



Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Report

2023-2024

Accessibility Statement

If you require this Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Report 2023-2024 in an alternative format, please contact SFRS.equality@firescotland.gov.uk to discuss how we can take steps to accommodate your needs.

Our website functions well with Google Translate to provide individuals access to our web content in languages other than English.

Accessibility of the content of materials is just as important as accessibility of the format. In this regard the Service has written the Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Report 2023-2024 with a broad audience in mind.

We have tried to restrict unnecessary detail or multiple examples illustrating the same point. Should you require more detail about a particular example described in this report or wish a full list of relevant examples against each Equality Outcome please get in touch with SFRS.equality@firescotland.gov.uk



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1. Foreword and Introduction

We are pleased to present our Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Report 2023-2024. The Scottish Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS) see our duties to mainstream equality not only as a responsibility but an opportunity to achieve better outcomes for the people of Scotland.

This Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Report 2023-2024 highlights our commitment to addressing inequalities and demonstrates some of the excellent work that is taking place across the Service. We will harness this commitment within SFRS to continue to mainstream equality through our service delivery, employment practice and workplace culture, decision making and governance practices.

This is our seventh Mainstreaming Report and covers the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

Within this report you will find details on the following:

- The steps that the SFRS has taken to mainstream the general equality duty across the Organisation.
- Progress made towards achieving the SFRS's six corporate Equality Outcomes.
- Employee information.
- Current pay gap information relating to gender, ethnicity and disability.



2. Mainstreaming Equality in the SFRS

Why We Mainstream Equality

Mainstreaming equality:

- Has the benefit of ensuring that people's needs are identified and met at the point of service delivery.
- Means that we can rely on the capacity of the entire workforce to deliver our goals.
- Allows greater opportunities for cross team working and partnership working with external agencies and communities.
- Facilitates learning and understanding of people and cultures different to our own.
- Supports an inclusive working environment.
- Enhances our performance on measures of best value in the delivery of a public function.

The legal duty to mainstream equality is set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

How We Mainstream Equality

We mainstream equality by:

- Setting out clear Equality Outcomes and measuring our performance against them.
- Using our Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment Process to inform our decision-making processes.
- Embedding equality considerations into our business-as-usual activities and project implementation.
- Engaging with and listening to our colleagues, our partners and our communities.
- Improving our knowledge and understanding through training and development activities.
- Having trust in our confident and competent workforce.

Our dedicated **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team** provide advice, guidance and support to colleagues from across SFRS in the design and delivery of service provision, employment practice and corporate governance and culture.

Our strategic and senior leadership team and board members provide direction, oversight and scrutiny of our equality related activities, ensuring that the findings of the Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment process inform their decision making.

Our Senior Equality Champions provide visible leadership and allyship in promoting and progressing initiatives that support an inclusive working environment by raising the profile of their chosen characteristic.

Senior Equality Champions

- Age
- Corporate Parenting/ Carers
- Disability
- Mental Health
- Neurodiversity
- Race
- Sexual Orientation
- Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls/Domestic Abuse
- Women

The Equality Partnership Group is a mechanism that supports the sharing of knowledge and notable practice on a wide range of equality and human rights related topics. The Group meets quarterly and colleagues from each Directorate and Service Delivery Area are invited to participate.

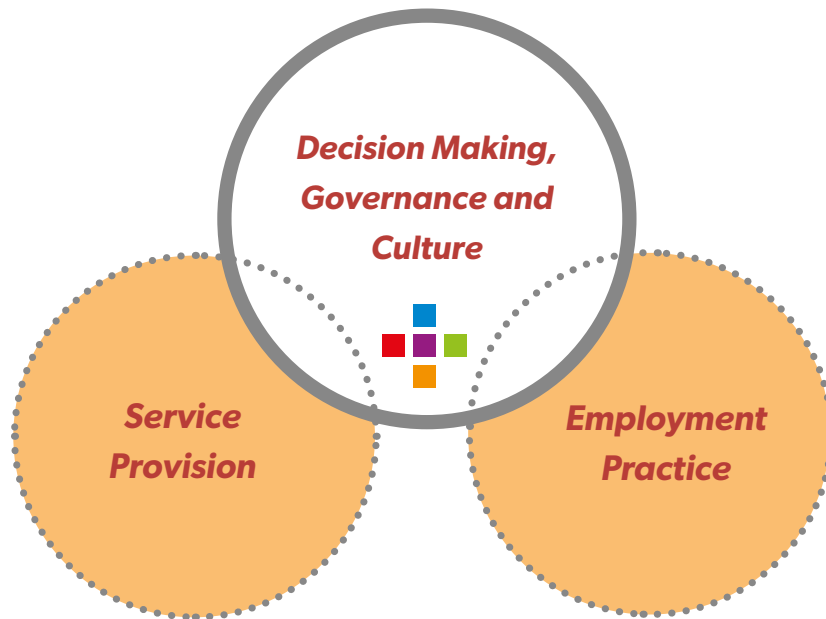
We continue to support the role of equality themed **Employee Networks** as a way for colleagues to engage with one another and share their experiences with like-minded people.

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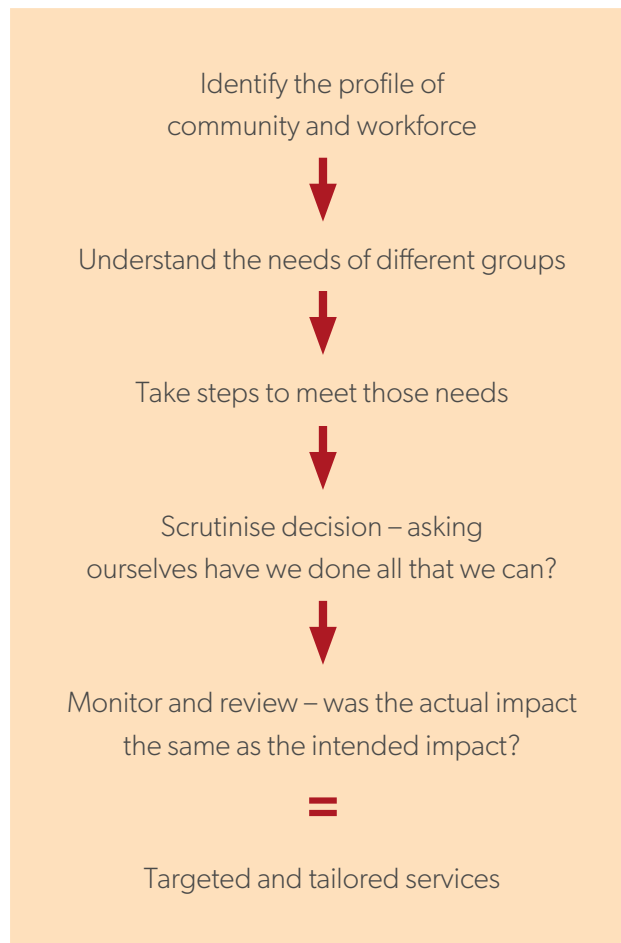
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Employee Networks

- Carers
- Disability
- LGBT+
- Neurodiversity
- Race
- Women's



The decision making pathway for mainstreaming equality



3. Equality Outcomes

In 2021, we introduced the following 6 Equality Outcomes:

- 1** SFRS services are accessible and appropriate to the needs of Scotland's diverse communities.
- 2** Scotland will be a safer and fairer place as a result of our collaborative work with other organisations.
- 3** SFRS is an inclusive employer with a workplace which reflects the diversity of Scottish society.
- 4** SFRS staff feel valued and have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.
- 5** SFRS employees are supported on mental health and wellbeing in line with policies and initiatives.
- 6** SFRS will support Scotland's young people reach their full potential.

We developed these based around our strategic corporate objectives and priorities, evidence about equality issues amongst our workforce and across Scotland's diverse communities and where we thought we could make a difference.

Our aim was to progress activities that would have an impact on people holding any of the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion & belief and sex).

We have recorded over 300 actions taken to progress these Equality Outcomes. The following section provides some case studies of some of the activities and initiatives that we are particularly proud of. If you would like more detail about any of the case studies or the full list please contact us via

SFRS.equality@firescotland.gov.uk

1 SFRS services are accessible and appropriate to the needs of Scotland's diverse communities.

We have recorded over 60 activities and initiatives carried out in support of this Equality Outcome.

SNAPSHOT

A guidance document and resources have been produced by our Prevention, Protection and Preparedness colleagues for engaging Refugees and Asylum Seekers on fire safety whilst living in temporary accommodation.

Enhanced Safeguarding training was developed and delivered to all staff and volunteer roles working more closely with vulnerable people.

The Community Action Team supported the delivery of road safety messaging to the Gaelic community in Argyll and Bute and circulated Road Safety Scotland books for children in Gaelic.

SPOTLIGHT: Brew with the Crew/Warm Spaces

'Brew with the Crew/Warm Spaces' events at Invergordon Station were open to all of the community but particularly elderly people and preschool families who are more likely to be in their homes during the day and may be struggling to heat their home all day and/or feel lonely/isolated/overwhelmed. These sessions were advertised on social media but also with flyers in local shops/business to include members of the community that don't see social media. These events have been held in stations across the Highland region.

2 Scotland will be a safer and fairer place as a result of our collaborative work with other organisations.

We have recorded over 50 activities and initiatives carried out in support of this Equality Outcome.

SNAPSHOT

Colleagues in Prevention, Protection and Preparedness worked in partnership with Safelives to develop and implement guidance and training on Domestic Abuse in the community.

Each of our Local Areas work closely with their local authority and health board planning partnerships to progress initiatives that improve the safety, health and life opportunities for people in their community.

Colleagues worked with partner agencies, including Police Scotland and Royal National Lifeboat Institution, in West Dunbartonshire to deliver a fire safety, road and water safety for P6/7 school pupils.

SFRS signed up to the Breastfeeding Friendly scheme (BFF) in 2021 and now has 33 venues designated as BFF.

Visiting members of the public will see signage that facilities for breastfeeding mothers are available to them. Colleagues in these venues have undergone training in how to provide and maintain the facilities and how to provide a welcoming and safe environment.

SPOTLIGHT: East Renfrewshire Falls Referral Project

SFRS provide a Home Fire Safety Advice service offering advice and support for people to remain safe in their own homes. As well as focusing on fire safety, being in homes provides us an opportunity to notice other safety issues that could be raised with relevant partners to provide additional support.

We have set up an Information Sharing Protocol with East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership which allows us to refer individuals who are identified during a Home Fire Safety Visit as having had more than one fall in a 12-month period and refer them directly to the local Falls Screening Clinic.

This type of collaborative working helps raise community awareness of fire prevention, falls prevention to reduce the risks of falls, social isolation, cold homes, and flu which over time will lead to a reduction in the pressures on public services in local areas.

3 SFRS is an inclusive employer with a workplace which reflects the diversity of Scottish society.

We have recorded over 30 activities and initiatives carried out in support of this Equality Outcome.

SNAPSHOT

The Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray area has seen an increase in the ethnic diversity and an increase in women applying and being successful in recruitment campaigns for our 'on call' posts as a result of their positive action campaigning. They have used role models from under-represented groups in the workforce to help promote vacancies and have used inclusive advertising through social media, television and other more traditional marketing methods.

SFRS achieved Silver status following participation in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and in recognition of the work being progressed to make SFRS LGBT+ inclusive for employees and the communities we serve. This is an improvement on our Bronze award in the previous year.

The Dignity and Respect Contact Advisers provide guidance and signposting to colleagues who feel that they have experienced discrimination, bullying or harassment in the workplace. Contact Advisers are drawn from all parts of the organisation and have received specialist training

SFRS has applied Agile Working since 2020. For some colleagues agile working has offered flexibility in the timing and location of work. For other colleagues, including operational colleagues the introduction of agile working may mean that some training is delivered virtually or in a location closer to home than previous requirements to travel to a central venue. In both these examples, there are advantages in gaining a better work/life balance and where there are caring responsibilities. In addition to being a benefit to our existing workforce, the use of a range of agile working features may appeal to prospective applicants from groups currently under-represented in the workforce

The Women's Experience Liaison Forum (WELF) is a joint management and trade union group set up to advance the inclusion and equality of women in the workplace.

SPOTLIGHT: Pre-Recruitment Engagement Programme (PREP)

Pre-Recruitment Engagement Programme (PREP)

Recruiting people with the right skills for the job is a challenge for any employer. The very specific skill set required of a firefighter means that the recruitment and selection testing is robust.

Applicants for our wholetime (full-time) firefighter vacancies outstrip the number of posts available. It is more difficult to recruit into the 'on call' posts in more rural areas for a variety of reasons.

Even when applicants come forward, they are not always successful in the selection process. To provide candidates with a better chance of being successful and to increase the likelihood that we will be able to fill vacancies and ensure service provision across Scotland, the PREP was introduced.

PREP involves prospective candidates working with experienced SFRS colleagues to ready themselves for the formal recruitment process. Emphasis is given to trialling and practicing different physical tests that are used in the selection process.

PREP has been seen to be an effective addition to positive action measures, especially in the recruitment of women who have higher rates of failure in the selection process at the physical testing stage.

Colleagues across SFRS have reported improvements in the testing results for women who have participated in PREP.

4 SFRS staff feel valued and have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

We have recorded over 50 activities and initiatives carried out in support of this Equality Outcome.

SNAPSHOT

The Staff Recognition Awards provide a way for managers and other colleagues to nominate SFRS colleagues for exemplary work. There are 6 award categories, all of which lend themselves to equality considerations: Going Above and Beyond; Service Values; Partnership Working; Culture and Inclusion; Exceptional Leadership and, Being an Environmental Champion.

A Colleague Experience Survey was launched in March 2024 and will run until May 2024. The survey seeks views across a range of topics including experiences of discrimination and bullying.

Throughout the year SFRS marked important community and cultural events. Local teams are encouraged to organise their own activities. A sample of the events marked during 2023-24:

- Black History Month – led by the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER), a tour was organised for colleagues to learn about Glasgow’s slave trading history and explore the topic of racism and race inclusion.
- Pride events were attended across Scotland.

SPOTLIGHT: Neurodiversity Employee Network

The Neurodiversity network is the newest of the employee networks in SFRS and already it has become one of the largest and most active.

The network is open to colleagues who may have a neurodiverse condition themselves, are the partner, parent or carer of someone with a condition or simply have an interest in the subject.

The network has been proactive in seeking to raise awareness and understanding of neurodivergence and have organised external speakers to deliver training and awareness sessions.

5 SFRS employees are supported on mental health and wellbeing in line with policies and initiatives.

We have recorded over 40 activities and initiatives carried out in support of this Equality Outcome.

SNAPSHOT

Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Board to direct and oversee our performance in improving mental wellbeing within the workforce.

Employee Assistance Programme – available all day, every day to help colleagues, their partners and dependents providing talking therapies.

Mental Wellbeing Noticeboards throughout our premises and online.

Partnering with Lifelines Scotland a programme of training including:

- Staying Well: Understanding Resilience and Self Care
- Supporting Your Colleagues/Team
- Post Trauma Support – Providing Psychological First Aid

SPOTLIGHT: Wellbeing Champions

176 volunteers from across SFRS who support and embed the goals of our Mental Health Strategy. They are proactive and intervene early to help colleagues after a traumatic incident. They also help fight mental health stigma and work to improve workplace wellbeing.

6 SFRS will support Scotland's young people reach their full potential.

We have recorded over 60 activities and initiatives carried out in support of this Equality Outcome.

SNAPSHOT

SFRS has 15 Youth Volunteer Schemes across Scotland. The scheme creates opportunities for people aged 12-18 to work together for a safer Scotland.

Our volunteers promote safer communities, while developing skills for life, learning and work. We promote fairness and equality through active participation and engagement opportunities. All the while, gaining a unique insight into life at a working fire station.

The scheme enhances confidence and inter-personal skills and provides a sense of belonging. As they volunteer, we equip them to become young ambassadors for the SFRS, and role models in their community.

Fire Safety Support and Education (FSSE) is for those under the age of 18. The programme offers a flexible approach to assist in the education. This is aimed at those who demonstrate an unsafe interest in fire or fire related anti-social behaviour.

The Fire Skills and Employability programme operates across Scotland.

In Ayrshire a partnership agreement with Ayrshire college as the Credit rating body allows young people completing Fire Skills Employability Award an SCQF level 4 award.

MCR Pathways is a volunteer mentoring programme and currently SFRS has more than 40 colleagues who have volunteered to mentor a care experienced young person.

SFRS partners with Career Ready to offer S5/ S6 pupils the opportunity to be mentored by a SFRS colleague. Participants also complete a four week internship as part of the programme which is intended to prepare them for the world of work.

SFRS continues to work with Gordonstoun School to enhance the volunteers' skills and life experiences. Volunteers are aged 15-18 from varying social backgrounds. There are 45 participants from diverse backgrounds.

SPOTLIGHT: Corporate Parenting

The Corporate Parenting Working Group co-ordinates the implementation of the Corporate Parenting Plan and our obligations under The Promise and includes representatives from the Service's Directorates and Service Delivery Areas.

Local areas work in partnership with Corporate Parenting Champions Boards to support delivery of local initiatives aimed at improving the lives of care experienced young people.

Nationally we work closely with Who Cares? Scotland and are active participants in their Collaborative Corporate Parenting Network.

Each year we mark Care Experience Week and Care Leavers Week.

In 2023 a representative from the People Directorate worked with Police Scotland and Scottish Ambulance Service to host a series of engagement sessions with care experienced young people to understand their experiences of the emergency services and the barriers to employment that they may experience or be concerned about.

OTHER SUCCESS STORIES

Asian Fire Service Awards 2023

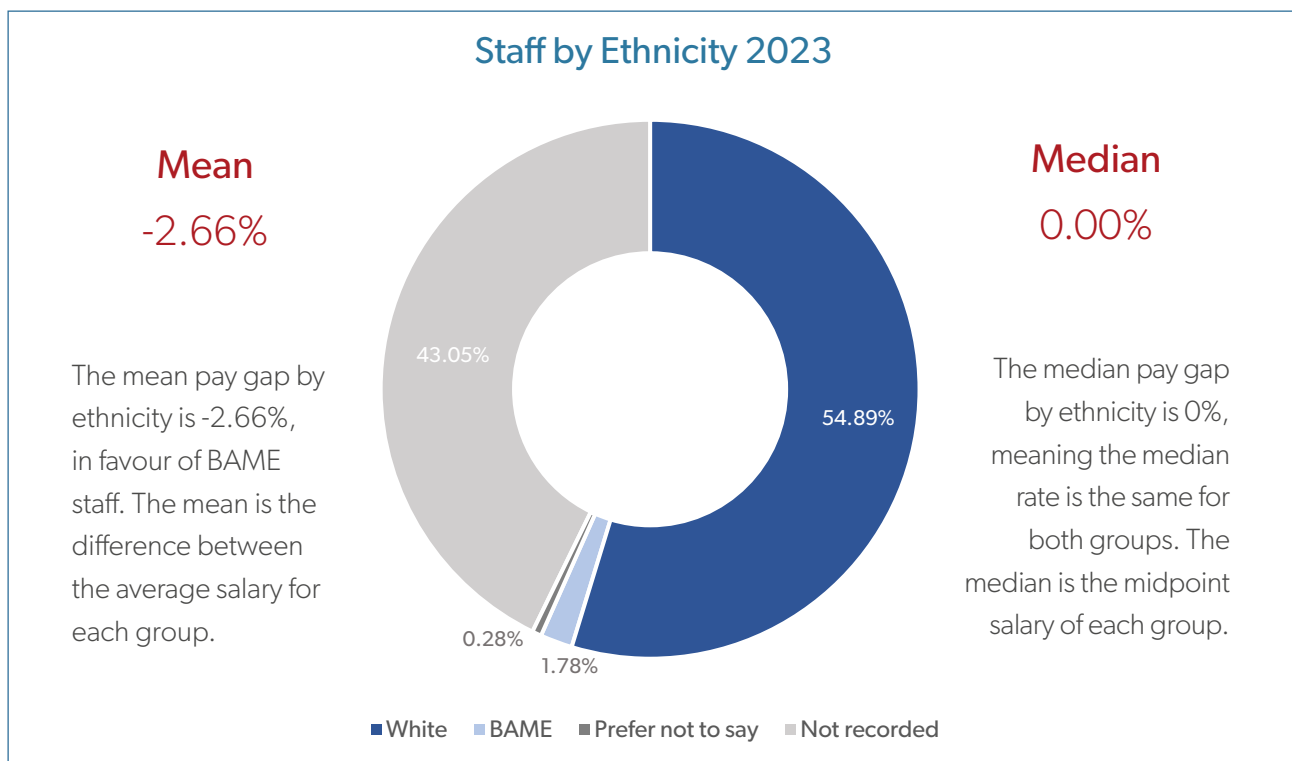
- Recognition for Charitable Activity – Walk with Speighty
- Champion of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Local Senior Officer Ian McMeekin

4. Pay Gap Information and Employee Data

Our Equal Pay and Gender Report 2023 has been published and should be read alongside this Mainstreaming Report 2023 - 2024 to provide a complete picture of employment equality performance. As of December 2022, the SFRS Mean and Median Pay Gap was as follows:

	2017	2019	2021	2023*
Mean	5%	4.42%	1.01%	-5.76%
Median	Not available	5.92%	2.5%	0%

Table 1 – SFRS Mean and Median Pay Gap

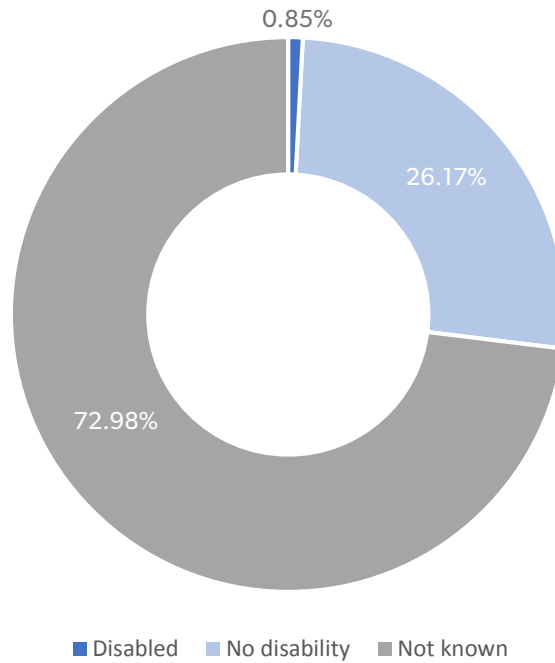


* The data used in this report reflects SFRS staff as of December 2022 whereas the 2021 report was January 2021. The snapshot date for data was brought forward in this recent report to allow sufficient time for the compiling of the report prior to publication.

Disability in Staff 2023

Mean
-7.93%

The mean pay gap of disabled staff is -7.93%, in favour of staff with a disability. The mean is the difference between the average salary for each group.



Median
0.00%

The median pay gap by disability is 0%, meaning the median rate is the same for both groups. The median is the midpoint salary of each group.

SFRS is not currently representative of the communities it serves within its workforce. Moreover, the data held by SFRS about its employees is incomplete. A significant proportion of employees choose not to disclose their protected characteristics in our self-service employee monitoring system.

The information held at 31 March 2024 was as follows when the headcount was 7,551 across all employee groups:

Ethnicity	Percentage of Total
White	53.70%
BAME	0.70%
Prefer Not to Say	0.29%
Not Recorded	45.31%

Disability	Percentage of Total
Disabled	0.90%
Not Disabled	26.92%
Not Recorded	72.18%

Sex*	Percentage of Total
Male	85.50%
Female	14.50%

Sexual Orientation	Percentage of Total
Bisexual	0.32%
Gay	0.25%
Heterosexual / Straight	39.58%
Lesbian	0.37%
Other	0.12%
Prefer Not to Answer	0.86%
Not Recorded	58.50%

* employees were asked to indicate their gender identity: female, male, having a trans background or if they would prefer not to answer. A free text option for those identifying as trans was provided. We are not reporting the free text results due to the small numbers involved.

5. Planning for 2024-2025

The following activities will be prioritised during 2024-2025:

- 1** A review of the Equality Outcomes in preparation for setting new Equality Outcomes.
- 2** Develop and implement improvements to the Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment process.
- 3** Introduce revised terms of reference for the Equality Partnership Group.
- 4** Support the work of the Culture Development Group to ensure that equality and inclusion are at the heart of the programme of work.
- 5** Develop new equality, diversity and inclusion training materials.
- 6** Take steps to improve disclosure rates of sensitive information by employees by communicating the purpose and use of data collection and through line management encouragement.



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Working together for a safer Scotland

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