

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT RECORD

<b>Title of policy/ practice/ strategy/ legislation etc.</b>	<b>SAAS Funding for Postgraduate Social Work courses for students ineligible for SSSC Bursary</b>	
<b>Minister</b>	<b>Minister for Higher and Further Education</b>	
<b>Lead official</b>	<b>Rebecca Slater</b>	
<b>Officials involved in the EQIA</b>	<b>name</b>	<b>team</b>
	<b>Alan Scott Kirsty McTaggart</b>	<b>SAAS  LED</b>
<b>Directorate: Division: Team</b>	<b>Lifelong Learning &amp; Skills Learner Experience Division</b>	
<b>Is this new policy or revision to an existing policy?</b>	<b>New Policy</b>	

### Screening

#### *Policy Aim*

Currently, SAAS do not fund postgraduate Social Work courses as students are eligible to claim financial support from the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) in the form of tuition fees and bursary. The number of bursaries available through the SSSC changes year-on-year; recent years have seen 321 funded places for each year of the 2 year course. HESA figures show there were 265 postgraduate social work enrolments at Scottish universities in academic year 2021-22. SSSC figures for that year show a final number of 289 Bursary students (Quota 321) were funded in the same year.

However, engagement with universities and SSSC has told us that many students do not take up places on Social Work courses when they find out they've not been successful in being awarded a bursary, so there could be a small number of students who could apply for funding if SAAS deemed the PG Social Work course eligible. Despite the fact there is a larger number of bursaries than

Scottish-domiciled students on the course, the system of bursary allocation whereby each university is allocated a set number of bursaries sometimes means that students are unable to access the course due to a lack of funding.

The aim of this policy would be to expand course eligibility so that postgraduate social work students who were not entitled to the SSSC bursary would be eligible to apply to SAAS for the postgraduate support package instead.

This helps to contribute to the following national outcomes:

- Education - We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society
- Poverty – We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally
- Economy – We have a globally competitive, inclusive and sustainable economy

### ***Who will it affect?***

This will directly affect postgraduate social work students who have not been selected for the CCCS bursary. Evidence from HEI providers has suggested that many potential students withdraw when they discover they have not been selected for the bursary. It will also help to train social workers, where there is [evidence](#) to suggest Scotland is facing a social care shortage.

### ***What might prevent the desired outcomes being achieved?***

When considering the changes which result in an increase to any kind of student financial support, we must be mindful of the potential financial impacts and if this is affordable in the wider student support budget.

The current financial landscape could present as a barrier to delivering this due to the lack of budget dedicated to the student support commitments.



## **Stage 1: Framing**

### ***Results of framing exercise***

A framing exercise was conducted by policy officials from Lifelong Learning & Skills Directorate and SAAS to gather evidence to inform this EQIA.

HESA colleagues were asked to provide, where available, the number of Scottish domiciled postgraduate studying a social work course in the 2021-22 academic year (the most up-to-date AY available at time of writing), split by age, disability, sex, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race and religion or belief.

### ***Extent/Level of EQIA required***

As the proposal to allow social work students who are not eligible for the SSSC bursary to apply to SAAS is intended as a positive change for all prospective students, it is considered a concise and focused EQIA is proportionate in these circumstances.

## Stage 2: Data and evidence gathering, involvement and consultation

Include here the results of your evidence gathering (including framing exercise), including qualitative and quantitative data and the source of that information, whether national statistics, surveys or consultations with relevant equality groups.

Characteristic <sup>1</sup>	Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<b>AGE</b>	<p>HESA data: The following statistics show a breakdown of the number of Scottish domiciled enrolments on taught postgraduate social work courses at Scottish HEIs in the academic year 2021-22 by age:</p> <p><b>21-24: 90</b>  <b>25-29: 140</b>  <b>30 years and over: 330</b>  <b>Total: 565</b></p>	HESA	<p>The most recent data is for the academic year 2021-22.</p> <p>Missing data includes Scottish domiciled students that may be on eligible courses in rest of UK. This number is expected to be small and unlikely to significantly impact the HESA data.</p>
<b>DISABILITY</b>	<p>Data from HESA highlighted that of the 565 Scottish domiciled enrolments on taught postgraduate social work courses at Scottish HEIs in the academic year 2021-22, <b>110</b> had a disability recorded.</p>	HESA	As above.
<b>SEX</b>	<p>Data from HESA highlighted that of the 565 Scottish domiciled enrolments on taught postgraduate social work courses at Scottish HEIs in the academic year 2021-22, <b>445</b> were female and <b>115</b> were male.</p>	HESA	As above.

<sup>1</sup> Refer to Definitions of Protected Characteristics document for information on the characteristics

<b>PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY</b>	No data to correlate pregnancy and maternity with Scottish domiciled enrolments on taught postgraduate social work courses at Scottish HEIs.		
<b>GENDER REASSIGNMENT</b>	No data to correlate gender reassignment with Scottish domiciled enrolments on taught postgraduate social work courses at Scottish HEIs.		
<b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</b>	<p>HESA data: The following statistics show a breakdown of the number of Scottish domiciled enrolments on taught postgraduate social work courses at Scottish HEIs in the academic year 2021-22 by sexual orientation:</p> <p><b>Heterosexual: 430</b>  <b>Other: 55</b>  <b>Unknown/prefer not to say: 80</b></p>	HESA	As above.
<b>RACE</b>	HESA data: The following statistics show a breakdown of the number of Scottish domiciled enrolments on taught postgraduate	HESA	As above.

	<p>social work courses at Scottish HEIs in the academic year 2021-22 by race:</p> <p><b>White:</b> 490  <b>Black or Black British (Caribbean, African), Other Black background:</b> 45  <b>Other ethnic minority:</b> 20  <b>Not known/refused:</b> 5  <b>Total:</b> 565</p>		
<p><b>RELIGION OR BELIEF</b></p>	<p>HESA data: The following statistics show a breakdown of the number of Scottish domiciled enrolments on taught postgraduate social work courses at Scottish HEIs in the academic year 2021-22 by religion or belief:</p> <p><b>No religion:</b> 325  <b>Christian:</b> 155  <b>Muslim:</b> 10  <b>Any other religion or belief:</b> 25  <b>Unknown/prefer not to say:</b> 45  <b>Total:</b> 565</p>	<p>HESA</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p><b>MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</b>  (the Scottish Government does not</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

require assessment against this protected characteristic unless the policy or practice relates to work, for example HR policies and practices - refer to Definitions of Protected Characteristics document for details)



### Stage 3: Assessing the impacts and identifying opportunities to promote equality

Having considered the data and evidence you have gathered, this section requires you to consider the potential impacts – negative and positive – that your policy might have on each of the protected characteristics. It is important to remember the duty is also a positive one – that we must explore whether the policy offers the opportunity to promote equality and/or foster good relations.

#### Do you think that the policy impacts on people because of their age?

Age	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation			X	Data from HESA highlighted that more than half (330 of 565) of postgraduate Social Work students are over the age of 30.
Advancing equality of opportunity			X	The policy change will be available to all eligible students in this category, irrespective of age.
Promoting good relations among and between different age groups			X	As above.

#### Do you think that the policy impacts disabled people?

Disability	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
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Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation			X	Data from HESA highlighted that of the 565 Scottish domiciled enrolments on taught postgraduate social work courses at Scottish HEIs in the academic year 2021-22, 110 had a disability.  The policy change will be available to all eligible students in this category irrespective of disability. Therefore it is not expected to impact disabled people.
Advancing equality of opportunity			X	As above.
Promoting good relations among and between disabled and non-disabled people			X	As above.

**Do you think that the policy impacts on men and women in different ways?**

Sex	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
Eliminating unlawful discrimination			X	Data from HESA highlighted that of the 565 Scottish domiciled enrolments on taught postgraduate social work courses at Scottish HEIs in the academic year 2021-22, <b>445</b> were female and <b>115</b> were male.

					The policy change will be available to all students irrespective of gender and so it is not expected it will impact people due to their sex.
Advancing equality of opportunity				X	As above.
Promoting good relations between men and women				X	As above.

**Do you think that the policy impacts on women because of pregnancy and maternity?**

<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Reasons for your decision</b>
Eliminating unlawful discrimination			X	There is no information to confirm the impact on pregnancy and maternity as a result of the introduction of the changes to the postgraduate support package for social work students.
Advancing equality of opportunity			X	As above.
Promoting good relations			X	As above.

**Do you think your policy impacts on people proposing to undergo, undergoing, or who have undergone a process for the purpose of reassigning their sex? (NB: the Equality Act 2010 uses the term ‘transsexual people’ but ‘trans people’ is more commonly used)**

<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Reasons for your decision</b>
Eliminating unlawful discrimination			X	There is no information to confirm the impact on pregnancy and maternity as a result of the introduction of the changes to the postgraduate support package for social work students.
Advancing equality of opportunity			X	As above.
Promoting good relations			X	As above.

**Do you think that the policy impacts on people because of their sexual orientation?**

<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Reasons for your decision</b>
Eliminating unlawful discrimination			X	Data from HESA highlighted the range of sexual orientation in postgraduate social work students, covering bisexual, gay, heterosexual and other.  The policy change will be available to all students irrespective of sexual orientation and so it is not expected that it will impact on people due to their sexual orientation.
Advancing equality of opportunity			X	As above.
Promoting good relations			X	As above.

**Do you think the policy impacts on people on the grounds of their race?**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Reasons for your decision</b>
Eliminating unlawful discrimination			X	Data from HESA highlighted the range of races in postgraduate social work students.  The policy change will be available to all students irrespective of race and so it is not expected that it will impact on people on the grounds of their race.
Advancing equality of opportunity			X	As above.
Promoting good race relations			X	As above.

**Do you think the policy impacts on people because of their religion or belief?**

<b>Religion or belief</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Reasons for your decision</b>
Eliminating unlawful discrimination			X	Data from HESA highlighted the range of religion and beliefs in postgraduate social work student.  The policy change will be available to all students irrespective of race and so it is not expected that it will impact on people on the grounds of their religion or belief.
Advancing equality of opportunity			X	As above.

Promoting good relations		X	As above.
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**Do you think the policy impacts on people because of their marriage or civil partnership?**

<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Reasons for your decision</b>
Eliminating unlawful discrimination	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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<sup>2</sup> In respect of this protected characteristic, a body subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (which includes Scottish Government) only needs to comply with the first need of the duty (to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010) and only in relation to work. This is because the parts of the Act covering services and public functions, premises, education etc. do not apply to that protected characteristic. Equality impact assessment within the Scottish Government does not require assessment against the protected characteristic of Marriage and Civil Partnership unless the policy or practice relates to work, for example HR policies and practices.

## Stage 4: Decision making and monitoring

### ***Identifying and establishing any required mitigating action***

If, following the impact analysis, you think you have identified any unlawful discrimination – direct or indirect - you must consider and set out what action will be undertaken to mitigate the negative impact. You will need to consult your legal team in SGLD at this point if you have not already done so.

Have positive or negative impacts been identified for any of the equality groups?	No positive or negative impact has been identified for any of the equality groups.
Is the policy directly or indirectly discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010 <sup>3</sup> ?	No.
If the policy is indirectly discriminatory, how is it justified under the relevant legislation?	N/A
If not justified, what mitigating action will be undertaken?	N/A

### ***Describing how Equality Impact analysis has shaped the policy making process***

The EQIA identified that there are a few gaps in the information available relating to the characteristics of gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity in postgraduate Scottish-domiciled social work students and therefore the impact that the introduction of a financial support package for this group of students will have on these protected characteristics.

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<sup>3</sup> See EQIA – Setting the Scene for further information on the legislation.

However, the remaining data is available and the introduction of a financial support package for this group of students is seen as a neutral change as it does not impact on the equality groups. The policy should have no impact in relation to a person's protected characteristics.

The new policy is therefore considered proportionate and justifiable in these circumstances.

### ***Monitoring and Review***

HESA continue to gather data on these students and will continue to monitor the impact of this policy change on the protected characteristics it collects.

### **Stage 5 - Authorisation of EQIA**

Please confirm that:

- ◆ This Equality Impact Assessment has informed the development of this policy:

Yes  No

- ◆ Opportunities to promote equality in respect of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation have been considered, i.e.:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation;
- Removing or minimising any barriers and/or disadvantages;
- Taking steps which assist with promoting equality and meeting people's different needs;
- Encouraging participation (e.g. in public life)
- Fostering good relations, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Yes  No

- ◆ If the Marriage and Civil Partnership protected characteristic applies to this policy, the Equality Impact Assessment has also



assessed against the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation in respect of this protected characteristic:

Yes  No  Not applicable

## **Declaration**

**I am satisfied with the equality impact assessment that has been undertaken for postgraduate social work courses and give my authorisation for the results of this assessment to be published on the Scottish Government's website.**

**Name: Naureen Ahmad**

**Position: Deputy Director, Lifelong Learning and Skills**

**Authorisation date: 26/04/2024**