



#GENERATIONEQUAL

First Minister's National Advisory
Council on Women and Girls

First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls

Phase 2 report



Easy Read



Easy
Read
made by



Disability
Equality
Scotland



made with
photosymbols®

What is the National Advisory Council for Women and Girls?



Humza Yousaf is the First Minister of Scotland.



He wants to make life better for women and girls in Scotland.



A group of women help the First Minister find out more about life for women and girls in Scotland.

They are called the National Advisory Council on Women and Girls.

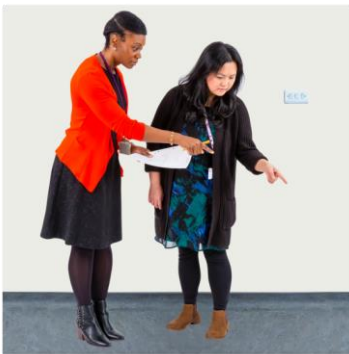


They advise how to have a Scotland where we are all equal and have the same choices and chances.



The Advisory Council are in Phase Two of their work that:

- **scrutinises** how work will be done to make their **recommendations** happen
- or looks at different issues



To **scrutinise** means to look closely at something.

Recommendations are what the group thinks should happen.



When the group has finished scrutinising they write a report to the First Minister.

The report says what needs to change to make things better for women and girls in Scotland.

So far, the Advisory Council have scrutinised:

- 9 of their recommendations
- the Scottish Government's response to the **cost of living crisis** for women and girls



A **cost of living crisis** is when the cost of everyday things like heating and food goes up a lot.



The cost goes up more than the amount of money people have coming into their household, either from a job or from benefits.

The cost of living increased sharply across the United Kingdom in 2021 and 2022.

What is the Empowering Women Panel?



The National Advisory Council on Women and Girls works with the Empowering Women Panel.

They are a group of **marginalised** women from across Scotland who share their experiences.

Marginalised people are:

- treated as if they are not important
- do not have much **influence** – the ability to change things
- do not have much power in society



This is not their fault.

What is intersectionality?



Intersectionality is a way to understand how identities work together.

An identity is how you see yourself.

We all have different identities that make us who we are, for example:

- a woman
- a Muslim
- middle class



She might experience **racism** – someone treating her unfairly because of her racial or ethnic group.

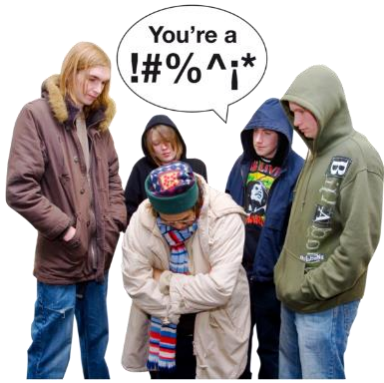


She might also experience **sexism** – someone treating her unfairly because she is a woman.



These different types of **discrimination** might happen separately or at the same time.

Discrimination means being treated unfairly.



Discrimination makes it difficult for women to:

- have power
- feel safe
- and have the same choices and chances



Intersectionality means looking at how policies and laws affect women and their different identities.

We should not see women as one group.

They are all individuals with different identities.

What have the Advisory Council and the Empowering Women Panel done?

First focus of scrutiny work



Focus of scrutiny means what we are looking at closely.

The Advisory Council has made recommendations to the Scottish Government on how to make the lives of women and girls in Scotland better.



Between August 2022 and February 2023 the Advisory Council checked how the Scottish Government had worked on some of these recommendations.

They felt that action was not quick enough and did not do enough to help all women and girls.

Second focus of scrutiny work



Between March 2023 and February 2024 the Advisory Council and Empowering Women Panel worked together to look at how the Scottish Government has supported women and girls through the cost of living crisis.



The Council and Panel feel that the Scottish Government have not thought about what marginalised women and girls need when they have given cost of living support.

This could be because the Scottish Government does not have enough information about these groups.



This means that the support the Scottish Government provides for the cost of living crisis is not right for marginalised women and girls.

The Advisory Council focused on the Scottish Government's response to the cost of living crisis for marginalised women and girls as they have been strongly impacted by this.



Before speaking to the Scottish Government about this, the Advisory Council spoke with:

- women's organisations
- anti-**poverty** organisations
- the Empowering Women Panel

Poverty is not having enough money to pay for basic things like food, heating or housing.



It was important for the Advisory Council to listen to the experiences of women and understand how the cost of living crisis affects them.

The Empowering Women Panel



The Advisory Council and Panel have worked together for the second focus of scrutiny on the cost of living crisis.

The Panel have shared their experiences on the cost of living crisis by doing a **peer research** project.

Peer research is when people use their own experiences to help each other.



They found that:

- everyone has different experiences of the cost of living crisis
- women and girls have to deal with many different types of discrimination

The Panel met the Scottish Government to show what they had found out.

They said how important it is to use **lived experience** to develop policy.

Lived experience is what people have gone through.



The Panel will keep working with the Advisory Council and the Scottish Government to deal with inequality for the women and girls of Scotland.

Recommendations and calls to action – these are both ways to say what work we think should happen



The Advisory Council made recommendations for change in Phase One.

There are certain recommendations that the Advisory Council has made more than once because not much work has happened.

An example of these recommendations are:



- how the Scottish Government collects and shares information on marginalised women and girls



- to make sure that Scottish Government staff have training on:
 - the inequality that women and girls have to deal with
 - how to use this knowledge when they make decisions



- to make sure that the Scottish Government listen to the lived experience of women and girls when they are making decisions about policies

The Advisory Council call to action - Accountability culture



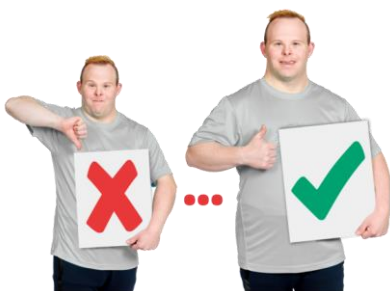
Accountability means making sure there are people and organisations who are responsible for making things happen.

The **culture** of an organisation is what it believes in and how it works.



The Advisory Council had many conversations with the Scottish Government about their response to the cost of living crisis for women and girls.

The Advisory Council felt that:



- the Scottish Government must have a culture that supports open and honest conversations about information, even if it means admitting that their work needs to be better



- it was not clear how the Scottish Government had thought about the needs of marginalised women when they make policies



The Scottish Government:

- should give staff training on how to work with groups like the Advisory Council
- should make a plan to improve how they work with groups like the Advisory Council

The Advisory Council Call to Action - Data and lived experience expertise

The Advisory Council believes that the Scottish Government should:



- better use the information it has on intersectional women and girls
- have more information about intersectional women and girls
- collect more information from people with lived experience like the Empowering Women Panel
 - to better understand the issues they face
 - to fill the gaps in information
- share plans on how it is improving **gender equality** - making sure that all people are treated fairly



The Advisory Council call to action - gender policy



Gender means if someone sees themselves as male, female or in a different way.

The Advisory Council feels that most of the Scottish Government do not consider the needs of women and girls enough when making policy.



The Advisory Council would like to see the Scottish Government do more work on gender **mainstreaming** to help women and girls.

Mainstreaming means building equality into policy and plans from the beginning instead of later when important decisions have already been made.



The Scottish Government could follow international examples of mainstreaming where they have been successful.



Making a national gender equality strategy would:

- help to improve gender mainstreaming
- progress the Advisory Council's recommendations
- have clear accountability



This strategy would be a plan of how the Scottish Government:

- would do the work
- when the work would be finished
- would be accountable

The Advisory Council all to Action - Local Services



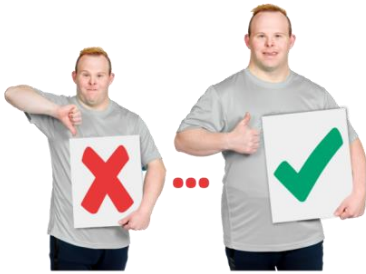
The Empowering Women Panel has spoken about the harmful impact of local service cuts on marginalised women in communities.

Cuts to public services are done to save money.

The affect the cuts have on people is not thought about.



The cuts can mean there are not as many services like social care, and support for unpaid carers.



The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) is an organisation which works with all of Scotland's 32 councils.

The Scottish Government and COSLA should work together to improve equality for women and girls.



COSLA should support local councils to listen to lived experience before they make decisions about how money will be spent.

Training on **gender budgeting** should be given to staff who make decisions.

Gender budgeting looks at how public money is raised and spent.

It makes sure it treats all people equally and protects women's rights.

The Advisory Council call to action - cost of living crisis



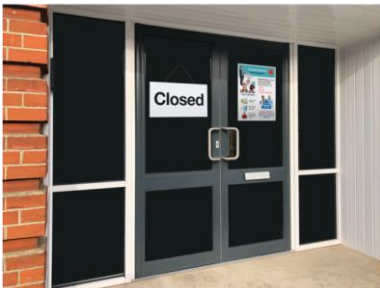
The Advisory Council does not think the Scottish Government have thought about the experiences of women and girls when doing work on the cost of living crisis.

It seems that the cost of living crisis is less important work for the Scottish Government than it used to be.



The Scottish Government should make plans to deal with poverty for marginalised women and girls.

There are still things that make it difficult for marginalised women.



Many services for marginalised women:

- have closed down
- are at risk of closing
- should be supported with money from the Scottish Government



The Scottish Government needs to fund local mental health support as the cost of living crisis has increased stress and anxiety for women and girls across Scotland.

The Advisory Council call to action - accountability



The Advisory Council had many conversations with the Scottish Government about their work on the cost of living crisis for women and girls.



They felt that the Scottish Government:

- could have been more open and honest about what work has been done and what has not been done
- should have had more focus on marginalised women and girls

The Advisory Council call to action - data



Data is the facts, figures and information that the Scottish Government uses to help it make decisions.

The Advisory Council would like the Scottish Government to do more to collect data to make sure policies work well for everyone.



The Scottish Government should be better at listening to the experiences of women and girls when making policy decisions.

The Advisory Council all to action - gender competence



Gender competence means making sure our policies treat all people fairly and give them the same choices and chances.

If the Scottish Government did more to consider gender competence, policies would work better for women and girls.

The Advisory Council Call to Action - National government and local council responsibilities



The Scottish Government and local councils should work together:

- to listen to the experiences of women and girls
- to understand how Government policy affects women and girls



By doing this it will be easier to know what work should be done to deal with those issues.

What will happen next?



The Advisory Council will:

- talk about different things next
- focus on their recommendations and write another report to the First Minister



They will always work on making Scotland a more equal place for every woman and girl.