

Kaukab Stewart MSP
Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

By email: ehrcj.committee@parliament.scot

02 August 2023

Dear Convener,

Budget 2024-25: Pre-Budget Scrutiny: Scotland's Equality Data Improvement Programme

Thank you for your letter dated 4 July 2023 requesting an update on the Equality Data Improvement Programme and Equality Evidence Strategy to inform your pre-budget scrutiny.

Following correspondence from the Minister for Equalities and Older People to the Committee on 24 March 2023 informing you of the publication of [Scotland's Equality Evidence Strategy 2023-2025](#), I am pleased to report that the second phase of the Equality Data Improvement Programme (EDIP) is now underway.

The second phase is focused on implementation of the three-year programme of work to strengthen Scotland's equality evidence base set out in the strategy. Over the lifespan of the strategy, improvement activity will be undertaken across all ministerial portfolios of the Scottish Government and National Records of Scotland (NRS). The 45 actions set out in the strategy cover improvements to the data on a range of equality variables including on all nine of the protected characteristics. The strategy will also be used to guide discussions with stakeholders, including the First Minister's Advisory Council on Women and Girls (NACWG).

We will report on progress made towards achieving these actions in an interim progress report in late 2024 and again following the conclusion of the strategy. The interim progress report will also include a summary of additional action taken by the Scottish Government to strengthen the equality evidence base, including social research commissions and capacity building activity, not represented in the strategy. We will also consider whether additional actions should be added to the plan in light of emerging priorities.

The EDIP continues to be governed by the project board established at the commencement of the programme. The project board will meet quarterly throughout the strategy implementation period to review progress made against the actions, agree priorities and identify where additional work is required. The next meeting of the project board is scheduled for 22 August 2023 and my officials will shortly commence a review of progress made since

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the publication of the strategy. I would be happy to provide the Committee with a further update on initial progress in autumn following completion of the review.

I would like to take this time to reaffirm our commitment to strengthening the equality evidence base to enable more inclusive decision making, including in relation to the Budget. While we recognise that gaps remain, we have made good progress in relation to equality data improvement in recent years.

Thank you for your, and the Committee's, diligent work in the pre-budget scrutiny process. I hope this information is helpful, and I look forward to continuing to work together on these important issues going forward.

I have copied this letter to the Minister for Equalities, Migration and Refugees.

Yours sincerely,



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