1 - Equalities in the budgeting process

- How were equalities issues taken into consideration in allocating budgets in 2012-13? (Please describe the process undertaken)

SDS is committed to being an equal opportunities employer, and this is an explicit policy. Staff costs account for c.20% of budget, some £43M in 2012/13, and c.85% of this is expended on direct service delivery. The nature of our delivery, with its heavy focus on careers information, advice and guidance, is related to ensuring equality and fairness, including for example heavy emphasis on disadvantaged client groups and employability support. A further c.62% of budget is attributed to National Training Programmes and supporting initiatives, all of which have rules which are designed to support equality and fairness, while c.5% relates to development projects where business cases should take account of equality factors. The remaining budget relates to operating costs for property, administration and infrastructure. Thus, the nature of the organisation ensures that equality issues are overt in delivery and therefore may be clear or implicit in budget planning.

- Was the approach taken for the 2012-13 budget any different from that taken in 2011-12? (If YES, please describe what changed in your approach)

Although the principles above were true in the previous year, there was an awareness-raising prior to the 2012/13 budget setting process. Board, Senior Management Team and senior managers all received Equality and Diversity training to ensure cognisance of obligations from recent legislation.

- Can you provide any examples of how equalities considerations influenced agreed budgets? (Please provide up to THREE examples)

SDS has a dedicated Equal Opportunities Adviser who is able to provide guidance to colleagues scoping business cases for budget. He has supported major Equality Impact Assessments for National Training Programmes, and for career information, advice and guidance service modernisation. The latter is approaching completion while the former has been published on our website. SDS operational budgets for 2012/13 include financial resource to support translating and interpreting services.

2 - Equalities in mainstream services

- For your three most significant mainstream services (in terms of cost), please provide details of—

a) The total budget for this service in 2011-12 and 2012-13]

As noted above, SDS services are designed to provide equal opportunity mechanisms. Modern Apprenticeships and the Get Ready for Work...
initiative are our largest external expenditures (£71M and £26M 2011/12, £75M and £26M in 2012/13). Delivery staff costs for services were c38M in 2011/12, and are budgeted at £33.5M in 2012/13. In the latter case, this reflects both a voluntary severance programme and service modernisation which is designed to offer a better, fairer service to those who need it most.

b) The impact (positive or negative) that this service has on equality groups

Our Equality Impact Assessments consider the impact on equality groups and these are published on our website.

c) The impact (if any) that any budget changes have had on equality groups

This would be identified in the appropriate Equality Impact Assessment.

3 - Service provision for equalities groups

- For up to THREE services with a specific focus or provision for equalities groups, please provide details of—

a) The total budget for this service in 2011-12 and 2012-13

Please see above.

b) The impact that this service has on equality groups

SDS supported 195K people of all ages with careers information, advice and guidance, 13K individuals at risk of redundancy, 16K people requiring support for employability, 54K individual learning accounts, and 26K Modern Apprenticeship start opportunities. This would support equality groups.

c) The impact (if any) that any budget changes have had on equality groups

Service development for career information, advice and guidance activities is designed to target vulnerable groups and those requiring most support. A quality assessment and continuous improvement programme is currently underway to review and inform future development.

4 - Mainstreaming equalities

- What specialist services or programmes have been, or are being altered, in the interests of mainstreaming?

As above, equality and fairness of opportunity are central to SDS service delivery.
What monitoring is in place to ensure that the relevant equality groups continue to access an appropriate service?

The introduction and development of formal assessment and continuous improvement programmes for National Training Programmes and CIAG will take cognisance, more explicitly, to ensure equality and diversity in decision making and delivery.

Kenny MacEachen
Government Liaison Executive
Skills Development Scotland
30 August 2012