EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EqIA)

Summary results of the EqIA

Title of policy/practice/process/service:
Communications strategy 2023-2026

Is the policy new (proposed), a revision to an existing policy or a review of current policy?
New

Key findings from this assessment (or reason why an EqIA is not required):
The communication strategy provides a strategic framework for SLAB's communications for the period 2023-2026. It is designed to support and contribute to the delivery of the Corporate Plan. Communication and ensuring the accessibility of information and services play an integral part of our corporate objectives and may also have an impact on equality groups. It's important to be aware of the varying communication support needs people may have and to be able to provide information where necessary in different languages, formats or communication channels.

Summary of actions taken because of this assessment:
We have already carried out various pieces of work focusing on staff and customer satisfaction around the service and information we provide. Further, we have developed communications objectives and priorities that will assist us in identifying staff and customer needs, satisfaction with our service, as well as accessibility of our communications.

Ongoing actions beyond implementation include:
Ongoing actions revolve around monitoring stakeholder feedback.

Lead person(s) for this assessment (job title and department only):
Media and Communications Manager

Senior responsible owner agreement that the policy has been fully assessed against the needs of the general duty (job title only):
Director of Strategic Development

Publication date (for completion by Communications):
29/07/2024

Document control	
Document control:	V0.3
Date policy live from:	TBC
Review cycle:	3 years

Document change log		
Version/Author	**Date**	**Comment**
V0.1 Policy Officer (Equalities) & Media and Communications Officer	November 2023	First draft for discussion
V0.2 Policy Officer (Equalities) & Media and Communications Officer	December 2023	Draft for review
V0.3 Policy Officer (Equalities) & Media and Communications Officer	January 2024	Draft for review by Director of Strategic Development
V0.3 Policy Officer (Equalities) & Media and Communications Officer	February 2024	Draft approved by Director of Strategic Development
V0.3 Policy Officer (Equalities) & Media and Communications Officer	March 2024	Draft for approval & sign off by Chief Executive
V0.3 Policy Officer (Equalities) & Media and Communications Officer	April 2024	Draft for review
V0.3 Policy Officer (Equalities) & Media and Communications Manager	July 2024	Amendments made and draft signed off by CE for publication

Step 1 – Framing the planned change

1.1   Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy/practice/process/service.

This strategy provides a strategic framework for SLAB's communications for the period 2023-26, which:
- supports and contributes to the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2023-26 and our Strategic Objectives
- identifies SLAB's communications vision, objectives, priorities and key stakeholders
- provides a framework for an annual Action Plan to guide a programme of work towards achieving communications objectives.

Our communications objectives recognise the importance of taking a user-centred approach to delivering the best possible outcomes.
- We will identify the need of our customers and staff to help inform work
- Customer and staff satisfaction with our service will improve
- We will continue to embed equality and accessibility into our communications so that our customers can easily engage with us
- We will provide information to inform the public debate about reform of legal aid, to help support ministers' decision-making

1.2   Why is the change required?

This is a new strategy aligned to our new corporate objectives 2023-2026

1.3   Who is affected by this policy/practice/process/service?

SLAB customers – solicitors, people involved in the legal aid process, the public and our staff.

1.4   Policy/practice/process/service implementation date?

31/07/2026

1.5   What other SLAB policies or projects may be linked to or affected by changes to this policy/practice/process/service?

The communications strategy has been aligned with our Corporate Plan 2023-2026.

Step 2: Consider the available evidence and data relevant to your policy/practice/process/service

2.1   What information is available about the experience of each equality group in relation to this policy/practice/process/service?

Equality characteristics	Evidence source (web link, report, survey, complaint)	What does the evidence tell you about the experiences of this group in relation to the policy/practice/process/service?
General	(1) Customer Service Policy (2) Complaints Handling Procedure (3) Unacceptable Behaviour Policy (4) EqIA SLAB website (5) Review of system letters (6) SLAB Digital Design	One of the objectives of our communications strategy as well as our corporate plan is the focus around staff and customers satisfaction with the service we provide. Under our customer service policy, we have carried out various EQIAs to inform our policies around customer service. The objectives for this policy area focuses amongst other objectives, on the development and improvement of our services. It also links to our strategic objectives of delivering a high-quality user focussed service and the enhancement of the quality, consistency and transparency of our decisions and delivery. The policy as well as the EQIA can be linked to the work carried out under this strategy. (1) (2) (3) We have also carried out an EqIA to assess the accessibility of our website and the compliance with World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) international Web standard Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) v2.1 Level AA. We have performed accessibility and user testing to ensure our website structure and content will positively influence our communication with customers, specifically equality groups. (4) We use the same platform for our intranet and we encourage staff to provide feedback on the design and accessibility.

Equality characteristics	Evidence source (web link, report, survey, complaint)	What does the evidence tell you about the experiences of this group in relation to the policy/practice/process/service?
	Standards and Principles (7) Inclusive language guide	We have carried out a system letter review to assess our communication with customers, including members of the public, and to ensure we provide more accessible and easy-to-understand letters. This contributed to improving our service delivery and help recipients understand what action they need to take and/or the decisions SLAB has made. Improved formatting and other accessibility features have a positive impact on equality groups, specifically people with disabilities and for people who have English as a second language. (5) Further, we have developed a policy and EqIA on SLAB Digital Design Standards and Principles, to ensure accessibility of our system designs. (6) To measure employee satisfaction, we conduct a biennial staff survey. We also consult employees on all of our staff related policies to ensure we capture their feedback. Our work around designing a new workplace (DANWE) as well as our flexible working policy also contributes to increase employee satisfaction, which is reflected in our latest staff survey results, which were very positive. When writing and speaking about people, or addressing them directly, it's important to use inclusive language. Certain language can exclude, discriminate, and create stereotypes against people, especially equality groups. Language is constantly changing, and what is acceptable to some, might be hurtful to others. (7)
Age	(1) Staff Demographics 2022-2023 (2) Communication with older	The mean employee age is now 45 years, compared to 46 in the previous year. Our employees are clustered around the middle age ranges with fewer employees aged <=24 years and 65+ years (both <5%). Around a third of our employees are aged 45-54 years (30- 35%). Proportionally, our age demographic has a number of similarities to the 2019 Scottish population in employment: the main difference is across the lower age ranges

Equality characteristics	Evidence source (web link, report, survey, complaint)	What does the evidence tell you about the experiences of this group in relation to the policy/practice/process/service?
	people who have diverse needs (3) Understanding the links between communication difficulties and mental health challenges	where <5% of our staff are aged <=24 years and 10-15% are aged 25-34 years, compared to the 2019 Scottish population in employment, for which the figures are 11.9% aged <=24 years and 23% aged 25-34 years. The percentage of our staff aged 45-54, in contrast, is higher than that in the 2019 Scotland population in employment (30-35%, compared to 20-25%) (1) Age, especially older age is often tied to disability. With increasing age, the likelihood of communication support needs increases. People may suffer from vision or hearing loss and therefore find it challenging to read information or engage in a conversation. (2) Speech and cognitive impairment may also interfere with a person's ability to effectively communicate. (2) There is a strong association between communication difficulties and mental health challenges. Research shows that 45% of young people referred for mental health services have communication difficulties. Many children and young people with one of the more severe forms of developmental language disorders suffer from mental health problems. Children and young people with mental health difficulties may have underlying speech, language and communication needs. (3)
Disability	(1) Annual Report and Accounts 2022-2023 (2) What is a communication support need?	15-20% of employees who completed their equality record declared a disability or long-term health condition. This level remains higher than the 2019 Scottish population in employment figure of 13.7%, but lower than the 25.9% of people with a disability in the general population. (1) Certain conditions may cause people to have communication support needs. Among these are cerebral palsy, autistic spectrum condition, developmental language disorder or delay, learning disability, certain genetic disorders, traumatic brain injury,

Equality characteristics	Evidence source (web link, report, survey, complaint)	What does the evidence tell you about the experiences of this group in relation to the policy/practice/process/service?
	(3) What are reading disorders? (4) How to care for someone with communication difficulties (5) Inclusive language guide	neurological disorder or illness such as motor neurone disease (MND), stroke, dementia, and some cancers including head and neck. Some conditions may be present from birth, others may be acquired later through illness or accidents. (2) People may struggle to say words or sentences or find the correct words to use, and they may have some speech that is difficult to understand, or they are unable to produce speech. They may not understand words that are being used, or the instructions they hear. They may have difficulties knowing how and when to talk and listen to others. People might be affected to varying degrees. (2) Reading disorders, such as dyslexia, may make it difficult for people to read and understand texts of information. Dyslexia is the most well-known reading disorder but there are others, such as alexia (losing the ability to read after a stroke or injury to the brain), hyperlexia (advanced reading skills, but problems with understanding when read/spoken aloud). (3) Sign language/British Sign Language (BSL) is the language used by deaf people in the UK. Sign language is a way of communicating visually, using hand gestures, facial expressions, lip patterns, finger spelling and body language. There are hundreds of different types of sign language across the world. Besides sign language, deaf/deafblind people may use sign supported English, tactile signing or Makaton, which are different methods/ways of signing and therefore communication. (4) Language used to describe that a person has a disability can often put the disability in the centre of attention, rather than the person. Disability can include wide ranging conditions but depending on the language used, it might put everyone in the same position/situation, which can lead to stereotypes and discrimination. (5)

Equality characteristics	Evidence source (web link, report, survey, complaint)	What does the evidence tell you about the experiences of this group in relation to the policy/practice/process/service?
Race	(1) Annual Report and Accounts 2022-2023 (2) Scotland Language (3) Inclusive language guide	Our data tells us that our employee ethnic origin demographic is: • 85-90% White Scottish and other British • <5% White minority • <5% minority ethnic groups • 5-10% selected prefer not to say. Our employee demographic is broadly comparable to the 2019 Scottish population, except in the 'White – minority' group, which is underrepresented compared to the Scottish in work population. Since the 2021-2022 report, 'white – minority' has moved from 5-10% of our staff complement to <5%.(1) English is the main language spoken in Scotland, but there are over 170 languages spoken in Scotland today. These include Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Dutch, Farsi, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Kurdish, Makaton, Mandarin, Punjabi, Polish, Spanish, Turkish, and Urdu. (2)
Sex	(1) Annual Report and Accounts 2022-2023 (2) Inclusive language guide	We have a 65-70% female and 30-35% male breakdown. The 2019 population data shows that in the general population 52% were female and 48% were male and of those in employment, 48.5% were female and 51.5% were male. (1) No evidence was found that indicated people had any communication needs based on the fact they are either a woman or a man.

Equality characteristics	Evidence source (web link, report, survey, complaint)	What does the evidence tell you about the experiences of this group in relation to the policy/practice/process/service?
		Sex/gender specific language can lead to stereotypes and exclusion of some groups/people. We recognise a wider range of gender identity that goes beyond the biological sex. When addressing people, language should be more neutral and inclusive. (2)
Gender Reassignment	(1)Annual Report and Accounts 2022-2023 (2)Our mental health and wellbeing - transactual	We monitor data in relation to gender reassignment but do not publish it due to the risk of disclosure and identifying individuals. (1)

No specific evidence was found that indicated people with a trans history had any communication needs because they have a trans history. However, evidence indicated that trans people are disproportionately affected by mental health difficulties which can cause communication support needs. (2) |
| Sexual orientation | (1) Annual Report and Accounts 2022-2023 | <5% of employees identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other/unsure. LGB and 'Other' representation appears comparable to the 2019 general Scottish population (2.9%) and the population of people who are in employment (3.2%). Whilst 10-15% of staff continue to answer 'prefer not to say', the specific percentage has decreased slightly since last year. (1).
No evidence was found that indicated people had any communication needs based on their sexual orientation. |
| Religion or Belief | (1) Annual Report and Accounts 2022-2023 | Of The number of employees identifying as Christian (30-35%) is lower than that reported for the 2019 Scottish population (42.5%) but broadly comparable to those in employment (36.4%). The percentage of employees declaring no religion (50-55%) is in line with the 2019 Scottish population (53.7%) but significantly lower than those in employment (60%). This is the same position as previous years. The number of employees identifying with other religions (collating Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, and |

Equality characteristics	Evidence source (web link, report, survey, complaint)	What does the evidence tell you about the experiences of this group in relation to the policy/practice/process/service?
	(2) Religion, Scottish Census 2011	others, for example Jewish) is <5%, in line with both the 2019 national profile and for those in employment (3.1%). Our 'prefer not to say' figure remains relatively high at 10-15%, though again, this figure has reduced slightly since we last reported. (1) According to the Scottish Census Questions 2011, 36.7% of people indicated they had no religion. 32.4% identified with the Church of Scotland, 1.4% of people identified as Muslin, Buddhists or Hindus, and Sikhs made up 0.7% of the Scottish population. The number of Jewish people stayed just under 6000. (2)
Pregnancy or maternity	(1) SLAB Annual Report and Accounts 2022-2023	In 2022-23, 100% of maternity leavers returned to work. Of these, 60% (20% more than the year prior) requested a variation to their contractual hours on return to work and all were approved on a permanent basis. SLAB does not gather information on absence rates among this protected characteristic group. (1) No evidence was found that indicated people had any communication needs based on the fact they are pregnant or a parent.
Marriage/civil partnership	N/A	This protected characteristic is only relevant in terms of employment law.
Care Experienced *(corporate parenting duty)*	(1) Staff demographics (2) SLAB – Corporate parenting literature	5-10% of all staff members declare they are care-experienced, 80-85% are not and 10-15% prefer not to say. (1) No evidence was found that indicated that people had any communication needs based on the fact they have been in care. Being care experienced is linked to higher levels of mental ill health and poorer educational outcomes, as well as a greater likelihood of being involved in the criminal justice system or experiencing homelessness. (2)

2.2 Using the information above and your knowledge of the policy/practice/process/service, summarise your overall assessment of how important and relevant the policy/practice/process/service is likely to be for equality groups.

Communication and accessibility to information and services play an integral part of our corporate objective. Inclusive and easily accessible communication form a principal of our communications strategy. As table 2 above shows, the strategy may impact on all equality groups, but specifically age, race, and disability. It's important to be aware of the varying communication support needs people may have and to be able to provide information in different languages, formats or communication channels. We also need to be aware of using inclusive language when communicating with people. We need to recognise social and cultural difference and avoid biases. Language is constantly changing and it's important to ensure that we're not excluding, discriminating or creating stereotypes against people with protected characteristics.

2.3 Outcome of step 2 and next steps. Complete the table below to inform the next stage of the EqIA process.

Outcome of Step 2 following initial evidence gathering and relevance to equality characteristics	Yes/ No (Y or N)	Next steps
There is no relevance to equality or our corporate parenting duties		Proceed to Step 5: agree with decision makers that no EqIA is required based on current evidence
There is relevance to some or all of the equality groups and/or our corporate parenting duties	Y	Proceed to Step 3: complete full EqIA
It is unclear if there is relevance to some or all of the equality groups and/or our corporate parenting duties		Proceed to Step 3: complete full EqIA

Step 3 – stakeholder involvement and consultation

3.1   Do you/did you have any consultation or involvement planned for this policy/practice/process service?
No

3.2   List all the stakeholder groups that you will talk to about this policy/practice/process/service.

N/A

3.3   What did you learn from the consultation/involvement?

While we didn't consult specifically on this strategy other consultations we have taken helped inform this work, including:

- our annual staff survey which provided results that shaped our work on internal communications and change management
- our consultation on financially eligibility which provided insight into how different groups perceive our guidance and forms
- our work with external stakeholders into customer communication needs had a significant impact on our Equality Outcomes Plan and Communications Strategy.

The evidence we've gathered highlights, amongst other things, the importance of inclusive language to communicate with a wide range of different stakeholders. It advances accessibility, equality of opportunity and improves decision making. Inclusive language is a crucial aspect of communication, and our aim is to mainstream it to each department across the organisation through the Communications Strategy's objectives and priorities.

Step 4 - Impact on equality groups and steps to address these

4.1   Does the policy/practice/process/service have any impacts (whether intended or unintended, positive or negative) on any of the equality characteristics?

All protected characteristics	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe the changes or actions (if any) you plan to take. For example, to mitigate any impact, maximise the positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes despite the potential for adverse impact.
	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	No impact	
potential for discrimination				As described in table 2 above, our new communications strategy is aligned to our new corporate plan, which focuses on our staff and customers and the service we provide to them. We have developed several policies around customer service and communication needs, as well as carried out EQIAs respectively. Protected characteristics may be linked to a range of communication needs we need to provide support for. Providing a range of different communication channels and formats, as well as ensuring the use of inclusive language, can help overcome any barriers our customers may face. As mentioned in table 2 above, we have also carried out an EqIA as well as user testing to ensure the information provided on our website is accessible. It is designed in a way that the user can for example, zoom in up to 300% without the text spilling off the screen, information for applicants is available in the form of BSL videos featuring audio description and sub-titles and the current accessibility software has functions including a picture definition dictionary, MP3 generator, screen mask, text enlarger and page simplifier. If information on this website is needed in a different format we can make this available, including accessible PDF, large print, easy read, audio recording or braille. Our

				website also includes a google translate feature, which can be used to translate the information into different languages. When we speak or write about people, or address them directly, we should be mindful of social and cultural differences, avoid biases and use inclusive language. Certain language can be discriminating, excluding and creating stereotypes against people, especially equality groups. As a general rule, it's always good to use neutral language and if possible ask people how they'd like to be addressed.
potential for developing good relations				A public statement about the availability of adjustments and promotion of the policy could develop good relations between staff and customers, with communication support needs.
potential to advance equality of opportunity				A more consistent and transparent approach should help more people with communication support needs to access SLAB's services. To ensure the language we use is inclusive we should: • Take an individualized approach; we are all different and we are not defined by one aspect of who we are • Only mention characteristics like gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity or ability when relevant • Respect people's privacy, let them share personal information about themselves only where they feel comfortable doing so • Be guided by the terms people use to describe themselves. Where appropriate, ask • Avoid irrelevant references to a characteristic, e.g. a female doctor, a single mother, etc. • Don't define someone by their characteristics, always put the person first, e.g. a person with a disability not a disabled person

				• If you are listing personal characteristics or titles, put them in alphabetical order to show they all have equal value and where possible include the option of 'prefer not to say' • If you make a mistake, apologise, correct it, learn from it and move on When providing information, it's important to think about the audience. General recommendations include: • Write in plain English • Avoid abbreviations and acronyms Reference

Age	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe the changes or actions (if any) you plan to take. For example, to mitigate any impact, maximise the positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes despite the potential for adverse impact.
	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	No impact	
potential for discrimination				When using inclusive language, it's important to avoid referring to someone's age, unless it's relevant and necessary. It's better to specify ages or age groups, or neutral terms, such as adults, older person/people, young people, than referring to elderly, middle aged, old pensioner or senior. Reference
potential for developing good relations				A public statement about the availability of adjustments and promotion of the policy could develop good relations between staff and customers, with communication support needs.
potential to advance equality of opportunity				See table 'All protected characteristics'

Disability	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe the changes or actions (if any) you plan to take. For example, to mitigate any impact, maximise the positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes despite the potential for adverse impact.
	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	No impact	
potential for discrimination				When talking about/to a person with a disability, it's important to use positive language and not label people when talking about disabilities. As a general rule, it's best to ask people how they want to be addressed/identify themselves, rather than assuming. Do not describe people as disabled or handicapped. Use people living with a disability or disabled person. Reference
potential for developing good relations				A public statement about the availability of adjustments and promotion of the policy could develop good relations between staff and customers, with communication support needs.
potential to advance equality of opportunity				How to use more inclusive language: ● Do not describe people as confined to a wheelchair. Use wheelchair user. ● Do not use diabetic people, use people with diabetes. ● Avoid terms that contribute to stigmas around disability or mental illness: crazy, dumb, lame, insane, psycho, schizophrenic, or stupid. ● Avoid terms that contribute to stigmas around sensory disabilities: blind spot or tone deaf. ● Most disabled people are comfortable with the words used to describe daily living. People who use wheelchairs 'go for walks' and people with

				visual impairments may be very pleased – or not – 'to see you'. An impairment may just mean that some things are done in a different way.
				● Common phrases that may associate impairments with negative things should be avoided, for example 'deaf to our pleas' or 'blind drunk'.
				● The term able-bodied is sometimes used to describe someone who does not identify as having a disability. Some members of the disability community oppose its use because it implies that all people with disabilities lack "able bodies" or the ability to use their bodies well. They prefer non-disabled or enabled as more accurate terms. The term non-disabled or the phrase does not have a disability are more neutral choices. Able-bodied is an appropriate term to use in some cases, such as talking about the proportion of able-bodied members in the work force.
				● Abnormality is a term used to describe something deviating from what is normal. The term can be appropriate when used in a medical context, such as abnormal curvature of the spine or an abnormal test result. However, when used to describe an individual, abnormal is widely viewed as a derogative term. Avoid referring to someone who does not have a disability as a normal person as it implies that people with disabilities are deviant or strange. Typical is a better choice. The phrase abnormal behaviour reflects social-cultural standards and is open to different interpretations. Be cautious when using the term. Explain what it means in the context in which it is being used.
				● Be aware that the word chronic can confuse people, as some think it means "bad" or "serious".
				● The word normally in a health context can make people feel they aren't "normal". Use usually instead. Avoid describing people as mentally ill, instead use mental health condition or mental health problems.
				Reference

Race , Religion & Beliefs	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe the changes or actions (if any) you plan to take. For example, to mitigate any impact, maximise the positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes despite the potential for adverse impact.
	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	No impact	
potential for discrimination				The term race should only be used where necessary and relevant. Certain terms to describe a group on people, such as BAME or BME or any other umbrella terms should be avoided. BAME should only be used in the context of comparing data. Better alternatives include minority ethnic groups, underrepresented ethnic groups, etc.
potential for developing good relations				A public statement about the availability of adjustments and promotion of the policy could develop good relations between staff and customers, with communication support needs.
potential to advance equality of opportunity				It's important to not make assumptions about people, where they come from and what they believe in. Always ask. ● When referring to a person's race or ethnicity, use adjectives, not nouns (for example, an Asian person, not an Asian). ● The term Caucasian is seen as out of date and even offensive to many people. ● The terms ethnic and minority should be used with caution, and never to refer to an individual. Don't use as a synonym for people of colour. Reference

Sex, gender, gender reassignment and sexual orientation	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe the changes or actions (if any) you plan to take. For example, to mitigate any impact, maximise the positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes despite the potential for adverse impact.
	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	No impact	
potential for discrimination				The language around sex, gender and sexual orientation changes frequently. Sex and gender are often used interchangeably; however, they have different meanings. Sex refers to the biological sex, male or female, that is assigned to us by birth, whereas gender is more complex. Gender describes how we see and describe ourselves. It can be fixed or fluid and it may be different to our sex. Using the wrong language can make people feel excluded and discriminated against. Reference
potential for developing good relations				A public statement about the availability of adjustments and promotion of the policy could develop good relations between staff and customers, with communication support needs.
potential to advance equality of opportunity				The recommendation is to make content gender neutral where possible. If unsure, use gender neutral pronouns, such as they or them, instead of she/her or he/him. Transgender is an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity is different from the sex they've been registered with at birth. Language or information around someone's sexual orientation should only be used where relevant or necessary. Reference

4.2   Describe how the assessment so far might affect other areas of this policy/practice/process/service and/or project timeline?

See table 4

4.3   Having considered the potential or actual impacts of your policy/practice/process/service on equality groups, you should now record the outcome of this assessment below.

Please select (X)	Implications for the policy/practice/process/service
X	**No major change** Your assessment demonstrates that the policy/practice/process/service is robust. The evidence shows no potential for unlawful discrimination and that you have taken all opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitoring and review.
	Adjust the policy/practice/process/service You need to take steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality of to foster good relations. You have set actions to address this and have clear ways of monitoring the impact of the policy/practice/process/service when implemented.
	Continue the policy/practice/process/service with adverse impact The policy/practice/process/service will continue despite the potential for adverse impact. You have justified this with this assessment and shown how this decision is compatible with our obligations under the public sector equality duty. When you believe any discrimination can be objectively justified you must record in this assessment what this is and how the decision was reached.
	Stop and remove the policy/practice/process/service The policy/practice/process/service will not be implemented due to adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated.

Step 5 - Discuss and review the assessment with decision makers and governance structures

5.1   Record details of the groups you report to about this policy/practice/process/service and impact assessment. Include the date you presented progress to each group and an extract from the minutes to reflect the discussion.

Executive Team – meeting 26 October 2023
Board – meeting 20 November 2023

Step 6 – Post-implementation actions and monitoring impact

6.1   Record any ongoing actions below.

A programme of work will be carried out based on the following communications priorities. Specific actions for the priorities will be listed in annual action plans.

Priority 1:
Review and develop our internal communications channels to meet our corporate and staff needs

We will deliver this priority by:

- reviewing the effectiveness of our current intranet and how it interacts with other communications channels, including various digital applications now available to staff, such as Office 365's Teams and SharePoint
- developing our internal communications channels to ensure they meet our corporate and user needs by communicating with the right audiences, at the right time and place, using the right tone of language and format to convey the right message
- encouraging a culture of collaboration and innovation to ensure continuous improvement
- ensuring communications are considered and embedded in corporate workstreams and projects from the start of the process.

Priority 2:
Communications reality – improving our understanding of stakeholder communications requirements

We will deliver this priority by:

- supporting the Customer Insight Strategy and its findings on what customers want and expect from their interactions with us, and the issues they face when doing so.

Priority 3:
Develop and ensure customer-centric communications

We will deliver this priority by:

- supporting the Equality outcomes plan 2023-26 findings and outcomes:
  - responding to findings on clients' needs for Communications and to ensure our service meets their needs
  - using equality data and engagement findings to improve our services by making key information and materials about our work and legal aid accessible to those who need our help
- seeking, encouraging and using feedback on the accessibility and effectiveness of Communications materials and processes to create content that addresses the needs and concerns of customers and potential customers
- improving how people feel about us as a responsive organisation by highlighting how we've listened and made changes that meet customer needs
  - promoting awareness of the organisation's commitment to equality and accessibility through internal Communications channels.

Priority 4:

Build capacity by supporting staff to develop effective communications skills

We will deliver this priority by:

- working with Digital Services to ensure default system settings conform with accessibility and agreed house style (font, font size etc)
- advising on appropriate training to develop Communications skills, including:
  - improving document formatting for style, consistency and accessibility
  - writing – tone and clarity of message
  - delivering messages in different formats – written, video, webinar, audio
  - identifying other Communications skills requiring support
- developing a network of communications leads throughout the organisation that:
  - have an interest in developing communications skills
  - can assist in further embedding good communications practice throughout the organisation
  - lead communication communications activity for their department.

Priority 5:

Support the Client Legal Services Business Plan to deliver its strategic aims

We will deliver this priority by:

- Providing communications support through:
  - showcasing the impact of our direct legal services on clients
  - supporting the development of the CLAO and PDSO websites
  - promoting feedback mechanisms for continuous improvement.

Work collaboratively with the Scottish Government on Communications needs of legal aid reform

We will deliver this priority by:

- working with Scottish Government colleagues to develop options for reform
- publicise data and supporting information.
  - **Note here how you intend to monitor the impact of this policy/practice/process/service on equality groups.**

Measure	Lead department/ individual	Reporting (where/ frequency)
Monitoring user/customer feedback	Communications	Ad hoc depending on frequency and nature of feedback
Staff survey results	Research/People & OD	Action plan to be developed
Having case studies and success stories to demonstrate examples of positive interactions	Communications	As required
Developing feedback mechanisms to monitor satisfaction with our services both internally and externally	Communications	SDD Director
Regular mini pulse surveys to monitor changes in sentiment about our capacity to respond to feedback	Communications	SDD Director
Monitoring customer satisfaction feedback that demonstrates the effectiveness of delivery by our Client Legal Services.	Client Legal Services	CLS Director
Monitoring feedback to gauge satisfaction with our communications Monitoring usage analytics for the websites	Communications Communications	SDD Director SDD Director
Monitoring stakeholder feedback	Various – depends on stakeholder group	Ad hoc depending on frequency and nature of feedback

6.2   EqIA review date.
     This EqIA should be reviewed as part of the post-implementation review of the policy/practice/process/service. The date should not exceed three years from the policy/practice/process/service implementation date.
26/07/2027

Step 7 – Assessment sign off and approval

Once final consultation has been undertaken with Corporate Policy Officer (Equalities), all equality impact assessments must be signed off by the relevant Director or Senior Responsible Owner (SRO), even where an EqIA is not required. The Chief Executive must approve all equality impact assessments. Note the relevant dates here:

Director/SRO sign off: 28/02/2024
Chief Executive approval: 25/07/2024

All full equality impact assessments must be published on SLAB's website as early as possible after the decision is made to implement the policy, practice, process or service.