

**The First Minister’s National Advisory Council on Women and Girls (NACWG)
Second Focus of Scrutiny Accountability Event**

28 February 2024 – 10:00-16:00

Attendees

NACWG Members

Amanda Amaeshi	Girlguiding Scotland (Amanda is supported by Katie Horsburgh)
Jen Ang	Co-Founder & Director, JustRight Scotland
Sandy Brindley	CEO, Rape Crisis Scotland
Tressa Burke	CEO, Glasgow Disability Alliance
Nicola Dickie	Interim Director, COSLA
Lily Greenan	VAW Consultant
Prof. Ima Jackson	Senior Lecturer, Glasgow Caledonian University
Pheona Matovu	Co-Founder & Director, Radiant and Brighter
Prof. Angela O’Hagan	Senior Lecturer, Deputy Director, WISE Centre for Economic Justice and Chair of Equality and Human Rights Budget Advisory Group
Satwat Rehman	CEO, One Parent Families Scotland
Anna Ritchie Allan	Phase Two NACWG Co-Chair and Executive Director, Close the Gap
Dr Marsha Scott	Chief Executive, Scottish Women’s Aid
Claire Sweeney	Board Development Lead, NHS Education Scotland and Associate with The Promise
Jill Wood	Policy Manager, Engender
Talat Yaqoob FRSE	Phase Two NACWG Co-Chair. Independent consultant and researcher. Founder of Pass the Mic and co-founder of Women 50:50

Empowering Women Panel

Representatives of the Empowering Women Panel will be in attendance alongside staff from Sleeping Giants, who facilitate and support the work of the Panel.

Empowering Women Panel Members			
Fatima	Adenike	Lisa	Lindsay
Debbie	Leeanne	Susan	Jackie
Nancy	Pippa	Steph	Rosie
Rachel	Kashfi	Babz	Claire

NACWG Secretariat

Deborah Fulerčik	Team Leader
Alison Lannon	Senior Policy Manager
Ryan Martin	Policy and Communication Officer

Minister and Senior Officials

Shona Robison	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance
Emma Roddick MSP	Minister for Equalities, Migration and Refugees
Louise Macdonald	Director General, Communities
Gregor Irwin	Director General, Economy

Scottish Government Directors and Officials

Alison Byrne	Director for Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights
Catherine McMeeken	Deputy Director of Equalities
Nick Bland	Deputy Director, Mainstreaming and Inclusion
Rob Priestley	Head of Mainstreaming Unit
Shirley Laing	Director for Tackling Child Poverty and Social Justice
Jonathan Wright	Senior Principal Researcher & Head of Equality and Social Justice
Alison Cumming	Director for Budget and Public Spending
Jennie Barugh	Director of Fiscal Sustainability and Exchequer Development
Simon Wakefield	Principal Research Officer
Calum Irving	Deputy Director, Strategic Third Sector and Public Service Leader
Laura Turney	Head of Scottish Leaders Forum Unit
Dooren Grove	Head of Open Government
Sean Neill	Director for Local Government and Housing
Ellen Leaver	Deputy Director, Local Government and Analytical Services Division
Alice Hall	Deputy Director, Environmental Quality and Resilience
Rachael McGruer	Deputy Director, National Care Service Local
Ian Turner	Deputy Director
Aidan Grisewood	Director for Jobs and Wellbeing Economy
David Holmes	Head of Wellbeing Economy and Capability Unit
Lewis Hedge	Deputy Director, Fair Work
Gary Gillespie	Chief Economist
Kathy Johnston	Deputy Director, Economic Analysis & Head of Economist Profession
Joanne Briggs	Senior Economic Adviser
Lynn Forsyth	Unit Head, Social Security Directorate
David Hamilton	Head of Briefing and Engagement

Angela Davidson	Acting Deputy Director, Improving Mental Health & Wellbeing
Hannah Doherty	Senior Policy Officer, Mental Health Strategy & Co-ordination Unit
Andrew Watson	Director for Children and Families
Eleanor Passmore	Deputy Director, Early Learning and Childcare
Kate Smith	Deputy Director of School Age Childcare
Linda Bauld	Chief Social Policy Officer
Tom Lamplugh	Head of Social Policy Unit
Fran Warren	Principal Research Officer

Observers

Further Scottish Government officials attended the event in addition to the NACWG's creative services and Research Scotland who are conducting the independent evaluation of Phase Two NACWG.

Annexes

[A](#): Feedback from Empowering Women Panel Session

[B](#): Feedback from NACWG Accountability Session

Background

The Accountability Event was a gathering of NACWG, the Empowering Women Panel, and Scottish Government officials, to discuss the NACWG's Second Focus of Scrutiny, which had been focused on the intersectional impacts of the cost-of living crisis and the role of accountability within Scottish Government. This event concluded the NACWG's Second Focus of Scrutiny investigations.

Following NACWG Co-Chairs opening remarks they invited the Deputy First Minister to say a few words, and she welcomed this scrutiny work and the outputs, as well as reinstating the importance of government engaging with the NACWG both on this topic and in the way the NACWG works. Minister Roddick was also invited to say a few words and highlighted the importance of a focus on intersectionality with this work, as women and girls from marginalised communities are most significantly impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.

Empowering Women Panel Session

The [Empowering Women Panel](#) is a key evidence channel for the NACWG and influences the work of the NACWG by providing lived experience input to their scrutiny work.

The Empowering Women Panel took forward the first main session of the day. They explored the work the Panel has undertaken over the past year and were keen for Scottish Government officials to directly hear their own lived experiences of how the cost-of-living crisis had affected them. A video was also played to showcase the Empowering Women Panel's experience over the past year.

The Empowering Women Panel then presented [their peer research](#) to attendees, highlighting the intersectional impacts of the cost of living crisis. Panel Members provided their unique experiences, stating that help is not reaching everyone equally, particularly women and girls with intersecting identities, and emphasising that the Scottish Government should be listening to those with lived experiences.

Empowering Women Panel Human Library Session

Panel members took forward table discussions exploring the following questions.

If at a table with Empowering Panel Members:

- 1) Directed to Empowering Women Panel Members: What would most help you and women you know with the cost of living crisis, and why?
- 2) Directed to Scottish Government Officials: What would help you to better engage directly with marginalised women and girls? How do you think the Panel could help you hear the lived experience of those who face barriers to participation?

If at a table without Empowering Panel Members:

- What would help you to better engage directly with marginalised women and girls (including what currently gets in the way of this)?
- How do you think the Panel could help you hear the lived experience of those who face barriers to participation?

The full feedback from this can be found at Annex A.

Before breaking for lunch, the NACWG Co-Chairs provided a summary of the morning session and thanked the Empowering Women Panel for sharing their experiences and their work over the past year. Scottish Government attendees were invited to reflect on the patterns of systematic inequalities that came out in the Empowering Women

Panel's stories and how they relate to officials' respective roles within government. Co-Chairs raised that without the application of an intersectional lens, policy will never be fit for purpose and that there is currently not a strong enough link between policy intent and policy implementation. Co-Chairs further added that Scottish Government targets will never be met if marginalised women and girls are not prioritised and at the forefront of decision making. The EWP had artwork and boards situated around the event venue which they invited Scottish Government officials to engage with.

NACWG Session One – Accountability

The first NACWG session was focused on accountability within the Scottish Government. NACWG Members provided observations regarding the accountability process and the Scottish Government's engagement with the NACWG throughout their Second Focus of Scrutiny. These observations highlighted a lack of reflection and accountability within the Scottish Government in addition to an absence of reference to women and girls from marginalised communities.

NACWG Members joined Scottish Government officials at tables within their respective areas and asked the following questions:

1. **Openness to accountability** – Responses to the NACWG questions were limited in several areas and lacked the candour and self-reflection required for accountability to be truly effective. Whilst there may be some hesitation in putting honest reflection in writing, this is preventing the NACWG from carrying out the important scrutiny work that it has been tasked with. A more open approach, seeking to improve and learn, would help make more impact on the lives of women and girls.

What barriers are preventing or limiting external accountability and how can a culture of accountability become more normalised as part of your role?

2. **Lack of prioritisation of women and girls and intersectionality** – The NACWG has noted that whilst there are strategies, training opportunities and technical responses to improving gender competence, data gathering and intersectionality, this is patchy. There is also a lack of recognition across Scottish Government that this is a priority, and an important part of the work of civil servants.

What will Directors and Deputy Directors across policy areas do to challenge this and transform mindsets within their areas of responsibility?

3. **Gender competence** – Women and girls were not specifically mentioned in several responses to the questions posed by the NACWG.

Why do you think this was, and what can be done differently within your policy area for NACWG to receive responses that consider intersectionality and women's inequality in the future?

4. **Data** – Women's organisations have been calling for improvement in intersectional disaggregated data for many years. Whilst some progress has been made, this has not gone far enough, fast enough. The lack of data on marginalised women and girls lives was very clearly an issue within the responses received from many policy areas.

What is your directorate doing to move this forward and how is it learning from, working with, and applying intersectional data expertise?

5. **Data** – We know disaggregated data collection is more resource and time intensive. However we also know that progress can be made through the utilisation of qualitative data, lived experience, and policy insights from equality organisations.

What barriers exist within Scottish Government to using qualitative and lived experience data to deliver effective policy interventions for marginalised women and girls? How can we move forward on delivering change, without a lack of data being used as a justification for inaction?

The full feedback from this session can be found at Annex B.

Co-Chairs provided reflections on discussions, highlighting common themes of Scottish Government officials feeling constrained on what could be said when speaking on behalf of Scottish Ministers. There were discussions on how to transform mindsets to prioritise women and girls within the policy cycle and that better use could be made of Gender Policy colleagues in supporting officials across Scottish Government.

NACWG Session Two – Cost of Living

This was a whole room session with the NACWG asking scrutiny questions directed at five Directorates:

- Public Service Reform
- Tackling Child Poverty and Social Justice
- Budget and Public Spending

- Local Government and Housing
- Social Care and National Care Service Development

Public Service Reform

1. Women are more reliant on public services, and are the majority of the public sector workforce which means there are clear gendered impacts of policy around public service reform. We understand that reform plans are currently being requested across SG and public institutions. How will women's and girls' needs be prioritised to prevent them from being disproportionately negatively affected by reform policy decisions or efficiency practices? We are interested to know what steps will be taken beyond any plans to do equality impact assessment.

Scottish Government officials shared that there is a need to fund at a strategic level and fund for the individual programmes within Public Service Reform (PSR). PSR recognised a need for a systematic approach to participation. There is consideration towards openness and transparency, taking into account how people view government.

2. Women and girls who are most marginalised in communities, such as women of colour, disabled women and women who are single parents, and migrant women are rarely considered or embedded in policy decisions and related actions. What knowledge base - what evidence and learning on intersectionality is the directorate calling on in order to ensure that quality assurance of these plans includes making certain that the most marginalised women and girls in Scotland do not regress as a direct result of these reforms.

Scottish Government officials noted that the use of participation would help design corporate training to build the policy profession and gender competence of staff. PSR are currently reviewing how they get better intersectional data to apply analysis, recognising improvements can be made. Guidance on a procurement framework is currently being developed. PSR recognised that they need to have a route where people can ask questions and seek guidance to expand their knowledge. Currently working with clusters having specific conversations on what they can do and what barriers exist with them. PSR are currently at a point where there is an opportunity to apply more catalysing forces. **There was commitment to go back to colleagues to discuss.**

Tackling Child Poverty and Social Justice

1. From the response and further discussion, we recognise that there are some welcome projects focused on marginalised women and girls. However, project-based activity of this kind is often ad-hoc, underfunded, oversubscribed, and often difficult to scale up. To create systems change, project work must be coupled with strategic policymaking which engages with women's and girls' experiences and be used to shape and improve mainstream services. What are the mechanisms for the project work to do this and what action will be taken to address this gap?

Scottish Government officials noted that work is currently being undertaken within a test and learn space. A place-based approach is being applied in Dundee, working with Dundee Council, the Department for Work and Pensions and Social Security Scotland to assess what can be done locally. Work is being done with Pathfinders to see how this work can be scaled up with further chief executives around the country in varying rural and urban areas.

There was acknowledgement that work carried out was not centred on women and girls but instead low income households more generally. There was recognition that women and girls could have been included earlier and there are plans to incorporate better consideration of women and girls going forward.

2. Within each of the six priority family groups for child poverty, marginalised women and girls are particularly likely to be most in need and face the worst consequences. Can you share with us any examples of specific policy (not project) interventions which respond to this, how these were designed and the outcomes of evaluations which identify improved outcomes for women?

Scottish Government officials provided an example on childcare, however, acknowledged that this does not solely focus on women albeit recognised that this would primarily affect women. There was discussion around the different statistics between male and female parents and that additional lenses must be applied when evaluating, e.g. has childcare helped predominantly women?

3. NACWG understands that a person-centred approach is being prioritised. However, in implementing this approach, it is often at the expense of a structural analysis of the intersecting inequalities that women and girls face. How has the data on intersecting inequalities for women and girls who are part of more than one priority family group been used to inform resource allocation and prioritisation of actions?

Scottish Government officials advised that priority groups are not put into specific categories. The whole system is assessed, looking at the long-term structural problem of poverty being that people are marginalised but not women specifically. No One Left Behind has good data on impact, with the latest statistics up to September 2023 showing that three quarters of parent participants taking up employability offers are female. Scottish Government officials are looking to bring together a partnership approach which is person based rather than place based.

Budget and Public Spending

1. There is overwhelming evidence that women and girls, and especially those who are most marginalised in Scotland such as disabled women, women of colour, migrant women, and women who are single parents, have been disproportionately affected by the cost of living crisis and the inequalities they face have worsened as a result. In our feedback, we stated that women and girls do not appear to be considered in public spending decisions, and is a lack of coherence between budget decisions and the equality and anti-poverty policy commitments of Scottish Government. Lack of resource and the potential for missed targets in these areas have a disproportionate negative effect on marginalised women and girls. What work was undertaken by the directorate and across portfolios to assess the impact of changes to allocations, and specifically reductions to resource allocation, on marginalised women and girls? And what commitments have been made to develop an improved analysis of spending allocations for impact and to address inequality?

Scottish Government officials advised that incremental improvements have been made in this area. **A commitment was made to improvement and driving forward a clearer thread through from policies set, resource and impact understanding.**

EHRBAG helped Exchequer to arrive at six challenge questions regarding equalities which are embedded in budgeting processes.

In the last year Exchequer has upped its own equalities profile in decision making with Ministers. A pre-Cabinet session on gender budgeting was delivered by Professor Angela O'Hagan, addressing issues and considerations. Ministerial workshops on equalities on collective deliberation on portfolio budget have been delivered.

Regarding disinvestment, Ministers must ensure that these decisions are evidence based to explain why investment in areas of lesser impact has been reduced and reallocated to another area for more positive impact.

Work is ongoing with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on gender budgeting, designing some pilots on how gender budgeting tools and techniques can be embedded within portfolios.

Exchequer annually undertake a lessons learned exercise on budget process, specifically on equalities dimensions.

2. During this scrutiny focus on the cost of living crisis, it has been increasingly difficult to identify what are specific and new interventions (since Oct 2021) in response to the cost of living crisis. It has been particularly challenging to identify support that has been designed specifically for women and girls in response to the crisis. How can work in response to the cost of living crisis be made more transparent and accessible for groups such as NACWG and wider public?

Scottish Government officials advised that there is a fiscal transparency project related to the Open Government Plan, with work on-going to provide more readily accessible data about the Government's budget.

The Scottish Government publishes "Your Scotland Your Finances" each year as a more accessible guide to the Scottish Budget and how resources available to the Scottish Government go towards different priorities. This publication is developed and improved each year.

There was recognition that the next phase is to move into participation but will seek advice from the EHRBAG on how to implement.

3. In NACWG's feedback, the conceptual disconnect between the action being taken by Scottish Government and the structural inequalities in the economy was highlighted. In particular, there was an absence of recognition around the need to address women's poverty and economic inequality in order to prevent men's violence. How will the refresh of NSET integrate a gendered analysis of women's economic inequality and women's poverty, and include targeted action to specifically address the economic inequalities faced by marginalised women? And how will intersectional gender competence be built into the governance structure of NSET?

NSET is expected to have a positive impact on women and girls, including through the 'Pathways' report on Women in Entrepreneurship; addressing barriers to start-up participation for under-represented groups; and person-centred employability support and the Fair Work Action Plan. Scottish Government officials recognised that more could be done and there are opportunities through the refresh of the National Strategy

for Economic Transformation. The refresh will be supported by the Economy Centre of Expertise in Equality and Human Rights, which was established through NSET to embed equality in economic policy-making by improving capability within teams in DG Economy, with a specific focus on intersectional gender equality.

Gender equality stakeholders have highlighted that more consideration needs to be given around paid and unpaid care, something which has been taken on board for consideration by officials. There is a consolidation of what can be done to make impact using the finite amount of funds available.

There has been learning from NSET on the foundational aspects of economy and how to make the programme manageable. It is important to identify what are the right things to focus on as having the biggest impact on driving fair, green economic growth, as part of our long-term transition to a Wellbeing Economy.

Local Government and Housing

1. The public sector equality duty is the primary regulatory framework for equality in Scotland's public sector but over its lifetime it has increasingly failed to deliver increased equality for women. NACWG recognises that the Verity House Agreement is a new approach to partnership working between Scottish Government and local government, which holds potential for more effective delivery of services. We are clear though that where women are not central to ways of working, policymaking and service delivery, the inequalities they face are exacerbated. What action will be taken to mitigate the potential negative consequences of the removal of ring-fenced funding for services that marginalised women and girls are reliant on?

Scottish Government officials advised that one of the key areas Local Government and Housing (LGH) are currently looking at is ensuring that funding for local authorities is provided flexibly and where local Councillors can make the decisions which best suit their local communities to deliver on our shared priorities. The risks of ringfencing are that we focus on a one-size fits all approach, rather than focus nationally on looking at its outcomes while local authorities can make the decisions for their communities to make sure that they support a fair Scotland. LGH are working closely with COSLA on this.

In the coming financial year (2024-25) the Scottish Government has baselined into the General Revenue Grant almost £1 million in funding, reducing administrative burden and increasing flexibility – while maintaining statutory duties and a shared focus on outcomes. Under the Verity House Agreement it is for Councils as democratically

accountable bodies to set out how this is being spent – what the outcomes are and how best these can be delivered.

2. In our last meeting, it was mentioned that a gendered lens has been applied more in work on homelessness than it has on housing policy. What action will be taken to address this and ensure an effective, strategic response to the inequalities that housing policy creates for marginalised women and girls?

Scottish Government officials raised that LGH have committed to building 110,000 houses to address the housing crisis. Through this it is hoped that there will be a data set which can be utilised.

3. It was briefly discussed that 32 local authorities collect data in different ways and using different methods, preventing a comparable and coherent picture of the national situation. Given the importance of data to enable an intersectional approach, what work is being done to develop data comparability and how are local authorities being supported to do this when there are budget constraints?

This answer was submitted after the Accountability Event due to time constraints.

Scottish Government has developed [guidance](#) on collecting data on protected characteristics which is available for councils to use and can contribute towards the aim of consistent data collection. The recommended questions contained within the guidance are taken from Scotland's Census 2022, which were developed and tested by NRS, with the exception of the disability question, which comes from the ONS harmonised standards. These provide a question set that enables users in Scotland to collect data in a harmonised manner. The guidance sets out some of the benefits of this, especially in regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Local authorities (LAs) will use comparable data from national sources when available, and obviously organisations such as Audit Scotland/Accounts Commission and the Improvement Service have a role in that respect.

LAs are doing much to understand the equalities context in their areas as part of business as usual. In setting their local budgets and making decisions about services under this legislation councils must also undertake Equality Impact Assessments related to their policy decisions including related to the stopping of services. All Scottish Councils have duties in this regard and publish transparently their decisions and progress.

LGH could explore with the Improvement Service whether sufficiently robust data currently exists on gender (and other protected characteristics) and, if so, whether there would be any option of incorporating these data within the Profile.

Senior leaders of many community planning partner organisations come together in the [Community Planning Improvement Board](#), to provide strategic leadership and support. While it is for CPIB to determine its own work priorities, there is an opportunity for DG Communities (as a CPIB member) to advocate for consideration of strengthening data on gender and other protected characteristics as part of its work.

The Scottish Government is working at pace to set direction and provide leadership in order to establish a strategic approach to data sharing within the public sector.

Social Care and National Care Service (NCS)

1. Women are the majority of social care service users, unpaid carers, and the vast majority of the social care workforce. Although this is sometimes acknowledged in policymaking, most frequently in relation to workforce, there is insufficient recognition of it in decision making around social care. What action will be taken to better embed the voices, priorities and needs of women and girls in the creation of the NCS and other decision making on social care policy?

Scottish Government officials advised that the NCS has taken a committed approach to working with the people of Scotland, unpaid carers and service users to inform its design. There have been conversations about intersectionality and how it can be captured in design.

NCS are making sure to reach out to communities of voices which may not be regularly heard, and that lived experience is embedded throughout the structure of NCS. Unpaid carers and service users are involved in the decision-making process. A Framework Bill is currently going through Parliament.

2. Many responses focused on the lack of intersectional disaggregated data that is available. This is a well-known issue across Scottish Government, however, enough is known about the lives of marginalised women and girls, and the need for higher levels of investment and specialist delivery to take action now rather

than later. Since data gaps will take resourcing and time to be addressed, and poverty for these communities of women is sharply rising what prevents this from being acted on now?

This answer was submitted after the Accountability Event due to time constraints.

Scottish Government officials recognised that the majority of unpaid carers and the paid social care workforce are women and that action is being taken to invest in those areas which will benefit women. Efforts have been made to improve support for unpaid carers such as the Carer's Allowance Supplement and the pay increase to a minimum of £12 per hour for the adult and childrens' social care workforce.

NCS showed commitment to developing data and knowledge of the current health and social care system to further understand the needs of marginalised women and girls, including through an intersectional lens. NCS are committed to developing the National Care Service using the Scottish Approach to Service Design. Its collection of equalities data for the Lived Experience Expert Panel (LEEP) enable consideration of an intersectional approach to policy development and the design of the NCS. Findings from NCS co-design activity is also widely shared to inform more immediate improvements to the current system where the existing legislative framework allows.

3. Data gaps routinely emerge where data is gathered by local authorities, delivery agencies, and funded third and private sector organisations. This is relevant not only to social care but also to other policy areas. There appears to be space for Scottish Government to use its influence and existing levers to improve the range of data gathered by these organisations. In our recent meeting it was discussed that the Scottish Social Services Council does not collect equality data which is necessary to improve delivery and outcomes. This is also the case at the implementation level across a number of policy areas. How will the Scottish Government use its existing levers and influence to enable a broader and more granular range of data more competent disaggregated data to be gathered on the social workforce and service care delivery?

Scottish Government officials recognised that sometimes the wrong data is gathered and analysed. **There was a commitment to embed lived experience and use coherent data going forward.**

Co-Chairs noted that all questions talked about intersectionality, data gaps, lived experiences, investment and transparency and that these should relate to all attendees. Officials were asked to reflect on the questions today and how these can be reflected in their own areas.

AOB, Summary and Next Steps

In their closing remarks, the NACWG Co-Chairs thanked everyone for their attendance and stated that the session delivered by the Empowering Women Panel this morning was a good reminder of why the NACWG do the work which they do. The NACWG carefully considered the Panel's peer research and wider feedback over this Second Focus of Scrutiny, and they look forward to working with them for the remainder of the Phase Two lifecycle.

Co-Chairs advised that there will be key engagement with Scottish Government and Ministers in the weeks ahead, including with the Permanent Secretary, Director Generals and the First Minister to discuss both the findings from their Second Focus of Scrutiny and the report on NACWG Phase Two work to date, due to be published at the end of April. A public meeting with the NACWG's Circle will then be held in May to discuss NACWG work to date. Following this the NACWG will begin its Third Focus of Scrutiny in June, which will focus on scrutiny of NACWG recommendation implementation.

ANNEX A

Social Care and National Care Service Development

Question for Empowering Women Panel Members: What would most help you and women you know with the cost of living crisis and why?

- A single point of contact – multiple is stressful and costly.
- Not having to continually repeat yourself to different people.
- Getting rid of social care charges
- Having support to speak up and have your voice heard.

Follow up question regarding thoughts on Respite.

- Inflexible – legislation won't allow for family members to undertake the respite, which is difficult when dealing with someone who has poor mental health and won't willingly go to 'respite care' with strangers.
- More difficult to access when living in rural locations.

Local Government and Housing

Question for Empowering Women Panel Members: What would most help you and women you know with the cost of living crisis and why?

- For those with learning disabilities to be offered further support in housing assistance. For example, assistance in understanding complex language and assistance with knowing who to approach for help and how to navigate the system.
- More certainty around adequate and affordable housing. Uncertainty around housing has an adverse impact on mental health.
- Reduced cuts in services. Cuts in services means individuals are having to travel further for appointments to discuss housing. Therefore, individuals need to consider childcare, transport and expense.
- Increased funding. There has been a decrease in welfare rights advice for housing. (For example, People First).
- Definitions of adequate housing differs between tenants and housing associations.

Equality Inclusion and Human Rights – Deputy First Minister

Question for Empowering Women Panel Members: What would most help you and women you know with the cost of living crisis, and why?

- Support around work and getting back into work.
- Making ends meet with the amount of universal credit afforded can be challenging.

Question for Scottish Government Officials: What would help you to better engage directly with marginalised women and girls? How do you think the Panel could help you hear the lived experience of those who face barriers to participation?

- More equal distribution of power – guidance should be considered on this across the organisation.
- Examples of not listening were shared.
- Needs to be ethical and safe as the use of someone's words is really important.
- Scottish Government can utilise the Empowering Women Panel to gain insight and expertise in how SG uses lived experience panels.
- There needs to be an organisational move beyond just listening, there needs to be more feedback and holding to account from those with lived experience. There is a wish to move towards full participation.
- A variety of accessibility tools should be utilised, not just easy read.

Tackling Child Poverty and Social Justice – Minister Roddick

Discussion summary:

- The importance of listening to women and ensuring that they are involved in the development of solutions to improve their situation was discussed. The Empowering Women Panel felt that there was a need to “get back to basics” rather than try to just “fill gaps” in the way women are supported.
- They also felt that there were real barriers for women trying to access support and that there needed to be more transparency and that the routes into support were much simpler to navigate. The example of advice on homelessness not being accessible.
- The Empowering Women Panel Members felt that this could be achieved by bringing support services together in Hubs that would offer a “one stop shop”.
- We discussed the pressure that third sector organisations were under currently because of the cost of living crisis, with staff working incredibly long hours to try to meet the demand for support, while facing additional costs themselves. It was also highlighted that the majority of these organisations have to operate on short term funding grants, which leads to insecurity for the staff and the service users.
- Empowering Women Panel Members also raised the issue of the inconsistencies in services across the country with care being an example. Access to money advice was also seen as very patchy with gaps in services across Scotland. It was felt that there needed to be an increased focus on making carers and single parents aware of what help was available and how to access it.
- The issue of access to translation services was also seen as key and again was not consistent across local authority areas, with the barrier that service users not being allowed to bring their own translators highlighted.
- The Empowering Women Panel Members also felt that there should be financial skills should be taught in schools – to prepare young people for when they will have to manage their own personal and family budgets. These types of classes should also be available to adults as well.

Public Service Reform / Covid Recovery

Discussion summary:

- Discussed the importance of community and community spaces and places to meet. EWP members said that communities are willing to play a part in the organising and running of groups, but accessing funding is difficult and groups are closing as a result. Their perception is that funding is particularly difficult to access for religious groups.
- Discussed whether people trust government information. EWP Members said no due to inaccessible language and no bridge to help. Citizen's Advice is an option but they don't always know how to help.
- Talked about how EWP Members would go about accessing information and practical support. The organisation Radiant and Brighter was highlighted as an organisation that predominantly helps minority ethnic refugee and migrant communities and which helps signpost to sources of help and support. EWP Members highlighted a need for more organisation organisations like them, and questioned whether they receive enough support from government.
- Asked EWP members if they look for support provided on a geographic/local basis, or individual community targeted support (like Radiant and Brighter focussing on minority ethnic refugee and migrant populations) that might be on a national basis. They looked to organisations which targeted their community, rather than geography.
- Talked about the role of government, and the levers that we have to effect change – e.g. in relation to fair work. Asked 'where is the 'glue' locally' and who holds the 'risk' for local groups. Talked about how government organises itself to respond to the barriers EWP members have talked about – what are our shared values and how are they felt on the ground.
- Reflected on the example of Social Security Scotland and what can be achieved when we build something from the ground up with lived experience at its heart.
- EWP Members raised the importance of local government and said that they feel its impact. Asked if EWP members felt that they could access their local councillors. Their reply was that this takes confidence and they would generally engage via their church.

Jobs and Wellbeing Economy - Business and Better Regulation

Question for Scottish Government (SG) Officials: What would help you to better engage directly with marginalised women and girls? How do you think the Panel could help you hear the lived experience of those who face barriers to participation?

- SG officials found the testimonies from the Panel insightful and impactful.
- Over-reliance on intermediaries to inform and develop policies was noted, as well as the challenge of engaging widely and the key role of intermediaries and representative organisations in giving voice to vulnerable people.
- Refresh of the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) presented an opportunity to have more direct engagement with lived experiences.
- Discussion on the level of detail of data available to SG officials, with particular focus on language use around “gender equality” and “women”
- SG officials noted that drilling data down on the economy was difficult.
- More training for officials on using and collecting equality data was highlighted by SG officials. Time pressures on officials was noted as a big concern.
- The challenge of applying intersectionality across SG and polices was raised.
- The NACWG member cited No One Left Behind as an example of a strategy that looked great from a high level, but faced barriers in practice. She advocated for lived experience to be incorporated early on in policy making and carried through each step of policy development.
- The NACWG member said there was a sense across the answers to NACWG questions that SG policies were skewed towards catering for men when it came to economic strategy. She advocated for strengthening Fair Work practices and increasing pay in areas such as social care, noting that women made up 80% of the workforce in this sector.

Budget and Public Spending and Chief Economist

What would help you to better engage directly with marginalised women and girls (including what currently gets in the way of this)?

How do you think the Panel could help you hear the lived experience of those who face barriers to participation?

- When questioned as previously done through SFS accountability questions set by NACWG, one of the roles of the civil services is to reflect the position of the Scottish Government, and NACWG reflected this defensiveness back in response feedback.
- Sometimes there would be a preference to have an in-person discussion rather than written responses as it is felt that an exchange of writing does not always lead to a mutual inquiry to ensure that SG understands the needs of NACWG.
- Sometimes there is a requirement to synthesise and make sense of large sets of issues and drive to support decisions. Brevity however means that a lot of nuance and underlying impact information can be lost.
- Resource is a barrier as often Directorates are the main resources driving what needs to be done at the present moment. Having additional resource available to work on different techniques and approaches would be beneficial. Having outside support such as OECD would provide important practical insight.
- The current funding position is broadly on a slight upward trajectory but not much. Delivery costs have increased therefore decisions are required on reducing spend on lower impact projects. There was acknowledgement that SG can be better at bringing impact analysis into options to do new things rather than options to reduce. There was scope to strengthen the impact analysis on options to reduce and to look beyond the financial impact e.g. community centres being closed down.
- There is a cross government group which considers intersectional analysis on a monthly basis but there could be scope to consider how this data is used.
- There is benefit in bottom up solutions and what people are relaying from the ground such as the Empowering Women Panel.

Chief Social Policy Advisor and Early Learning and Childcare

Question for Scottish Government Officials: What would help you to better engage directly with marginalised women and girls (including what currently gets in the way of this)?

- Removed from service delivery so looking to create opportunities to engage in relation to design of services. Useful to do this through existing opportunities, e.g. the Empowering Women Panel – as well as finding other routes.
- Working directly with people as part of place-based community work (childcare policy), but not perfect for targeting – work tends to be with those who actively choose to engage, e.g. parents of disabled child but perhaps not a disabled parent. Focused on tackling poverty in deprived communities currently.
- Using local trusted third parties can help support this approach – anchor organisations or representative groups. Also need to ensure community approaches are fully inclusive and consider intersectionality.
- Noted issues related to GDPR and proportionality – sometimes may not know whether participants are from marginalised groups depending on appropriate collection of data.

Question for Scottish Government Officials: What would help you to better engage directly with marginalised women and girls? How do you think the Panel could help you hear the lived experience of those who face barriers to participation?

- UCD and people focused engagement is time and resource intensive – how is this realistically built into programme plans? Staff resourcing is difficult as is funding external research/ consultation. This need to be prioritised in programme plans.
- Learning from Social Security Scotland’s charter to have dignity, fairness and respect, and ways of overcoming barriers.
- Rigorously doing impact assessments, keeping them live and being honest in what they are saying.
- Prioritising service design work so people can actively be involved in creating something in their communities and consulting when things don’t work to achieve a better model. Already using a UCD approach but keen to involve and learn from the experiences of the Emp Women Panel if possible.
- Engaging local people through door knocking approach has built relationships and helped them feel at ease to come to community hubs but was resource intensive. Need to balance and understand return on investment. Could simplifying deliver better results and be more inclusive?
- There are more services available than ever, but feedback shows it’s overwhelming and that people would prefer a person to talk to and tend to stick with one person – there could be scope for support workers to have several conversations (finances, transport, childcare)

Social Security

Please note the suggested questions included in the briefing for NACWG members were not used.

Instead the table was asked to reflect on the last question posed by the Empowering Women Panel's session – if the worst was to happen would you know where to go for help and/or how to find out.

Points raised:

- The emotional reaction could have a significant impact on the ability to respond to the situation and seek support and help.
- The intersectional equalities issues could compound the ability to find or access support – how much more difficult would it be to find help and how would it feel.
- Lived experience reflections from panel members highlighted a substantial sense of shock and denial limiting the desire or ability to seek early support.
- This was then followed by a feeling of shame or embarrassment and the need to hide away with a negative impact on confidence.
- Additional barriers were felt by disabled people in terms of accessible and inclusive communication and information.
- The importance of support networks was highlighted either from family and what does the absence of such networks mean for those without that support.
- The current system (at large) is not talking to people or providing accessible, inclusive processes. Current services are not reaching communities.
- And if things go wrong then where is the accountability?
- Hostile UKG policies/rhetoric around disability and migration if fuelling the wider societal psyche – don't feel welcome.

Mental Health

Question for Empowering Women Panel Members: What would most help you and women you know with the cost of living crisis, and why?

- Easy access hub of info for people
- Access – the inflexible nature of some policies. For example, the fuel voucher not taking into consideration the different methods of payment.
- Provision of payment meters – costed more for those who need it the most.
- People giving advice not always trained very well – this can then become inaccessible info/ information not reaching those who need it.
- Better website. Sometimes they are visually inaccessible/ not intuitive and not everyone has the skills to navigate (particularly the elderly, or those with restricted access due to domestic abuse). Finding information online can take up a lot of time and energy.
- Making things simple – it isn't always obvious what is required to access services and you have to work that out for yourself.
- A walk in hub – a safe space for women and girls. Not everyone has access to online/ social media.
- Connection to community important – services continue to be cut.

Question for Scottish Government Officials: What would help you to better engage directly with marginalised women and girls? How do you think the Panel could help you hear the lived experience of those who face barriers to participation?

- Importance of lived experience – better than pre-Covid.
- Diverse Experience Advisory Panel
- Self-harm – co-produced the strategy – helped them to understand it better so it was more about finding other ways to cope.
- Some groups for 12 months – sometimes requested every four months.
- Panel member: safe spaces to talk about stigmatised issues without jargon.
- Panel member: impact of social media harassment on mental health

ANNEX B

Social Care and National Care Service Development

What barriers are preventing or limiting external accountability and how can a culture of accountability become more normalised as part of your role?

- Challenge is how to mainstream thinking of certain groups into our work.
- It's right to challenge us – we need to be more person centred.
- We're defensive by nature.
- Face to face will provide better info, always. There's a mistrust of committing to writing.
- Capacity is an issue too, which might be why you get a response with no depth, and it feels like an FOI response. We are used to lifting from our core briefs.
- Officials defend and protect ministers, that's their job, and we are used to putting a positive spin on things and not outlining where we haven't done so well.
- You will definitely always get more from verbal discussions.

What will Directors and Deputy Directors across policy areas do to challenge this and transform mindsets within their areas of responsibility?

- We think we are working intersectionality, but I doubt we really are.
- Individual objectives for directors? This would personalise it.
- We all have diversity objectives and this would be used to specifically speak to that.
- NPF – unsure
- EQIA – not effective already
- Long term reform – do we lose sight of this when firefighting the annual cycles?

What is your directorate doing to move this forward and how is it learning from, working with, and applying intersectional data expertise?

- Local government and others own it – SG doesn't – and we don't have the power to make them share it.
- SSSC good on gender and disability, but not so good regarding ethnic minorities. We are trying to get them to improve, but it would help if pressure came from others too.

Local Government and Housing

What barriers are preventing or limiting external accountability and how can a culture of accountability become more normalised as part of your role?

- Answers were responded to in SG's current model of accountability – which is that it is Ministers who are accountable and the civil service supports them in that process.
- Officials provided examples of participation processes which they believe are working well. NACWG Members pointed out that panels on a specific theme will not immediately capture intersectional gender equality inputs without that lens being specifically embedded in design and applied.
- It was noted work on housing could be improved.
- A cultural challenge was highlighted of exposing Ministers through noting difficulties as part of responses, rather than focusing on what the Government is doing positively to progress areas of work.
- Reflective questions in the briefing were helpful. In the original answers officials wouldn't have thought to note what they weren't or couldn't do.
- Officials viewed the accountability questions too narrowly by considering the cost-of-living crisis. Many interventions had been in place prior to the COL. NACWG Member raised that they had not misinterpreted the question by not listing pre-COL interventions.

What will Directors and Deputy Directors across policy areas do to challenge this and transform mindsets within their areas of responsibility?

- To not view accountability questions so narrowly in the future (Officials viewed the accountability questions too narrowly by considering the cost-of-living crisis. Many interventions had been in place prior to the COL.)
- Minister's need to challenge the Civil Service to more fully examine these issues and raise areas where we are not working well.
- Further conversations with analytical teams regarding data available and data collection.
- Further training on intersectionality. More use available sources within SG to deliver engaging training sessions. There could be further push internally for collective engagement with learning resources rather than individuals being left to do on their own.
- Make Equality Impact Assessments more strategic.

Why do you think this was, and what can be done differently within your policy area for NACWG to receive responses that consider intersectionality and women's inequality in the future?

- To ensure all relevant voices are considered within policy making, implementation and delivery (e.g. local government, COSLA etc).
- Upcoming Outcomes Framework with local government as part of the Verity House Agreement is data driven and evidence based.

What is your directorate doing to move this forward and how is it learning from, working with, and applying intersectional data expertise?

- Hidden Homelessness data set is intersectional.
- Conversations with analytical colleagues on exploring what is possible in gathering intersectional data.
- Intention to evaluate long term programmes to evaluate who the intervention is affecting and gather data.
- Officials noted there is a distinction between what data they have and if it can be used within interventions.

What barriers exist within Scottish Government to using qualitative and lived experience data to deliver effective policy interventions for marginalised women and girls? How can we move forward on delivering change, without a lack of data being used as a justification for inaction?

- Officials noted a nervousness about using data that is not fully understood, specifically non-mainstream forms of data (e.g. mainstream economics methodologies). NACWG members highlighted the issue of credibility of data in these scenarios.
- Further inclusion of lived experience work. Officials noted lived experience work is apparent in work around homelessness and Gypsy Travellers.

Equality Inclusion and Human Rights – Deputy First Minister

It was posed by the NACWG that there needs to be a move away from the culture of FOI-type approaches when asked accountability questions and towards a culture of shared learning.

- There was recognition that this is a challenge within the Scottish Government. A move to conversation rather than written responses would help to facilitate this as these would allow for more candid conversations.
- There were reflections on the benefit of Audit Scotland's approach.
- There was discussion on how NACWG could be used as a best practice model.
- Ministerial competence and understanding of the right questions to ask is important. This includes understanding of intersectional approaches. (there was an action taken here by DFM to consider how this can be enabled across Cabinet and beyond).
- DFM also expressed the need for the purpose of the phase 2 of the NACWG to be better communicated across SG - e.g. better understanding that this is not a working group providing recommendations but delivering accountability.
- Inclusive communication is critical as this can be a barrier to marginalised women and girls from fully accessing the support which is available.
- There was an understanding that this requires time and prioritisation from Scottish Government, and there may need to be culture/capacity shifts on how to respond with candour and reflection.

The NACWG Member was asked what is seen as critical to full accountability.

- There should be a significant push around prioritisation with all of the Civil Service understanding its importance. This narrative must come from the top down.
- Need to use and share examples of where there have been successes before – using examples from outside of gender – to heighten understanding. This should be linked to Centres of Expertise.
- The Empowering Women Panel would say cash first interventions and ring fencing of community spaces and services.
- There was agreement for a reminder to be sent by the First Minister / Deputy First Minister post-event on the importance of accountability and why its partnership with the NACWG is a high priority to all parts of the Scottish Government.
- The NACWG will respond to the paper recently sent to them on structural approaches.

Tackling Child Poverty and Social Justice – Minister Roddick

Summary of discussion:

- NACWG Member summarised the issues that the NACWG had with the written responses to their questions as: not answering the question; reading like an FOI response without any candour and being very repetitious.
- Scottish Government officials acknowledged the difficulties in answering the NACWG's questions in a way that gave a complete picture of the work underway in Scottish Government to address the inequality that women face. That was partly because of the way the questions were structured but also because work is at different stages of development and that in some cases because of this it is difficult to measure the impact it is having at the moment.
- The role of Ministers was also raised in the context of what can be shared out with the government, as ultimately they are the decision makers.
- Scottish Government officials agreed that we must get better at this and suggested that working in a collaborative way with the NACWG going forward, would help with this.
- The lack of prioritisation of the issues facing women and girls was discussed in the context of the policy cycle and how officials develop evidence based policies. The important role of EQIAs and analytical support for policy making has highlighted and the capacity issues that these teams face and the impact this has on the quality of the support.
- The need to equip all areas of Scottish Government policy with these skills was also restated, as the danger of equality impact assessment being seen as only the responsibility of the Directorate for Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights would be a backward step. This was raised in the context of the tension between Scottish Government's work specially benefitting women and girls, such as the Women's Health plan, and how we make sure all SG policies work for women. Careful thought would have to be given to the development of a Gender Strategy for example, to ensure that responsibility wasn't siloed in the Equality Division.
- The use of data was also discussed and the barriers faced by policy makers to draw on and interpret the available evidence. It was acknowledged that in some areas where data gaps existed, it would be very expensive to fill them and would take a significant amount of time. The use of qualitative as well as quantitative evidence was also discussed.

Public Service Reform / Covid Recovery

What barriers are preventing or limiting external accountability and how can a culture of accountability become more normalised as part of your role?

- There was a reflection that the form/template used by the NACWG to gather written responses from Scottish Government did not reflect the earlier conversations that officials had had with the NACWG Co-Chairs, and that the template and the questions posed by the NACWG were narrow and didn't allow for broader reflections.
- It was also reflected that communication could have been better and that some officials were not aware that the NACWG was unhappy with the responses until quite late on.
- Reflected that in the morning, with the EWP, we started to get into a co-production space and this is needed and helps to build up the knowledge base.
- Talked about the fact that we work in organisations that are meant to support people, but often times we see engagement as 'we need people to tell us about our policies' – we need a paradigm shift. We reflected that it's about meaningful change and meaningful accountability.
- Talked about the ['Texas Sharpshooter Fallacy'](#) (when similarities in data are overemphasised and differences ignored, leading to false conclusions) and reflected that it is something we do in government all the time.
- Asked 'what is the work' – and acknowledge the gap between implementation and policy. The gap is government – maybe the problem is with the policy and we're not recognising it.
- Talked about needing to have more routine contact as government but that engagement needs design – government seeking to engage more and more can be frustrating for communities.
- Discussed feedback from members of the youth parliament, that because of their participation with the parliament they came to be considered as 'too knowledgeable' and not reflective or representative of young people.
- Said that often the problem is in government's explanation, not people's understanding.
- Talked about the role of a public servant and how this has changed over the years. Public servants almost have so many things to think about – intersectional equality, climate etc. etc. that some are retreating into themselves and just doing the bit they can do.
- Asked, 'what about the people who aren't the room' and how do we influence them – need to build trust.
- Talked about data – we collect the data that matters to us in government, not necessarily the data that matters to people.

What will Directors and Deputy Directors across policy areas do to challenge this and transform mindsets within their areas of responsibility?

- Talked about the importance of participation and noted that Scottish Government is rolling out a participation handbook which will be supported by training too.
- Raised the Senior Leaders Group (a NACWG recommendation) which has met for the first time. Asking the group to report to the Executive Team on the development of a theory of change. Increasing the focus in government on performance and delivery – using mandate letters, performance dashboards and so on. Steps at every level but with a much stronger steer from the Executive Team.
- Said that it makes sense to draw on the expertise and experience of the NACWG and the EWP.
- Talked about being thoughtful about getting ‘trapped’ by setting up a dashboard and targets for things we can measure – not what is needed to measure.
- Discussed the importance of giving weight to the stories and the experiences too – qualitative measures as well as quantitative data.
- Reflected that government officials rarely deal with individuals.
- Talked about community capacity and the struggle to prove the impact of infrastructure. How do you measure it?

Why do you think this was, and what can be done differently within your policy area for NACWG to receive responses that consider intersectionality and women’s inequality in the future?

- Discussed the absence of DG Corporate in the room and asked how they are planning in terms of the workforce. Is there sufficient analytical capacity? Workforce strategy – is Scottish Government as an organisation optimally resourced and are the right people with the right skills and capabilities in the right roles?
- Discussed the role of the Policy Professions and noted that the NACWG was surprised that there is no ‘badge’ or level at which one must operate or have skills in.
- Reflected on support and training for Ministers to be gender competent and noted that the M for Parliamentary Business is looking at training sessions for Ministers.
- Discussed the form and depth of training – that this needs to be relevant and be more than a ‘sheep dip’ and not just putting something on Pathways. Needs to be relevant. Noted that this has always been a challenge for mainstreaming equality.
- Reflected that one helpful approach might be picking your 3 (or 5) flagship policy initiatives and putting your resources there in terms of intense support.

What is your directorate doing to move this forward and how is it learning from, working with, and applying intersectional data expertise?

- Discussed taking opportunities where possible, and not waiting for the golden thread.
- Talked about how data could be collected about what the third sector does and capacity and support to organisations.
- Noted that support for infrastructure is based on who asks first instead of priority areas.

Jobs and Wellbeing Economy - Business and Better Regulation

What barriers are preventing or limiting external accountability and how can a culture of accountability become more normalised as part of your role?

- In terms of the responses to the accountability questions asked by the NACWG, SG officials advocated for more training for junior officials on how to best respond.
- The framing of the questions was also noted as an issue by SG officials.
- SG officials acknowledged the need for SG officials to be more open with the NACWG on policies that hadn't worked, not just highlighting the policies that had worked.
- A need to directly engage more with women led businesses was noted.
- The NACWG member said, following the completion of Phase 1, there was an expectation from the NACWG that women would be factored into all levels of policy development and decision making hence some of the frustrations felt.

What will Directors and Deputy Directors across policy areas do to challenge this and transform mindsets within their areas of responsibility?

- The current fiscal landscape offered an opportunity for more scrutiny to ensure value for money, but also to ensure policies were mindful of their impacts on women and girls.
- The NACWG member highlighted the Accountable Officer (AO) template, believing this could be a crucial tool for the SG to use for scrutiny and accountability. She said embedding gender equality into the AO template would make a real difference to SG policies in terms of gender equality.
- There was discussion on how to improve communication across SG directorates, to ensure gender equality was fully recognised across the SG, using less technocratic language.
- The importance of intersectionality was discussed, and how this could be better factored into policies such as the Fair Work Action Plan and employability funding.
- Available data was discussed, with SG officials noting it was difficult to drill down data on specific groups, but that improvements were being made.
- A labour market survey was cited as a good example of having data on gender, disability, etc but was also noted as expensive to carry out as deeper analysis entails additional cost. SG officials also highlighted data to come through from the No One Left Behind Strategy.
- On NSET, the NACWG member stressed growing the economy would require ensuring more women were in the tax base.
- The impact of violence against women and girls was raised, with SG officials noting it was difficult to respond to questions on this and the broader economy. The NACWG member spoke of the importance of the SG having the tools to gather this data.

Budget and Public Spending and Chief Economist

What barriers are preventing or limiting external accountability and how can a culture of accountability become more normalised as part of your role?

- There was a view that formulaic questions and answers can activate a particular mode of response from SG officials. There is a perception that there is a culture of protecting the institution, however, there was recognition that there would be benefit in providing more information about the impact of financial decisions taken.
- There is thought to be a challenge in openness regarding where things are not as up to standard as they should be, particularly when it does not feel possible to fix or there is no plan to move forward.
- Directors are not always conscious of their own power. Whilst they do not have the power to make ultimate decisions, they do have the power to change how things operate internally.
- There could be a stronger alignment with Programme for Government and Budget with a connected system of impact assessment to inform policy and spending decisions.
- There are standardised structures in place whereas there could be more cross cutting opportunities, for example Violence Against Women and Girls fits into multiple Directorates such as Justice, Economy, Social Housing, etc. Would be an opportunity to apply a more unified approach.

What will Directors and Deputy Directors across policy areas do to challenge this and transform mindsets within their areas of responsibility?

and

Why do you think this was, and what can be done differently within your policy area for NACWG to receive responses that consider intersectionality and women's inequality in the future?

- The Economy Centre of Expertise in Equality and Human Rights facilitated training for staff across DG Economy and other areas. This was a full day session as part of a programme of ongoing work. A lack of recognition of intersectionality is partly a lexicon issue for a lot of people as it is not always relatable. There was much exposure to different types of thinking through this training to help build confidence and capability.
- There were questions around where professional expertise lies within the organisation as it was not widely known where to find information on gender analysis. It was raised that this expertise must also be within policy areas.
- Checkpoints should exist within the system to say that responses are not good enough. Above referenced expertise should be deployed to unblock poorer responses.
- There are six key questions that should be asked with regards to budget and process – these were developed with EHRBAG and were used in the most recent Equality and Fairer Scotland budget statement.

What is your directorate doing to move this forward and how is it learning from, working with, and applying intersectional data expertise?

- There is scope to strengthen the training offer, and engagement with that offer, to support teams in developing greater capabilities in working with intersectional data.
-
- Individuals could be provided with appropriate training in impact analysis to help them understand requirements.
- Scrutiny should come in at an earlier stage, for example EQIA screening, to inform if certain things are or are not meeting certain standards.
- Effort is being put into records management to ensure that documents are stored appropriately and can be found readily when required. Greater emphasis on data being produced as business as usual as not all Directors or Ministers may be asking for data to be produced to standardised terms and quality.

Chief Social Policy Advisor and Early Learning and Childcare

What barriers are preventing or limiting external accountability and how can a culture of accountability become more normalised as part of your role?

- It felt like a great deal was being covered therefore more targeted questions could have helped.
- The Poverty and Inequality Commission start with written questions and then follow up with conversations. It takes a bit more time to write it up but ultimately more valuable.
- Through a degree of habit, it is easier to emphasise the positive over the negative. More could have been articulated about where there were knowledge gaps.
- There are worries about the repercussions of highlighting the negative aspects such as gaps in knowledge, including press backlash.
- The Audit Scotland model was referenced as useful from a Scottish Government perspective in building accountability conversations.

What will Directors and Deputy Directors across policy areas do to challenge this and transform mindsets within their areas of responsibility?

- Making progress, anchors metrics we've asked all the boards for, six priority groups for child poverty – trying to progress.
- Looking through a poverty lens rather than a disability or gender lens – impact assessments are helpful for looking at with multiple lenses.

Why do you think this was, and what can be done differently within your policy area for NACWG to receive responses that consider intersectionality and women's inequality in the future?

- Did not talk about more intersectional cases.

What is your directorate doing to move this forward and how is it learning from, working with, and applying intersectional data expertise?

And

What barriers exist within Scottish Government to using qualitative and lived experience data to deliver effective policy interventions for marginalised women and girls? How can we move forward on delivering change, without a lack of data being used as a justification for inaction?

- Enhancing quantitative data with lived experience.

- Data is not always considered from the beginning – there may be no templates and research comes in too late. Resource is a key element.
- Knowing what data to collect and when, and what it is being used for.
- There are huge variations in the data sets that different local authorities hold with little consistency across Scotland.
- There is an increasing problem with people's willingness to participate due to an increased distrust in how data will be used.
- Ensuring that marginalise groups are engaged with.

Social Security

What barriers are preventing or limiting external accountability and how can a culture of accountability become more normalised as part of your role?

- Concern raised about a possible regression on published data and how this may affect policy development.
- Social Security equality and diversity stats not published.
- Confirmation given that this data will be published later in 2024.
- Social Security analysts are doing intersectional work which can be drawn on for policy design.
- Questions around what data exists around women of colour or those who are disabled.
- Social Security are open to working with analysts and organisations around data and what it is telling us.
- The challenge around some data categories in terms of size and numbers was acknowledged.
- This management information (data) is used for communications and policy work. Examples may be helpful and could be provided.
- System design and development is a key component – the balance between policy intent and systems approach can be challenging.
- Effective use of resource can be a barrier to the inclusion of seldom heard groups and creative ways of working need to be supported to achieve this balance well.
- Could Social Security and NACWG explore a data sharing agreement (**for follow up**)
- There was a question raised around how SG and its agencies decide on which organisations/communities to engage with during policy and system development and at what point – there is a perceived view of an inconsistent ad hoc approach which may further alienate seldom heard group voices.

What will Directors and Deputy Directors across policy areas do to challenge this and transform mindsets within their areas of responsibility?

- Is it sufficiently targeted, how does it reach the people it needs to and how does it influence design.
- Lived experience falls away with certain groups such as migrant women, people of colour and disabled people.
- Social Security colleagues recognise the need for continued dialogue and will look at internal networks and reference groups.
- Social Security colleagues outlined work around seldom heard groups, inclusive communications, client panels, the evaluation of the 5 family payments and the review of Adult Disability payment.

Why do you think this was, and what can be done differently within your policy area for NACWG to receive responses that consider intersectionality and women's inequality in the future?

- The absence of an agreed working definition across SG means a mixed level of knowledge and understanding.

- It was recognised that SG may need some help in this area.
- Organisations and networks of support are not being tapped into
- Social Security partnership lead is being recruited and can explore once in post.

Why do you think this was, and what can be done differently within your policy area for NACWG to receive responses that consider intersectionality and women's inequality in the future?

- The response collation process was unclear and will be reviewed for future requests.
- Social Security do have information on intersectional data and this may have been included in the response (will consider for future work)
- Questions around other independent groups work on intersectionality (Minimum Income Group, Adult Disability review Group etc) and how this could inform the NACWG. The Council could consider reaching out to the Chair for further information?

Mental Health

What barriers are preventing or limiting external accountability and how can a culture of accountability become more normalised as part of your role?

- Helpful to have cross-party support in taking brave/innovative approaches (e.g. self-harm strategy).
- Spending time with people with lived experience so they can hold SG to account.
- This type of in-person discussion is helpful for frank discussion.
- Mental Health is focusing on multiple disadvantaged groups and assessing who is most at risk.
- There are data gaps across the healthcare system as a whole but SG seeking to address this.
- The strategy is new and plans for accountability are being established. There are plans to involve women and girls' organisations within governance arrangements.
- Developed delivery plan through intersectional lens, including a table of action on equality.

What will Directors and Deputy Directors across policy areas do to challenge this and transform mindsets within their areas of responsibility?

- The Mental Health Directorate has a dedicated equality mainstreaming resource which is uncommon in other areas.
- Setting culture of equality within Directorate.
- It is part of leaders' roles to check policies for equalities prior to sign off.
- It's necessary to link up to the other Directorates to encourage them to consider the social determinants of mental ill health. Can't just focus on services because do not tackle the root cause of poor mental health.

What is your directorate doing to move this forward and how is it learning from, working with, and applying intersectional data expertise?

- There were significant data gaps before even intersectional data, e.g. didn't have desegregated data for CAMHS pre-pandemic. We are now improving data across services which will be used to improve them.
- Ensuring that engaging with those with lived experience and qualitative data is informing policy where data gaps exist to ensure evidence-based policymaking.
- Produced a Mental Health Equality Evidence Report with evidence and data on the mental health and inequalities experienced by a range of protected characteristics and marginalised groups.

What barriers exist within Scottish Government to using qualitative and lived experience data to deliver effective policy interventions for marginalised women and girls? How can we move forward on delivering change, without a lack of data being used as a justification for inaction?

- Additional reporting burdens on health boards and local authorities always get pushback – collecting data can be seen as bureaucracy.
- Variety in how much/quality of data gathered by health boards.
- Financial constraints.
- Using the data better to effectively measure those impacted.
- Computer systems vary per NHS Boards.