



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

Website Summary

February 2019 Spotlight: Gender and Justice

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

**#GENERATION
EQUAL**



YOU SAID – WE LISTENED

In February 2019, we invited public feedback on the Spotlight topic of gender equality and justice. 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 a range of genders, sexual orientations, ethnicities, religions, ages, as well as from people with a disability.

WE ASKED THREE QUESTIONS:

- Q1. IN SCOTLAND, WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST EQUALITY ISSUES AROUND JUSTICE, FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS?**
- Q2. IN SCOTLAND, WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE TO IMPROVE JUSTICE OUTCOMES AND EXPERIENCES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS?**
- Q3. WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD NACWG RECOMMEND TO IMPROVE GENDER EQUALITY IN JUSTICE?**



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WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Feedback addressed various aspects of crime, safety and justice including: crime prevention; law enforcement; reporting; the courts system; justice outcomes; sentencing; and punishment. There was recognition that a range of issues influence women's experience of the justice system, including poverty.

There was no single dominant theme, with feedback across a range of points, as summarised below.





MAIN ISSUES



1.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Some feedback highlighted perceived issues, or scope for improvements around existing legislation. Examples included:

- Issues around enforcement of sex discrimination legislation
- More awareness around the new domestic abuse legislation
- Issues around the Equality Act 2010, in relation to pension age, and the application of single-sex exemptions
- Issues around how schools handle reports of gender-based crimes/incidents
- Issues around use of non-disclosure orders.

Feedback on potential actions included: improved understanding and enforcement of existing laws; increased understanding and support of legal options open to women; exploring a ban on use of non-disclosure orders; increased application of the Equality Act in relation to the protected characteristic of sex; and increased awareness and understanding of Scotland's domestic-abuse legislation.



2.

WOMEN REPORTING CRIME

Overall, feedback suggested more should be done to understand and overcome the barriers that can prevent women reporting crime and accessing justice. The feedback included points such as: trust in the Police and Criminal Justice System; the impact of adverse life experiences; access to legal advice and legal aid; the 'burden of proof' expected for many gender-based crimes; and overcoming specific barriers that may deter older women from reporting and accessing justice.

Feedback on potential actions included: taking action to reduce victim blaming; improving access to legal aid and support; and building greater understanding of gender-based crime.



3. LESSON CONTENT

Some people called for improvements to education around a range of issues including: healthy/unhealthy relationships; sex; consent; gender; periods; contraception; STIs; pornography; and body image.

Suggested actions to address this included: compulsory lessons in all secondary schools; reconsidering if separate lessons for girls and boys is the most effective way of covering these issues; and delivering age-appropriate lessons in primary schools about consent, healthy/unhealthy relationships, and online safety. Feedback highlighted volunteer organisations which could help deliver these kind of lessons. Feedback also suggested that teachers be allowed to specifically train in PSE teaching, making this a job in its own right, covering a range of mental health and wellbeing issues.



4. STEM SUBJECTS

Some people highlighted issues around girls choosing STEM subjects and pursuing STEM careers. It was also pointed out that efforts to promote STEM to girls can sometimes be counter-productive.

Suggested actions included: avoiding gender stereotypes; raising awareness of the range of STEM careers, and women role models; making activities such as computing, coding and engineering fun from an early age; increasing teacher training opportunities in STEM subjects; 'upskilling' current teachers; and involving external professionals where current staff may not have specialist skills.



5. OTHER BARRIERS TO ATTAINMENT WITHIN SCHOOLS, HIGHER EDUCATION AND BEYOND

Some people highlighted how poverty can be a barrier to attainment, and limit education and career aspirations. The impact of challenging life circumstances was also raised (e.g. families with addiction problems). Coping with periods and pressure around body image were also mentioned as possible barriers for girls. Within higher education, concerns were raised about negative bias towards female students with children, and availability of childcare. Some people highlighted that girls can perform well at school, but fall behind in employment and career progression. Suggested actions largely mirrored the points above.



6. GENDER INEQUALITY AMONGST TEACHING STAFF

Feedback highlighted a lack of female leadership within education.

Suggested actions included: CPD events around leadership confidence; having 'stepping stone' roles for becoming a principal teacher; reviewing minimum contract lengths and maternity/paternity policies; more flexible working opportunities around promoted posts; greater promotion of early years and primary school teaching to men; and improved gender data on the education workforce.



7.

CONCERNS AT BOYS BEING 'LEFT BEHIND'

Some people highlighted that girls outperform boys in some aspects of education, and the need to make sure boys are supported to reach their full potential too.



8.

CONCERNS AT TRANSGENDER INCLUSION POLICIES

Some people raised concerns around the safety and protection of women and girls in toilets and changing areas, including concerns around the cleanliness and hygiene of mixed-gender toilet facilities. Some people raised concerns around the potential for trans rights to erode women's rights, and suggested that education-related opportunities for women (e.g. specific funding, and roles) should be retained for natal-women. Some people felt greater education was needed in schools around the difference between 'sex' and 'gender'; and some people wanted to see more consultation with women around transgender inclusion policies within education.

This is a summary of the response and can't highlight every individual point raised. However full feedback has been shared with the NACWG.



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 topics. We have a new one every two months.