



**First Minister's National Advisory
Council on Women and Girls**

Website Summary

August 2018 Spotlight: Gender and Enterprise

WITH THE VOICE OF EVERYONE
WE WANT TO CREATE
A SCOTLAND WHERE
WE'RE ALL EQUAL

**#GENERATION
EQUAL**



YOU SAID – WE LISTENED

In August 2018 we invited public feedback on the Spotlight topic of gender equality and enterprise. We'd like to give a huge thank you to everyone who shared their experiences and ideas.

A full report has been given to the NACWG, and a summary version is shared below.

Please note: these reports summarise the responses received to this open call for submissions. They do not represent the views of the National Advisory Council on Women and Girls (we are seeking feedback to gain more insight) nor do they represent a majority view or the view of the Scottish population. They represent the views of those organisations or individuals who have chosen, proactively, to respond.

Who did we hear from?

We had a great response and heard from both individuals and 'Wee Circle' discussions.

We heard from both men and women, and the age of respondents ranged from 25-60.

WE ASKED THREE QUESTIONS:

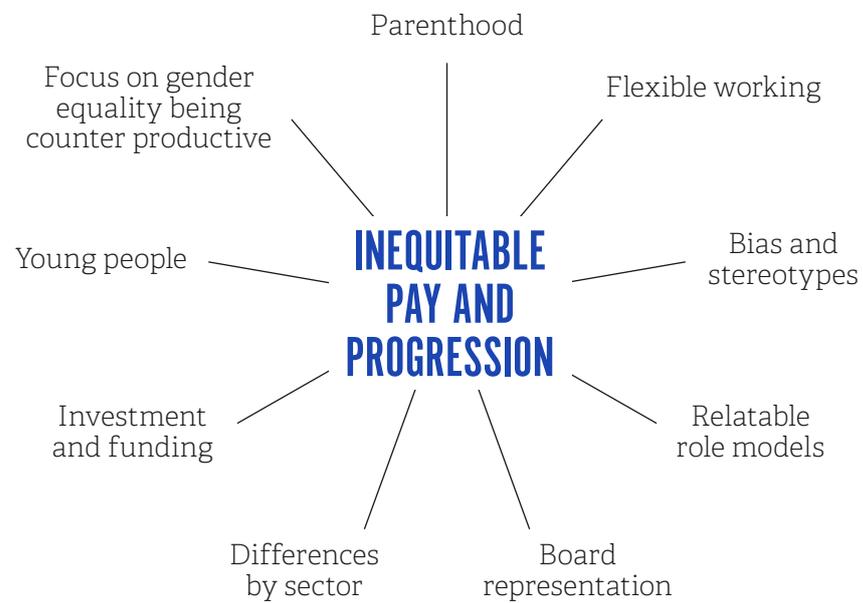
- Q1** IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST ISSUES WOMEN IN BUSINESS FACE IN SCOTLAND?
- Q2** WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE TO TACKLE THE IMPACT GENDER INEQUALITY HAS ON WOMEN IN BUSINESS IN SCOTLAND?
- Q3** WHAT IDEAS DO YOU THINK THE COUNCIL SHOULD SUGGEST TO REDUCE THE IMPACT GENDER INEQUALITY HAS ON BUSINESS IN SCOTLAND?

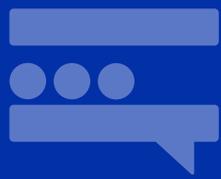


WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Unequal pay and career progression were identified as the two main problems.

Nine factors were highlighted as contributing to these problems.





MAIN ISSUES



1.

PARENTHOOD

Becoming a parent was felt to disadvantage women in work. Suggested actions included: increasing uptake of paternity leave; improving the support given to women while on, and when returning from maternity leave; making childcare fundamentally more accessible and affordable; and challenging workplace stereotypes and biases around mothers and fathers.



2. FLEXIBLE WORKING

Feedback suggested that part time and flexible working options are important for women with caring responsibilities. Suggested actions included: encouraging more businesses to offer part-time and flexible working; offering this to everyone to avoid gender-based stigma; and tackling workplace cultures where working long or extra hours is seen as the only path to career progression.



3. BIAS AND STEREOTYPES

Feedback highlighted that old-fashioned gender norms, and unconscious bias can disadvantage women in work. Suggested actions included: more senior staff undertaking unconscious bias training; increased use of diversity monitoring forms when recruiting; helping more businesses have discussions about gender equality; and encouraging businesses to review how 'business social scenes' such as golf can disadvantage women and minority groups.



4.

RELATABLE ROLE MODELS

Feedback pointed to a lack of relatable role models for women in business. This was partly 'women at the top', but feedback called for more role models of all ages and stages of career development. Suggested actions included: extending mentoring opportunities for women of all ages; showcasing business role models who are not unrealistic 'superwomen'; challenging the stereotype of a successful business (based on rapid growth and high turnover) – recognising that small, stable, community businesses can represent success in a different way; sharing stories of successful women-led businesses; and getting more men to be vocal and visible about tackling the gender pay gap.



5. BOARD REPRESENTATION

Feedback highlighted the need for more women on boards and senior management teams. Suggested actions included: helping women access 'pre-board training', and 'new to board' support; and growing the pipeline of women in sectors that have traditionally been male dominated. Quota systems were not supported in the feedback received, as they were felt to risk undermining promotion by merit.



6. DIFFERENCES BY SECTOR

Feedback pointed out that the public sector may have made more progress on gender equality than the private sector. Feedback also noted that smaller businesses had not been required to publish gender pay gap data. Suggested actions included: increasing transparency and accountability within private sector businesses; considering a voluntary code for private sector businesses; and getting a better understanding of how small businesses can measure and improve gender equality.



7.

INVESTMENT AND FUNDING

Feedback highlighted the need to ensure women have equal access to funding, investment and business advice. Suggested actions included: making sure business advisors/investors undertake diversity training and are aware of unconscious bias; publishing gender data around business investment, finance and support from Government bodies; ensuring marketing materials avoid male gendered approaches which might deter women from starting a business; and giving more recognition to small community/social businesses.



8.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Feedback suggested more needs to be done to encourage young women to start businesses, or choose a business career. Suggested actions included: more and better role models; making sure careers materials aren't off-putting to young women; encouraging young men into traditionally female roles (as well as vice versa); and getting a better understanding of how early childhood experiences affect women's likelihood to start a business, or progress within employment.



9.

FOCUS ON GENDER EQUALITY BEING COUNTER PRODUCTIVE

Feedback suggested emphasis on gender inequality in the workplace could be counter-productive, for example: suggesting to women that they are victims, creating unhelpful tensions within workplaces, and focusing on gender at the expense of other minority groups. Suggested actions included: taking steps to improve diversity and equality beyond gender alone; greater use of unconscious bias training; emphasising how progressive actions (like flexible working options) benefit everyone, not just women; helping people have 'good conversations' about pay and progression; and modelling business in 2050, and working back from there to create a roadmap.



THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who took the time to share their feedback – it is valuable.

We'd love as many people as possible to share their ideas on our next Spotlight topic.

We have a new one every month.