



Level the playing field

This resource accompanies our [guidance for employers on taking an anti-racist approach to tackling gender inequality in the workplace](#). It sets out information on ways to take positive action in your organisation.

The law says that if you have identified that certain groups are underrepresented within a particular role or area within your business, you can take targeted action to help address this. This is known as positive action and is lawful under the Equality Act 2010.

Positive action can be used to mitigate a disadvantage a particular group might experience, or increase their representation in a workplace. In order to use positive action you must be able to show that it's an appropriate way for you to improve equality in your organisation. For example, if your employee data shows that racially minoritised women are underrepresented in your organisation, or at particular grades, positive action may be appropriate in order to increase their representation.

Positive action doesn't mean giving someone an unfair advantage. It's mitigating the disadvantage caused by racism and sexism, to put them on a level playing field with their counterparts.

Actions to level the playing field:

- Add a statement to your job adverts saying you particularly encourage applications from women from racially minoritised groups.
- Use images of different groups of women in your adverts.
- Don't just use standard recruitment websites for your external vacancies. Advertise through recruitment sites or organisations which target women and/or Black and racialised people, for example Equate Scotland's Career Hub, and the Scottish Minority Ethnic Women's Network.
- Offer pre-interview information or training sessions for potential applicants to learn about your business and the skills required for the vacant post. This can include sessions targeted specifically at women from racially minoritised groups.
- Offer work shadowing opportunities and/or internships which challenge stereotyping. For example, engineering and construction placements for young Black women.
- Provide induction training for women returners whose family-related career breaks may mean recent work experience is limited.

Positive action example: pre-application or pre-interview information or training sessions

You can run pre-application and pre-interview training or information sessions reserved for women from racially minoritised groups where there is a clear underrepresentation of women in that role/type of role or grade. These sessions give prospective candidates information on:

- what the organisation is looking for in a candidate,
- what a good application looks like,
- the type of questions they might be asked in an interview, and
- what a good answer looks like.

NOTE: This does not mean you must share the actual interview questions or model answers to those questions. It's about the type of questions you might ask and the structure of good answers and/or the interview. For example, you might use competency-based questions. In this case your session would explain what a competency-based interview is, what types of competencies you focus on, and how applicants can best prepare good answers, for example by using the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) model. This can be especially helpful for migrant women who may be less familiar with the application and interview processes in Scottish organisations.

The sessions not only prepare candidates for the recruitment process, but also signals more widely that the organisation is taking action to advance anti-racist practice and tackle gender inequality. Providing meaningful feedback to unsuccessful candidates, where possible, enhances transparency and acts as a further sense check for those involved in selection to confirm there has been no unintended bias. Feedback is also useful for different groups of women who are looking to progress so that they understand any skills development that needs to be done.

LEGAL DISCLAIMER

While every effort has been made to ensure that the explanations given here are accurate, only the courts or tribunals can give authoritative interpretations of the law.

You can find more information on your legal obligations and positive action on the [Equality and Human Rights Commission's website](#).

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

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Published December 2022