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8 December 2025

Dear Karen,

I am writing to inform the Committee that today, in line with our Programme for Government commitment, the Scottish Government has published a suite of materials designed to embed equality and human rights across all areas of Government practice, and to provide support for public sector organisations in implementing these principles.

The suite of materials includes:

- [the Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming Strategy](#)
- [the Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming Action Plan](#)
- [the Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming Toolkit](#)

In addition, we have today also published our [Regulation 12 report](#) which outlines proposals to enable listed authorities to better perform the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in Scotland, in line with Scottish Ministers' statutory duty under regulation 12(1) of the Equality Act (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 ("Scottish Specific Duties").

We have developed all of these materials through extensive engagement with communities, organisations and individuals, including those with lived experience of inequality and exclusion.

I am pleased to provide below an overview of each of these materials for the Committee's awareness.

## **The Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming Strategy**

The Strategy sets out the Scottish Government's approach to embedding equality and human rights into everything it does across Government and seeks to encourage the same across the wider public sector. It provides a clear vision and practical framework for making lasting change in how the Scottish Government develops policy, delivers services and allocates resources.

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This is about how we can do things better. It means using the resources we have wisely and fairly to deliver meaningful change. We are committed to making the principles set out in the Strategy a core part of how decisions are made; not as an add-on, but as a foundation of our work that benefits everyone, especially those experiencing inequality.

The Strategy articulates a framework for action against six key drivers. These drivers emerged clearly and consistently through stakeholder engagement, reflecting the areas where change is most needed and possible. They are:

- Strengthening Leadership
- Developing Accountability and Transparency
- Ensuring an Effective Regulatory and Policy Environment
- Utilising Evidence and Experience
- Enhancing Capability and Culture
- Improving Capacity

These are not just headings, they are levers for change and reflect the areas where we must focus our collective efforts to build a fairer Scotland.

## **The Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming Toolkit**

Developed collaboratively with a stakeholder working group, the Toolkit is a website with over 100 resources that provides a central repository for relevant third party guidance, training materials and best practice examples to support the public sector to strengthen its mainstreaming activity. The Toolkit marks the first time that the Government has brought together such a comprehensive resource and we are proud to lead this important step forward in embedding equality and human rights.

The included resources cover practical guidance on legislative duties and organisational approaches, supported by over 30 case studies from sectors including health, education and local government. Examples include an Equalities Policy Guide for education settings; a report on involving people with lived experience in health and social care; a trauma-informed practice toolkit; and a guide for employers on advancing social mobility. The Toolkit also includes templates for impact assessments and action planning, as well as a curated library of materials from bodies such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Human Rights Commission.

The Toolkit has been designed so that the widest range of people can use it. The website meets current accessibility standards, making it simple to read, and to navigate with a keyboard and mouse. It also includes features like text-to-speech, translation into over 100 languages, and options to change fonts, text size and colours.

The Toolkit will be reviewed regularly and enhanced based on user feedback, ensuring it remains relevant and impactful in continuously progressing equality and human rights mainstreaming.

## **The Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming Action Plan**

The Action Plan sets out for the first time in one place how the Scottish Government is taking practical steps to embed equality and human rights across its systems and processes.

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It brings together 61 actions aligned to the six drivers outlined in the Mainstreaming Strategy. The Action Plan focuses on Scottish Government actions, so we can lead by example and drive meaningful progress. By doing this ourselves, we aim to demonstrate how a systematic approach to mainstreaming can drive change across government and society.

The Action Plan will be reported on and updated each year, and we will explore the potential to align the Mainstreaming Action Plan reporting with statutory reporting duties to support accessibility.

The next step will be the creation of a robust governance framework to support the monitoring of this plan and to drive progress against the actions it contains. This framework will set out clear structures for oversight, accountability and delivery. We intend to publish this new governance framework by Summer 2026.

## **Regulation 12(1) Report and Proposals**

This report sets out the Scottish Government's proposals for improving the operation of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in Scotland between December 2025 and December 2029. It represents a package of proposals designed to strengthen how equality duties operate in practice and build capability across the public sector. It has been partly informed by the findings from the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee inquiry on the operation of the PSED.

The proposals focus on five priority areas: pay gap action plans, strengthening stakeholder engagement, improving understanding of fostering good relations, building leadership and capacity, and reinforcing accountability at senior levels. These priorities were identified through evidence and stakeholder feedback and complement existing commitments, such as extending pay gap reporting to include disability and race, and developing an inclusive communications toolkit.

The proposals are included in the Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming Action Plan. In line with the Action Plan, details of the governance framework, designed to support monitoring and reporting of the progress of these proposals, will be published in Summer 2026.

## **Conclusion**

These publications represent a significant step forward in our commitment to embedding equality and human rights across Government and encouraging the same across the wider public sector, underscoring the Government's pivotal role in providing leadership, building capability and setting a clear strategic direction.

I welcome the Committee's continued engagement on this important work.

Yours sincerely,

**KAUKAB STEWART**

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