



CROWN OFFICE
& PROCURATOR
FISCAL SERVICE

SCOTLAND'S PROSECUTION SERVICE

Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service

Equality Outcomes for 2021 to 2025

Our way forward for equality, diversity and inclusion in the prosecution service.

Introduction

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) is Scotland's sole prosecution and death investigation authority. We receive reports about crimes from the police and other reporting agencies and decide what action to take in the public interest, including whether or not to prosecute. We also examine deaths that need further explanation and investigate allegations of criminal conduct by police officers.

Our Purpose

Our purpose is to secure justice for the people of Scotland. Our work helps to ensure that Scotland is safe from crime, disorder and danger. By investigating deaths that need further explanation, we ensure that appropriate lessons are learned with a view to reducing the incidence of avoidable deaths.

We recognise that caring for the welfare of our people, supporting their development, strengthening their engagement and motivating them to achieve our goals are the most significant contributions we can make to achieving our purpose.

We are alert to the diverse needs of bereaved relatives, victims, witnesses and communities and we protect the rights of those accused of crime – and at all times we uphold our values of showing respect and being professional.

We respect the European Convention on Human Rights and the public sector equality duty in the Equality Act 2010 in all areas of our work. Through our published Equality Outcomes, we demonstrate the importance of equality in service delivery, staff development, recruitment profile and in the development of our policies and practice.

We work closely with partners in the criminal justice system and beyond to protect the public and create a safe and inclusive society.

We act to uphold the rule of law independently, robustly, fairly and effectively.

Our Goals

In 2020, we published our [Strategic Plan](#) which describes what we aim to deliver over the period 2020-2023 and our underlying priorities. These are set against the backdrop of legal reforms, both past and planned, changes in the patterns of criminal behaviour, recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and developments in our business practices. Our goals are:

- **Deliver high quality casework** – we will secure justice through independent, robust, fair and effective professional decision-making, case preparation and presentation. We will explain our decisions, be open about our work and conclude our investigations as quickly as possible.

- **Support our people** – we will build a skilled, engaged and diverse workforce, invest in staff development and strengthen our capacity to deliver an improved service.
- **Improve our service** - will continue to digitise and modernise the way we work, supporting wider reform of the criminal justice system, securing efficient and effective justice and putting the public at the heart of all we do. We will communicate courteously, promptly and effectively with victims, witnesses, accused persons and bereaved relatives and deal professionally with enquiries and complaints.

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 tenets 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 person 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 Equality Outcomes 2021 - 2025

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 inclusion and 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 employees will act fairly and without bias towards all victims, witnesses, accused persons and bereaved relatives and be sensitive to individual needs, to ensure that the deaths investigation and 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 protected characteristics 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 employees have an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential.

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

Have your say

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service welcomes any comment or feedback on our Equality Outcomes for 2021-2025.

Please email DiversityTeam@copfs.gov.uk.