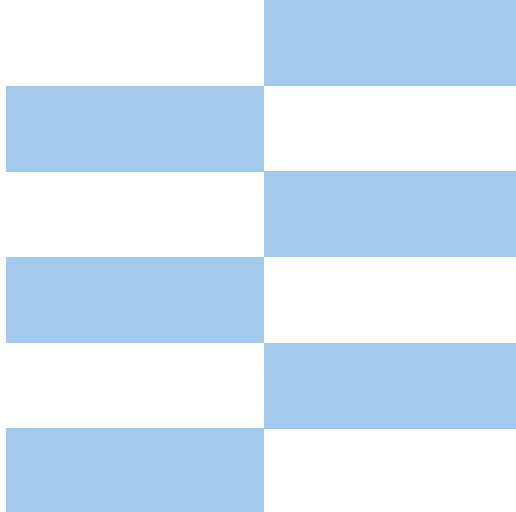




Applying a gender lens: A tool for employers

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Introduction

What is this tool for?

This tool describes a process that employers should use to apply a gender lens to an employment policy or practice. This is sometimes known as a 'gender analysis'. The tool aims to build capacity and confidence in employers to understand and address the causes of gender inequality in your organisation.

It provides information on what a gender analysis is and outlines the importance of understanding women's different experiences in the labour market. It also highlights the importance of using intersectional data, addressing gendered barriers, and taking action to ensure women's experiences are included in the design and delivery of policies, programmes and practice.

This tool will be of particular interest to employers working towards Close the Gap's Equally Safe at Work accreditation.

How to use the tool

The tool sets out a series of steps, which should be followed in sequence. It can be used by any organisation which wants to apply a gender analysis to its employment policies, initiatives, and practice. It will also complement other mainstreaming work that your organisation is undertaking, including equality impact assessments.

Before working through the steps, it's important to have an understanding of women's labour market inequality. Without an understanding of women's experiences at work, it's not possible to develop targeted approaches for driving sustainable change.

The tool provides information on what you should do at each step. There's also a worked example to demonstrate what this looks like in practice.

The process can be used to assess any initiative, programme or policy that is in development or is in the process of being reviewed and updated.

There's also information on the practical steps you can take to implement the learning from the Equally Safe at Work Applying a Gender Lens workshop.

Who should use the tool

The tool is designed to support organisations to review internal employment activities. It can be used by anyone reviewing policies and practice such as those working in HR, equalities, learning and development, senior management, and as trade union representatives.

Background

Women's labour market inequality

The gender pay gap, a key indicator of women's labour market inequality, represents women's and men's divergent experiences of not only the workplace but also education, skills acquisition, unpaid care and other domestic labour.

The gender pay gap is caused by a range of factors which include occupational segregation, a lack of quality part-time and flexible working, the economic undervaluation of stereotypical female work, women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care, and discrimination in pay and grading systems.

Gender norms and stereotyping about women's capabilities and interests results in a stark segregation in the type of work men and women do. This means women are overrepresented in roles that are low-paid. This is sometimes referred to as the '5 Cs': cleaning, catering, clerical (administration), care and cashiers (retail and customer service). Women are more likely to have unpaid caring roles for children, older people or disabled people. Women therefore often need to look for part-time work to balance their caring responsibility with work. However, a lack of flexible working in the labour market means that their choices are limited because most part-time work is in lower paid, stereotypically female jobs. This contributes to women's underrepresentation in management and senior positions, also known as 'the glass ceiling'. Women's over-representation in low-paid work is a key cause of women's poverty, and therefore child poverty. Disabled women, racially minoritised women, and women who are single parents are more likely to be in low-paid work. They are also more likely to be underemployed and unemployed because of the intersecting inequalities they face.



Female-dominated jobs such as nursing, administration, pupil support, cleaning and catering have been systematically undervalued in the economy, resulting in the low pay associated with them. However, the work that mainly women do in these jobs is integral to people's lives and to the functioning of our economy.

Violence against women

Another key factor that impacts women's experiences of the workplace is violence against women (VAW). VAW, also known as gender-based violence, affects all aspects of women's lives and the workplace is no exception.

VAW refers to violence and/or abusive behaviour that is predominately carried out by men and directed at women because of their gender. This behaviour includes physical, emotional, psychological, sexual and economic abuse and stems from systemic and deep-rooted women's inequality. It's an abuse of power and privilege and can be used to control women. The term VAW includes, but is not limited to:

- domestic abuse.
- sexual harassment.
- rape and sexual assault.
- stalking.
- 'honour-based' abuse.
- child sexual abuse.
- commercial sexual exploitation.

VAW can negatively impact women's capacity to work, and victim-survivors are often targeted in and around the workplace. Finding appropriate support in the workplace can be difficult for women who are experiencing trauma, stress, anxiety, and depression. VAW can also affect victim-survivors' capacity to work with men, particularly in situations where there is an existing gender or power imbalance.

In addition, male-oriented, sexist workplace cultures enable sexual harassment to go unchallenged and they also undermine women in the workplace in both subtle and overt ways. Everyday sexism is visible in formal and informal interactions and manifests in a range of ways in the workplace. For example, when sexist jokes and remarks made by male colleagues are dismissed as 'friendly banter', this can lead to women feeling unsafe and unable to report.

VAW is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality. Therefore, addressing women's labour market inequality is a fundamental step in eradicating violence against women. Women's experiences at work are shaped by a variety of factors and it's essential to understand the barriers that different groups of women face in order to develop targeted and effective approaches for driving change.



What is a gender analysis?

In the context of developing policies or practice, doing a gender analysis means applying knowledge about women's and men's different life experiences to make sure that a policy or programme takes account of these differences. This means recognising the different expectations, inequalities, levels of power and needs of groups of women and men in the workplace.

Women face gendered barriers that shape their experience of studying, training and employment, and it's integral that these barriers are addressed when developing or reviewing policies and practice. For example, considering the time and location of training programmes to ensure that those with caring responsibilities, who are mostly women, can attend.

It's important to note that all policies and programmes have the potential for a differential impact on women and men and it's only when you have identified the gendered impacts and are intentional in the design, can you progress gender equality. The absence of a gender analysis within programmes, sometimes known as a gender-blind approach, can mean women's needs and experiences are ignored compared to their male counterparts, which creates more inequality.

Women are not a homogenous group

Intersectionality means recognising that different forms of discrimination overlap and compound whether it's based on gender, race, age, disability, class, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or ethnicity.

Employers should take an intersectional approach when considering and responding to the barriers experienced by women in the workplace. An intersectional approach recognises that women are not a homogenous group and do not experience inequality in the same way. Different groups of women experience multiple, intersecting inequalities and discriminations that overlap and combine to create varying levels of inequality. For example, sexism, racism and Islamophobia together intersect and compound to shape racially minoritised Muslim women's experiences.

In the **green** box there is a worked example of how an organisation would apply each step in practice. This is not based on one single organisation, but is compiled from approaches taken by different organisations.

Steps for reviewing practice

Checklist		
Step 1	Review and gather data.	
Step 2	Identify the gendered differences within your workplace.	
Step 3	Work out why these gendered differences exist within your workplace.	
Step 4	Decide on actions to address these inequalities and how change will be measured.	



Step 1

Review and gather data

The first step is reviewing your organisational data, identifying any gaps and determining how you will fill them.



Reviewing data

Reviewing your existing data will enable you to identify any barriers that groups of staff may be facing. In this first step, you should look at your employee data, and any survey or qualitative data collected on employee experiences. This will enable you to start building a picture of what is happening in your organisation. For example, you will be able to see the types of work men and women are clustered in, and the proportion of women working part-time compared to men.

A key part of reviewing your data will also be to identify where there are gaps. Data gaps can happen for a number of reasons, including limitations in HR systems or because it simply wasn't collected before. It's important to be curious about what else you could be collecting because this could help point to significant issues in the organisation. For example, you may find that data isn't collected on why flexible working requests are denied. By collecting this data, the organisation will be better able to understand if there are barriers to accessing flexible working that could be addressed.

It's important that data gaps are addressed, and you should develop a plan which sets out how you will do this. Including a timeframe, accountable person, and setting aside sufficient resources are important to ensure that this will be delivered.

Gathering data

Now that you've reviewed what data you have, and have identified any gaps, you may decide to gather further data. Collecting both qualitative and quantitative data is essential for building a full picture of what is happening in your organisation. Whether this is statistics, or data from focus groups or surveys, data helps you identify the issues that should be prioritised.

Undertaking focus groups, staff surveys or adding new questions to existing surveys can provide worthy insight on workforce experiences. It may also include conducting exit interviews or consulting your women's network or equalities network.

Remember that not all staff members are office-based and access to a computer, work phone or work email may vary across the organisation. You should think of different ways that you can reach all staff and elicit a diverse range of responses e.g. QR codes for surveys, paper copies of surveys, and drop-in engagement sessions. This shows you have made efforts to gather views from a wide range of staff groups, so that the organisational picture is more accurate.

Which data to collect

It's important to gather data on your gender pay gap, and composition of your workforce. For public sector employers, this is a requirement of the public sector equality duty (PSED) and it also aligns with the criteria of Equally Safe at Work.

The following data should be collected, and should be disaggregated by gender. Where possible, it should also be intersectional, which means looking at race, disability, religion and belief, gender identity, sexual orientation and age:

- Overall headcount.
- Full-time and part-time work.
- Employees by grade.
- Employees by job type/role.
- Employees on fixed term and/or temporary posts.
- Pay, including uplifts and accesses to bonuses.
- Employees' performance management ratings.

In analysing the data, you should consider if women are:

- Concentrated in part-time work.
- Concentrated in particular grades.
- Concentrated in particular roles.
- Overrepresented in insecure work.
- More or less likely to receive a pay rise.
- More or less likely to receive performance related pay.
- More or less likely to receive a promotion.



Modern Apprenticeships at West Glenford Council

West Glenford Council has decided to review its Modern Apprenticeship (MA) programme through a gendered lens to see if there are improvements that they could make to encourage participation from young women. This is because the majority of new starts in MA have been young men. To better understand the current picture in their organisation, the council looked at the data from the past three years to see which MA frameworks young men and young women participated in.

When reviewing the data, they found data on gender, age, framework, starts and completions. They also found some exit interview data from participants who didn't complete their MA, however this was inconsistently collected.

The data showed that more young men were participating in MAs, and they were also more likely to complete them. While young women were also starting MAs, they had a lower completion rate. As well, they found young men were overrepresented in construction and horticulture MAs, and women were significantly more likely to be found in health and social care, and business administration.

Since they only collected data on gender and age, the council realised they were missing out on key intersectional data and analysis which could help them better understand experiences for different groups of men and women. They also identified that collecting further qualitative data on young men and young women's experiences of the workplace, in addition to exit interviews, would be helpful for understanding any further barriers.



Step 2

Identify the gendered differences within your workplace.



Once data has been reviewed and new data has been gathered, the next step is to identify the gendered differences within your workplace.

Through the analysis of your data, there may be gendered differences that become apparent. For example, you may find that part-time workers, who are predominately women, are less likely to be in higher-paid, senior roles in your organisation, or you may find from the staff survey that on average women feel more undervalued in the workplace than men. Gendered differences can also be seen in levels of participation in mentoring or leadership programmes, or completion rates of apprenticeships.

Similarly to Step 1, Step 2 is about being curious about what the data is telling you about women's and men's experiences in your organisation. By looking at who is participating and who is absent, you'll have a clearer picture of where barriers may be and persist.

It's also important to remember that women are not a homogenous group, and their experiences in the workplace can differ. You should therefore take an intersectional approach which means recognising that different groups of women have different needs and may face specific barriers within your organisation. For example, disabled women will not have the same experience at work as racially minoritised women, or LGBTI women. By analysing intersectional gender-disaggregated data in your organisation, you'll better understand the ways that gender inequality overlaps and intersects with race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion and belief, class, and gender identity.

Modern Apprenticeships at West Glenford Council

Now that West Glenford Council has looked at the data of who is participating in MAs, who is completing them, and what the gaps are, they recognise that there may be different experiences for men and women.

They decided to look further into these different experiences. The council decided to focus on women's participation in the horticulture and construction: building MA frameworks. This is because the number of women participating in horticulture and building frameworks is very low. In the past three years, women have made up between 0% and 5% of apprentices in horticulture or building frameworks. As well, they found that in these frameworks, when women did participate, many didn't complete.



The council found that there were a number of differences in experiences for men and women in horticulture and building apprenticeships. One of the reasons for this was because both frameworks were male-dominated and when a young woman joined, they were usually the only woman in the framework. As a result of the sector being male-dominated, the workplace culture was male-oriented and at times felt hostile because it often didn't consider the different needs of young women. This wasn't always intentional, but rather they hadn't needed to consider women's needs before because women didn't generally work there.

Another difference was highlighted in the recruitment process. The council looked at the number of women applying for horticulture and building MAs to see if there were barriers in the application process. They found that for building MAs, young women would apply but they were significantly less likely to pass the practical exam.

The council decided to look further into why there was a difference in experience and how this impacted women's participation and completion rates.

Step 3

Work out why these gendered differences exist within your workplace.



Now that you know what the gendered differences are in your organisation, Step Three is about understanding the causes of these gendered differences.

It's important to remember that there are systemic issues that underpin gender inequality in the labour market. Ways this manifests which will have an impact on women's experiences at work include:

- Gender norms and stereotypes about women's and girl's interests, skills, capabilities and priorities;
- Women's disproportionate responsibility for caring, and how this can prevent them from doing jobs, attending training or progressing;
- The often exclusive or hostile nature of male-oriented workplace cultures;
- Women's experience of violence and abuse, including sexual harassment which is more prevalent in male-dominated teams and workplaces; and
- Women's limited access to resources and reliance on public transport.

Applying this knowledge alongside what the data is telling you about your organisation, you'll be better able to understand how to meaningfully address it. For example, if your organisation wants to increase the number of women in leadership roles, and saw that in the data only 2% of senior leaders worked flexibly, this would be a clear indication that further work is required to make flexible working available in leadership roles. By applying your knowledge about women's disproportionate responsibility for care, you understand that a lack of access to flexible working in senior roles results in less women working in those roles.

Modern Apprenticeships at West Glenford Council

Now that West Glenford Council has started to identify potential barriers to women's participation in horticulture and building MAs, they decided to look further into exit interviews for women who left their MA early.

In one exit interview, a young single mother highlighted key barriers she faced in participating in a horticulture apprenticeship. Part of the MA involved attending college, and she shared that the course timetabling was not provided by the college in sufficient time to arrange childcare. In addition, she couldn't take her child's buggy on the only bus that ran between the college and her home, effectively preventing her to get where she needed to be. These two significant challenges meant that the woman had to withdraw from her apprenticeship.



In another exit interview, a young woman had started her horticulture apprenticeship but decided to leave the course early. This job was mostly done outdoors and travelling about to different outdoor sites. However, while her older male colleagues had locations for toilet breaks, there was a lack of toilet facilities for the young woman. This made the young woman feel uncomfortable and excluded, so she decided to leave.

The council also spoke to an assessor of the practical exam for the building apprenticeship to better understand what was happening during the recruitment process. The assessor highlighted that in the skills assessments, often young women didn't have the same level of practical skills as their male counterparts. This was because for young men, this requirement was easier to fulfil, as they are more likely to learn woodwork at school and are more likely to learn these skills from family members. Since young women and girls are less likely to study this subject in school, it presented barriers.

This information from the exit interviews and from the recruitment process highlighted that a lack of consideration of caring responsibilities, transport links, and appropriate facilities were preventing young women from undertaking and completing MAs.

Step 4



Decide on actions to address these inequalities and how change will be measured.

This step is about what you do with the information you have, decide which actions you'll take and how you'll measure progress.

By now, you will have identified areas of focus to progress on gender equality. In Step 4, you should plan the action you're going to take, who needs to be involved, what the desired outcomes are, and how you will measure progress.

This step may look different for each organisation, as there may be variation in what your priorities are, the resources you have, and the capacity to implement change.

When deciding on actions, it's important to be clear about who you want to target and what you want to achieve. For example, this could include a targeted recruitment campaign, or offering pre-interview information or training sessions for potential applicants. Other actions you take could include introducing capacity building for line managers, sharing case studies of best practice in flexible working, or offering a variety of learning and development opportunities for part-time workers. This is not an exhaustive list but offers a number of examples of the different types of activities you could undertake in your workplace to improve gender equality. As well, it's important to remember that programmes designed to benefit all staff rarely make an impact for those who are already excluded or from minority groups. Therefore, it's important to be specific and focused.

To ensure that the action is realistic and achievable, it's essential to identify the resources required for delivery, which includes the necessary budget and staffing.

Measure your progress

It's important to monitor any changes in your practice, policy or initiative, so you can evaluate the extent to which there has been a positive or negative impact. By measuring progress on delivering actions, you can identify the effectiveness of the interventions, and discern where any changes may need to be made.

You should outline a plan for how you'll measure progress. This will involve deciding on outcomes and indicators. You'll need to be clear on the target group for the action; the number of people involved; the timeframe for completion and who is responsible for delivering the action. Setting manageable targets, accompanied with specific action can help drive activity and accountability which is more likely to lead to positive change. You could also collect data from employees or participants on the impact of the new intervention.

There will inevitably be learning curves along the way and progress may not always appear linear. It's important to not allow this to discourage your efforts. Any challenges you encounter will be an opportunity to apply your learning and improve practice. Regularly reviewing and evaluating your process will enable you to adapt your approach to be more effective.

To drive gender equality forward there must be sustained commitment which can only be achieved when you're accountable and transparent about your progress. There is no single activity that will eradicate gender inequality, but taking a range of action to improve workplace culture will demonstrate a deeper understanding of the multiple interrelated factors that sustain gender inequality in the labour market.



Modern Apprenticeships at West Glenford Council

The council identified areas for improvement from the exit interviews, and they also decided to review initiatives they've undertaken over the past five years to recruit women and men into non-traditional apprenticeships to determine any learning. They learned that previous initiatives had taken a generic approach to recruiting new participants, and didn't acknowledge or address the gendered barriers.

To increase the number of women participating in horticulture and building MAs, West Glenford Council decided to implement a number of actions. They undertook a needs assessment to determine if there were appropriate practices to support young women into horticulture and building MAs. For example, ensuring appropriate-sized work uniforms, tools, and personal protective equipment, and ensuring there were suitable changing and bathroom facilities, and agreed arrangements for toilet breaks while offsite.



For building MA, as one of the barriers for participating was the practical exam the council decided to offer young women pre-interview training. This would provide support on developing the practical skills to be successful in the exam and aimed to level the playing field. As well, attendees at the pre-interview training would be asked to complete an evaluation form so the council can assess whether it is effective.

The council also introduced a targeted recruitment campaign for young women to enter into horticulture and building apprenticeships. They targeted recruitment materials using images of women in horticulture and other trades, and disseminated information through social media. They also partnered with schools to share information with students about the benefits of participating in non-traditional frameworks.

The council developed an action plan to measure progress against their new initiatives. This included clear outcomes, targets and a senior member of staff who would ensure action was taken. They allocated responsibility to key staff to ensure the activities were consistently delivered and that any feedback was recorded. They found that as a result

of the pre-interview training on practical skills, there was an increase in young women successfully joining building apprenticeships. As well, through their targeted recruitment campaigns, they had increased the number of women in horticulture apprenticeships. The council were able to see that they were on their way to achieving their goal of increasing the number of young women in both horticulture and building MAs by 35% by the end of the year. The council also highlighted its findings on how timetabling could present barriers to participation to the college. As a result, the council has worked with the college to identify ways to improve timetabling and communication with young women and men participating in MAs.

Looking at the number of applications, disaggregated by gender, as well as looking at the intersectional data that was collected through a survey during the recruitment process, allowed the organisation to make a comparison and to see whether this approach was effective for attracting young women. As a way to see if they had retained young women in the role, and that their workplace culture was positive, they conducted check-ins with young female MAs to gather feedback on their experience. They also standardised exit interviews, and expanded the data they collected to include intersectional data.



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