

Thematic Gender Review of the National Performance Framework

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Executive summary

Introduction and methodology

The National Advisory Council on Women and Girls (NACWG) is a key leadership organisation in Scotland that raises awareness of gender inequality and provides accountability to the Scottish Government for the speed and type of change needed. In their first annual report in 2018, the NACWG issued the following recommendation: 'carry out a thematic gender review of the new National Performance Framework as a catalyst for system analysis and change.' ([2018 - Attitudes and Culture Change NACWG report](#)).

This report is the Scottish Government's response to that NACWG recommendation and has drawn from multiple evidence strands including:

- Evidence from the review of National Outcomes public consultation, desk based research, and stakeholder call for evidence.
- Expert stakeholder workshops, including one with participants with an interest in gender, which were conducted as part of the review of the National Outcomes.
- An extract on gender from the Equality Impact Assessment undertaken as part of the review of the National Outcomes.

In this report we set out what actions we have taken to understand, assess and implement the needs of women and girls to be better represented in the NPF.

This work has informed two key aspects:

- The development of the wording of the proposed revised National Outcomes.
- The development of the National Indicators that measure progress towards the National Outcomes.

This work will collectively result in a gender-informed policy and an evidence based NPF which drives overall societal wellbeing in Scotland for the next five years and beyond.

What we did: Review of National Outcomes

The evidence provided throughout the statutory review of the National Outcomes has contributed to the development of revised National Outcomes to better address gender inequalities.

As part of the ongoing review of the National Outcomes, evidence relating to gender and its correlation with wellbeing was gathered through desk-based research, online consultation, call for evidence and stakeholder meetings. Twelve meetings were held with expert stakeholders, including one themed around gender. The theme of gender was raised at several other expert stakeholder meetings, specifically those themed around care, the sustainable development goals, and transport. The stakeholder meeting which specifically focused on gender gave us further understanding of what currently works well and in which ways gender could be strengthened in the NPF. Specific themes that emerged around gender were: data disaggregation and intersectional data, gender-based violence, and paid and unpaid care.

The National Outcomes actively seek to promote equality, ensuring equality groups have fair access to the realisation of the Outcomes. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the 2018 National Outcomes in order to understand any improvements that could be made, as well as on the proposed revised National Outcomes, however, it is the authority of specific policy areas to assess the impact of any policies specific to achieving the National Outcomes. The evidence gathered throughout the review of the National Outcomes has been used to better understand the interests of equality groups, and these were reflected in the development of proposed revisions to the Outcomes.

Thematic analysis of text-based responses was completed for all evidence received. The evidence for each theme was then summarised and considered for inclusion in the proposed revisions to the NPF. This evidence informed decisions to either: include a new National Outcome, change an existing National Outcome, mainstream throughout the wider NPF, or to make no change if it did not meet the outcome criteria for inclusion in the NPF.

Throughout the review of the National Outcomes, stakeholders communicated their concerns of the existing NPF falling short in capturing gender inequalities. The proposed new National Outcomes will mainstream gender across the outcomes, recognising that all the National Outcomes apply to women and girls. The proposed new National Outcome for Care was extensively requested in the review process and will acknowledge the benefits of the unpaid and paid care work that falls disproportionately to women. The revised extended definitions of the new National Outcomes will broaden scope to include the unique experiences of women and girls, including the National Outcomes of Equality and Human Rights and Communities.

Introduction

Context

Gender equality is a fundamental human right. It is also a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world ([Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG 5\) | United Nations Western Europe](#)).

Gender inequality negatively affects everyone, not just women and girls ([WHO: Gender and health](#)). Although there has been considerable progress over the last few decades, many challenges remain. These include social and economic barriers that result from different expectations and treatment of men and women. For instance, across the world women have poorer access to employment opportunities. This is both an ethical problem and hinders economic development for everyone.

These issues are often interconnected and mutually reinforcing. For example, women do three times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men, negatively affecting their health, autonomy and ability to get full-time, well-paid jobs ([Executive Board of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women](#)).

Legal and policy frameworks

Anti-discrimination law such as the [Equality Act \(2010\)](#) protects people from discrimination of all types on the grounds of sex. This is underpinned by European law and the [Human Rights Act \(1998\)](#).

The Scottish Government believes that no one should be denied rights or opportunities because of their sex or gender. Institutions, including the Scottish Government, have taken many steps towards advancing gender equality in legislation and policy.

There are statutory requirements on public authorities to proactively reduce gender discrimination and advance gender equality. The practice of gender mainstreaming has been a requirement on public bodies since 2007 and now forms part of the public sector equality duty. Together these legal frameworks and statutory requirements aim to protect women once discrimination has occurred and prevent it from happening in the first place.

There are a number of policy frameworks that relate to gender in Scotland, although Scotland does not have an overarching gender equality strategy. One example is the 'Equally Safe' strategy which aims to act on all forms of violence against women and girls, co-owned between the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. The strategy is backed by the 'Equally Safe Delivery Plan' which helps to ensure the ambitions of the strategy are being realised ([Equally Safe 2018: Scotland's strategy to eradicate violence against women](#)).

The 'A fairer Scotland for women – gender pay gap action plan' introduced the first plan to reduce the gender pay gap for employees in Scotland and tackle labour market inequalities faced by women. The plan commits to driving change across areas of education, gender stereotyping, labour market inequalities and data improvements ([Gender pay gap action plan: annual report](#)). This report provides further evidence on the impact of the action plan, drawing attention to areas of focus for future action.

Jointly these frameworks cover key policy areas and embed international obligations to women.

Measurements of progress – the National Performance Framework

Legislation sets out the rights of individuals and responsibilities of government to prevent discrimination, whilst policy and strategy describes the governments' plans for meeting those obligations. Measurement is important because that is how we evaluate progress towards these goals.

Internationally, the United Nations (UN) has set a series of Sustainable Development Goals. These are 'global goals' and targets that are part of an internationally agreed performance framework. All countries are aiming to achieve these goals by 2030. Goal 5 seeks to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" ([United Nations: Gender equality and women's empowerment](#)).

The National Performance Framework (NPF) is Scotland's localisation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It was first introduced in 2007 as a way to measure our national wellbeing beyond traditional economic measures ([National Performance Framework | National Performance Framework](#)).

The NPF is a framework for all of Scotland. It sets out a vision for collective wellbeing based on the priorities and aspirations of people in Scotland. It supports a shared way of working based on a Scotland-specific context, asking everyone to work together to help to improve the lives of the people of Scotland.

To help achieve its purpose, the framework sets out National Outcomes to tell us what success looks like. The current National Outcomes were developed in 2018 by asking the public, practitioners, and experts what kind of Scotland they would like to live in. The result was eleven National Outcomes. Figure 1 below shows the National Outcomes and their descriptions.

Figure 1: National Performance Framework 2018



In 2015, the [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act](#) put a duty on Scottish Ministers to set, report on, and review National Outcomes. The Act also put a duty on public bodies to pay regard to the National Outcomes.

To measure how well we are achieving what matters to the people of Scotland as conceptualised through the National Outcomes, 81 National Indicators were selected to track progress. Each National Indicator measures an aspect of national wellbeing, including a range of social, economic, and environmental factors. These National Indicators come from many sources, including large population surveys such as [the Scottish Household Survey](#), [the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey](#) and [the Scottish Health Survey](#).

In 2019, a report was published that compares the outcomes and experiences of disabled people to those of non-disabled people using indicators drawn from Scotland's NPF ([National Performance Framework – disability perspective: analysis](#)). The report was further updated in 2021.

Review of National Outcomes

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 also means Scottish Ministers are required to consult on, review and publish the National Outcomes every five years. The next review of National Outcomes is currently underway. The consultation process concluded in Summer of 2023 and gathered multiple types of evidence. We heard the views of a minimum of 44,000 citizen respondents about what is important to them for national wellbeing through an online public consultation and a desk-based literature review of existing citizen engagements and community action plans. We also heard the views of more than 220 expert stakeholders and their organisations through our call for evidence and stakeholder meetings. This evidence was used to draft a revised set of National Outcomes which will now undergo Cabinet and parliamentary scrutiny throughout 2024. It is expected that the revised National Outcomes will be published in early 2025.

The National Advisory Council on Women and Girls

Within this policy context, a commitment was made by the Scottish Government in 2016 to establish a First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls (NACWG). The role of the NACWG is to raise awareness of gender inequality in Scotland, act as a champion for positive progress and be a catalyst for change by identifying gaps in work to tackle gender inequality. The NACWG provide accountability to the Scottish Government for the speed and type of change. They contend that gender equality considerations are unevenly reflected in policy, including in areas of intersectionality ([2020 – Creating an Intersectional Gender Architecture NACWG report](#)).

The recommendations of the NACWG have influenced policy making, with the Scottish Government taking onboard NACWG recommendations to make the annual Programme for Government gender sensitive and create a Directorate for Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights.

In their first annual report in 2018, the NACWG issued the following recommendation: 'carry out a thematic gender review of the new National Performance Framework as a catalyst for system analysis and change.' ([2018 - Attitudes and Culture Change NACWG report](#)). In 2019 the Scottish Government accepted the recommendation and committed to this as part of the next NPF review ([Scottish Government's Response to the NACWG 2019](#)).

This report is the Scottish Governments response to that NACWG recommendation and has drawn from multiple evidence strands including:

1. Evidence from the review of National Outcomes public consultation, desk based research, and stakeholder call for evidence.
2. Expert stakeholder workshops, including one with participants with an interest in gender, which were conducted as part of the review of the National Outcomes.
3. An extract on gender from the Equality Impact Assessment undertaken as part of the review of the National Outcomes.

In this report we set out what actions we have taken to understand, assess and implement the needs of women and girls to be better represented in the NPF.

What we did: Review of National Outcomes

The evidence provided throughout the review process has contributed to the development of the new proposed National Outcomes to better address gender inequalities. Part two of this report provides details of how the evidence gathered as part of the review informed the proposed new National Outcomes.

We listened: Stakeholder Workshop: Gender

As part of the ongoing review of the National Outcomes, 12 meetings were held with expert stakeholders, including one themed around gender. Gender was raised at several other expert stakeholder meetings, including those themed around care, sustainable development goals and transport.

The stakeholder meetings focused on gender told us more about what works currently about the National Performance Framework (NPF) and how gender could be strengthened in the NPF.

This section will mainly detail the discussion at the stakeholder group themed around gender, but it will also include topics raised in other themed groups where relevant.

We asked: What is good about the current National Performance Framework?

Participants were largely positive about the current NPF. Several appreciated the goals and aspirations of the NPF:

“Having an overall framework that sits above political choices, that steers the whole of Scotland and is focussed on wellbeing is good. There’s a commitment to thinking differently about wellbeing and equality which is great.”

“Aligning to the SDGs is good. There are areas where that could be improved in terms of gender equality. The mapping between them is positive, though there are ways to improve that.”

We asked: What should be changed in the existing National Performance Framework?

Whilst most participants agreed that the NPF was a good vision, the group agreed that there were many issues in practice. Participants had many suggestions for how the National Outcomes or National Indicators could be changed to better reflect the experiences of women and girls.

The group identified several policy areas that they felt were missing from the existing National Outcomes. These included COVID recovery, participation and, most commonly, care. Several participants called for a care outcome to help achieve better gender equality.

“Participation is important – it comes three times – we should have an Outcome on participation. When you look at all of these things, the participation of marginalised women would require resourcefulness, thoughtfulness and an action plan. If you measure it, it would drive activity around it. Not just about work.”

“There’s nothing in there about how we want to recover from COVID collectively.”

“Outcomes - missing outcome on care, single parents”

Participants felt that gender mainstreaming throughout the outcomes was lacking. There was discussion about having an equalities National Outcome alongside the existing Human Rights Outcome. Some participants felt that gender should be embedded into the existing Outcome with other participants arguing that the Outcome marginalises women. Likewise, the discussion over a separate equalities Outcome generated some debate.

“Either another petal or embedding into the equality and HRs petal-equalities groups and those who experience most marginalisation.”

“We spoke in the group about gender – it isn’t mainstreamed throughout. One petal as human rights minoritizes women within that. It makes women increasingly more invisible. We want to see a more comprehensive consideration of the divergent experiences of women e.g. women who are single parents, women of colour etc. It all sounds great but it’s very far removed from realities.”

“Children and child poverty – has a gender lens. Looking at gender inequality on its own isn’t enough. I would add another petal that covers inequalities in general because then you’re looking at intersectional inequalities.”

“With regard to the interesting equalities and whether or not to mainstream or be particular, one important thing is that when we collapse different types of equality into one generic thing (e.g. a petal) it tends to be diluted. We lose the specificity of what are women’s experiences, what are BAME women’s experiences. However you decide to go about equality I would caution not to fall into the trap of diluting things down to say ‘equality’ and not go specific. Attend to the specific needs of multiple marginalised groups.”

Others felt that while the NPF was a good vision, how it was implemented in practice was lacking. One participant called for more strategic links to the public sector equality duty. Another said that there needed to be greater thought given to operationalising the NPF.

“In Scotland in general we don’t have a problem of making policy – and the NPF is a good vision – it’s at the level of implementation that’s the issue.”

“Lack of strategic link to the public sector equality duty. NPF is designed to drive action towards outcomes but doesn’t connect with Public Sector Equality Duty.”

“How do we operationalise this? How do we make it seed down the way across all areas of policy and delivery and across different organisations. Do we need to add to it or do we need to get it out there more? This sets out the kind of society we want to live in, actually all of the specific policy interventions that we’ve got, how are they feeding back into this framework.”

The wording of the National Outcomes was part of the conversation. One participant felt that the terminology in the NPF and the National Outcomes was too passive and should be more proactive. Another felt that the National Outcomes are very broad.

“Terminology is passive eg poverty - should proactively say we will tackle structural inequality to make things happen.”

“Outcomes are broad and open, within gender alone you need to consider multiple barriers, intersectionality etc. gender equality is a huge goal.”

There was considerable discussion over the National Indicators. Participants felt that many National Indicators lacked a specific gender focus and were not fit for purpose. One example of this was in terms of safety, where some participants argued that concerns specific to young girls are not being captured by current National Indicators.

“Girls fall between the cracks. I reviewed the children indicators with that lens and found that there are things that are specific to girls that are not measured – e.g. body positivity, happiness, confidence, community, wellbeing, gender stereotypes, career aspirations and safety. We’re not measuring how safe children feel in their environments. How safe do they feel at home, or in intimate sexual relationships. Those are specific concerns that girls have that is not in there.”

Crime was also seen as an area where the National Indicators themselves fail to capture the true experiences of women and girls. According to one participant, the current indicator for crime victimisation gives the impression that crime rates are going down. However, this ignores violence that is not reported, violence against women and girls that is different from other forms of violence. Other participants felt that Sustainable Development Goal indicators on violence against women should be in the NPF as there is existing data that can be drawn on.

“Crime is one example of where the choice of data is really interesting. When we have the data on crime victimisation and violence in particular, the general line from SG is that violence is going down in Scotland. But that’s not the case for women and girls, and that’s what happens when you don’t split out violence against women and girls from other types of violence. We can’t just measure reported violence – e.g. rape has the lowest conviction rate of any crime in Scotland.”

Participants highlighted National Indicators in the Poverty National Outcome where women’s experiences were not being accurately captured.

“Poverty indicators - focus on household measures of poverty and creates no space for intra household resource allocation, who shares resources in mixed sex households (e.g. Domestic violence).”

The most frequently mentioned change to the NPF was around better availability of sex-disaggregated and intersectional data. There was some debate over whether intersectional data analysis would improve the situation. Whilst there was considerable discussion about how this would improve the situation, one participant felt that more consideration needs to be given to the data sources and whether they can tell us anything useful before applying an intersectional lens.

“The indicators are good but the choice of data is not so good. We need to have a more thorough assessment of what type of data we’re using, why we’re using and who that data serves, before we get into the discussion that it needs to be intersectional.”

“There’s two out of 81 that explicitly relate to women which is not enough. There’s a lack of intersectional analysis and gender sensitive and sex disaggregated indicators. SG has committed to improving the data gaps, but this is an opportunity to address some of these gaps to more effectively measure different women’s experiences.”

“We need more intersectional data. With a lot of the indicators when you look on the website they are split by sex, then separately split by disability and so on. We know that people live their lives not in one of those boxes at a time, so the data underpinning the indicators should be able to be looked at intersectionality – e.g. women of colour who are disabled. How is that most marginalised group able to achieve the outcomes. If the data isn’t agile enough to represent those most marginalised we’re never going to achieve the vision of the framework.”

“Taking an intersectional approach. I’d like to see an indicator or series of indicators about protected characteristics and making sure there are additional actions being taken to address issues for disabled women.”

“Need indicators under each of these things for women and for marginalised women. Need intersectional lens for everything. Eg communities, belonging not just to geographical communities”

In terms of measurement and indicator choice, participants suggested we need to be more flexible with types of data we are using and consult third sector organisations who have practical experience.

“So we should be more free and creative with the data sources we’re using. Rather than saying ‘how many have been reported’, we should go to the charities supporting survivors of violence and ask how many they have supported. We need to heavily caveat the data by saying it is under-reported. All data will underestimate levels of violence for these women. Zero Tolerance would like a specific indicator on violence against women and girls – with all the caveats to what data we use.”

“The indicators need to be almost put through the intersectional lens. For example under communities – ‘places to interact’ that should be

'accessible safe places to interact'. The LGBT communities don't interact in a place based way, neither do disabled women interact in that way. Safe and accessible. Glasgow Disability Alliance would like to have time to do that. Social capital – how are we measuring that – are we asking people about sense of connections, peers, role models, the ability to understand how we access support etc. During COVID, Glasgow Disability Alliance spoke to lots of people – trying to understand would help us to help you better."

There were specific data improvement suggestions that will be covered in the review of the National Indicators alongside the National Outcomes. For example, one participant encouraged the use of the SEEMiS (the education management information system used in Scotland to report local student data) to measure gender-based violence in schools. Another suggested a raft of National Indicators to better represent women in the Poverty National Outcome.

"Poverty Outcome: indicator - social care/ childcare charges, extra costs of being disabled; income maximisation; disability employment gap; gender employment gap." [Facilitator note]

Some felt that there needed to be improved alignment between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and NPF Outcomes with more specificity about how the Sustainable Development Goals are embedded.

"Improving the alignment between SDG 5 and NPF. There are 9 targets and 14 indicators. We should improve that alignment e.g. by having gender based violence, women's representation and participation – there are things that we can tie in better. The mainstreaming of gender has diluted."

"SDGs are mapped onto NPF but not clear from website how NPF enables SG to meet the SDGs."

"Should be transparent about how mainstreaming is happening. E.g. SDG 5 is supposed to be mainstreamed throughout – so be explicit about how you're doing that."

Finally, one participant felt that there should be recognition of the interrelated nature of the Outcomes and measures that consider this.

"Good to recognise the interrelated nature of Outcomes and measures towards these."

We assessed: Equality Impact Assessment of the National Outcomes: Gender

What are impact assessments?

An impact assessment is a tool to evaluate the potential effects of a planned action or policy proposal. Impact assessments are effectively the building blocks of evidence-based policymaking and practice. They ensure policies take account of the different needs and experiences of the people that benefit from the work undertaken. This also means scarce resources are used appropriately. The Scottish Government conducts various impact assessments to ensure that policies and practices are fair and equitable.

What are Equality Impact Assessments and why are we doing one?

As part of the suite of impact assessments we are doing as part of the current review of National Outcomes, we have conducted an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA).

The public sector equality duty requires the Scottish Government to assess the impact of applying new policies and practices. An EQIA aims to consider how a policy or practice may impact, either positively or negatively, on different sectors of the population in different ways. Equality legislation means that certain sectors of the population have “protected characteristics” which must be considered when making policy. These are: age, disability, gender reassignment, sex including pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, and sexual orientation.

An EQIA is evidence-based and helps public bodies to ensure policies, practices, events and decision-making processes support equal opportunities, are fair and produce better results. As the NPF sets the strategic direction for the whole of Scotland, it is vitally important that we consider how our National Outcomes apply to and affect different groups.

EQIA of the National Outcomes

The National Outcomes set out the kind of Scotland we want to see. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 places a duty on Scottish Ministers to set, report on, and review National Outcomes. It also puts a duty on those carrying out specified public functions to pay regard to the National Outcomes.

National and local government play a key role in the delivery of the National Outcomes. Scotland’s Community Planning Partnerships, which encourage public bodies to work with local communities to design and deliver better services, support the NPF through their Local Outcomes Improvement Plans. The NPF promotes partnership and collaboration, providing an overarching framework towards which all public services are working.

The NPF is not only a framework for its delivery partners, but in its simplest form, is a written set of outcomes, supported by their extended definitions that must be written in language that is accessible to all policy services in Scotland. This ensures that evidence-based policy that will allow Scotland to meet these outcomes can be implemented in a way that everybody understands.

It is vitally important that we understand the impact of the framing of each National Outcome as we ask everyone in Scotland to work towards them. We need to ensure that the intention of the National Outcomes does not impact certain groups of the population more than others, either positively or negatively.

The EQIA collated evidence from the review of the National Outcomes. Evidence relating to gender and its interaction with wellbeing was gathered through desk-based research, online consultation, call for evidence and stakeholder meetings. The following sections of this report are extracts from the wider EQIA that are specific to gender which has been [published in full](#) alongside [the other impact assessments on the National Performance Framework website](#). Together, the suite of impact assessments have been used to inform the development of the refreshed National Outcomes.

Several responses called for a more gendered NPF. For example, Engender, Scotland’s feminist policy and advocacy organisation stated that:

“The current version of the NPF falls far short in articulating the specific forms of inequality which exist in Scotland and ensuring the outcomes of intersectional gender equality are mainstreamed across government policymaking.”

Disaggregated and intersectional data

Evidence from the Review of the National Outcomes also highlighted the lack of available intersectional data. Scottish Women’s Aid, Close the Gap, Scottish Women’s Budget Group, Zero Tolerance, The Poverty Alliance, Oxfam, and The Scottish Human Rights Commission all called for better disaggregated data.

Gender-based violence

Scottish Women’s Aid and the Scottish Human Rights Convention both petitioned that the revised National Outcomes address violence against women and girls. Scottish Women’s Aid stated that:

“Domestic abuse compromises the health, safety and wellbeing of thousands of women, children, and young people each year. To outline the picture in brief, the police recorded 64,807 incidents of domestic abuse in 2021-22 (only reflecting the numbers of those accessing help through Police Scotland or reported to Police Scotland from another source).”

Paid and unpaid care

Care was one of the most frequently mentioned themes in the evidence received. The gendered nature of care (both paid and unpaid) was raised as one reason why a new National Outcome for care should be introduced. The Poverty Alliance stated that:

“In Scotland, women account for as many as 70% of unpaid carers; 96% of childcare workforce; and 80% of adult social care staff.”

Paid care work is predominantly undertaken by women, so while wages in the care economy remain low, women remain disproportionately affected. In their call for evidence, Close the Gap and The Women’s Budget Group both highlighted this issue with the Women’s Budget Group stating:

“This critical state is in part due to the invisibility of care built from a gender bias of a female-dominated sector as at least 80% of the social care workforce were women (Scottish Government 2022). Therefore, investing and valuing care also translates to investing and valuing women’s jobs.”

The gender distribution of unpaid care has long been recognised as a source of inequality between men and women. This was raised by several stakeholders, particularly those supporting the ‘A Scotland that Cares’ campaign. The resulting impact on poverty was also raised by stakeholders, such as Alzheimer Scotland, Scottish Women’s Budget Group and Close the Gap. The availability of affordable, reliable childcare was noted as an enabler of women’s economic participation.

As Scottish Women’s Budget group stated in their call for evidence:

“Unpaid care is highly gendered as care is often perceived as a role taken on by women due to entrenched social norms and stereotypes. Women are more likely to be poor and have lower levels of wealth largely due to caring responsibilities, whilst currently experiencing deep personal and financial costs exacerbated by rising costs.”

We acted: Evidence-informed policy making for the refreshed National Outcomes

The proposed revised National Outcomes were drafted after comprehensive analysis of the consultation evidence, and collation of the key emerging themes.

Thematic analysis of text-based responses was completed for all evidence received. Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns of meaning within qualitative data and categorising them into themes through coding. Each piece of evidence was coded through the lens of our review question “Do the National Outcomes still reflect the kind of Scotland we want to see?” Final themes and sub themes were collated and categorised for consideration in the development of updated National Outcomes. In addition to this, the National Outcomes and Indicators category of themes will feed into the development of the National Indicators to support the new National Outcomes.

The evidence for each theme was summarised and considered for inclusion in the proposed revisions to the NPF. This evidence informed whether to include a new National Outcome, change an existing outcome, mainstream within the wider NPF, or not make a change where it did not meet the outcome criteria for inclusion in the NPF.

Any proposed new outcomes – or changes to existing outcomes - were expected to meet the following criteria:

- Population level theme – applies to everyone
- Contributes to wellbeing of people and planet/human flourishing
- Describes an outcome not a process
- Distinct enough from the other Outcomes
- Improved alignment with the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals

Each National Outcome is accompanied by an extended definition, which aims to capture the main issues raised through the evidence and provide an opportunity to add context to the National Outcome. Where there was evidence that suggested a protected group should be specifically mentioned, this was considered as part of the drafting of the extended definition. Through the stakeholder meetings and calls for evidence responses we were able to identify the most relevant definitions through which to mainstream gender.

The National Outcomes actively seek to promote equality and to ensure equality groups have equal access to the realisation of the Outcomes. Though it will be for specific policy areas to assess the impact of any policies relating to the achieving of the National Outcomes, an Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the 2018 National Outcomes in order to understand any improvements that could be made in this review, as well as on the proposed revised National Outcomes. The evidence gathered throughout

the review was used to better understand the interests of groups with protected characteristics, and these were reflected in the development of proposed revisions to the Outcomes.

Based on the evidence outlined in part two of this report, the following key themes were considered specifically with a gender lens. The actions we took to incorporate the asks in the revision of the National Outcomes are laid out under each theme.

Standalone National Outcome for Women

One over-arching consideration in addressing the gender gaps in the NPF was whether or not to have a stand-alone National Outcome for Women. While some in the review process did call for this, others proposed mainstreaming gender across all the other National Outcomes.

A stand-alone National Outcome would be in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and would undoubtedly increase the prominence of gender in the framework. However, it is proposed that gender is instead mainstreamed more effectively throughout the National Outcomes and their extended definitions.

This prevents the perception that other National Outcomes do not relate to women and is in line with the approach to protected characteristics that is taken throughout the rest of the framework – which is to ensure all National Outcomes are applicable for everyone living in Scotland, and not to single out particular groups.

A different approach was taken to the Children and Young People Outcome as it applies to one age-related group. This was deemed to fit the criteria for a standalone National Outcome as it is a stage of life everyone experiences.

The extended definitions of the National Outcomes provide an opportunity to address barriers to outcomes experienced by distinct groups. As such, proposed extended definitions for National Outcomes for Care, Health, Equality and Human Rights, and Reduce Poverty have been strengthened to address specific gendered inequalities which exist in Scotland.

Care

We heard the key message from our stakeholders that the majority of caring, both paid and unpaid, is carried out by women. To reflect this, along with ensuring we also reflect the experiences of people who are receiving care, we proposed a new National Outcome for Care which states as its headline: “We are cared for as we need throughout our lives and value all those providing care”.

To ensure the proposed Care National Outcome fully captures the asks from our stakeholders, the proposed National Outcome for Care has a supporting extended paragraph that more fully describes the outcomes we are aiming to achieve for the people of Scotland. That paragraph specifically includes unpaid care, experience of care, and care workforce. The wording we have proposed to ensure this is fully reflected is:

“We reduce inequality through our actions to support caring, which is disproportionately carried out by women. We improve the lives of children, older people, and disabled people by ensuring high quality care.”

Equality and Human Rights

The evidence given in the review highlighted the omission of violence against women and girls in the existing National Outcomes. This has been addressed in the proposed extended definition for the revised National Outcomes for Equality and Human Rights:

“We live free from all forms of violence, including violence against women and girls.”

Communities

To address the disparity in journeys by active travel, the proposed new National Outcome acknowledges the different experiences of women and men. Similarly, the extended definition recognises that public space may be experienced differently by groups, including women:

“We plan our places to enable walking, wheeling and cycling for everyone... We acknowledge that different approaches may be needed to enable all groups to feel safe in public spaces.”

Wellbeing Economy and Fair Work

The inclusion of flexible working and reduction of pay gaps in this outcome both support women’s economic participation, fair work and reducing the inequalities highlighted by stakeholders, ensuring this is fair work and contributes to women’s socio-economic wellbeing:

“Fair work is accessible to all, and we reduce inequalities. Good quality jobs, availability of flexible working and reducing barriers to the labour market are good for the economy as well as our people. We reduce unfair pay gaps. We acknowledge the role of different sectors, including the third and voluntary sector, in providing quality employment.”

Health

This outcome references the need to ensure those with differing health needs, such as women, have access to the healthcare they need. This is covered in the extended definition:

“We recognise the differing health needs and inequalities across our population, and ensure that everyone, including women, children, older people, disabled people and those living in rural or island communities, have access to the most appropriate services and care to meet those needs.”

Reduce Poverty

The proposed extended definition recognises the link between gender and poverty and was written with a gendered lens.

The importance of addressing child poverty through supporting families recognises the central role of women in these areas. The link between women’s poverty and child poverty arose in multiple evidence strands:

“Anyone experiencing poverty is treated with dignity and respect. We support families who need it, to become financially secure so that children do not grow up in poverty. We tackle deep-seated and multi-

generational child poverty to stop the cycles that reduce opportunity, and that lead to further inequalities.”

“We recognise the links between poverty and gender, ethnicity, disability and health, and act to reduce inequalities.”

Conclusions

This thematic gender review has explored work carried out to better address gender equalities in the NPF, with focus three main strands of work including: (1) evidence from the review of National Outcomes public consultation, desk based research, and stakeholder call for evidence; (2) expert stakeholder workshops, including one with participants with an interest in gender, which were conducted as part of the review of the National Outcomes and; (3) An extract on gender from the Equality Impact Assessment undertaken as part of the review of the National Outcomes. This has then informed both the development of the wording of the refreshed National Outcomes and the development of the National Indicators that measure progress towards the National Outcomes. In addition, a series of next steps in the NPF data improvement work is presented below to further address the recommendations made.

The review of the National Outcomes enabled us to gather evidence and has contributed to the development of new National Outcomes and revised National Indicators that better address gender inequalities in the NPF.

Throughout the review of the National Outcomes, stakeholders told us that they were concerned that the existing NPF fell short in capturing gender inequalities. The proposed new National Outcomes will mainstream gender across the outcomes, recognising that all the National Outcomes apply to women. The proposed new National Outcome for Care was much requested in the Review process and will acknowledge the benefits of the unpaid and paid care work that falls disproportionately to women. Revised extended definitions of the new National Outcomes will broaden scope to include the unique experiences of women, including in outcomes of Equality and Human Rights and Communities.

We also listened to key stakeholders through organised workshops. During our schedule of 12 meetings with expert stakeholders, one of these workshops focused on the theme of gender and gender was raised at several other workshops, including those themed around care, sustainable development goals and transport. We asked what stakeholders would like to see changed in the NPF with responses focusing on how the National Outcomes or National Indicators could be adapted to better reflect the experiences of woman and girls. Several people asked for a new care outcome to better achieve gender equality. From this we have adapted the National Indicators to encapsulate the experiences of women and girls better across those indicators that are people and household based through changes to the indicators themselves and also through provision of disaggregations where gender is available.

In addition stakeholders told us that they felt that gender mainstreaming throughout the outcomes was lacking, with focus on the addition of a new gender outcome or embedding gender within the new National Outcomes. We have taken this on board and have further embedded gender throughout the National Outcomes and National Indicators. In respect of participants who felt that the National Indicators lacked gender focus we have now ensured that gender is a key focus amongst the new indicator set and our future programme of data and reporting work focuses on this specifically to support a programme of work on improving the availability of sex-disaggregated and intersectional data.

From the Equality Impact Assessments we have collated evidence from the review of the National Outcomes relating to gender and its interaction with wellbeing gathered through desk-based research, online consultation, call for evidence and stakeholder meetings.

This has enabled us to understand the impact of how we frame each of our National Outcomes as we ask the people of Scotland to work towards them. From this we have ensured that the intention of the National Outcomes does not impact certain groups of the population more than others, including those of all genders.

The following next steps will strengthen the representation of gender inequalities in the National Outcomes.

Next steps

National Outcomes

The draft National Outcomes which take account of the evidence gathered as part of the review of National Outcomes, including the evidence specified in this report, will now go through a period of scrutiny from Cabinet and the members of the Scottish Parliament as required by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. The evidence used to refresh the National Outcomes, including this report, will be considered alongside the draft National Outcomes during that scrutiny.

We aim to launch the refreshed NPF in early 2025.

National Indicators

The current set of National Indicators will be revised to reflect the new National Outcomes agreed by Parliament, and will be informed by the consultation evidence.

Work is ongoing on a revised set of National Indicators. It is being led by Scotland's Chief Statistician, and will be completed once a revised set of National Outcomes has been agreed with Parliament. We are assessing the relevance and quality of all current 81 National Indicators as well as exploring alternative measures that would better reflect the refreshed National Outcomes. The indicators will need to meet a minimum data quality level to be included in the updated indicator set. The indicators will go through rigorous quality assurance with analysts and will be independently peer reviewed and critiqued by the NPF Technical Advisory Group (NPFTAG), which is chaired by the Chief Statistician, prior to indicators going live. Additional engagement will be undertaken with the NPF Policy Advisory Group (PAG) and NPF Expert Advisory Group (EAG). We are also considering further data improvements from the feedback received through the National Outcomes Review consultation to support improved impact and value from the National Indicator data for our users.

Data availability and disaggregation

The ability to disaggregate data across population groups (including gender) and show how Scotland is progressing in reducing inequalities is an important criterion in the development of the refreshed National Indicator set to accompany refreshed National Outcomes. How we can better disaggregate current National Indicators and the development of new measures to track inequalities will be considered as part of this.

Work that has already been delivered in this regard can be seen on the new look [National Performance Framework website](#) where equalities data is currently reported on for relevant National Indicators, including by gender or sex for each National Indicator where that data is available. We also continue to link to the wider equality data landscape via the Equality Evidence Finder.

There has also been ongoing work in Scottish Government to improve the quality of data on women and girls, to enable evidence-informed policy making. Scotland's Gender Index (GEI) was developed in 2020 and recently updated in 2023 ([Scotland's Gender Equality Index 2023](#)). The purpose of the GEI is to allow tracking over time and identify trends in the issues facing women and girls in Scotland. The GEI presents gender equality numerically with a score of 1 indicating no gender equality and a score of 100 indicating

full gender equality. It covers six domains, developed with stakeholders: work, money, time, knowledge, power and health. Like the NPF the GEI uses indicators from a range of sources to measure equality.

Intersectional data exploration

In addition to the issues faced as a woman or girl, people's experiences are shaped by being a member of other interconnected social groups. These social groups include race, age, disability, sexual orientation, economic status and wider life experiences. Our lives are also affected by power structures, such as laws, policies and governments, which shape peoples' lives in different ways according to these identities. For example, a disabled woman may experience overlapping discrimination and challenges as a woman and as a disabled person but also uniquely as a disabled woman. The resulting inequality is known as intersectionality ([Using intersectionality to understand structural inequality in Scotland: evidence synthesis](#)).

The Scottish Government's Equality Evidence Strategy 2023-2025 places important focus on pursuing intersectional approaches across data collection and policy making. One of the actions set out in the Equality Evidence Strategy is to, "Undertake research to synthesise available evidence on key structural intersectionalities, identify gaps and suggest ways in which evidence gaps can be captured through both qualitative and quantitative research." With this in mind, Scottish Government's Equality Analysis Team is planning a series of intersectionality-focused evidence reviews. The first in the series considers evidence relating to minority ethnic women's experiences and draws in both quantitative and qualitative insight. It is now anticipated this Evidence Review will be published in Autumn 2024.

An intersectional approach is necessary to properly capture the experiences of women and girls, who are members of interconnected social categories which often compound existing structural inequalities. Due to how existing NPF data is collected and presented, it is currently not possible to take an intersectional approach to this thematic gender review. However, we have been working with equalities colleagues and the Chief Statistician to explore what options are available to us, in conjunction with ongoing work undertaken by the equalities team. The development of this work and its applications to other intersectional elements in the NPF will be explored throughout 2024 and 2025.