



# **The Scottish Commission on Social Security: Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2024-25**



## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024 – 2025

### INTRODUCTION

Gathering and analysing stakeholder’s experiences and views are key to ensuring that the Scottish Commission on Social Security (SCoSS) robustly interrogates regulations and *Our Charter* commitments. Stakeholders, including disabled people, people who claim devolved benefits, carers and the organisations who represent them, can often identify the existing challenges inherent in a system and potential problems that would arise following a change. These experiences and views should have an influence on the decisions that SCoSS makes and the scrutiny reports we publish.

A robust strategy for engaging with people who use social security and representative organisations also enables SCoSS to provide evidence to the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament that we have engaged effectively with these groups as part of the scrutiny process. This strategy also represents the renewed commitment of SCoSS to engage effectively, inclusively and sensitively with people who have experience of Social Security Scotland and the Scottish benefit system. This strategy sets out how we will obtain feedback on our scrutiny work.

To achieve these goals, this stakeholder engagement strategy outlines objectives and priorities to ensure the involvement of a variety of stakeholders in the work of SCoSS with the aim of effective, appropriate and consistent engagement.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Our strategic objectives set out what we aim to do to achieve our functions as set out in Section 22 of the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018, including scrutinising social security regulations and reporting on “Our Charter”.<sup>1</sup> This should be achieved whilst maintaining our values of “scrutinising impartially on the basis of evidence, while actively seeking out and carefully considering different views and perspectives.”<sup>2</sup>

Our Strategic Objectives for 2023-24<sup>3</sup> are—

1. We will provide expert, independent and evidence-based scrutiny of draft social security regulations that is driven by the social security principles and human rights.
2. We will provide independent challenge and advice on whether people are getting the service from the social security system that the Social Security Charter says they should expect.

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<sup>1</sup> Our Charter, Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland, [https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/asset-storage/production/downloads/Our-Charter\\_1.pdf](https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/asset-storage/production/downloads/Our-Charter_1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Our Values, SCoSS Business Plan 2023-24.

<sup>3</sup> Strategic Objectives, SCoSS Business Plan 2023-24.

3. We will work alongside Scottish Ministers, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament as well as other key stakeholders, such as people with lived experience, to ensure our work constructively supports the development of a devolved social security system based on dignity, fairness and respect.
4. We will make engagement with people with lived experience of the devolved social security system and other stakeholders central to our scrutiny.
5. We will be transparent about how we make our decisions.
6. We will improve the accessibility and inclusivity of our information.
7. We will ensure our remit, governance model, operating structure, processes and resource management are fit for purpose and are systematically reviewed to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of SCoSS's contribution to the maintenance and development of the devolved social security system.
8. We will seek to embed continuous improvement across all our work.

Each objective links to wider SCoSS stakeholder engagement objectives detailed below.

## **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

We have identified some broad strategic objectives for engagement – identification, communications, scrutiny planning, feedback and measurement. Our objectives for engagement in 2024/25 are:

### **Identification**

- We will undertake a desk based exercise to identify existing and future stakeholders and map stakeholders by interest and influence.

### **Communications**

We will—

- Identify opportunities to proactively present on SCoSS's work to stakeholders offering stakeholders a platform to share their feedback, insights, and perspectives on SCoSS's progress.
- Produce a quarterly newsletter highlighting future scrutiny processes and opportunities for stakeholder influence.
- Promote the SCoSS newsletter via events and meetings and increase the contacts who receive it.
- Publicly promote the SCoSS online presence.
- Gather feedback from stakeholders on the accessibility of the SCoSS website.

### **Scrutiny planning**

- We will develop a menu of options that can be tailored to the specifics of a scrutiny process (e.g. organising a roundtable event on case law with social security experts) to allow for appropriate stakeholder engagement to be undertaken as part of each scrutiny planning process.

- We will consider our approach to gathering *proactive* feedback from the public on both the work of SCoSS and Social Security Scotland to guide next year's stakeholder engagement objectives.

### **Feedback**

- Stakeholder needs (for example barriers to engagement and accessibility requirements) will be identified through data collection (event feedback, surveys, in-house research) and presented to the Board on an annual basis for discussion.
- We will review our complaints policy to ensure it remains fit for purpose given our expanded stakeholder engagement plans.

### **Measurement**

- We will identify Key Performance Indicators to measure the effectiveness of SCoSS stakeholder engagement.
- The SCoSS Secretariat will develop a measurement framework based on those Key Performance Indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of SCoSS stakeholder engagement.