

## EQUALITIES OUTCOMES (2019-2023)

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### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report proposes a suite of Equalities Outcomes to cover the period 2019-2023.

The Council, the Education Authority, and the Argyll and Bute Licensing Board, as 'listed authorities', are required to publish sets of equality outcomes at least every four years.

The current set of equality outcomes was adopted in 2013, reviewed in 2014, and extended in 2017, with the view to the outcomes being reviewed ahead of the preparation of the 2019 Equalities Mainstreaming Report, which is due for publication by the end of April 2019.

The report describes the work that has been undertaken to develop the proposed outcomes, which are as follows:

#### **Workforce:**

- We support our workforce, encouraging participation across all age groups
- We promote diversity across occupational groups

#### **Engagement:**

- We have improved engagement with protected groups

#### **Services:**

- People with protected characteristics have improved experiences of services
- We take the views of people from protected groups into account when we change our services.

#### **Education:**

- We do not tolerate bullying and harassment of people from protected groups
- The gap in educational attainment between people with and without

protected characteristics is reduced.

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

The recommendation of this report is that the Policy and Resources Committee endorse the draft Equality Outcomes and recommends them to the Council for approval.

## EQUALITIES OUTCOMES (2019-2023)

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### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This report presents draft Equality Outcomes for the period 2019-2023. It sets out the reasons for developing new outcomes as well as the work carried out to develop them.

2.2 The proposed outcomes are:

**Workforce:**

- We support our workforce, encouraging participation across all age groups
- We promote diversity across occupational groups

**Engagement:**

- We have improved engagement with protected groups

**Services:**

- People with protected characteristics have improved experiences of services
- We take the views of people from protected groups into account when we change our services.

**Education:**

- We do not tolerate bullying and harassment of people from protected groups
- The gap in educational attainment between people with and without protected characteristics is reduced.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That the Policy and Resources Committee note that the Equality legislation recognises the Council, the Education Authority, and the Argyll and Bute Licensing Board as separate 'listed authorities', each of which is required to publish sets of, and report on progress towards achieving, equality outcomes.
- 3.2 That the Policy and Resources Committee endorse the draft Equality Outcomes and recommends them to the Council for approval.

### **4.0 DETAIL**

- 4.1 The Council, the Education Authority, and the Argyll and Bute Licensing Board, as 'listed authorities', are required to publish sets of equality outcomes at least every four years. Additionally, progress in achieving the outcomes must be reported in a 'mainstreaming report' every two years.
- 4.2 The current set of equality outcomes was adopted in 2013, reviewed in 2014, and extended in 2017, with the view to the outcomes being reviewed ahead of the preparation of the 2019 Equalities Mainstreaming Report, which is due for publication by the end of April 2019.
- 4.3 While the council, the education authority, and the licensing board are separate authorities, it is acceptable for the council, education authority, and the licensing board to report on progress towards achieving their outcomes in a single report. This is the approach that Argyll and Bute Council, along with other local authorities in Scotland, takes. As a result, the equality outcomes have been developed for use by all three bodies.
- 4.4 This paper outlines the work that has been carried out to develop the equalities outcomes that are being proposed for the period 2019-2023.
- 4.5 The following activities have taken place as the proposed outcomes have been developed.
  - a. Discussion at the Equality Forum (15 August 2018): it was suggested that we should explore the possibility of having a set of outcomes that are common across community planning partners.
  - b. The council's HROD Performance and Improvement Team looked at the equality outcomes currently in use by: NHS Highland; the Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership; Police Scotland; Scottish Fire and Rescue; Argyll and Bute Council. We concluded that, while there are some areas of overlapping interest and activity, we cannot duplicate the equalities outcomes used by partner organisations as some outcomes are tailored to specific areas of activity that are not shared by all partners. While outcomes from both Police Scotland and the Health and Social Care Partnership influenced the first draft of our proposed outcomes, the wording was changed to reflect the council's 'style'.

- c. A meeting of selected members of the Equality Forum took place on 4 November 2018 to further discuss the sharing of equality outcomes. The conclusion was that, while desirable, this would be problematic in part for the reasons outlined above. Additionally, organisations do not share common reporting schedules, which means that we could bring outcomes into full alignment only after a period of several years. In the shorter term, we should, however, make sure that all partners are aware of each other's activities with regards to their equalities agendas.
  - d. In October, officers from HROD Performance and Information contacted Heads of Service with a first draft of new equality outcomes for their comments, along with suggestions for actions and / or success measures that might underpin these. We received comments from around half of the people we contacted.
  - e. Further discussion at the Equality Forum (5 November 2018) led to further refinement of our proposed outcomes.
  - f. The draft equalities outcomes were reported to SMT (12 November 2018), along with a request to carry out a public consultation. This led to further refinement of the proposed outcomes.
  - g. Discussions have taken place with the Licensing Board with regard to the equality outcomes it wishes to use.
- 4.6 Guidance on how to construct equalities outcomes suggests that individual outcomes need not relate to every protected characteristic. However, where they do not, the authority must publish its / their reasons for not doing so.
- 4.7 The equalities outcomes consulted on were as follows:
- We support our workforce, encouraging participation across all age groups
  - We have reduced gender-based segregation within occupational groups
  - We have improved engagement with protected groups
  - People with protected characteristics have improved experiences of services
  - We take the views of people from protected groups into account when we change our services.
- In addition, two outcomes specifically relating to Education were consulted on:
- Bullying of young people with one or more protected characteristic is reduced
  - The gap in educational attainment between people with protected characteristics is reduced.
- 4.8 According to the legislation, in preparing equality outcomes, listed authorities must: take reasonable steps to involve persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and any person who appears to the authority to

represent the interests of those persons; consider relevant evidence relating to persons who share a relevant protected characteristic.

- 4.9 The consultation was coordinated by staff from HR and Organisational Development.
- 4.10 Community Development Officers provided HROD with a list of local groups that were subsequently contacted to invite responses to the consultation. In addition, the Community Development Officers highlighted the consultation while they were delivering out equality training for community groups during November and December.
- 4.11 Having mapped the interests of the groups for which Community Development provided details against the nine protected characteristics, it became apparent that there is a bias towards the protected characteristics of age and disability. Therefore, in an attempt to reach groups and individuals who come from other protected groups, as well as the rest of the population, the consultation was promoted externally through the council's social media channels and internally via a newsflash. Respondents were encouraged to forward information about the consultation to anyone who might have been interested. Elected members were also invited to respond to the consultation. Particular effort was made to try to reach young people and looked after children.
- 4.12 Details about the consultation were posted on the council's website. An online survey was used as the primary means of data collection. However, a downloadable Word document was also provided. Respondents were also given the option to email comments without using the survey.
- 4.12 The consultation was live on the council's website from 22 November 2018 to 13 December 2018.
- 4.13 The consultation document and the analysis of the consultation results are appended to this report.
- 4.14 Fifty-five people responded to the consultation. The majority of responses came from individuals. More information is provided in Appendix Two.
- 4.15 There was broad agreement with all the outcomes. However, in light of results of the consultation, the suggested wording of two outcomes were changed as follows:
  - In light of the strength of feeling around this issue, *Bullying of young people with one or more protected characteristics is reduced*, and the widely held view that bullying in any form is unacceptable, the wording has been changed to: **We do not tolerate bullying and harassment of people from protected groups.**
  - To be clearer about what this outcome is trying to achieve, the wording of *The gap in educational attainment between people with protected characteristics is reduced* has been changed to: **The gap in educational attainment between people with and without protected characteristics is reduced.**

4.16 We propose that the full set of equalities outcomes that should be taken forward for the period 2019-2023 are as follows:

**Workforce:**

- We support our workforce, encouraging participation across all age groups
- We promote diversity across occupational groups

**Engagement:**

- We have improved engagement with protected groups

**Services:**

- People with protected characteristics have improved experiences of services
- We take the views of people from protected groups into account when we change our services.

**Education:**

- We do not tolerate bullying and harassment of people from protected groups.
- The gap in educational attainment between people with and without protected characteristics is reduced.

4.17 The new outcomes will be reviewed by 2023 at the latest.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

5.1 This paper has outlined the work undertaken to develop a suite of equalities outcomes to cover the period 2019-2023.

5.2 These equalities outcomes will cover three listed authorities: the Council, the Education Authority, and the Argyll and Bute Licensing Board.

5.3 The Policy and Resources Committee is asked to endorse the draft Equality Outcomes and recommends them to the Council for approval..

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Policy: This report recommends the adoption of a new suite of equalities outcomes to cover the period 2019-2023.

6.2 Financial: None arising directly from this report.

6.3 Legal: Public listed authorities are required to publish sets of equality outcomes at least every four years.

6.4 HR: Two of the proposed equality outcomes relate explicitly to the workforce of the council.

- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
  - 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics
  - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty: None arising directly from this report.
  - 6.5.3 Islands: None arising directly from this report.
- 6.6. Risk: None arising directly from this report.
- 6.7 Customer Service: Proposed outcomes are designed to ensure that the views of people with protected characteristics are borne in mind when changing services, and to ensure that they have enhanced experiences of service delivery.

**Douglas Hendry**

**Executive Director of Customer Services**

**Rory Colville**

**Policy Lead for Corporate Services**

Report prepared 18 December 2018

**For further information contact:**

Chris Carr [chris.carr@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:chris.carr@argyll-bute.gov.uk)

Performance and Improvement Officer

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Consultation questions

Appendix 2: Analysis of consultation results

## **Appendix 1: Consultation questions**

### **Equality Outcomes Consultation**

In 2010, the Equality Act (2010) became law. The Act says that the council, the education authority, and the licensing board, when carrying out their functions, must work to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

To help us do this, we must publish a set of equalities outcomes. We must report on the progress we have made towards achieving these outcomes every two years, and the outcomes, themselves, must be reviewed every four years.

The outcomes we are proposing for the period 2019 to 2023 seek to deliver on the above objectives by focussing on our workforce, how we engage with the wider population, how we provide our services, and deliver education. They are:

#### **Workforce:**

- **We support our workforce, encouraging participation across all age groups**
- **We promote diversity across occupational groups**

#### **Engagement:**

- **We have improved engagement with protected groups**

#### **Services:**

- **People with protected characteristics have improved experiences of services**
- **We take the views of people from protected groups into account when we change our services.**

#### **Education:**

- **Bullying of young people with one or more protected characteristics is reduced**
- **The gap in educational attainment between people with protected characteristics is reduced.**

We would like to invite you to comment on these outcomes. Please consider each outcome in turn, and tell us whether you agree or disagree with it, and give us reasons for your answers.

**Outcome 1: We support our workforce, encouraging participation across all age groups**

We believe that all employees, including those from all the protected characteristics, should be encouraged, and have equal opportunity, to participate fully within the workforce. This principle is set out in the council's Equality and Diversity Policy.

However, we recognise that the Council has particular issues and risks relating to the age of our workforce. This is why this outcome emphasises age.

The age profile of the Council's workforce is significantly different from that of Argyll and Bute's population, with a low number of young people employed, and therefore it is an important focus of our attention. We actively encourage young people to join our workforce, to provide long-term opportunities for them in our area and to create our workforce for the future.

**Q1: Do you agree with the proposed outcome 1?**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q2: Would you like to make any comments to explain your answer?**

**Outcome 2: We promote diversity across occupational groups**

The Council has a highly segregated workforce in some types of job. For example, people working in home care are 99% female. By contrast, employees in Roads and Amenities and IT are predominantly male. We aim to widen opportunity for people in job roles that they may not have considered otherwise and create opportunity for all.

**Q3: Do you agree with the proposed outcome 2?**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q4: Would you like to make any comments to explain your answer?**

**Outcome 3: We have improved engagement with protected groups**

We aim to make sure the voices and opinions of people from protected groups are heard when we engage with our service users. This is particularly important when people from particular protected groups may have different experiences or needs and whose voices may not be heard so clearly.

**Q5: Do you agree with the proposed outcome 3?**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q6: Would you like to make any comments to explain your answer?**

**Outcome 4: People with protected characteristics have improved experiences of services**

We aim to make sure that, as far as possible, our services meet the needs and aspirations of people from protected groups and that we work to improve their experience of our services.

**Q7: Do you agree with the proposed outcome 4?**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q8: Would you like to make any comments to explain your answer?**

**Outcome 5: We take the views of people from protected groups into account when we change our services.**

We aim to make sure that the needs and opinions of people from protected groups are taken into account when we make changes to the way we deliver our services. This helps us to make sure that people with one or more protected characteristics have equal opportunity to access the services we provide as those who do not share a protected characteristic.

**Q9: Do you agree with the proposed outcome 5?**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q10: Would you like to make any comments to explain your answer?**

**Outcome 6: Bullying of young people with one or more protected characteristics is reduced**

As part of wider work to tackle bullying in schools, we will take action to reduce bullying on the basis of one or more of the protected characteristics.

**Q11: Do you agree with the proposed outcome 6?**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q12: Would you like to make any comments to explain your answer?**

**Outcome 7: The gap in educational attainment between people with protected characteristics is reduced.**

We work to provide a high standard of education to all pupils, and we want to reduce gaps in attainment between people with, and without, protected characteristics. This will help us to advance equality of opportunity for young people who share one or more of the protected characteristics.

**Q13: Do you agree with the proposed outcome 7?**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q14: Would you like to make any comments to explain your answer?**

**Q15: Have you responded:**

On behalf of an organisation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Go to question 16
As an individual?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Go to question 17

**Q16: You have said that you are answering on behalf of an organisation. Please tell us which one.**

**Q17: You have said that you are answering as an individual. The following questions are optional, but answering them will help us to understand your responses better.**

**Q17a: What is your sex?**

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q17b: Have you ever identified as a transgender person or trans person?**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q17c: How old are you?**

0-15	<input type="checkbox"/>
16-24	<input type="checkbox"/>
25-44	<input type="checkbox"/>
45-64	<input type="checkbox"/>
65-74	<input type="checkbox"/>
75+	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q17d: What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong to?**

None	<input type="checkbox"/>
Church of Scotland	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roman Catholic	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Christian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sikh	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jewish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hindu	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pagan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other religion (Please write in)	<input type="text"/>

**Q17e: What is your ethnic group?**

**White**

- White Scottish
- Other British
- Irish
- Gypsy/Traveller
- Polish
- Other white ethnic group

**Mixed or multiple ethnic group**

**Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British**

- Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British
- Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British
- Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British
- Other

**African**

- African, African Scottish or African British
- Other

**Caribbean or Black**

- Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British
- Black, Black Scottish or Black British
- Other

**Other ethnic group**

- Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British
- Other

**Q17f: Do you have a physical or mental health condition or illness lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Q17g: Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?**

Heterosexual/Straight	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gay/Lesbian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bisexual	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Thank you for answering our questions.**

## **Appendix two: Analysis of consultation results**

Argyll and Bute Council carried out a public consultation on the draft Equalities Outcomes (2019-2023). The consultation ran between November 22 and December 13, 2018.

The outcomes consulted on were as follows:

### **Workforce:**

- We support our workforce, encouraging participation across all age groups
- We have reduced gender-based segregation within occupational groups

### **Engagement:**

- We have improved engagement with protected groups

### **Services:**

- People with protected characteristics have improved experiences of services
- We take the views of people from protected groups into account when we change our services.

### **Education:**

- Bullying of young people with one or more protected characteristic is reduced
- The gap in educational attainment between people with protected characteristics is reduced.

The draft outcomes were developed to help us meet our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty, which focusses on people with protected characteristics. The wording of the outcomes was influenced by guidance from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission.

When developing the outcomes the following questions were considered.

### **Does the outcome do one or more of the following?**

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

### **Will the outcomes help to?**

- Increase transparency by establishing a clear link between evidence and the actions we are taking to advance equality
- Ensure that we are addressing the right issues
- Make better, fairer decisions, which are understood by those affected by them

- Be more accountable to those we serve / employ
- Show we are bringing tangible benefits for communities and the people who work for us

**Does the equality outcome:**

- Help us to meet our strategic business priorities.

55 responses to the consultation were received.

Six respondents said that they were replying on behalf of organisations. However, when asked what the organisations were, four respondents identified themselves as having come from within the council. Only one respondent identified themselves as belonging to an external organisation.

44 responses were submitted by individuals. Five respondents did not provide this information.

Of the individual respondents, over 80% submitted information about themselves.

- Three-quarters of respondents were female.
- No trans people responded
- Nine out of every ten respondents were of working age (taken to be 16 to 65 years of age)
- Two-thirds said they had no religion; the remaining third identified as Christian, predominantly Church of Scotland.
- All but one respondent identified as White Scottish or White other British.
- One-third said they had a physical or mental health issue that had lasted / was expected to last over twelve months
- Nine out of ten respondents identified as heterosexual / straight. The remaining individuals all identified as having an 'other' sexual orientation. (No respondents identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual.)

There was therefore limited representation of people with protected characteristics among respondents.

Respondents were given the option to reply to the consultation by:

- Completing an online survey
- Downloading a Word document that contained all the survey questions
- Emailing [equality@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:equality@argyll-bute.gov.uk).

All respondents used the online survey, which was set up in Survey Monkey.

**General reaction to the draft plan**

There was broad agreement with the proposed outcomes. See table 1.

	Agree	Disagree	Don't	Total

			know	
Outcome 1: We support our workforce, encouraging participation across all age groups	45 81.8%	6 10.9%	4 7.3%	55 100%
Outcome 2: We promote diversity across occupational groups	49 90.7%	3 5.6%	2 3.7%	54 100%
Outcome 3: We have improved engagement with protected groups	47 90.4%	3 5.8%	2 3.8%	52 100%
Outcome 4: People with protected characteristics have improved experiences of services	45 84.9%	4 7.5%	4 7.5%	53 100%
Outcome 5: We take the views of people from protected groups into account when we change our services.	44 84.6%	4 7.7%	4 7.7%	52 100%
Outcome 6: Bullying of young people with one or more protected characteristics is reduced	40 76.9%	8 15.4%	4 7.7%	52 100%
Outcome 7: The gap in educational attainment between people with protected characteristics is reduced.	45 88.2%	2 3.9%	4 7.8%	51 100%

More detailed information relating to each outcome is given below.

The HSCP has its own set of equalities outcomes. However, some responses included comments that relate to areas of work carried out by the HSCP. The results of this consultation will be shared with the HSCP so that these views will be taken into account when the HSCP comes to review its own outcomes.

A recurrent theme was that any improvements made for people with one or more protected characteristic(s) should not be at the expense of other groups that might be seen to be disadvantaged in some way or of the wider population.

### Workforce:

#### Outcome 1: We support our workforce, encouraging participation across all age groups

Agree	45
Disagree	6
Don't know	4

18 free text comments were made.

While there was broad agreement with the proposed outcome, even among respondents who agreed, concerns were expressed and caveats made.

One respondent raised the issue of intersectionality, suggesting that thought needed to be given to individuals who had more than one protected characteristic.

A couple of respondents expressed the view that the council needs to be sensitive with regard to how older members of staff are highlighted in workforce reviews; older staff should be seen to be valued, but this does not always appear to be the case. Questions were also raised with regard to the best ways to transfer knowledge and experience between older and younger cohorts.

Several respondents commented about increases in the state pension age. Where the state pension age has increased, and will increase in the future, this may prevent people from retiring and freeing up jobs for younger cohorts. Questions were therefore raised about the practicality of achieving this outcome.

Respondents both agreeing and disagreeing with the outcome expressed the view that opportunities should be made available regardless of age. One respondent, who agreed with the outcome, said, 'While we need to create opportunity for young people...we should never discriminate against age'. Another respondent, who disagreed, said: 'Any opportunities should be available regardless of age. I do not agree with this positive discrimination whereby young people are given additional opportunities...'

By contrast, two others respondent who disagreed with the outcome wanted to see more young people being given opportunities in the council. Therefore, their objection appeared to be that this outcome was not more fully focussed on younger groups:

- 'We need to retain young people in the area and maintain an age balance within the population'
- '...A&B Council should employ more young people particularly focusing on our care experienced young people...'

## **Outcome 2: We promote diversity across occupational groups**

Agree	49
Disagree	3
Don't know	2

13 free text comments were made.

One enthusiastic respondent commented: 'This is great!' Others said: 'I would love to see female road workers and male care workers. It would change a lot of thinking within the workforce,' and, 'It would be great to see more male staff in our residential houses to create more of a gender balance.'

However, while there was broad agreement with the proposed outcome, even among respondents who agreed, some concerns were expressed and caveats made.

A couple of respondents suggested that gender stereotyping could be challenged in some areas more effectively than others. For example, one respondent suggested: 'Certainly more females could be encouraged to go into IT. Not sure about home care and Roads and Amenities...'

Implicit in a number of comments was a concern that this could lead to positive discrimination in some areas. While there was acceptance that gender stereotypes should be challenged, this should be not at the expense of a person's qualifications or ability to do the job.

A couple of respondents raised the issue of what recipients of care might prefer, suggesting that their views need to be taken into account when recruiting and training staff.

One respondent highlighted the importance of making flexible working available in all areas: 'to allow all genders to have a fulfilling career and family life balance'.

### **Engagement:**

#### **Outcome 3: We have improved engagement with protected groups**

Agree	47
Disagree	3
Don't know	2

15 free text comments were made.

While there was broad agreement with the proposed outcome, even among respondents who agreed, concerns were expressed and caveats made.

Two respondents suggested that the engagement should go beyond people with protected characteristics, themselves. One suggested that: '...even if those protected people are over 18, those around them who have cared about them as minors, should have a legal input in the interests of the vulnerable person.' Another respondent wanted to know how this (currently?) works in practice, reporting that neither they, nor their child, who needs additional support, have ever been asked for their views.

Another respondent stressed the need to engage with our 'looked after' children, hinting that this should take place before 'we even take into consideration those who are from protected groups.'

Two respondents highlighted the need for resources to be made available for this outcome to be achieved, 'or else engagement becomes tokenistic and merely about consultation, rather than including "collaboration" or "involvement" as options for engagement'.

Some respondents, who approved of the outcome, appeared cynical with regard to how effective engagement was at present, suggesting that they recognised this was an area in which improvements could be made.

## Services:

### Outcome 4: People with protected characteristics have improved experiences of services

Agree	45
Disagree	4
Don't know	4

14 free text comments were made.

While there was broad agreement with the proposed outcome, even among some respondents who agreed, concerns were expressed and caveats made.

One respondent questioned how people with protected characteristics could become involved with the co-delivery of services.

One respondent highlighted transgender care leavers as a particular group that could benefit from improved service experiences.

A couple of respondents suggested that all service users should have the same, positive, experiences of services. One respondent, while agreeing with the outcome, said: 'All people should be treated equally. Any handicap or difficulty should be met to ensure that they are treated equally. These costs need to be allowed for and nobody should be treated differently or given priority once a level outcome can be achieved.'

One respondent hinted that education of staff and a change in culture is required to ensure that this outcome is delivered.

One respondent, who disagreed with the outcome, suggested the following: 'All individuals, with or without a protected characteristic, should have improved experiences of services. The only exception to this would be where there is specific evidence to show that individual(s) with one or more protected characteristic receive a poorer service than all individuals without a protected characteristic...'

Another respondent queried how this can be delivered where private organisations work in partnership with the council.

### Outcome 5: We take the views of people from protected groups into account when we change our services

Agree	44
Disagree	4
Don't know	4

10 free text comments were made.

While there was broad agreement with the proposed outcome, even among respondents who agreed, concerns were expressed and caveats made.

Principal caveats related to:

- Making sure that the interests of people from protected characteristics do not come at the expense of the opinions of the wider population
- The need to make sure that all changes are costed to ensure that they are sustainable and can remain in place when budgets are squeezed further.

In a similar vein, one respondent suggested that this outcome could encourage lip service to be paid to protected groups. There is a danger that we listen, but then do not incorporate their views into any change to the service.

### Education:

#### **Outcome 6: Bullying of young people with one or more protected characteristics is reduced**

Agree	40
Disagree	8
Don't know	4

19 free text comments were made.

This was the outcome which provoked the highest level of disagreement.

While there was broad agreement with the outcome, it was clear from the comments made that respondents consider bullying in all forms to be unacceptable, not just bullying of people with protected characteristics. Moreover, given that bullying is unacceptable, the outcome should be more aspirational, aiming for the eradication of bullying, not just its reduction.

A couple of respondents mentioned the issue of workplace bullying, suggesting that this is an issue that needs to be tackled more widely. This included one comment about workplace bullying in schools.

One respondent suggested that highlighting the bullying of people with protected characteristics might exacerbate the problem as it would draw attention to them and to the issue.

#### **Outcome 7: The gap in educational attainment between people with protected characteristics is reduced**

Agree	45
Disagree	2
Don't know	4

17 free text comments were made.

While there was broad agreement with the proposed outcome, even among respondents who agreed, concerns were expressed and caveats made.

A couple of respondents suggested that pupils should be encouraged to develop skills in areas beyond the purely academic, making mention of practical skills, or achievements in music and art.

Concern was raised by a number of respondents about the need to support pupils beyond those with protected characteristics. One respondent suggested that efforts should be made to close the gap in educational attainment between LAC and non-LAC. Another commented on the need to assist less affluent pupils irrespective of whether or not they share protected characteristics, and made a link to the Fairer Scotland Duty.

Another respondent questioned whether equivalent support would be in place when people with protected characteristics move into employment.

### **Recommendations:**

On the basis of the responses to the consultation, the following recommendations have been made.

#### **Workforce:**

- **We support our workforce, encouraging participation across all age groups**  
Keep the outcome as is.
- **We promote diversity across occupational groups**  
Keep the outcome as is

#### **Engagement:**

- **We have improved engagement with protected groups**  
Keep the outcome as is

#### **Services:**

- **People with protected characteristics have improved experiences of services**

Keep the outcome as is

- **We take the views of people from protected groups into account when we change our services.**

Keep the outcome as is

#### **Education:**

- **Bullying of young people with one or more protected characteristics is reduced**

In light of the strength of feeling around this issue, and the widely held view that bullying in any form is unacceptable, the wording be changed to **We do not tolerate bullying and harassment of people from protected groups.**

- **The gap in educational attainment between people with protected characteristics is reduced.**

To be clearer about what this outcome is trying to achieve, change the wording to: **The gap in educational attainment between people with and without protected characteristics is reduced.**