

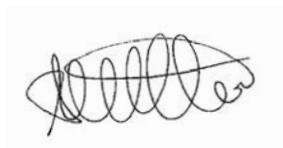
Close the Gap
Annual Review 2018 - 2019



Introduction

It's been an exciting year for Close the Gap as we've worked to consolidate our recent organisational growth and expanded staff team. We've continued to build relationships with partner organisations and other stakeholders, and rolled out the world-leading Equally Safe at Work employer accreditation pilot in Scotland's local government.

This year, we've enthusiastically welcomed Scotland's first gender pay gap action plan. There's never been a strategic response to the pay gap in Scotland, so this is a significant milestone, and we were pleased to be involved in its development. The gender pay gap has never been higher on the agenda, as large organisations reported their gender pay gap information for the second time. Although awareness of the inequalities women face at work may be higher, we are still some distance from seeing meaningful change in women's lives. I'm therefore delighted to be able to share the work that Close the Gap has been doing over the past year to realise women's equality in the labour market.



Anna Ritchie Allan
Executive Director



A strategic response to Scotland's gender pay gap

This year, Close the Gap was delighted to see the launch of *A Fairer Scotland for Women*, Scotland's first national gender pay gap action plan. We worked closely with Engender and Scottish Government on the development of the action plan, and advocated for a bold approach to challenging the wide-ranging and persistent inequalities that women face in Scotland's labour market. The plan critically recognises that the causes of the pay gap reach far beyond the workplace, with change also necessary in education, in the distribution of unpaid care, early years and childcare, economic development and in the way Scottish Government and delivery agencies develop policy.





Equally Safe at Work

Close the Gap is delighted to be piloting the world-leading *Equally Safe at Work* employer accreditation programme in Scotland's local government sector. After unprecedented interest from local government employers, this year we've been piloting *Equally Safe at Work* with seven councils. Our early adopter councils are Shetland Islands, Highland, Aberdeen City, Perth & Kinross, Midlothian, North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire. A further 18 councils are engaged in a shadow group to share learning about the pilot through a community of practice.

The innovative *Equally Safe at Work* enables councils to deliver action that will advance gender equality at work, better support victim-survivors in the workplace, and understand their role as an employer in preventing violence against women.

This year councils have been undertaking a range of exciting activities as they work towards bronze level accreditation, such as:

- developing improved data gathering systems to improve the quantity and quality of gender-disaggregated data including staff experiences of VAW;



- reviewing and developing employment policies to ensure they are gender- and VAW-sensitive;
- delivering awareness-raising work on gender equality and VAW, and *Equally Safe at Work*;
- gathering benchmark quantitative and qualitative data from staff on attitudes to, and experiences of, gender equality at work; and developing organisation-specific initiatives to address occupational segregation.

Close the Gap has been working closely with early adopter councils to deliver a programme of training for line managers on flexible working and VAW, and we've also developed guidance for line managers on VAW. We're currently developing work that will produce guidance for line managers on managing perpetrators in the workplace.

The pilot has demonstrated that accreditation programmes can lever action from employers on gender equality and VAW. It has also produced a rich source of data on local government women workers' experiences of gender equality at work, and VAW. Importantly this includes new data on the experiences of low-paid women, a group which is often missing from discourses on the pay gap.

Close the Gap would like to thank the early adopter councils for their commitment to *Equally Safe at Work*, advancing gender equality at work, and preventing violence against women, both within and outwith the workplace.



Still Not Visible

In February, Close the Gap published research on Black and minority ethnic women's employment, which provides an important insight into the lived experiences of BME women at work in Scotland. It captures data on key aspects of employment such as recruitment, development and workplace culture. The launch was chaired by Kaliani Lyle, former Race Equality Adviser to the Scottish Government, and Jamie Hepburn, the Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills, delivered the keynote speech welcoming the research. The research underlines the importance of taking an intersectional approach to realising women's labour market equality.

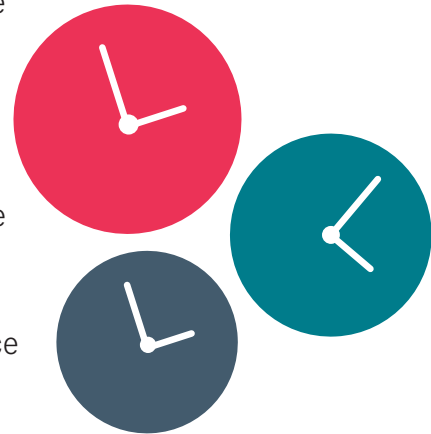


Since the launch, we've been developing work to identify solutions to the challenges highlighted in the research. We've engaged with stakeholders working around gender, race equality and employment, and are developing plans to enable BME women to be involved in the solutions work.



Flexible Working For All?

In July we were delighted to publish research on the availability and uptake of flexible working in Scotland. It identifies whether the extension of the right to request flexible working to all employees has resulted in increased flexible working across Scotland's labour market. The research provides a valuable snapshot into the experiences of women in accessing flexibility, which is often essential for those who have a caring role. It reveals that the regulatory change has had very little impact on the uptake of flexible working, women's access to flexible working specifically, and therefore gender equality at work more broadly. It is clear that we need a step change in workplace culture to create truly flexible workplaces.



The research was undertaken by Joanna Wilson, whose PhD Close the Gap is supporting with University of Manchester. This year Joanna has progressed her work on the gender pay gap in Scotland, with a specific focus on the extent to which workplace flexibility affects the distribution of unpaid work in mixed-sex households.



Influencing and enabling change in the workplace

Building on our 18 years of experience, we've continued to work closely with a range of employers to influence and enable change in the workplace.

Supporting private and third sector organisations to close their gender pay gap

By promoting the use of our innovative online tool, *Close Your Pay Gap*, we've worked to support large organisations obliged to report their gender pay gap information under the UK regulations. We have also provided bespoke support on pay gap reporting to individual organisations, one of which was subsequently nominated for an award for their activities.

In April, we carried out a second assessment of employer reporting, which focused on a cross-sectoral sample of 250 employers headquartered in Scotland. The findings provide an invaluable insight into employer responses to the gender pay gap and the effectiveness of the existing regulatory levers.



Enabling SME employers to support victim-survivors of domestic abuse

This year we were very pleased to launch a new resource for SME employers on domestic abuse, as part of our existing *Think Business, Think Equality* online self-assessment tool. It enables businesses to better support employees affected by domestic abuse, and to build organisational competence around domestic abuse and its effect on women and the wider business. The new resource includes a bespoke action plan, guidance, case studies, and an FAQ on domestic abuse and work.

Supporting public sector employer compliance with the public sector equality duty

We used the findings from our biennial assessments of public sector equality duty compliance to shape our employer engagement work in the public sector. This year, Close the Gap has worked with a range of public bodies, primarily to support compliance with the public sector equality duty. This work has included providing a quality assurance role on reporting, delivering capacity building workshops, support with data analysis, advice on equality outcome and action planning, and support on intervention development.



Parliamentary engagement

This year we have been working to develop our new parliamentary engagement function. As a result, we have built our organisational capacity to navigate parliamentary structures, strengthen existing partnerships and build networks with parliamentarians.

We worked with Gail Ross MSP to secure a Scottish parliamentary debate to mark the launch of *Equally Safe at Work* in January. We have also been working closely this year with Engender and Jackie Baillie MSP to advocate for a gendered approach to the Scottish National Investment Bank Bill.



Providing expertise and information, and building capacity in MSPs in better understanding women's labour market inequality are core aims of our parliamentary engagement work. We developed a range of MSP briefings for parliamentary debates covering a broad variety of topics including *Equally Safe at Work*; in-work poverty and Universal Credit; the Fair Work Action Plan; 16 Days of Action to Address VAW; disabled women's employment in Scotland; gender, artificial intelligence and data-driven technologies; misogyny, racism, harassment and sexism; and the Scottish National Investment Bank.



Policy advocacy work

Close the Gap engages with policymakers to advocate that policy germane to women's labour market participation is gendered.

Women's Future Skills

This year, we have sharpened our focus on gender and skills policy. This has included mapping the skills planning architecture in Scotland to identify key weaknesses around gender. Core to *Women's Future Skills* is a focus on gender and automation including how technological change will affect women's engagement with the changing labour market. This is an important piece of work for Close the Gap given the potential significance of the gendered impacts of automation and AI on women's employment in Scotland.

A gender review of Developing the Young Workforce

Close the Gap conducted a review of Developing the Young Workforce, the seven-year strategy to address youth unemployment, to identify to what extent activity had advanced girls' and young women's equality. We used the findings to highlight specific challenge areas; to inform Scottish Government's review of Developing the Young Workforce activity to date; and advocate for a targeted approach as Government considers its focus for the final stage of the strategy's implementation.

Women's in-work poverty

Women's in-work poverty and their concentration in low-paid, stereotypically female jobs is a strategic focus for Close the Gap. We're clear that solutions to closing the pay gap must incorporate specific interventions on undervaluation. Yet there is very little policy focus on addressing the horizontal segregation which characterises women's employment. This year we have continued to work with Poverty Alliance on the benefits of the Living Wage to women, and delivered activity to highlight the gendered dimension of in-work poverty. We have also advocated for a gendered approach to policymaking and interventions on tackling low-paid work to ensure that the fair work agenda also means fair work for women.

Participation in public body equality advisory groups and working groups

Staff participate in a number of public sector equality advisory groups and working groups, which enables us to influence practice and advocate for the gendering of employment and/or service delivery policies. This year we've participated in the Skills Development Scotland equality advisory group, Scottish Enterprise inclusive growth advisory group, Highlands and Islands Enterprise equality advisory panel, Audit Scotland equality advisory group, City of Glasgow College equality and diversity group, Education Scotland equality advisory group, and Scottish Government STEM strategy equality group. We also work with partner and stakeholder organisations to share learning and expertise around gender and the labour market. As part of this, we are members of the Equate Scotland steering group, and the advisory group of the joint Rape Crisis Scotland and Zero Tolerance project, Equally Safe at School.

Reactive policy advocacy work

A large component of Close the Gap's work is reactive policy advocacy work. This includes responding to consultations, giving evidence to parliamentary committees, and briefing parliamentarians ahead of debates. This year, our reactive work has covered a broad range of policy including:

- The development of Scotland's gender index;
- The review of the public sector equality duty;
- Flexible working legislation;
- Improving employment for disabled women in the public sector;
- Sexual harassment in the workplace;
- Flexible Workforce Development Fund;
- Social security and in-work poverty;
- Ethnicity pay gap reporting; and
- Regulatory options for parental leave and pay.



Infrastructure

Our board sets policy and objectives, and ensures good governance practice around management and financial stability. The board of trustees meet quarterly to provide governance and oversight to ensure the effective delivery of Close the Gap's strategic aim of women's labour market equality. Responsibility for operational activity is delegated to the Executive Director, who leads the staff team.

In 2019 we recruited two new trustees, Nicole Busby and Claire Fleming, who bring to the Close the Gap board a range of valuable skills and experience.

Our trustees are:

Nicole Busby, Convener
Emma Ritch, Vice-Convener
Sue Domminney, Treasurer
Claire Fleming

We would like to thank Helen Miller and Angela O'Hagan, who stepped down from the board this year, and whose time, commitment and skills contributed to Close the Gap's growth in recent years.

We would also like to extend our thanks to Scottish Government which provides core funding for Close the Gap and Equally Safe at Work.

We have moved offices to our new home at 166 Buchanan Street in Glasgow. This allows us to accommodate our new and expanded team, and enables us to host a range of meetings, both internal and for external partners and stakeholders.



The Close the Gap team

Anna Ritchie Allan
Executive Director

Lindsey Millen
Policy Manager

Ruth Boyle
Policy and Parliamentary Officer

Kelsey Smith
Programme Officer

Sarah Todd
Development Assistant

Joanna Wilson
PhD Student

We're delighted to continue our work with the University of Manchester to support the PhD studentship of Joanna Wilson, whose work focuses on the gender pay gap in Scotland.



Close the Gap works in Scotland on women's labour market participation. We work with policymakers, employers and unions to influence and enable action that will address the causes of women's inequality at work.

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Close the Gap

Close the Gap (SCIO) (known as Close the Gap) is a Scottish charity, SC046842.