Close the Gap

Disabled women and work in Scotland: Easy Read Version

This document gives the main points of the research.

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What is this research about?

Research means asking questions to find out true facts and information**.**

This research is about disabled women in the workplace.

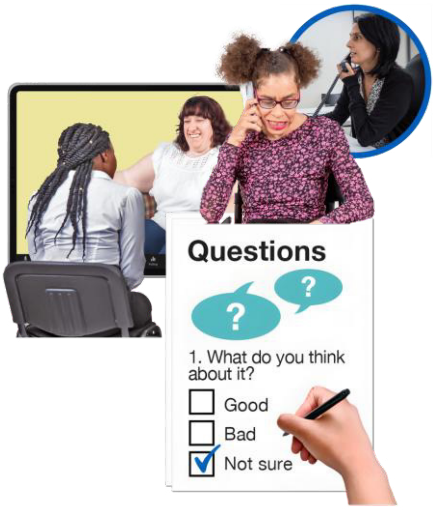
It looks at what problems disabled women in Scotland face in getting, keeping and moving up in jobs.

Close the Gap

The research has been done by a charity called Close the Gap.

Disabled women and women with long-term health conditions took part in the research.

They had different conditions and different jobs.



How we did our research:

- We spoke to some women on the phone.
- We spoke to small groups of women over Zoom.
- We asked lots of women to answer questions in a survey.

What did we find out from the research?

Close the Gap's research found 10 important things.

These are called **key findings.**

Key Finding 1:

Disabled women find it hard to get a job and stay in jobs.

Many disabled women said they could not work all the time. The main reason is health and caring for other people.

Employability programmes help people find a job and get ready for the workplace.

Many disabled women did not know about or cannot access these.

Key Finding 2:

Disabled women find applying for jobs hard.

Discrimination means treating someone unfairly because of who they are.

For example, because of their:

- Race
- Gender
- Disability

Many disabled women worry about being treated unfairly when applying for jobs.

- 1 in 4 disabled women said they faced discrimination when applying for jobs.

Many disabled women said they find job applications and interviews hard, especially:

- Women who are neurodivergent, like women with autism or ADHD.

Key Finding 3:

Not all disabled women get help at work.

Employers must make **reasonable adjustments** to help disabled people at work.

Reasonable adjustments are small changes to help disabled people do their jobs well.

These changes make things fair for everyone.

This is the law under the Equality Act 2010.

Many managers do not know they have to do this.

- 1 in 3 disabled women got the help they needed right away.
- 1 in 5 disabled women never got any help.

Key Finding 4:

Support at work is very important.

Managers are very important.

They can make disabled women have a good or bad time at work.

In workplaces with good support:

- Women feel able to ask for things they need.
- Women have flexible, caring, and helpful support.

Women with visible conditions are more likely to have good support at work.

In workplaces with less support:

- Women may not get the help they need.
- Women may feel unsupported or ignored.

Neurodivergent women, like those with autism or ADHD, are more likely to have poor support at work.

Key Finding 5:

Flexible working is important.

Some disabled women could work in a flexible way. But not everyone could.

Flexible working helps disabled women with their health and care for others.

Some women worried they might lose it if managers did not see how important it was.

Key Finding 6:

Training and moving up in jobs is hard for disabled women.

Not enough money, support and reasonable adjustments are reasons.

Only 2 in 10 disabled women think they can move up at work.

Some women are worried about getting promoted in case they do not get help or lose the help they get.

Key Finding 7:

Many disabled women take jobs just to survive.

They took low-paid or short-term jobs because they had to.

Some disabled women went into jobs that did not suit them because others did not believe in them.

Women from racial minority groups face more unfair treatment in finding good jobs.

Key Finding 8:

Many disabled women feel judged at work.

They think they need to work extra hard to show they are as good as their co-workers.

- More than 8 in 10 disabled women think they need to work harder.

- Over half of disabled women had their work questioned.

Key Finding 9:

Many disabled women said they have been hurt or bullied at work.

- More than 7 in 10 disabled women have been hurt at work.

- More than 4 in 10 disabled women said they had been bullied at work.

This included physical and mental harm.

Key Finding 10:

Violence against women

Violence against women (VAW) includes:

- Sexual harassment

- Domestic abuse (when you are hurt, bullied or frightened by your partner or ex-partner).

- Rape or sexual assault

- Stalking (when you are followed or being watched by someone).

- Honour-based abuse (abuse linked to family or cultural beliefs).

- 6 in 10 disabled women have faced violence.

- Only 1 in 10 disabled women told someone at work.

What problems do disabled women face at work?

Disabled women face many problems at work.

These include:

- Finding it hard to apply and get jobs.

- Not having enough help or adjustments at work.

- Being treated unfairly or bullied.

- Missing out on promotions.

- Needing to speak up for themselves to be treated fairly.

Not all disabled women go through the same things at work.

Women with visible conditions, like using a wheelchair, often get more help.

Women with hidden conditions, like mental health issues, often get less help.

Disabled women from racial minority groups face extra problems.

What needs to change for disabled women at work?

We need changes in workplaces and in law and policies so disabled women can work fairly and fully.

Employers should understand different disabilities, be fair and not make disabled women speak up for themselves.

The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Scottish Government should make laws and policies that make it easier for all disabled women to work and do well at work.

This will help them have fair and full work lives.

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Close the Gap

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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