



South East of Scotland
Transport Partnership

Equalities Outcomes 2021-2025 and Mainstreaming Report

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About SEStran – Role & Function

SEStran is one of seven Regional Transport Partnerships (RTP's) in Scotland. The partnership area covers 8 local authorities, including City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian, West Lothian, Fife, Falkirk, Clackmannanshire and Scottish Borders. This covers an area of 3180sq miles and is home to 28% of Scotland's population. SEStran aims to develop a sustainable transportation system for the South East of Scotland that will enable business to function effectively and provide everyone living in the region with improved access to healthcare, education, public services and employment opportunities. SEStran is a Model 1 RTP, as defined under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005, with a main function to deliver a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) for the area. SEStran's RTS is the cornerstone of its work, it lays out the vision for the strategic development of transport in South East Scotland up to 2028 (in the current version) and includes a focus on links to and from Edinburgh, as the economic hub of the region. SEStran is currently engaged in a process to update and re-write the RTS for the period up to 2035, prompted by a new National Transport Strategy (NTS 2), the climate emergency, new technology and by the impact of COVID 19. It is expected that a draft for consultation will be prepared by the autumn of 2021. SEStran currently has a staff complement of 9.

Legal Context

The Equality Act 2010 (“the 2010 Act”)

Part 3 of Schedule 19 to the 2010 Act sets out that a Regional Transport Partnership established by Section 1(1) of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 (“the 2005 Act”) falls within the definition of a public authority for the purposes of the 2010 Act.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 (“the 2012 Regulations”)

Para. 1 of Schedule 1 to the 2012 Regulations sets out that a Regional Transport Partnership established by Section 1(1) of the 2005 Act falls within the definition of a public authority for the purposes of the 2012 Regulations.

The Regional Transport Partnerships (Establishment, Constitution and Membership) (Scotland) Order 2005, which was made under Section 1(1) of the 2005 Act, established SEStran, meaning SEStran is covered by both the 2010 Act and the 2012 Regulations.

This means SEStran is covered by the public sector equality duty (PSED), as set out in the 2010 Act. The PSED requires that SEStran must, when exercising its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the 2010 Act;

- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The 2010 Act explains that having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The protected characteristics under the 2010 Act are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

About this report

This report sets out how SEStran is addressing its responsibilities under the 2010 Act. It summarises the progress made in mainstreaming equality and sets out our new Equalities Outcome for the reporting period 2021-2025. It demonstrates our continued commitment to developing and embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in culture and behaviours and as a fundamental part of our day to day business and decision making.

Section 1: Mainstreaming Equality

Mainstreaming is a specific requirement for public bodies in relation to implementing the Equality Duty. It means integrating equality into the day to day working of the organisation.

Over the period 2019 – 2021, SEStran has sought to mainstream Equality into our core functions as outlined below.

1. How SEStran Assess Impact on Equality

SEStran seeks to involve and inform equality groups right from the start of discussions on any new proposals, policies or projects, progressing on to a more structured assessment in any subsequent stages.

SEStran is very clear on the need to ensure that the requirements of people with protected characteristics are taken in to account during the development and implementation of a new policy or service, or when a change is made to a current policy or service. Working with our legal advisers, SEStran has developed a new Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) template. Alongside this, SEStran is keen to ensure that staff have a comprehensive knowledge of obligations under the equalities legislation and has provided a variety of staff training courses and workshops to support and enhance this knowledge and awareness.

2. Procurement

Equality is considered throughout the procurement and tender procedures and use is made of Public Contracts Scotland, frameworks and Scotland Excel, which is the Centre of Procurement Expertise for the local government sector in Scotland.

SEStran's Corporate Procurement Policy [\[Governance Scheme\]](#) takes account of the Scottish Government's Public Services Reform Agenda and the subsequent Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 and the associated Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015.

There are several principles relevant to equalities that form part of this policy, including: "Consider how procurement can improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the SEStran area with particular reference to reducing inequality in the SEStran area, facilitate the involvement of small and medium enterprises, third sector bodies and supported business, and promote innovation" And "Demonstrate through the procurement process that SEStran has given due regard to whether the award criteria and conditions relating to the performance of a relevant contract should include consideration to enable it to better perform its equality duty."

3. HR Policies

Equality and diversity are fundamental principles in all HR policies and procedures and are actively promoted in SEStran. All policies are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in legislation and best practice. This is done in consultation with HR advisers, stakeholders and staff, before finally being presented to the Performance and Audit Committee for further scrutiny and feedback.

SEStran will continue to review all policies and procedures to ensure they reflect SEStran's commitment to ensuring that it promotes an equitable and inclusive workplace.

4. Corporate Planning and Reporting

Further to updating SEStran's equalities impact assessment procedures, SEStran also includes a section for reporting on any equality's implications within our formal reporting procedures. To demonstrate commitment to embedding equality into the corporate planning process SEStran continues to include a series of icons throughout the Business Plan and projects reports, which easily identifies where equalities feature in the organisational objectives.

5. Equalities & Access to Healthcare Forum

SEStran continues to hold an Equalities and Access to Healthcare Forum which meets twice a year, involving local equalities groups and healthcare representatives, to discuss the work that SEStran is doing, how it operates and to get feedback and suggestions on how to improve on equalities and accessibility issues. This Forum is an important way for SEStran to co-design projects and policies and gain input from individuals with protected characteristics or from groups representing the interests of those with protected characteristics. In this way SEStran mainstreams equalities into the work of the Partnership. Efforts are continuing to look to reinvigorate the membership of the Forum to engage with as wide a range of people and groups as possible and as part of that commitment SEStran has held a number of workshops on "Exploring Disability and Public Transport" which were well attended. The evidence gathered at the workshops is being used in the development of the journey planner app for those with a disability.

6. Disability Confident Scheme

In 2017 SEStran became a Disability Committed Employer, which was progressed to the higher-level Disability Confident Employer in 2018 and is the level that we continue to retain. The Disability Confident Employment Scheme is a government scheme designed to encourage employers to recruit and retain disabled people and those with health conditions. SEStran employs the Disability Confident logo to demonstrate that applicants with disabilities are encouraged and welcome.

7. The National Disability Internship Programme

The National Disability Internship Programme is delivered by Inclusion Scotland and funded by the Scottish Government's Equality Unit. The internship programme is included in the A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People Action Plan, which is an action plan to support the human rights of disabled people in Scotland up to 2021.

SEStran appointed a Marketing Intern in autumn 2019, primarily to focus on the promotion of the Thistle Assistance programme and journey planner. The placement was initially for a period of 20 weeks but due to the pandemic, and the skills and ability of the intern, the post was extended until autumn 2020.

As an employer, this was a very positive experience for SEStran, and we will seek to explore any further opportunities that arise.

8. Living Wage Employer

In 2017 Living Wage accreditation was achieved and SEStran continue to uphold this commitment. The living wage is currently £9.50ph and is based on cost of living. Research has shown that paying the living wage helps organisations recruit, retain better staff, reduce absenteeism and encourage higher productivity.

9. Board Diversity

SEStran is committed to continuing to make progress on improving the diversity of its Board to encourage new and innovative thinking and maximise use of talent, leading to better decision making and governance.

Our Board membership information is available here:

<https://www.sestran.gov.uk/board-members/>

Two thirds of the SEStran Partnership Board is made up of elected members and their appointments are made by their respective councils alone, therefore, we took action to influence the gender balance of our non-councillor members through signing the voluntary One Scotland 50/50 pledge, as endorsed by the Equalities Forum and the Partnership Board. We undertook an inclusive application process for the non-councillor members who were appointed in 2018. Since their appointments, the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 came into force. The purpose of the Act is to improve the representation of women on the boards of Scottish public authorities. The Act sets a gender representation objective for the non-executive member component of public boards. The objective is that 50% of non-executive members are women. The current term for the non-councillor members ends in March 2022 and SEStran will seek to retain the gender balance amongst the non-councillor members and explore options for further increasing the diversity through the next recruitment exercise.

The Succession Planning Committee and the Board Diversity Succession Plan¹ sets out the process to help deliver a more diverse Board. Appointments were made to the Succession Planning Committee in August 2017, when the Board for the 2017-2022 term was established. The role of the SEStran Succession Planning Committee is to: lead on meeting the Board's responsibilities in relation to planning for succession through appointments and Board member development; offer advice to the Board on future appointments and reappointments; review and evaluate the skills, knowledge, expertise, diversity (including protected characteristics) of current Board members, and requirements of future members and monitor the development and continuous improvement of a succession plan that can be presented to the Board.

The 2012 Regulations set out that Scottish Ministers are required from time to time, to gather information about members' protected characteristics and that the Ministers will forward those to the public bodies covered by the duties. In order to regularise data collection, SEStran has developed its own equalities monitoring procedure and will publish the current gender balance of the Partnership Board. No other data on protected characteristics will be made available.

The gender of SEStran's members is as follows:
Identified as Male 41%; Identified as Female 21%; Didn't Answer 38%

10. Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation (CIHT) Charter

SEStran demonstrated a commitment to the diversity and inclusion agenda by signing the Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation (CIHT) Diversity and Inclusion Charter in September 2016 and we continue to adhere to this Charter.

11. Staff Engagement

Since the start of the COVID pandemic, all SEStran staff have been working from home. The IT infrastructure was already in place to support remote working, therefore the transition, from a technical perspective, was relatively straightforward.

The mental health and wellbeing of all staff is paramount and SEStran has supported its staff through the crisis by issuing relevant guidance on topics ranging from homeworking, managing mental wellbeing, eating well and staying active. Regular engagement activities are arranged through a variety of mediums, including staff meetings, 1:1s and a few social events.

12. Policy and Procedure Reviews

SEStran includes policy review sessions as part of weekly staff team meetings, where policies are reviewed on rotation to provide staff with the opportunity to refresh their knowledge, understanding and ask questions.

¹ <https://sestran.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Board-Diversity-Succession-Plan-2.pdf>

13. Training

Following successful staff training, Equate Scotland delivered training on Positive Language and Unconscious Bias to the Partnership Board in June 2019.

In March 2020 staff attended a training session provided by our legal advisers Anderson Strathern LLP on Equalities Impact Assessments. Anderson Strathern also worked with staff to develop a new EqIA template.

Staff can access Equalities and Diversity Training Modules via Falkirk Council's e-learning portal. This training aims to raise awareness and covers the legislation and is designed so that staff are encouraged to think about, reflect and challenge their perceptions. It includes examples, quizzes and a test at the end of the training which aims to help staff understand equality and diversity issues.

14. Thistle Assistance Program

SEStran has operated the Thistle Assistance Programme² since 2011. This has been an extremely successful scheme that aims to give those with mobility challenges, disabled and elderly transport users more confidence in using public transport.

Thistle Assistance is part of the Scottish Government's Accessible Travel Framework and is a key priority in the current delivery plan³.

Since its launch SEStran has distributed over 100,000 cards and had over 5,000 downloads of the App. SEStran will seek to continue to promote the programme. SEStran also made the decision to make the Thistle Card design freely available, in order that it could be easily used in other areas of Scotland. Other RTP's have launched the Card in their regions, allowing more people to utilise the Card and increasing accessibility to public transport across Scotland.

In 2016, SEStran developed the Thistle Assistance app, which replicates the original card. The app is not a replacement for the Card but seeks to increase use and awareness of the Thistle Card scheme. The app is free to download and SEStran are in discussions with developers to further the potential of this technology. By promoting the use of the Thistle Card & app, SEStran looks to reduce barriers to accessing public transport for all and promote social inclusion for those who have no other means of transport. In 2015, SEStran's work with the Thistle Card was recognised by the Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance (SATA) with an achievement award in recognition of outstanding achievement in facilitating transport services for disabled people. More recently the SEStran Thistle Card has been nominated for the Scottish Transport Awards Accessibility Project of the Year and the CIHT Inclusive Transportation Award.

² <https://www.thistleassistance.com/>

³ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/accessible-travel-delivery-plan-progress-report-20192020/>

In December 2019 SEStran launched a new Thistle Assistance dedicated website and promotional campaign to engage with the public and generate more awareness of the benefits of the program.

15. Journey Assistance Planner App

SEStran through the development and implementation of two key projects, Real Time Passenger Information and the Thistle Assistance⁴ Programme, has identified a need to improve the door to door journey for people with mobility challenges allowing them to access the public transport network more easily and with confidence – combining journey planning, wayfinding and disability awareness into one easy to use and versatile platform. The platform would deliver in two key areas which respond to passengers needs as identified by the Campaign for Better Transport⁵:

1. improving availability of information.
2. making connections between different steps in the journey, and different modes of transport, easier.

People rely on public transport to access jobs, services, facilities, family and friends. While many of the barriers identified by disabled people and non-disabled people in undertaking journeys are the same, the impact can be different⁶.

In 2018 SEStran made a successful application to the Scottish Enterprises “CanDo” Innovation fund for £150,000 to run Phase One of a project to develop a journey planning and wayfinding mobile solution for People with mobility challenges. A competition was run, and five software developers were commissioned to research and produce proof of concepts for a Thistle Assistance Journey Planner. Each developer was engaged by SEStran with funding of £30,000 to undertake the work, this work was completed in December 2019.

SEStran in February 2021 was successful in securing an additional £150,000 from Scottish Enterprise to deliver the second phase of the project. Phase Two will focus on the development and testing for a fully developed working prototype which will be tested in the public realm. For Phase 2 we propose further exploration of the journey customisation features, both at the lower level of local personal navigation and at the higher macro level of providing better navigation transit systems such as train/bus stations). Additionally, Phase 2 must explore how the demonstrated prototype can be integrated with existing services such as Traveline.

This work will run over 12 months and is due to be completed in May 2022.

⁴ www.thistleassistance.com

⁵ Transport Research Laboratory (2011) – *Door to Door Journeys* www.bettertransport.org.uk/files/door-to-door-journeys-full-report.pdf

⁶ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/706248/accessibility-action-plan.pdf

16. Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI)

Building on a substantial investment over the past 10 years by SEStran, the major bus operators have now modernised their ticketing and RTPI technology and are now providing their own RTPI to Traveline and, directly, to the travelling public. Also, to keep pace with rapidly developing new technology and to be able to continue to provide RTPI through their digital display screens, SEStran is investing in a new Content Management System being introduced by City of Edinburgh Council, later this year. This will also allow a number of other bus operators in the region to provide RTPI for their services. RTPI gives bus users confidence in arrival times and can minimise time spent at bus stops.

SEStran is also investing in new hardware of the regional RTPI network, include a full update of PCs for the screen network and also bespoke installations around the region.

17. Hate Crime Charter

SEStran has been involved in the Transport Scotland Hate Crime Working Group. This working group, which is being led by Disability Equality Scotland, has been working on a programme aimed at tackling hate crime on public transport by raising awareness and encouraging people to report incidents of hate crime. Following a series of public consultations on the topic, the group developed a Hate Crime Charter, which was piloted in partnership with Stagecoach East, First Bus, and ScotRail. The pilot reached over 1.2 million people in an eight-week period. Awareness was raised amongst transport staff who felt better equipped to recognise and report hate crime. 70% of bus staff said they felt the Charter would make a difference. Furthermore, the post-pilot survey indicated that 79% of transport staff would welcome more training on hate crime, which is being taken forward by Disability Equality Scotland and Police Scotland. Based on the feedback from the pilot, the working group agreed the final design of the Charter which will be officially launched on 23 March 2021.

18. Regional Transport Strategy

SEStran has commenced work to develop a new Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). This is likely to be an ongoing process during the next two-year period for reporting on the Equality Duty. The RTS is a statutory document produced by SEStran and the requirement to undertake an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is an integral part of the development work. An Assessment Framing Note has been produced which is the first stage of the EqIA process being undertaken in tandem with and to inform RTS development. It will frame the application of relevant equalities duties at each stage of the RTS development process by identifying key equalities issues (and the associated equalities evidence base) which should be considered in the emerging RTS and taken account of in EqIA reporting.

19. GO e-Bike Hubs

SEStran launched GO e-Bike in 2018 with the aim of increasing usage and awareness of power-assisted cycling across the South East of Scotland and beyond. GO e-Bikes launched with 5 different projects in St. Andrew's, Buckhaven, West Lothian, Falkirk, and also encouraging employers to get involved with a 'Try a GO e-Bike Roadshow'. GO e-Bike aims to promote a healthier more active population, reduce inequalities in our communities and improve our environment. The hubs were selected on a criterion of fulfilling a local social or community benefit from their implementation.

Future hubs are being developed across the South East of Scotland awarded funding as part of the Low Carbon Travel and Transport Challenge Fund established by Transport Scotland from funds awarded under European Regional Development Fund 2014- 2020 programme and Transport Scotland funding, where relevant, to enable everyday functional journeys to be taken by walking, cycling and public transport and to support an increased proportion on ultra-low emission vehicles on Scotland's roads.

20. CLEAR Buckhaven

The community organisation CLEAR (Community-Led Environmental Action for Regeneration) sits in the heart of a rural isolated community with no rail links. Currently the organisation is limited to a van with issues of a lack of licenses and insurance, this is taking up valuable senior staff time. 6 e-bikes are being offered on short & medium-term loans to the community centre staff of 30 volunteers. An electric cargo bike will be shared by staff to move tools and produce between expanding fruit growing orchard sites comprising over 10,000 trees. The e-cargo bike will free up staff resources and provide a low carbon alternative to transport tools and various produce from the orchards.

Much of the volunteer work has been unable to function through 2020, however the e-cargo bike has continued to see use in transporting produce from the community orchards and tool shed.

21. West Lothian Bike Library

West Lothian Bike Library is a social enterprise based in Livingston. The Bike Library is working in partnership with West Lothian Council to help people to get active and connected through cycling, improving health and increasing independence, confidence, employability and skills. The catchment area is all of West Lothian which includes several areas of high deprivation according to Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

9 standard e-bikes are offered on short hire periods with a try before you buy offer. 1 e-trike opens up the social inclusion to a wider all-ability audience and is available on longer term loan. The e-trike has proved to be a great asset for challenging social isolation with trained pilots regularly taking users out who live alone.

From the onset of Lockdown in 2020, WLBL have been supporting key workers through long term loans of e-bikes and providing maintenance support to those with their own bikes.

22. Socialbite Village

The Social Bite Village is an innovative, highly supported community for up to 20 people affected by homelessness. The purpose of the Village is to offer the right support, living environment and opportunities for someone from a situation of homelessness to build an independent life.

The Social Bite Village hub has eight e-bikes available for use by residents and staff. The e-bikes are in place to enable improved accessibility for residents and provide a flexible, free, and active mode of transport. The e-bikes will support improved access to employment opportunities and support services and increased opportunity for active travel with the added benefits to physical and mental health.

Throughout 2020 the use of the e-bikes has been invaluable to residents at the village with many of their other support activities unable to operate. SEStran continue to support with maintenance and training for led rides.

23. Tweeddale Youth Action

Tweeddale Youth Action is a community-focused social enterprise based in the Scottish Borders. The hub, operated through the TYA Bike Punks project, provides ten e-bike for hire in the local community, provides training in bike maintenance for young people to gain qualifications and the opportunity for community led rides. Micro-enterprise will be developed young people using two e-cargo bikes.

After successfully operating the e-cargo bikes in the collection of recycling, delivery of local produce, and other services, the hub at TYA was unable to operate after the start of Lockdown. Due to structural issues the building housing the hub was deemed unsafe and with no suitable alternative the hub closed to business. In the interim, the e-bikes were relocated to be used for key workers in West Lothian and the Forth Valley. The e-cargo bikes have since been put to use in community deliveries in South Edinburgh by Cargo Bike Movement.

The e-bikes will return to the Borders for use when restrictions are lifted to allow public hire.

24. DRT

SEStran has been working with a wide range of stakeholders, including local authorities, other public bodies (i.e. higher education), shortlisted specialist technology providers (including both Mobility as a Service and Demand Responsive Transport), shared and public transport operators, the Open Transport Initiative, community councils and Mott MacDonald's MaaS Advisory team, to prepare a Mobility-as-a-

Service (MaaS) project proposal for the Transport Scotland MaaS Investment Fund Round 2. Part of SEStran's plans to develop a region-wide MaaS platform is to integrate new Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) routes to support bus services and introduce DRT in rural areas facing transport poverty.

The SEStran DRT Strategic Study, which was carried out by SYSTRA in March 2020, considered the strengths and weaknesses of the current DRT (including community transport) sector, and identified digital innovation as an opportunity to optimise the DRT services in the SEStran region. Furthermore, it is recognised that bus patronage has dropped over the last decade. Increasing fares, longer journey times, and discontinued rural services are some of the causes of a falling patronage and Covid-19 is putting additional pressure on the viability of bus services across the region. SEStran sees DRT technology as a way of optimising and supporting transport services, particularly in areas where traditional fixed-line bus services are not commercially viable.

Recruitment and Employee Data

SEStran collects information at recruitment stage and from current employees but, is not required to publish information about the workforce for data protection reasons owing to the small number of staff employed. SEStran uses the data it collects in order to better perform the equality duty, and to better understand the recruitment and workforce profile, enabling it to identify areas of improvement and eliminate any adverse impact on equality.

This allows the targeting of support for areas of under-representation within the workforce, enables us to take positive action and produce a dataset to inform long-term workforce planning and assess current policies and procedures. To be effective in assessing equality data, data from staff is relied upon to provide the widest possible analysis. SEStran is committed to undertaking effective monitoring of equality data relative to the workforce.

Equal Pay & Gender Pay Gap

SEStran is not covered by legal obligations in respect of publishing a Statement on Equal Pay or Gender Pay Gap information.

SEStran is committed to providing a flexible working culture and there are a range of policies which enable staff to work flexibly. Our commitment to mainstreaming equality throughout our functions is demonstrated through this report.

Section 2: Equality Outcomes 2021-2025

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, as amended, requires SEStran to publish equality outcomes. Our equality outcomes specify a result that we aim to achieve to further one or more of the needs of the general equality duty, which are to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

To help inform our equality outcomes, SEStran gathered and considered relevant evidence. Evidence was obtained through:

- Engagement with SEStran's Equalities and Access to Healthcare Forum who represent the interests of people with the relevant protected characteristics
- An analysis of reports and evidence finder tools published by the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, third sector organisations that represent the interests of people with the relevant protected characteristics, public bodies and other organisations
- An analysis of our workforce data
- An analysis of our public involvement data
- Staff engagement
- Engagement with and attending workshops run by the EHRC
- Engagement with the other RTPs

The Equality Outcome which we have set primarily relate to the relevant protected characteristics of age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We have not included the protected characteristics of marriage and civil partnerships in our Equality Outcomes. After analysis of equalities monitoring data there was no evidence of inequalities relating to this characteristic. This data will be monitored, however, and actions relating to these protected characteristics are being achieved through mainstreaming activities.

Equalities Outcomes 2021-2025

SEStran's Equality Outcomes 2021-2025 build on the progress made since the implementation of our original Equality Outcomes in 2017.

1. Increase diversity of the Partnership Board	
Inequality	The representation of women, people from ethnic minorities and disabled people serving on public boards is disproportionate to population levels.
Equality outcome	Increase the representation of ethnic minorities and disabled people on the SEStran Partnership Board, whilst retaining the gender balance of the non-councillor members.
General equality duty	Will help to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity for women, disabled people, and people from ethnic minorities.
Link to strategic priority	Links to the Gender Representation on Public Boards Act, Scottish Government's Race Equality Framework, the EHRC Is Scotland Fairer.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The barriers facing women, disabled people and people from ethnic minorities identified. - Recruitment channels widened. - Application process simplified. - Use positive action to appoint Observers with relevant protected characteristics to the board.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage with relevant equalities groups and third sector organisations. - Review application process for Non-Councillor Member and Board Observer recruitment. - Collect equalities monitoring data from board members. - Write to partner authorities to consider diversity when appointing Elected Members to the SEStran Board at the next Local Government elections in May 2022. - Arrange meetings of the Succession Planning Committee. - Host meetings virtually to reduce barriers in relation to travelling and access to physical meetings.
Measuring progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify base line evidence. - Monitor progress using equalities monitoring data collected from the Board members.
2. Facilitate access to Active Travel facilities for disabled people	

Inequality	There are insufficient opportunities for disabled people to take part in active travel, due to, for example, insufficient space and access to specialised equipment such as adapted bikes.
Equality outcome	To ensure design and development of all active travel initiatives deliver increased opportunities for disabled people to access active travel initiatives.
General equality duty	Will help to eliminate inequality between able bodied and disabled people in developing healthier lifestyles.
Link to strategic priority	The encouragement of and provision of active travel facilities is now the highest priority in NTS2 and will be in the emerging Regional Transport Strategy.
Outputs	Policy within the RTS that will guide development of active travel facilities to ensure that any new facilities include sufficient accommodation for disabled people to both access and use active travel provision, safely.
Activities	Consult with appropriate bodies to establish appropriate guidance and the types of provision required. Ensure policy refers to appropriate design guidance and requires facilities to make appropriate provision. Ensure LA's partners who are required to deliver RTS policies and other delivery bodies are aware of the policy requirement.
Measuring progress	Establish baseline statistics Survey use
3. Increased Access to public transport in rural areas for disabled people, the elderly and young people.	
Inequality	A lack of access to public transport in rural areas disadvantages disabled people, the elderly and reduces opportunities for young people to access education, training and employment. Many more opportunities to access public transport exist in urban areas. This is particularly relevant to people using concessionary travel cards.
Equality outcome	Increased opportunities to access public transport in rural areas for ensuring the benefits of concessionary travel are available to relevant groups, mainly disabled people, elderly and young people.
General equality duty	Will help to improve outcomes for individuals, communities and society and narrow or remove the biggest inequalities experienced by the identified groups.

Link to strategic priority	The encouragement of promoting increased public transport use is now a high priority in NTS2 and will be in the emerging Regional Transport Strategy. To ensure that the RTS policies and specific actions and projects creates a framework and actions to deliver change.
Outputs	RTS policies that promote and facilitate alternative public transport solutions. Commercial bus operators encouraged to provide demand responsive bus services in areas where timetabled services are not commercially viable.
Activities	Regional implementation needed and lead role for SEStran in seeking consistent approaches across the Region. Partnership working with tech companies and bus operators to introduce services, initially on a trial basis that increase access to services in these rural areas. Co- ordination with other Community Transport Services to maximise opportunities.
Measuring progress	Number of services introduced and or narrative on progress.
4. Develop and Promote the Thistle Assistance Programme	
Inequality	People with disabilities (seen/unseen) and mobility challenges often face difficulties when trying to access and use public transport.
Equality outcome	Develop a Thistle Assistance Journey and Wayfinding solution to help disabled people, older people, vulnerable people and women access public transport and plan their journey's more easily.
General equality duty	SEStran will help develop and promote an accessible and safer public transport system for disabled people, older people, and women, which will help to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity.
Link to strategic priority	Scotland's ten-year Accessible Travel Framework and These aims assist with delivering on the pledges within Scotland's first ever National Accessible Travel Framework published in 2016 (Going Further) .
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Journey planning and Wayfinding tool to help with the door to door journey - Community/Equalities platform established to assist in journey planning - Continue promotion of Thistle Assistance (www.thistleassistance.com)
Activities	- Stakeholder engagement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing activity – online/print - App development and review
Measuring progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey - Workshop feedback - Successful wayfinding solution developed - Thistle Assistance leaflets sent out & app downloads
5. Expansion of Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) Network and promotion of Hate Crime Charter.	
Inequality	Disabled people, older and vulnerable people, people from ethnic minorities, LGBT people and women do not always feel safe using public transport and experience difficulty accessing information.
Equality outcome	Expand the RTPI network and continue to promote the Hate Crime Charter to improve safety and accessibility to public transport within the region.
General equality duty	This outcome will help to eliminate discrimination, foster good relations and advance equality of opportunity.
Link to strategic priority	This links to the NTS focus on reducing inequalities, the SEStran RTS and the Accessible Travel Framework.
Outputs	Availability of travel information to allow for better journey planning. Promotion of Hate Crime Charter with commercial bus operators.
Activities	Financial commitment to new Content Management System (CMS). Meetings with bus operators. Meetings with RTPI group. Engage with Equalities and Access to Healthcare Forum.
Measuring progress	Increase in the number of RTPI screens installed. Increased awareness of Hate Crime Charter.

Performance Reporting

SEStran will publish a Mainstreaming Report and Equalities Outcomes Progress Report before the end of the next period, i.e. 30 April 2023.

The Partnership will also continue to monitor all Partnership Board reports for any implications arising from them that may affect any equalities issues.

Providing Information in Various Formats

Information is provided in a variety of formats, including: reports provided in PDF and RTF format but can also be provided in alternative formats and/or languages such as large print or Braille.



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