



CROWN OFFICE  
& PROCURATOR  
FISCAL SERVICE

SCOTLAND'S PROSECUTION SERVICE

# CROWN OFFICE & PROCURATOR FISCAL SERVICE

## EQUALITY OUTCOMES 2017 – 2021

# COPFS Equality Outcomes for 2017 to 2021

## Introduction

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) is Scotland's sole prosecution service. We receive reports about crimes from the police and other reporting agencies and decide what action to take in the public interest, including whether to prosecute. We also examine deaths that need further explanation and investigate allegations of criminal conduct by police officers.

In 2015, we published our [Strategic Plan](#) which describes what we aim to deliver over the period 2015-2018 and our underlying priorities. These are set against the backdrop of legal reforms, both past and planned, changes in the patterns of criminal behaviour and developments in our business practices. Our key objectives are:

- criminal cases are effectively and independently investigated and prosecuted or have other proportionate action taken in the public interest
- deaths which need further explanation are appropriately and promptly investigated
- financial gain achieved by criminal means is removed from criminals using proceeds of crime laws
- a level of service which takes account of individual needs and characteristics is provided to all
- victims, nearest relatives and witnesses and those accused of an offence are treated with dignity and respect

## What is an Equality Outcome?

An equality outcome is a result which we aim to achieve in order to further one or more of the three needs of the General Equality Duty:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations across all protected characteristics

By focusing on outcomes rather than objectives, we aim to achieve practical improvements for people who come into contact with the prosecution service, whether as a victim, a witness, an accused or a bereaved family member. Equality outcomes are therefore results which we aim to achieve and which deliver specific and identifiable improvements in the services and support we provide for people entering the Scottish criminal justice system.

## COPFS New Equality Outcomes

We have therefore developed a set of six Equality Outcomes linking directly to our Strategic Plan, which provides the framework for positive action to ensure equality of opportunity:

- 1 People who live or work in Scotland are aware of the role of the prosecution service in the Scottish criminal justice system
- 2 Our prosecutors will act fairly and without bias towards all victims, witnesses and accused persons, and be sensitive to individual needs, to ensure that the prosecution service we provide, delivers an equal opportunity to everyone to access justice
- 3 The services provided by COPFS are suitable and accessible to all who need to use them
- 4 COPFS staff are knowledgeable about equality legislation and treat all victims, witnesses, accused persons and colleagues with dignity and respect
- 5 Scotland will be a safer place for everyone as a result of our collaborative working with other organisations
- 6 COPFS is an inclusive employer with a workforce which proportionately reflects the diversity of Scottish society and where staff have an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential.

## Current Equality Outcomes

We published our first set of equality outcomes covering the four year period from [2013-2017](#) in April 2013, and a [progress report](#) was published in April 2015. On 28<sup>th</sup> April we published our [Mainstreaming Equality Report 2017](#) which completes the first cycle of mainstreaming equality based on our first set of equality outcomes.

We look forward to working with stakeholders and our justice partners over the next 4 years to eliminate unlawful conduct, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between protected groups.