



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

Website Summary

July-August 2020 Spotlight: Fair Work

**IT'S TIME  
TO WORK TOGETHER  
AND MAKE CHANGE  
HAPPEN**

**#GENERATION  
EQUAL**



## YOU SAID – WE LISTENED

---

In July and August 2020, we invited public feedback on the Spotlight topic of fair work. 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 heard from a range of individuals and groups who held 'Wee Circle' discussions. The diversity questions we ask are optional but show that responses were shared by people of a range of ages and ethnicities.

### WE ASKED THREE QUESTIONS:

- Q1. IN SCOTLAND, WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST EQUALITY ISSUES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN RELATION TO WORK?**
- Q2. IN SCOTLAND, WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE TO SUPPORT FAIR WORK AND IMPROVE GENDER EQUALITY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS?**
- Q3. WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD THE NACWG RECOMMEND TO IMPROVE GENDER EQUALITY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE WORKPLACE?**



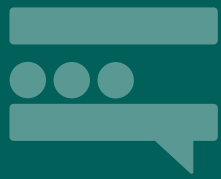
# #GENERATIONEQUAL

3 / 14

## WHAT DID WE LEARN?

The responses spanned eight main areas:

1. Culture and attitudes: Stereotypes, biases and sexism.
2. Workplace policies: flexible working, parental leave, IVF, periods
3. Childcare: costs and access.
4. Pay and progression: earnings, pay gap, progression, pensions, board representation, and intersectional data.
5. Barriers to fair work opportunities: the poverty trap, aspects of Universal Credit, access to technology, and additional barriers experienced by women in rural areas, by disabled women, and by Minority Ethnic women.
6. Unpaid care.
7. Advice and support: Careers advice, support networks, role models, support starting a business, re-training or returning to work after a period away.
8. Coronavirus-related issues e.g., re-training, and women's domestic burden.



# MAIN ISSUES



## 1.

# CULTURE AND ATTITUDES

---

Respondents highlighted ways sexism, stereotypes and bias can create unfair experiences for women seeking work or in employment. Some long-standing gender stereotypes were still felt to be shaping women's experiences, and the distinct ways this can be compounded for disabled women and women from Ethnic Minority groups. One 'Wee Circle' discussion focused on employment in the Early Learning and Childcare sector and raised issues around the low pay and low perceived value of this work. Respondents' main suggested actions were: workplace training and education around gender bias and sexist attitudes and behaviours; more visible male and female role models challenging workplace bias and sexism; and helping employers to see the benefits of a diverse workforce (beyond gender diversity).



## 2. WORKPLACE POLICIES

---

Responses highlighted how workplace policies (or lack of) can create unfair experiences and outcomes for women e.g.: flexible working; parental leave; periods; and time away from work for IVF treatment. Respondents' suggested actions included: introducing new policies; 'normalising' flexible working opportunities for all staff; reducing biases in recruitment; sharing best practice on supporting women returning from maternity leave; supporting men to take up shared parental leave; and making sure parental leave is sufficiently funded.



## 3. CHILDCARE

---

Respondents felt there was continued need for more childcare and more accessible, affordable childcare. Respondents' suggested actions included: improving the quality and quantity of childcare provision across the country; subsidising nurseries to help staff wages and affordable access; exploring Government support for reduced-price places at childcare settings for staff's own children; doing more to encourage men and boys to enter the ELC sector at all levels; taking an intersectional approach to equalities impact research and policymaking; and making childcare a key part of plans to re-start the economy following the pandemic.



## 4.

# PAY AND PROGRESSION

---

Feedback highlighted issues around: pay and pensions; the low value society often places on work and sectors where women make up the majority of the workforce; career progression, tokenism, and the 'glass escalator' that can exist for men within traditionally female employment sectors.

Suggested actions included better support for women, for example: more mentoring, coaching, quotas and support / advice networks. Also, improved accountability, e.g.: not allowing employers to ask a job applicant's previous salary; increased focus on wellbeing; more transparent reporting around tackling the gender pay gap; and using equality audits to understand the cause of intersectionality and equality issues.





## 5. SPECIFIC INTERSECTIONAL BARRIERS TO FAIR WORK

---

Feedback highlighted how 'fair work' can affect different women in different ways. These included negative perceptions of disabled women in work; women from Minority Ethnic groups needing to 'over-deliver'; and 'talk' about diversity not necessarily translating into inclusive, equitable, or culturally sensitive practices. Other issues included limited choice of work in remote and rural areas; the ways poverty and some benefits can create barriers to work; and the need for fair access to technology.

Respondents' suggested actions included: creating fairer access to technology and internet access; engaging with Minority Ethnic women to understand how recruitment processes could be made fairer; providing a route for Minority Ethnic women to get support and speak out about specific experiences related to fairness in the workplace; and helping employers understand how woman and girls who are black, disabled, LGBT+ can experience distinctive and/or compounded barriers to fair work.



## 6. UNPAID CARE

---

Women's care responsibilities, the low value placed on unpaid care work, and lack of investment on the care sector were recurring themes, interwoven with points about pay and progression. Respondents suggested actions such as: higher wages for carers, cleaners and support workers; and more investment in the care sector.



## 7.

# CAREER ADVICE AND SUPPORT

---

Feedback included references to how COVID-19 has exposed the fragility of many sectors and jobs and highlighted the need to women to be able to access good quality careers advice, re-training opportunities, and support for small business ventures. Respondents suggested: more opportunities for women and girls to access various levels of education, including flexible learning, CV and interview preparation; creating initiatives to get women back into work; help changing sector; more investment in small local businesses.



8.

## WOMEN'S CORONAVIRUS BURDEN

---

A number of responses referenced how COVID-19 has created an unfair domestic burden on women, with potential consequences on their work hours and career progression. Respondents suggested research was needed to understand this better.



## OVER-ARCHING POINTS

---

Over-arching suggested actions from respondents included: creating a toolkit for employers; exploring a Universal Basic Income; and commissioning more formal research with an intersectional lens.



# THANK YOU

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

**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.**