The Equality Data Collection community of practice is the primary group for the development of organisational good practice regarding Equality data collection, promoting consistency in practice across the business. The community of practice will support the delivery of the Equality Strategy, focusing on data collection and measurements, with a specific action around improving the reporting of intersectional data. It is also responsive to business needs, working as a consultative group for specific actions and projects that require advice and support around equality data. The group builds on similar approaches already established within SDS, for example the CIAG community of practice on Corporate Parenting.

As identified through consultation and research, we aim to incorporate Island Communities Impact Assessments and Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments into our EqlA practice. As part of our new integrated approach, we will be gathering data regarding the consultations that have taken place as part of the EqlA process and developing mechanisms to share and monitor consultations across the business. This will help to reduce repetitive consultations with our partners whilst still ensuring that lived experience is at the heart of service design and development. The Equality Evidence Hub was launched in 2022 to provide a source of central and accessible evidence for colleagues to use when developing EqlAs. This resource will lead to higher quality EqlAs that better meet the needs of our customers and increase the number of EqlAs completed as the process of developing them will be easier.

Equality Power BI Reports have been developed to enable SDS to gain a better understanding of equality characteristics by geography, framework and sector, and to show providers how their delivery performance compares with their peers. This information helps SDS have constructive equality conversations with providers and to encourage them to take action to increase participation rates where needed.

Work in Partnership

The Career Review EqlA ensured the needs of those with lived experience of equality factors have been considered at every stage of the Career Review. The Career Review included equality groups within the co-design and stakeholder consultation and provided the views of those with lived experience of equality factors. Each phase of the review was equality impact assessed to maintain a clear focus on equality, diversity and inclusion across the recommendations and the final report. As the Career Review itself set out to address the persistent inequalities in our economy and society, the Career Review EqlA has provided insight and guidance

to meet that ambition. Furthermore, each of the ten Career Review recommendations is supported by a clear equality impact statement.

SDS commissioned a consultation report on Engaging Black and Minority Ethnic individuals and their parents around what they felt were the barriers and challenges to accessing apprenticeships. The findings suggest that there is, at times, a lack of knowledge and understanding about the breadth of apprenticeships on offer in Scotland. The research indicates a direct correlation between a child's career choice and parental influence, meaning that ethnic minority young people are less likely to see apprenticeships as a possible career path and that a change of perception requires work with both young people and parents. The research findings will be used to further SDS's aim that all individuals have equality of opportunity in relation to apprenticeships.

SDS commissioned Intercultural Youth Scotland (IYS) to develop a model for engaging minority ethnic communities, particularly young people, around our work-based learning (WBL) products and services. The research drew on the lived experience of minority ethnic individuals to explore their knowledge of apprenticeships and establish what barriers they encountered if they had applied for an apprenticeship. Targeting young minority ethnic individuals and their key influencers, including parents, carers, and community leaders, the model aims to raise awareness of the benefits and attractiveness of WBL among minority ethnic communities.

Focus towards 2024

We will continue to undertake our Community of Practice on Lived Experience, to ensure that we continue to expand building lived experience into the development cycle of our products and services and in mainstreaming equality more broadly. This group aims to bring focus to protected customer groups not covered by other equality outcomes and cross-cutting issues of good practice in relation to elevating the lived experience of customer groups.

We will continue to develop and expand our Focal Point Groups to ensure that we engage with key representative organisations across Scotland to better understand the challenges from a wider range of the individuals they represent and consider appropriate action.

Codesign and the Career Review

As part of the Young Person's Guarantee, the Scottish Government commissioned an independent review of Scotland's career services. The Career Review engaged hundreds of practitioners, partners and people entitled to services to co-design how services are delivered through a 'changemaking' approach.

An 'equality first' approach was embedded throughout the Career Review to ensure the insight of individuals with lived experience of protected characteristics, and those who represent them, was captured and reflected.

DYW Coordinator and former teacher Brendan Toal (pictured) was one of the practitioners who took part in the co-design process. He reflects: "We talked a lot about this idea of how we can provide support to equity groups that might experience barriers and that really came through. I enjoyed getting to speak to different people and hear their working life story and what mattered to them".

Oliver Stan, then an S1 school pupil, was one of hundreds of young people who supported the work of the Career Review. Oliver said: "Children don't really have much of a say. We need to learn how to understand children and what they think inside. I think it's important that young people's voices are heard."

YMCA said: "The Career Review put lived experience at the heart of its co-design approach, ensuring a wide range of diverse voices were heard and valued. I enjoyed working with SDS and others to collaboratively co-design, using the experiences of the young people who we work with at YMCA to redesign services, which we believe will better meet the needs of all of Scotland's people."



Careers Adviser Laura Cochrane was one of the SDS colleagues who helped produce the Career Review Equality Impact Assessment. She said: "As someone who is dedicated to our profession and really understands the individuality of each of our customers, it's wonderful to be a part of embedding equality throughout the eco-system. By doing so, we can better meet the needs of the people we support."

In February 2022, the Career Review Programme Board published Careers by Design, containing ten recommendations for the development of Scotland's career services. With equality indicators and an equity statement for each recommendation, the ten recommendations have critical value in addressing the needs of equality groups, supporting individuals to overcome barriers and disadvantage and in advocating for equality, inclusion and diversity across education, training, and employment.



To read the final report of the Career Review visit: sds.co.uk/career-review/

Equality Outcome 4: Businesses are aware of the benefits of diversity and fair work practices and increasingly adopt and embed them, improving the well-being of people from protected characteristic groups.



Equality Evidence Review

The Equality Evidence Review provides data and evidence in relation to the labour market experiences and outcomes for each of the protected groups. The evidence suggests there is a strong business case for equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace with clear benefits for employers and workers in relation to productivity, profitability, innovation, and skills. Where available, evidence on the business case for diversity is presented including employers' perceptions of equality and the role of employers in improving equality and diversity.

2021 Actions

We identified the following actions for 2021-25 for this equality outcome:

- Elevate lived experience of people from protected characteristic groups to contribute to more diverse and inclusive practice by using our convening power and commission-based approaches
- Become an active member of an EDI coalition and consider a memorandum of understanding with another organisation and/or focused coalition to achieve this outcome
- Building on the Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan, set clear expectations on equality and fair work for suppliers and support in achieving those

- Highlight key strengths and areas for improvement, including effective practice and any case studies, through a formal quality thematic review of apprenticeships
- Resources developed for individuals on wellbeing, employment rights and responsibilities
- Support employers in relation to skills, knowledge and expertise to implement fair work practices

2021 Measures

Our identified key measures for 2021-25 for this equality outcome are:

- 57.0% of unique suppliers were accredited Living Wage employers and were awarded a regulated contract awarded in 2022/23 (compared to 50.9% in 2021/21)
- 42.6% of unique suppliers had signed up to the Scottish Business Pledge and were awarded a regulated contract awarded in 2022/23 (compared to 37.9% in 2021/22)

Our equality outcomes are for four years and our progress so far on Outcome Four is given on the following pages.

Key Activity since 2021

One of the Career Review recommendations highlighted the potential for fair work to address the impact of poverty. As part of our work to ensure career services understand the impact of poverty on individuals and communities, SDS collaborated with trade union colleagues to develop a learning package to raise awareness of the principles of fair work. This resource was piloted with senior pupils to allow them to identify what a good quality job looks like.

SDS works to ensure underrepresented groups can participate and succeed in SDS commissioned apprenticeships. Identifying case studies and real-life stories can be a powerful way to influence employers. Case studies are intended to support the promotion of SDS services and alternative pathways for individuals in their career, and to support aspirations of those from equality groups.

The current App.Scot site is predominantly used by training providers and employers and SDS is undertaking a scoping exercise to enhance this with information that would be useful for current apprentices, including on Fair Work and wellbeing. Working with specialist mental health organisation, Penumbra, specific resources have been commissioned and disseminated on mental health for employers and apprentices themselves. We are gathering intelligence by speaking to apprentices from the different programmes (Modern Apprenticeships, Further Apprenticeships and Graduate Apprenticeships) to ensure we develop a resource that will meet their needs.

To achieve our aim of ensuring equality of opportunity and access we provide training and resources to inform and upskill learning providers on the needs of different groups and practical steps they can take to recruit and support individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds. Between 2020 and 2023 SDS has delivered CPD sessions on: needs assessment, mental health, autism awareness,

race equality, suicide prevention, engaging with ethnically diverse communities, poverty awareness and supporting care experienced young people. We also delivered various information sessions, for example on becoming a mentor for a care experienced young person, and have e-learning modules on trans awareness, refugees, neurodiversity, and supporting unpaid carers.

SDS produced an Employer Equality Evidence Review which demonstrates a business case for diversity, presented to internal teams and other employer-facing partners. It was developed with a Rapid Evidence Assessment and is used to inform the content for the Employer Toolkit. The Employer Toolkit summarises the key points from a wide range of existing resources and brings these together into one place making it easier for employer teams to find, use and share with employers. The toolkit includes a directory of third sector organisations indicating which services they offer to employers and can be filtered by protected characteristic, geography and type of service (e.g. promoting vacancies, delivering training, consultancy). This is to enable employers to be directed to organisations who can support them with their specific needs.

Learning providers are contracted by SDS to deliver WBL. Through our commissioning and contract management processes we set expectations that learning providers will take proactive steps to support us in achieving our aim of ensuring equality of opportunity and access across all customer groups. Our aims are that providers are informed of the challenges or barriers facing customer groups in accessing WBL opportunities, understand appropriate terminology and language on equality, understand the business benefits of diversity, and feel confident in promoting good practice to employers.

The Employer Action Plan was developed to ensure equality and diversity are embedded throughout our employer service offer and encourage businesses to adopt fair work, improving the wellbeing of people from protected characteristic groups. The actions identified

in the plan promote the business benefits of diversity and fair work, offering practical advice to employers who want to improve their practices and support for SDS staff to gain the knowledge, understanding and access to resources they need.

SDS has worked to raise awareness of fair work across our own staff, for instance, staff have attended sessions around fair work principles and how this relates to contract management with suppliers. We are now looking to progress work on fair work with suppliers. Our Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan set out our expectations of suppliers in terms of equality embedded in contracts.

We have high expectations of employers to deliver their equality and diversity commitments and so we provide support through equality training and resources for providers.

The Skills Planning and Sector Development community of practice aims to share and develop good practice from sectors or projects where progress is being made. The group also reviews learning from EqIAs and project evaluations (including using a co-design approach) to identify common recurring activities and challenges, and uses this information to inform guidance and activities across SDS.

Work in Partnership

SDS is committed to elevating the lived experience of people from protected characteristic groups to contribute to more diverse and inclusive practice by using our convening power and commission-based approaches. We are involved in the following groups:

- The SAAB Gender Commission brought together Scottish employer organisations and those who influence career choices and policy to understand how we can address the issue of workplace inequality in relation to gender. Its report was published in 2022 making twelve recommendations.
- SDS is scoping for a proposed SAAB Commission on Race to work with employers and partner organisations to identify ways to increase representation of minority ethnic individuals within apprenticeships. The recommendations will provide SDS, along with employers and other bodies, actions identified by those with lived experience to increase representation of minority ethnic individuals within apprenticeships.
- The SAAB Employer Equality Group aims to address underrepresentation in apprenticeships and to support better access and participation. SDS is also involved in the short life working group on care experience, which is examining the barriers faced by care experienced people in finding and retaining a job and by employers in recruiting and retaining care experienced people. The group aims to identify the areas where more support or an improved approach is needed.

SDS is an active member in the following EDI coalitions:

- The Business Support Partnership is an established and effective partnership between Scotland's enterprise and skills agencies; local government via COSLA, SLAED and Business Gateway; Scottish Government; and sector specific agencies Creative Scotland and VisitScotland. A specific Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group has been set up and is led by SDS, to share learning and improve equality knowledge and practice across the partners.
- The Public Sector Network is a joint initiative between SDS and Scottish Government which aims to create more opportunities for young people in the Public Sector. SDS is contributing to a public sector 'Lunch and Learn' where the network can hear real-life examples of good practice of how organisations have supported underrepresented groups through engagement and recruitment.

Focus towards 2024

Recognising the important part that employers play in achieving our equality outcomes, we will continue to work with partners across the Business Support Partnership. This will ensure we collectively benefit from experience and resources to better support employers in creating a diverse workforce, including where this can address skills shortages.

We will continue work on our Employer Action Plan, to ensure key employer facing staff have the confidence and resources to develop meaningful diversity and inclusion conversations with employers they work with.

In addition, we will continue to promote the strong business case for equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace with clear benefits for employers and workers in relation to productivity, profitability, innovation and skills, and in addressing labour market shortages.

In relation to apprenticeships, going forward we will work closely with the Scottish Funding Council to identify and implement equality actions, including through joint impact assessment work.

Providing Opportunities to People from Disadvantaged and Underrepresented Groups

Based in Airdrie, Bell Group is a family-owned, family operated, painting and building maintenance contractor which has employed apprentices – mainly in painting and decorating – since 1984.

The business offers strong pastoral support to all apprentices and is continuing its tradition of offering opportunities to disadvantaged groups. It provides work experience placements and taster days for refugees, care leavers, ex-offenders, cadets and those leaving the military, as well as those furthest from the labour market from the communities in which they operate.

These initiatives helped Bell Group to win the Large Employer of the Year – Promoting Diversity category in this year’s Scottish Apprenticeship Awards.

 For more info visit skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk



“ Having recently had our application to offer jobs to Ukrainians granted by the Home Office, we are currently working on a specific project in Scotland in collaboration with a number of key partners by opening doors to promote the construction sector and apprenticeship vacancies to refugees.

Julie Lawrenson, Bell Group’s Head of Learning and Organisational Development

”

Equality Outcome 5: SDS benefits from increased diversity throughout our workforce, particularly in relation to gender, race and disability, and colleagues with protected characteristics feel heard, respected and fulfilled at work.



Equality Evidence Review

The Equality Evidence Review presents evidence that highlights the challenges to workforce participation and progression by gender, race, and disability. Workers from minority ethnic groups and disabled workers are underrepresented in the labour market with lower levels of participation, representation, and progression. Women are disproportionately impacted by occupational segregation which impacts on their pay and progression in certain occupations. Evidence is presented to show that (in general) diverse businesses and organisations tend to be more successful.

2021 Actions

We identified the following actions for 2021-25 for this equality outcome:

- Adopt different approaches to recruitment with the intent of achieving greater inclusion in recruitment outcomes
- Take action to reduce our gender, race and disability pay gap
- Through implementation of the Fair Work Action Plan, maintain the high level of employee engagement and effective employee voice, particularly in relation to protected and underrepresented groups
- Implement a strategy for Race Equality at SDS incorporating capability, culture, career progression and public commitment

- Further develop our existing range of employee network groups, including those for LGBT and minority ethnic colleagues, enabling lived experience to influence policy development and workplace practices
- Continue to demonstrate SDS as a best practice LGBT inclusive employer, with a focus on intersectionality
- Develop positive action opportunities for underrepresented groups to access and progress in work, particularly in relation to our Young Talent Programme, leadership development and informal mentoring offer.

2021 Measures

Our identified key measures for 2021-25 for this equality outcome are:

- % of employees reporting information on each of the protected characteristics – contained in appendix A
- Results from our employee engagement surveys
- Monitoring of career progression and CPD hours by equality groups – contained in appendix A
- Equal Pay Gap (Gender, Disability and Ethnicity) – contained in appendix B
- % women, Minority Ethnic and disabled people in manager and leadership roles – contained in appendix B
- Stonewall Index Ranking

Our equality outcomes are for four years and our progress so far on Outcome Five is given on the following pages.

Table 5.1: Employee Engagement Survey Results

Measure	2019	2021
SDS is an equal opportunities employer	8.3	8.4
SDS welcomes and accommodates the different needs of all colleagues	8.2	8.2

Table 5.2: Stonewall Index Ranking

2020	2022
12th out of 503 UK employers	29th out of 403 UK employers

Key Activity since 2021

SDS continues to prioritise investment in pay to address areas of inequality within the SDS workforce. In our 2021 and 2022 pay reviews, a higher level of pay award has been awarded to our ‘young talent’, and ‘professional and technical’ grades, where a higher proportion of our female, disabled and minority ethnic workforce can be found.

We are committed to maintaining a high level of employee engagement and effective employee voice, particularly in relation to protected and underrepresented groups. For example:

- One of the key actions within the Fair Work Action Plan is to strengthen the effective voice of all underrepresented groups within SDS. An example of progressing this is our ongoing internal communications campaign on ED&I, intended to facilitate an inclusive culture by raising colleague awareness, understanding and engagement.
- We are learning from our pandemic experience and in 2022 we introduced our interim hybrid working approach which provides a framework to enable SDS, people managers and colleagues to make simple, customer-focussed decisions on where we work. It is intended to support SDS to move to more hybrid working practices than pre-pandemic.
- Our employee survey results (Your Views) demonstrate that our employees view SDS as a fair work employer.
- We have updated our Wellbeing Strategy action plan, with colleague feedback highlighting the need for a continued focus on mental wellbeing and the importance of supporting the wellbeing of people managers.

Working to become an Anti-Racist Organisation

SDS's commitment to race equality is evidenced by the commitment made in our new Strategic Plan 2022-27 to become an anti-racist organisation. Building on research and good practice insights, we established a Race Equality Steering Group which included members from our Trade Unions and BAME Network Group to develop a draft Race Equality Action Plan. The Race Equality Steering Group and BAME Network are currently paused, as the network group felt that SDS would benefit from accessing external expert race equality advice. We are currently exploring the opportunity to access this advice and to work in partnership with external experts. This will help us to further understand the challenges as a learning organisation and develop our strategic plans towards becoming an anti-racist organisation.

Meanwhile, we have continued to progress several key activities on race equality in SDS:

- An informal Mentoring Network was piloted in 2021. This included a specific focus on targeting minority ethnic colleagues who were interested in career progression. Senior staff acted as mentors for this initiative, and this has had a positive impact on minority ethnic representation in promoted posts (see annex). We have subsequently launched a new digital mentoring platform 'Mentoring at SDS'. Mentoring is a central part of our ambition to create, sustain and develop a diverse workforce in which talented people maximise their contribution and potential.
- In addition to the Anti-Racist training for our Board, mentioned in the Governance section, 'It's About Race' Training sessions have been delivered to colleagues by the Diversity Trust to positively impact culture and improve the race competence of colleagues. The training focuses on improving understanding of various forms of racism, inequality and bias affecting the Black, Asian and Minority communities in Scotland. Training has received positive feedback from colleagues and additional sessions have been offered to meet high demand.
- As an employer, we are committed to increasing the diversity of our workforce. SDS worked with the Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations (CEMVO), as part of the Scottish Government funded Race for Human Rights programme, to undertake a review of our recruitment processes in 2022. Following this, we identified five areas of action and exploration:
 - Improved pre-selection engagement
 - Improved post-selection feedback to candidates
 - Further analysis of recruitment and selection data to understand what areas present the greatest opportunity for improvement in selection outcomes for minority ethnic candidates, such as roles or specific minority ethnic backgrounds
 - Increased interview panel diversity
 - New Recruitment and Selection Policy developed

Work in Partnership

SDS currently has 58 equality champions who promote information on equality issues, developments and best practice. Equality champions have an important role in identifying potential equality challenges and driving forward equality at a local level.

Our internal LGBTI+ allies network group offers confidential support and advice regarding any LGBTI+ related matters to all staff. The network attended Pride events across Scotland, including in Shetland for the first time in 2022, to demonstrate we are an inclusive employer.

SDS is currently working with disabled employees who have expressed an interest in establishing a disability staff network.

SDS was proud to be ranked 29th out of 403 UK employers in Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2022 for our progress on lesbian, gay, bi and trans inclusion in the workplace. Going forward, SDS will focus on implementing improvements suggested by our LGBTI+ network and progressing the recommendations from the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.

SDS has developed plans for positive action opportunities in consultation with colleagues, partners and taking into consideration the voice of underrepresented groups. Examples include:

- In 2022, 14% of our Graduate Intern posts were ringfenced for disabled applicants.
- SDS designed a new paid summer internship programme for care experienced undergraduates to provide further experience of the world of work and in recognition of the greater need for some of these students to be able to support themselves financially over the summer break.

- SDS requires all people managers to attend an ED&I workshop that focusses on inclusive recruitment practices and how to promote an organisational culture of dignity and respect.

Through a range of initiatives, SDS has continued to improve the proportion of employees reporting their diversity information. Currently, 96% of employees have disclosed their race. In recognition of this, SDS delivered a best practice workshop in partnership with CEMVO for Scottish Government on how to improve employee declaration rates.

Focus towards 2024

Given our progress made to date, we have identified the four priority areas below which will help us achieve this outcome:

We will progress a Strategy for Race Equality at SDS with a focus on capability and inclusive culture, to become an anti-racist organisation including exploring the opportunity to further roll out the It's About Race sessions.

We will further develop our employee network groups to enable effective employee voice. Our focus will be on establishing a network group for disabled colleagues.

We will continue to seek opportunities to achieve greater inclusion in our recruitment practices, including further analysis of recruitment and selection data.

We will continue to analyse pay gaps and seek opportunities to impact positive change through Scottish Government pay policy priorities and recruitment activity.

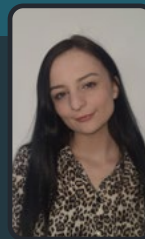
Summer Internship Initiative

In Summer 2021, as part of the SDS Corporate Parenting Plan and youth strategy, SDS delivered a summer internship programme pilot to care experienced individuals. Three summer interns, who were finishing their third-year studies, joined SDS for an eight-week placement.

The interns participated in a mix of work-based learning and personal development workshops. They completed their placements and offered feedback on their experience:

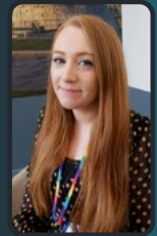
“ Skills Development Scotland's employment opportunities allowed me to comfortably transition from university to the world of work while also developing a variety of skills along the way.

Nicole Smith, Junior UX Designer at SDS



“ The summer internship helped me to see how the things I was learning at university are put into practice in a real HR environment. The subsequent placement has allowed me to expand my knowledge and skills while becoming confident in my role. Thanks to these placements I now know I have made the right decision in my career and am extremely grateful for the opportunities.

Natalie Horsfall, HR Assistant at SDS



In 2022, SDS extended the summer internship pilot and offered a 12-month placement to the interns following completion of their fourth year at university. Two of the interns accepted the opportunity and following their graduation and started their placements in July 2022.

SDS is currently evaluating our approach and shaping recommendations for the future of the programme.

4. Future Monitoring and Reporting

The work and ambitions highlighted through our equality objectives, and the wider content of this Mainstreaming Report, are very much ongoing, and progress against these will continue to be monitored on that basis. We will continue to take a cross-organisational approach to ensuring progress is made against each of our equality outcomes.

A final update on progress against our equality outcomes will be reported in our next Mainstreaming Report, due in 2025. Prior to that, some actions and measures will also be reported via other SDS corporate publications and the publication of official statistics.

CASE STUDY

Supportive employers developing talent: Murray's apprenticeship journey

West Lothian College offer Assisted Programmes courses to support students with additional support needs to reach their goals. This helps young people prepare for volunteering, employment or further study and the more informal college setting can provide a valuable step from school to greater independence.

Murray Robertson first joined Assisted Programmes on a School Transitions course, which provided a taster of what the college offered. He is now undertaking an apprenticeship in Retail at SCQF 5 incorporating an SVQ 2 in Retail Skills.

Adjustments were made to Murray's assessment planning and methods, including breaking the plans down into more manageable chunks and using more professional discussion during observation.

“I started college when I came to a school link and then I started full-time and part-time courses. I have enjoyed being at college, meeting new people and learning new things.”

Murray Robertson, Modern Apprentice



For more info visit skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk

Annex A

Our workforce data provides the evidence to inform our work to further embed and mainstream equality in all that we do. The Specific Duties require public bodies to publish an annual breakdown of our employee data by composition, recruitment, development and retention and we have detailed this information on the following pages.

In all the tables featured in Annex A and B numbers less than five have been replaced with an asterisk (*) to avoid the potential identification of individuals. To ensure these numbers could not be calculated by subtracting from the total number of employees, where necessary, we have also replaced a further field with two asterisks (**).

Following advice from both the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), we carried out a Data Protection Impact Assessment in 2023 in relation to our workforce diversity monitoring information. This identified that for published reports, SDS is now able to report on figures 5 and over, where previously were only able to report 10 and above. This allows the publication of more transparent and meaningful data, whilst maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of our colleagues.

Annex A includes:

- **Summary of Key Employment Data Findings**
- **Annex A1: SDS Employee Data by Age**
- **Annex A2: SDS Employee Data by Disability**
- **Annex A3: SDS Employee Data by Ethnicity**
- **Annex A4: SDS Employee Data by Religion or Belief**
- **Annex A5: SDS Employee Data by Care Experience**
- **Annex A6: SDS Employee Data by Sexual Orientation**
- **Annex A7: SDS Employee Data by Gender Reassignment**
- **Annex A8: SDS Employee Data by Sex**

In each of the listed sections above, we present the total number of SDS employees, those who were recruited to, promoted in or leavers from SDS, and the average number of CPD hours completed by the protected characteristic in question. Additional comments and analysis are provided where appropriate.

Summary of Key Employee Data Findings

Whilst there have been no major changes to the workforce diversity, the following bullet points highlight general trends in workforce data:

- We have maintained the high number of employees reporting their diversity monitoring information, with low numbers of colleagues reporting “prefer not to say” or “no response”.
- There was less recruitment in 2022/2023 in comparison to previous years, due to stringent vacancy management in the context of budget constraints. This is also reflected in the reduced numbers of promotions in 2022/2023.
- Retention of employees has remained consistent over the reporting period.
- On average employees completed 34 hours CPD in 2022/23. Analysis of protected characteristics indicates that there is fair and equal access to development opportunities.
- The percentage of employees identifying as disabled has continued to increase.
- There was a reduction in recruitment of 16-24-year-olds in SDS. However, this is a result of the number of young people joining or progressing in longer programmes. These opportunities include options to progress from a two year Modern Apprenticeship onto Technical Apprenticeship, embarking on a Graduate Apprenticeship lasting four years or completing a 12 month Graduate Internship. In addition, young talent opportunities are open to Disabled and Care Experienced people up to the age of 29.
- There has been an increase in representation of minority ethnic colleagues in both new starts and promotions.
- Whilst we recognise there is more work to be done, there has been progress in relation to minority ethnic representation, with a 0.6 percentage point (pp) increase in workforce representation. Minority ethnic people represented 7% of new starts to the organisation in 2021/22 and 11% in 2022/2023.
- There has been little change since 2021 in the overall female/male breakdown of the workforce. This is also the case for women in leadership roles in SDS.
- Our mean gender pay gap has continued to decrease from 8.0% in 2021 to 7.6% in 2023. The median gender pay gap is now 0%.
- There was an increase in the Ethnicity and Disability Pay gaps. This is as a result of the increase in recruitment from both minority ethnic and disabled people with colleagues joining the organisation in roles at the lower end of our pay and grading framework. This has subsequently had a negative impact on the pay gaps with 70% of new starts from a minority ethnic background joining in Young Talent grades, SDS3, or SDS4/CD grades, which therefore reduced the average hourly rate of minority ethnic colleagues, increasing the pay gap.

Annex A1: SDS Employee Data by Age

Age Range	Total Employees										pp change 2019-23
	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
16-24	83	5.1	61	3.7	89	5.4	51	3.1	52	3.2	-1.9
25-34	259	16.1	275	16.5	281	16.9	286	17.4	274	17.0	+0.9
35-49	656	40.7	655	39.2	651	39.2	622	37.9	618	38.3	-2.4
50+	615	38.1	678	40.6	639	38.5	681	41.5	670	41.5	+3.4
Total	1613		1669		1660		1640		1614		

Age Range	Recruited to SDS										pp change 2019-23
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
16-24	43	31.4	41	29.5	42	48.8	38	35.8	13	20.3	-11.1
25-34	43	31.4	39	28.1	13	15.1	34	32.1	17	26.6	-4.8
35-49	40	29.2	41	29.5	20	23.3	20	18.9	28	43.8	+14.6
50+	11	8.0	18	12.9	11	12.8	14	13.2	6	9.4	+1.4
Total	137		139		86		106		64		

Please note on all tables pp is an abbreviation of percentage point

Commentary

As the tables opposite show, recruitment of 16–24-year-olds has decreased. Our Young Talent programme is a rolling programme of a range and varying length of opportunities, from two year Modern Apprenticeships with opportunity to progress to a Technical Apprenticeship, four year Graduate Apprenticeships and one year Graduate Internships.

The reduction in recruitment is a result of the number of young people joining longer programmes and progressing on to next level or longer programmes. In addition, disabled and or care experienced participants are eligible up to the age of 29 for our young talent programme.

Annex A1: SDS Employee Data by Age

Age Range	Promoted within SDS										
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		pp change 2019-23
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
16-24	26	12.3	12	8.6	12	11.4	11	8.1	*	*	**
25-34	76	36.0	65	46.8	36	34.3	57	41.9	**	**	**
35-49	75	35.5	50	36.0	37	35.2	47	34.6	19	31.7	-3.8
50+	34	16.1	12	8.6	20	19.0	21	15.4	20	33.3	+17.2
Total	211		139		105		136		60		

Age Range	Leavers from SDS										
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		pp change 2019-23
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
16-24	15	13.6	13	13.8	9	9.6	23	20.0	13	10.5	-3.1
25-34	23	20.9	22	23.4	8	8.5	32	27.8	28	22.6	+1.7
35-49	27	24.5	17	18.1	23	24.5	15	13.0	24	19.4	-5.1
50+	45	40.9	42	44.7	54	57.4	45	39.1	59	47.6	+6.7
Total	110		94		94		115		124		

Age Range	Average CPD Hours completed				
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
16-24	43.7	53.9	53.7	42.0	54.2
25-34	45.6	59.2	37.8	35.7	34.3
35-49	37.9	42.0	35.1	35.2	33.0
50+	37.7	40.6	38.9	34.5	33.9
Overall	39.4	44.8	38.0	35.2	34.3

Annex A2: SDS Employee Data by Disability

Disability	Total Employees										pp change 2019-23
	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Yes	67	4.2	119	7.1	118	7.1	125	7.6	131	8.1	+3.9
No	1452	90.0	1487	89.1	1483	89.3	1446	88.2	1420	88.0	-2.0
Prefer not to say	17	1.1	32	1.9	32	1.9	33	2.0	31	1.9	+0.8
No Response	77	4.8	31	1.9	27	1.6	36	2.2	32	2.0	-2.8
Total	1613		1669		1660		1640		1614		

Commentary

We continue to have high disclosure rates for employees reporting disability. In addition, there has been a 1pp increase of disabled people at SDS since 2021.

There is no evidence of disability discrimination in relation to promotion, recruitment, retention, or development.

Disability	Recruited to SDS										pp change 2019-23
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Yes	5	3.6	14	10.1	8	9.3	14	13.2	5	7.8	+4.2
No	120	87.6	104	74.8	74	86.0	56	52.8	49	76.6	-11.0
Prefer not to say	*	*	6	4.3	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
No Response	**	**	15	10.8	*	*	**	**	**	**	**
Total	137		139		86		106		64		

Annex A2: SDS Employee Data by Disability

Disability	Promoted within SDS										pp change 2019-23
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Yes	7	3.3	5	3.6	*	*	7	5.1	*	*	**
No	191	90.5	126	90.7	100	95.2	124	91.2	55	91.7	+1.2
Prefer not to say	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
No Response	**	**	**	**	--	--	*	*	--	--	**
Total	211		139		105		136		60		

Disability	Leavers from SDS										pp change 2019-23
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Yes	8	7.3	5	5.3	9	9.6	5	4.3	14	11.3	+4.0
No	93	84.5	77	81.9	79	84.0	88	76.5	100	80.6	-3.9
Prefer not to say	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
No Response	**	**	**	**	*	*	**	**	**	**	**
Total	110		94		94		115		124		

Disability	Average CPD Hours completed				
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Yes	38.9	42.4	41.1	39.5	39.3
No	39.4	44.8	37.6	34.9	34.0
Prefer not to say	62.5	49.5	56.8	36.8	28.9
No Response	34.5	46.1	28.2	31.3	31.2
Overall	39.4	44.8	38.0	35.2	34.3

Annex A3: SDS Employee Data by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Total Employees										
	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		pp change 2019-23
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
White/Scottish/British/Irish	1436	89.0	1527	91.5	1521	91.6	1485	90.5	1464	90.7	+1.7
White Other	30	1.9	44	2.6	47	2.8	49	3.0	44	2.7	+0.8
Mixed or Multiple Ethnicity	*	*	*	*	*	*	6	0.4	9	0.6	**
Asian, Asian British/Scottish	6	0.4	15	0.9	15	0.9	16	1.0	18	1.1	+0.7
African, Caribbean, or Black	12	0.7	12	0.7	13	0.8	14	0.9	12	0.7	--
Other Ethnicity	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
Prefer not to say	59	3.7	38	2.3	34	2.0	35	2.1	32	2.0	-1.7
No Response	63	3.9	28	1.7	25	1.5	**	**	**	**	**
Total	1613		1669		1660		1640		1614		

Ethnicity	Recruited to SDS										
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		pp change 2019-23
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
White/Scottish/British/Irish	120	87.6	113	81.3	72	83.7	53	50.0	47	73.4	-14.2
White Other	*	*	7	5.0	6	7.0	12	11.3	*	*	**
Mixed or Multiple Ethnicity	--	--	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
Asian, Asian British/Scottish	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
African, Caribbean, or Black	*	*	--	--	*	*	*	*	--	--	**
Other Ethnicity	--	--	--	--	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
Prefer not to say	--	--	--	--	--	--	*	*	--	--	--
No Response	11	8.0	14	10.1	*	*	33	31.1	9	14.1	+6.1
Total	137		139		86		106		64		

Annex A3: SDS Employee Data by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Promoted within SDS										
	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		pp change 2019-23
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
White/Scottish/British/Irish	193	91.5	130	93.5	99	94.3	120	88.2	53	88.3	-3.2
White Other	6	2.8	*	*	*	*	7	5.1	**	**	**
Mixed or Multiple Ethnicity	--	--	--	--	--	--	*	*	*	*	**
Asian, Asian British/Scottish	--	--	--	--	*	*	*	*	--	--	--
African, Caribbean, or Black	*	*	--	--	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
Other Ethnicity	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Prefer not to say	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**	**	**
No Response	8	3.8	*	*	*	*	*	*	--	--	-3.8
Total	211		139		105		136		60		

Ethnicity	Leavers from SDS										
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		pp change 2019-23
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
White/Scottish/British/Irish	90	81.8	79	83.2	80	85.1	84	73.0	104	83.9	+2.1
White Other	*	*	*	*	*	*	10	8.7	7	5.6	**
Mixed or Multiple Ethnicity	--	--	--	--	*	*	--	--	--	--	--
Asian, Asian British/Scottish	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
African, Caribbean, or Black	*	*	*	*	--	--	--	--	*	*	**
Other Ethnicity	*	*	--	--	*	*	--	--	--	--	**
Prefer not to say	*	*	*	*	*	*	--	--	*	*	**
No Response	6	5.5	7	7.4	*	*	**	**	*	*	**
Total	110		94		94		115		124		

Commentary

Whilst we recognise there is more work to be done, there has been progress in relation to minority ethnic, with a 1pp increase in workforce representation since 2019. Minority ethnic colleagues now represent 3% of the organisation (42 colleagues). Minority ethnic people represented 7% of new starts to the organisation in 2021/22 and 11% in 2022/2023, an increase of 9pp since 2019. There was also an increase in the percentage of minority ethnic colleagues in promotions.

Annex A3: SDS Employee Data by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Average CPD Hours completed				
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
White/Scottish/British/Irish	40.0	45.7	38.0	35.0	34.4
White Other	41.6	35.4	39.5	38.0	33.3
Mixed or Multiple Ethnicity	26.3	40.9	26.9	36.9	27.7
Asian, Asian British/Scottish	48.8	44.6	52.0	65.2	54.4
African, Caribbean, or Black	37.1	41.5	56.6	43.4	48.3
Other Ethnicity	39.5	43.4	31.0	20.5	22.2
Prefer not to say	30.7	32.0	36.6	24.8	25.4
No Response	32.9	42.3	25.2	32.7	26.8
Overall	39.4	44.8	38.0	35.2	34.3

Annex A4: SDS Employee Data by Religion or Belief

Religion or Belief	Total Employees										
	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		pp change 2019-23
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Buddhist	5	0.3	5	0.3	5	0.3	5	0.3	5	0.3	--
Catholic	271	16.8	280	16.8	272	16.4	259	15.8	255	15.8	-1.0
Other Christian	87	5.4	106	6.4	112	6.8	109	6.6	106	6.6	+1.2
Church of Scotland	339	21.0	338	20.3	321	19.2	318	19.4	309	19.1	-1.9
Hindu	*	*	5	0.3	5	0.3	5	0.3	6	0.4	**
Jewish	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
Muslim	*	*	*	*	5	0.3	6	0.4	6	0.4	**
Sikh	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
Pagan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
Another Religion or Belief	30	1.9	18	1.1	17	1.0	15	0.9	15	0.9	-1.0
None	572	35.5	698	41.8	720	43.7	707	43.1	713	44.2	+8.7
Prefer not to say	206	12.8	172	10.3	163	9.6	165	10.1	149	9.2	-3.6
No Response	91	5.6	38	2.3	34	2.0	45	2.7	43	2.7	-2.9
Total	1613		1669		1660		1640		1614		

Commentary

The religion or belief category with the biggest response is 'None', which has increased by 8.7 percentage points over the reporting period.

There has been a 3.6 percentage points reduction in 'Prefer not to say' which may suggest colleagues feel more comfortable disclosing their religion or belief.

There has not been significant change in terms of religion or belief, however small numbers make it difficult to draw any firm conclusions. Overall, there is no evidence of discrimination in relation to religion or belief.

We will continue to monitor trends in relation to religion or belief in our workforce.

Annex A4: SDS Employee Data by Religion or Belief

Religion or Belief	Recruited to SDS										
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		pp change 2019-23
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Buddhist	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Catholic	23	16.8	16	11.5	10	11.6	*	*	6	9.4	-7.4
Other Christian	7	5.1	8	5.8	8	9.3	5	4.7	*	*	**
Church of Scotland	11	8.0	14	10.1	6	7.0	10	9.4	8	12.5	+4.5
Hindu	--	--	*	*	--	--	--	--	*	*	**
Jewish	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	*	*	**
Muslim	--	--	--	--	*	*	*	*	--	--	--
Sikh	*	*	--	--	*	*	--	--	*	*	**
Pagan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Another Religion or Belief	*	*	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	**
None	83	60.6	79	56.8	55	64.0	47	44.3	32	50.0	-10.6
Prefer not to say	--	--	5	3.6	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
No Response	10	7.3	15	10.8	*	*	36	34.0	9	14.1	+6.8
Total	137		139		86		106		64		

Annex A4: SDS Employee Data by Religion or Belief

Religion or Belief	Promoted within SDS										
	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		pp change 2019-23
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Buddhist	*	*	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	**
Catholic	32	15.2	22	15.8	17	16.2	14	10.3	6	10.0	-5.2
Other Christian	8	3.8	6	4.3	9	8.6	7	5.1	7	11.7	+7.9
Church of Scotland	46	21.8	29	20.9	15	14.3	22	16.2	12	20.0	-1.8
Hindu	--	--	--	--	*	*	--	--	--	--	--
Jewish	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Muslim	*	*	--	--	--	--	*	*	--	--	**
Sikh	--	--	--	--	--	--	*	*	--	--	--
Pagan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Another Religion or Belief	5	2.4	*	*	*	*	*	*	--	--	-2.4
None	88	41.7	65	46.8	54	51.4	76	55.9	29	48.3	+6.6
Prefer not to say	21	10.0	11	7.9	8	7.6	11	8.1	6	10.0	--
No Response	**	**	*	*	--	--	*	*	--	--	**
Total	211		139		105		136		60		

Annex A4: SDS Employee Data by Religion or Belief

Religion or Belief	Leavers from SDS										
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		pp change 2019-23
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Buddhist	*	*	*	*	--	--	--	--	--	--	**
Catholic	13	11.8	14	14.9	19	20.2	16	13.9	20	16.1	+4.3
Other Christian	*	*	5	5.3	*	*	8	7.0	8	6.5	**
Church of Scotland	19	17.3	14	14.9	22	23.4	11	9.6	21	16.9	-0.4
Hindu	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	*	*	**
Jewish	--	--	*	*	--	--	*	*	--	--	--
Muslim	*	*	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	**
Sikh	--	--	*	*	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Pagan	*	*	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	**
Another Religion or Belief	5	5.4	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
None	43	39.1	40	42.6	36	38.3	50	43.5	48	38.7	-0.4
Prefer not to say	14	12.7	7	7.4	9	9.6	5	4.3	18	14.5	+1.8
No Response	9	8.2	9	9.6	*	*	21	18.3	7	5.6	-2.6
Total	110		94		94		115		124		

Annex A4: SDS Employee Data by Religion or Belief

Religion or Belief	Average CPD Hours completed				
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Buddhist	43.6	46.1	31.7	27.0	26.0
Catholic	36.7	38.3	41.1	33.1	34.5
Other Christian	44.1	47.2	35.7	36.7	36.3
Church of Scotland	39.2	48.6	37.7	34.3	35.3
Hindu	47.9	49.8	102.7	156.9	101.0
Jewish	26.4	33.1	23.8	24.8	25.5
Muslim	47.4	51.4	46.6	42.0	64.8
Sikh	45.2	41.6	30.3	56.0	41.1
Pagan	43.3	45.2	51.6	23.8	24.6
Another Religion or Belief	36.7	36.0	30.6	28.2	29.4
None	42.0	36.5	37.8	35.4	33.6
Prefer not to say	35.8	39.9	38.1	37.0	32.6
No response	35.0	41.1	23.5	29.6	26.7
Overall	39.4	44.8	38.0	35.2	34.3

Annex A5: SDS Employee Data by Care Experience

Care Experienced	Total Employees										pp change 2019-23
	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Yes	6	0.4	17	1.0	19	1.1	20	1.2	21	1.3	+0.9
No	655	40.6	1400	83.9	1414	85.2	1405	85.7	1398	86.6	+46.0
Prefer not to say	16	1.0	25	1.5	24	1.4	24	1.5	22	1.4	+0.4
No Response	936	58.0	227	13.6	203	12.2	191	11.6	173	10.7	-47.3
Total	1613		1669		1660		1640		1614		

Care Experienced	Recruited to SDS										pp change 2019-23
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Yes	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
No	122	89.1	122	87.8	78	90.7	68	64.2	53	82.8	-6.3
Prefer not to say	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
No Response	**	**	14	10.1	*	*	33	31.1	**	**	**
Total	137		139		86		106		64		

Commentary

We continue to have high disclosure rates for employees reporting in relation to care experience. There has been little change to care experienced representation in the workforce since 2021.

Annex A5: SDS Employee Data by Care Experience

Care Experienced	Promoted within SDS										
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		pp change 2019-23
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Yes	--	--	*	*	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
No	113	53.6	94	67.6	97	92.4	126	92.6	56	93.3	+39.7
Prefer not to say	*	*	--	--	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
No Response	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	*	*	**
Total	211		139		105		136		60		

Care Experienced	Leavers from SDS										
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		pp change 2019-23
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Yes	--	--	--	--	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
No	16	14.5	56	59.6	71	75.5	83	72.2	101	81.5	+67.0
Prefer not to say	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**	**	**
No Response	93	84.5	37	39.4	20	21.3	27	23.5	16	12.9	-71.6
Total	110		94		94		115		124		

Care Experienced	Average CPD Hours completed				
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Yes	22.0	79.9	90.0	63.7	54.8
No	43.7	45.4	37.8	36.1	35.4
Prefer not to say	31.4	41.2	49.2	28.7	29.2
No response	36.6	43.4	33.4	26.3	23.6
Overall	39.4	44.8	38.0	35.2	34.3

Annex A6: SDS Employee Data by Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	Total Employees										
	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		pp change 2019-23
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Heterosexual/Straight	1351	83.8	1472	88.2	1467	88.4	1448	88.3	1429	88.5	+4.7
Lesbian/Gay/ Bisexual/Other	38	2.4	62	3.7	69	4.3	65	4.0	69	4.3	+1.9
Prefer not to say	161	10.0	106	6.4	99	5.8	93	5.7	83	5.1	-4.9
No Response	63	3.9	29	1.7	25	1.5	34	2.1	33	2.0	-1.9
Total	1613		1669		1660		1640		1614		

Sexual Orientation	Recruited to SDS										
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		pp change 2019-23
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Heterosexual/Straight	114	83.2	107	77.0	67	77.9	65	61.3	47	73.4	-9.8
Lesbian/Gay/ Bisexual/Other	11	8.0	14	10.1	14	16.3	7	6.6	5	7.8	-0.2
Prefer not to say	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
No Response	**	**	**	**	*	*	**	**	**	**	**
Total	137		139		86		106		64		

Commentary

There has been little change in the breakdown of sexual orientation at SDS. Of the 4.3% of colleagues who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Other, 2.5% identified as Gay or Lesbian and 1.8% identified as Bisexual or Other. There is no evidence of sexual orientation discrimination in relation to recruitment, retention, promotion or development.

Annex A6: SDS Employee Data by Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	Promoted within SDS										pp change 2019-23
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Heterosexual/Straight	189	89.6	119	85.6	94	89.5	121	89.0	55	91.7	+2.1
Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Other	7	3.3	11	7.9	6	5.7	9	6.6	*	*	**
Prefer not to say	8	3.8	**	**	5	4.8	*	*	*	*	**
No Response	7	3.3	*	*	--	--	*	*	--	--	-3.3
Total	211		139		105		136		60		

Sexual Orientation	Leavers from SDS										pp change 2019-23
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Heterosexual/Straight	88	80.0	70	74.5	77	81.9	76	66.1	98	79.0	-1.0
Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Other	5	4.5	*	*	7	7.4	13	11.3	10	8.1	+3.6
Prefer not to say	11	10.0	13	13.8	**	**	5	4.3	**	**	**
No Response	6	5.5	**	**	*	*	21	18.3	*	*	**
Total	110		94		94		115		124		

Sexual Orientation	Average CPD Hours completed				
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Heterosexual/Straight	40.1	48.1	37.3	35.7	34.5
Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Other	44.5	58.5	56.1	32.9	40.6
Prefer not to say	34.9	45.5	39.6	31.3	27.7
No Response	32.9	35.5	23.1	30.4	27.5
Overall	39.4	44.8	38.0	35.2	34.3

Annex A7: SDS Employee Data by Gender Reassignment

Gender reassignment	Total Employees										pp change 2019-23
	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Yes	*	*	*	*	*	*	6	0.4	*	*	**
No	1379	85.5	1568	93.9	1569	94.5	1540	93.9	1525	94.5	+9.0
Prefer not to say	120	7.4	42	3.4	49	3.0	46	2.8	42	2.6	-4.8
No Response	**	**	**	**	**	**	48	2.9	**	**	**
Total	1613		1669		1660		1640		1614		

Gender reassignment	Recruited to SDS										pp change 2019-23
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Yes	--	--	--	--	*	*	*	*	--	--	--
No	128	93.4	122	87.8	81	94.2	72	67.9	54	84.4	-9.0
Prefer not to say	--	--	*	*	--	--	--	--	*	*	**
No Response	9	6.6	**	**	*	*	**	**	**	**	**
Total	137		139		86		106		64		

Commentary

There is no evidence of gender reassignment discrimination in relation to recruitment, retention, promotion or development.

Annex A7: SDS Employee Data by Gender Reassignment

Gender reassignment	Promoted within SDS										pp change 2019-23
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Yes	*	*	--	--	*	*	*	*	**	**	**
No	188	89.1	127	91.4	100	95.2	128	94.1	58	96.7	+7.6
Prefer not to say	**	**	5	3.6	*	*	*	*	**	**	**
No Response	16	7.6	7	5.0	*	*	*	*	**	**	**
Total	211		139		105		136		60		

Gender reassignment	Leavers from SDS										pp change 2019-23
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Yes	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	*	*	**
No	93	84.5	79	84.0	82	87.2	94	81.7	107	86.3	+1.8
Prefer not to say	9	7.3	*	*	**	**	*	*	7	5.6	-1.7
No Response	8	8.2	**	**	*	*	**	**	**	**	**
Total	110		94		94		115		124		

Gender reassignment	Average CPD Hours completed				
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Yes	44.4	^	67.2	30.5	28.7
No	40.1	43.8	38.3	35.8	34.8
Prefer not to say	33.6	34.4	37.6	26.3	24.2
No response	34.5	52.6	23.4	27.5	26.9
Overall	39.4	44.8	38.0	35.2	34.3

^due to inconsistencies in CPD reporting by a small number of colleagues which distort the average for this year, this figure has not been included.

Annex A8: SDS Employee Data by Sex

Total Employees											
Sex	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		pp change 2019-23
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Female	1162	72.0	1197	71.7	1183	71.3	1172	71.5	1155	71.6	-0.4
Male	451	28.0	472	28.3	477	28.7	468	28.5	459	28.4	+0.4
Total	1613		1669		1660		1640		1614		

Recruited to SDS											
Sex	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		pp change 2019-23
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Female	85	62.0	87	62.6	51	59.3	62	58.5	36	56.3	-5.8
Male	52	38.0	52	37.4	35	40.7	44	41.5	28	43.8	+5.8
Total	137		139		86		106		64		

Promoted within SDS											
Sex	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		pp change 2019-23
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Female	157	74.4	109	78.4	77	73.3	96	70.6	47	78.3	+3.9
Male	54	25.6	30	21.6	28	26.7	40	29.4	13	21.7	-3.9
Total	211		139		105		136		60		

Annex A8: SDS Employee Data by Sex

Sex	Leavers from SDS										pp change 2019-23
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Female	79	71.8	57	60.6	65	69.1%	71	61.7	71	57.3	-14.5
Male	31	28.2	37	39.4	29	30.9%	44	38.3	53	42.7	+14.5
Total	110		94		94		115		124		

Sex	Average CPD Hours completed				
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Female	39.7	45.2	37.5	35.9	34.8
Male	38.5	44.0	39.5	33.5	32.9
Overall	39.4	44.8	38.0	35.2	34.3

Commentary

There has been little change in the breakdown of males and females across the organisation. Although there was an increase in the percentage of males recruited to SDS, there was also an increase in male leavers. The percentage of those promoted shows 78% of promotions were for females.

Annex B: SDS Equal Pay Statement and Audit

Annex B includes:

- **SDS Equal Pay Statement**
- **Equal Pay Audit**
- **Table B1 – Occupational Distribution by Gender**
- **Table B2 – Gender Pay Gap by Grade**
- **Table B3 – Percentage of staff part-time by grade**
- **Table B4 – Occupation Distribution by Ethnicity**
- **Ethnicity Pay Gap**
- **Table B5 – Occupation Distribution by Disability**
- **Disability Pay Gap**
- **Pregnancy and Maternity**
- **Disciplinary and Grievance**

Equal Pay Statement

We recognise that all employees should receive equal pay for doing equal work or work of equal value, in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We are committed to continuing our work with our recognised trade unions to take action to promote and implement equal pay. SDS is also committed to operating a pay and reward system which is transparent, based on objective criteria and free from bias and we will continue to work towards reducing any identified pay gap. In 2021, we committed to take the following actions:

- Continue to ensure that equal pay and equality considerations are embedded in development of our pay and grading framework and are routinely considered in pay negotiations with our trade union partners.
- In that context, we will seek to utilise opportunities provided by public sector pay policy to promote improved equal pay outcomes.
- Continue our focus on making our work at all grades accessible and sustainable.
- Adopt a ‘thinking differently’ approach to job design, organisation of work and recruitment and selection practice enabling innovative practices to achieve greater inclusion in recruitment outcomes.

Equal Pay Audit

- Our mean gender pay gap has been continued to decrease from 8.0% in 2021 to 7.6% in 2023. The median gender pay gap is now 0%. The gender pay has reduced annually since 2010, when SDS reported a 15.7% mean gender pay gap. For this calculation, the average full-time equivalent hourly pay has been calculated for females and males separately in each SDS grade and overall. The female average is then taken as a percentage of the male average for each grade and overall.
- We also calculated our median gender pay gap. This is 0%, with both the male and female median hourly rate being £23.50.
- There is no pay grade where the mean pay gap is greater than 5%, which is the threshold where EHRC advise investigation.
- We will continue to ensure that equal pay and equality considerations are embedded in development of our pay and grading framework. At SDS Intern, 3A, 3CD and 4A, the gap is in favour of women. It is important to emphasise that SDS is not solely addressing equality issues through pay frameworks, we are developing other actions to increase equality of opportunity and secure a meaningful and sustained reduction in our gender pay gap.
- We have a disability pay gap of 8.8%, which is a 1.7% increase since 2021, and an ethnicity pay gap of 10.1%, a 3.3% increase since 2021 (for colleagues who identify as “Asian, Asian British, Asian Scottish”, “African, Caribbean or Black”, “mixed or multiple ethnicity” and “other ethnicities”). As mentioned previously, this is a result of the increase in recruitment from both minority ethnic and disabled people with colleagues joining the organisation in roles at the lower end of our pay and grading framework. This has subsequently had a negative impact on the pay gaps with 70% of new starts from a minority ethnic background joining in Young Talent grades, SDS3, or SDS4/CD grades, which therefore reduced the average hourly rate of minority ethnic colleagues, increasing the pay gap.

Table B1: Occupational Distribution by Gender

	Grade	Number of males	Number of females	Total	Percentage of grade		Percentage of gender	
					Male	Female	Male	Female
Young Talent	MA	7	3	10	70.0%	30.0%	1.5%	0.3%
	Intern	18	17	35	51.4%	48.6%	3.9%	1.5%
Professional and Technical	SDS 3A	20	56	76	26.3%	73.7%	4.4%	4.8%
	SDS 3CD	8	83	91	8.8%	91.2%	1.7%	7.2%
	SDS 4A	52	129	181	28.7%	71.3%	11.3%	11.2%
	SDS 4CD	154	546	700	22.0%	78.0%	33.6%	47.3%
People Manager	SDS 5	110	196	306	35.9%	64.1%	24.0%	17.0%
	SDS 6	52	87	139	37.4%	62.6%	11.3%	7.5%
Leadership	SDS 7a	5	10	15	33.3%	66.7%	1.1%	0.9%
	SDS 7b	16	19	35	45.7%	54.3%	3.5%	1.6%
	SDS 7c	5	5	10	50.0%	50.0%	1.1%	0.4%
Senior Leadership	SDS 8	9	4	13	69.2%	30.8%	2.0%	0.3%
	SNRD	2	0	2	100.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%
Chief Executive	CEO	1	0	1	100.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%
	Total	459	1155	1614				

Commentary

Table B1 provides details of the gender breakdown in each of the SDS pay grades. Analysis demonstrates there has been a slight increase in the percentage of females in promoted posts (SDS 5 and above) since 2021.

Table B2: Gender Pay Gap by Grade

	Grade	Female pay as a % of male pay	Pay gap %
Young Talent	MA	99.4	-0.6
	Intern	100.6	+0.6
Professional and Technical	SDS 3A	101.0	+1.0
	SDS 3CD	101.5	+1.5
	SDS 4A	100.5	+0.5
	SDS 4CD	100.0	0.0
People Manager	SDS 5	99.8	-0.2
	SDS 6	97.0	-3.0
Leadership	SDS 7a	96.5	-3.5
	SDS 7b	99.1	-0.9
	SDS 7c	99.5	-0.5
Senior Leadership	SDS 8	97.6	-2.4
	SNRD	--	--
Chief Executive	CEO	--	--
	Total	92.4	-7.6

(-) indicates a pay gap in favour of males

(+) indicates a pay gap in favour of females

The SDS Median Pay Gap is 0%. Male median hourly pay is £23.50, and the female median hourly rate is £23.50

Table B3: Percentage of staff part-time by grade

	Grade	% of grade part-time	% of organisation part-time
Young Talent	MA	10.0%	0.3%
	Intern	0.0%	0.0%
Professional and Technical	SDS 3A	14.5%	2.9%
	SDS 3CD	49.5%	11.8%
	SDS 4A	11.0%	5.2%
	SDS 4CD	33.9%	62.2%
People Manager	SDS 5	16.7%	13.4%
	SDS 6	7.2%	2.6%
Leadership	SDS 7a	6.7%	0.3%
	SDS 7b	8.6%	0.8%
	SDS 7c	0.0%	0.0%
Senior Leadership/ Chief Executive	SDS 8	15.4%	0.5%
	SNRD	0.0%	0.0%
	CEO		

24% of overall workforce are part-time – 5% of Men and 31% of women

Table B4: Occupational Distribution by Ethnicity

	Grade	Minority Ethnic	White (Other)	White Scottish/ British/Irish	Percentage of Ethnicity		
					Minority Ethnic	White (Other)	White Scottish/ British/Irish
Young Talent	MA	*	--	8	--	--	0.5%
	Intern	*	*	30	*	*	2.0%
Professional and Technical	SDS 3A	*	*	67	*	*	4.6%
	SDS 3CD	*	*	83	*	*	5.7%
	SDS 4A	6	5	160	14.3%	11.4%	10.9%
	SDS 4CD	16	16	643	38.1%	36.4%	43.9%
People Manager	SDS 5	9	13	274	21.4%	29.5%	18.7%
	SDS 6	*	*	129	*	*	8.8%
Leadership	SDS 7a	--	--	15	--	--	1.0%
	SDS 7b	--	--	33	--	--	2.3%
	SDS 7c	--	--	10	--	--	0.7%
Senior Leadership	SDS 8	--	*	11	--	*	0.8%
	SNRD	**	**	**	**	**	**
Chief Executive	CEO	**	**	**	**	**	**
	Total	42	44	1464			

Commentary

Table B4 provides details of the number of minority ethnic people in each of the SDS pay grades. Analysis demonstrates there has been an increase in the % of minority ethnic people in promoted posts (SDS 5 and above) since 2021.

Ethnicity Pay Gap

The Mean Ethnicity Pay Gap for Minority Ethnic employees is 10.1% compared to 'White Scottish/Irish/Other British'. The median ethnicity pay gap is 4.4%. Minority Ethnic median hourly pay is £22.46, and White median pay is £23.50.

This is an increase from when we published our mean ethnicity pay gap in 2021, where we reported a 6.8% gap. As noted in Annex A3, there has been an increase in Minority Ethnic recruitment as SDS. This increase has resulted in more staff from a minority ethnic background in roles at the lower end of our pay and grading framework, having a negative impact on the pay gap. In addition, 70% of those new starts were recruited to MA, Intern, SDS3/CD, and SDS4/CD grades, reducing the average hourly rate of minority ethnic colleagues, increasing the pay gap.

The White (other) mean pay gap is -2.6% compared to 'White Scottish/Irish/ Other British', in favour of White (Other). The median pay gap was 0%. White (other) median hourly pay is £23.50, and White median pay is £23.50.

A grade analysis has not been provided due to the low numbers of White (other) and Minority Ethnic employees.

🔍 CASE STUDY

Mentoring Programme

Annah Masahi joined the SDS Mentoring Programme to get support from a mentor and work towards promotion.

“ Through the programme, I have managed to be able to confidently outline my skills in interviews and secure a permanent role in the promoted post as per my goal.

The support of a mentor helped to empower me especially at times when I was at my lowest through grief, and I couldn't have reached my goal without his wisdom and leadership experience.

Having the privilege to speak to a Head of Region on a mentor and mentee level supported me in removing barriers and this helped me gain confidence in speaking to my superiors confidently.

Getting support from a wide range of people from my mentor's team was another highlight for me in the programme as it helped me learn of the bigger picture from people with different job roles and it supported me in gaining knowledge and skills about strategic thinking which I'm fully utilising now as a team leader.”

Annah Masahi, Team Leader, South East at SDS

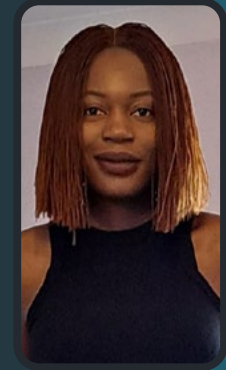


Table B5: Occupational Distribution by Disability

	Grade	Number of disabled people	Number of Non-disabled people	Percentage of Disability	
				Disabled	Non-disabled
Young Talent	MA	*	6	*	0.4%
	Intern	9	24	6.9%	1.7%
Professional and Technical	SDS 3A	7	63	5.3%	4.4%
	SDS 3CD	15	71	11.5%	5.0%
	SDS 4A	13	157	9.9%	11.1%
	SDS 4CD	54	621	41.2%	43.7%
People Manager	SDS 5	20	275	15.3%	19.4%
	SDS 6	7	129	5.3%	9.1%
Leadership	SDS 7a	--	15	0.0%	1.1%
	SDS 7b	*	34	*	2.4%
	SDS 7c	--	10	0.0%	0.7%
Senior Leadership	SDS 8	--	13	0.0%	0.9%
	SNRD	**	**	**	**
Chief Executive	CEO	**	**	**	**
	Total	131	1420	--	--

Commentary

Table B6 provides details of the number of disabled people in each of the SDS pay grades. Analysis demonstrates there has been an increase in the % of disabled people in promoted posts (SDS 5 and above) since 2021.

Disability Pay Gap

The disability pay gap at SDS is 8.8% compared to those who are not disabled. A grade analysis is not detailed due to the low numbers of disabled employees. The median disability pay gap is 3.5%. Median hourly pay for disabled colleagues is £22.67, and the non-disabled median pay is £23.50.

This is an increase from when we published our disability pay gap in 2021, where we reported 7.1%. This was mainly a result of positive action in our young talent programme, with an increase in the number of disabled young people starting at lower grades. This reduced the average hourly rate of disabled colleagues.

Pregnancy & Maternity

SDS's Maternity, Paternity, Adoption & Shared Parental Leave Policy offers enhanced maternity provision. This consists of 26 weeks full pay, 13 weeks of statutory maternity pay and 13 week unpaid leave.

For the period 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022 there were 33 employees who went on maternity leave (2.0% of the workforce). For those who returned from maternity leave within this period (18), 56% returned to their substantive post and hours, and the rest returned on flexible working arrangements.

For the period 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023, there were 34 employees who went on maternity leave (2.1% of the workforce). For those who returned from maternity leave within this period (39), 77% returned to their substantive post and hours, and the rest returned on flexible working arrangements.

Disciplinary and Grievance

There were fewer than 10 employees who went through a disciplinary or grievance process between 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

For the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, there were 23 employees who went through a disciplinary or grievance process. Due to these low numbers, we can only disaggregate on sex, with 52% male and 48% female.

During covid we took an informal approach to resolving employee relations issues, from May 2022 we returned to normal formal policy application where appropriate, which is why there has been an increase compared to previous years.

In continuing to promote a culture of dignity and respect, we have trained an additional number of colleagues in mediation skills, to deliver our Early Concerns and Facilitation service offer. This aims to resolve issues at an early stage, avoiding the need for more formal action.

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