

EQUALLY SAFE AT **WORK**



Equally Safe at Work
Findings from the pilot evaluation

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1. Introduction

Equally Safe at Work is an innovative employer accreditation programme designed to support Scottish local authorities to prevent violence against women (VAW) and advance gender equality at work. Equally Safe at Work was developed by Close the Gap, Scotland's expert policy advocacy organisation working on women's labour market participation. Close the Gap has been working with employers, policymakers, trade unions, and employees for two decades to influence and enable action to address the causes of women's inequality at work.

Equally Safe at Work was developed to advance women's labour market equality in Scotland through working directly with employers to ensure that workplace policies and practice take account of women's experiences of employment. The programme was designed to support councils to understand how gender inequality and VAW affect women in the workforce and the wider organisation, and to provide a framework to drive change.

This report presents the main findings from the evaluation which assessed whether an accreditation programme is an effective mechanism for leveraging change in employment practice on gender equality and VAW. Section two outlines the problem Equally Safe at Work aims to address; section three describes the Equally Safe at Work programme, and how the pilot was delivered; section four outlines the evaluation methodology; section five sets out the findings of the evaluation; section six identifies key learning; and section seven concludes by reflecting on the future potential of Equally Safe at Work to enable change for women at work.

2. The problem

Women's labour market inequality

Preventing VAW requires action to address women's inequality in all areas of society. Women's labour market inequality is caused, and sustained, by wider gender inequality. Women's labour market and economic inequality reduces their financial independence, restricts their choices in employment and creates a conducive context for VAW. Financial dependence and poverty can make it harder for women experiencing violence or abuse to move on and maintain employment.

The persistent gender pay gap is the key indicator of women's labour market inequality, and the divergent experiences men and women have in the workplace and in education, training, care and domestic labour. Gender norms and stereotyping about women's capabilities and interests results in a stark segregation in the types of work that men and women do. A lack of quality part-time and flexible jobs, coupled with women's disproportionate responsibility for caring, also finds women underrepresented in management and senior roles. Pay discrimination, often unintentional, also characterises Scotland's labour market, with women routinely paid less than men for doing equal work.

While there are commonalities experienced by all women at work, disabled women, Black and minority ethnic women, women of minority faiths, lesbian and bisexual women, trans women, refugee women, young women, and older women experience different, multiple barriers to participation in the labour market, and to progression within their occupation.

Socioeconomic background also has an influence on women's labour market outcomes, with women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds less likely to be represented in higher-paid jobs, and more likely to be in lower-paid, stereotypically female work such as care and cleaning.

Women comprise the majority of local government workers, and occupational segregation characterises the sector. Women are more likely to work in homecare, admin, primary teaching, and early years and childcare, while men tend to work in IT, refuse collection and trades. Although women comprise 50% of local authority chief executives, they are under-represented in senior grades across the sector.

3. Equally Safe at Work

Equally Safe at Work was developed to support Scottish councils to improve their employment practice through advancing gender equality at work and supporting victim-survivors of VAW. The accreditation programme supports the delivery of Equally Safe, the Scottish Government and COSLA joint strategy to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls. Equally Safe recognises that violence against women and girls is a cause and consequence of gender inequality. Eliminating women's workplace inequality and other gendered inequalities in society is therefore a fundamental step in preventing VAW.

Equally Safe at Work is a world-leading employer accreditation programme. A review undertaken by Close the Gap looking at international work on gender and VAW-sensitive employer accreditation initiatives, identified that there are no programmes that focus on gender equality and VAW, highlighting a gap in provision. There are clear business benefits to employers in engaging with effective accreditation programmes including:

- it demonstrates commitment to employees, and other stakeholders;
- reputational gains as accreditation is recognised as a badge of excellence;
- the reputational gains enable improved recruitment and retention; and
- being identified as a sector leader on gender equality and VAW.

How councils were engaged

To engage with employers and identify participants for the pilot, all 32 local authorities were contacted, introduced to the pilot and invited to submit an expression of interest. Information was also shared with the Heads of HR group at COSLA and with local Violence Against Women Partnership (VAWP) leads.

All local authorities responded, with 31 councils expressing interest to learn more about the programme. Information sessions were held in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee to provide further information on the details of the programme and councils were invited to apply to participate in the pilot. 14 councils applied to participate and seven were selected for the pilot. The Equally Safe at Work pilot councils, the early adopters group, comprised Aberdeen City, Midlothian, Highland, Shetland Islands, Perth & Kinross, North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire.

To sustain engagement with those councils who were interested in Equally Safe at Work but not in the early adopters group, a council shadow group was established. The shadow group also served as a community of practice where learning and expertise was shared. Membership of the group comprised 20 councils: Glasgow City, South Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Borders, City of Edinburgh, Angus, Argyll and Bute, Moray, Stirling, Falkirk, Fife, East Dunbartonshire, West Dunbartonshire, East Ayrshire, East Renfrewshire, Aberdeenshire, West Lothian, East Lothian, and Inverclyde.

How we engaged experts in the programme development

Close the Gap established an expert advisory group to oversee the development of the pilot. Members were experts in gender equality, VAW and local government and included COSLA, Engender, Improvement Service, Scottish Government, Scottish Women's Rights Centre, and Zero Tolerance. Close the Gap also consulted with employers in local government and trade unions to test the design of the framework and ensure that the criteria was robust and achievable in the pilot period.

What councils had to do

Early adopter councils were required to work to meet the criteria in the Equally Safe at Work standards framework. The framework can be found in the appendix on page 36.

The framework comprises six standards which align with women's workplace equality:

- Leadership;
- Data;
- Flexible working;
- Workplace culture;
- Occupational segregation; and
- VAW¹.

¹ Due to the employment focus of Equally Safe at Work, the programme focuses on forms of VAW most likely to impact women's experience at work which include domestic abuse, stalking, sexual harassment, rape and sexual assault and so-called 'honour-based' violence.

Each standard includes criteria, separated into bronze, silver and gold tiers, which enables councils to improve their employment practice. The early adopter councils worked towards meeting the bronze tier standards.

To meet the criteria, councils were required to undertake a range of activities including:

- establishing a working group to oversee a workplan to drive participation in the pilot;
- demonstrating leadership commitment to gender equality and VAW;
- developing and refreshing employment policies;
- providing training to line managers;
- supporting quantitative and qualitative employee data gathering;
- developing improved data gathering systems;
- developing initiatives to address occupational segregation; and
- delivering internal awareness-raising campaigns.

The initial pilot period was from January 2019 until January 2020. Early adopter councils met three times as a group to discuss the pilot and share learning on meeting challenging criteria. Learning was also shared between early adopter councils outwith the programme structure through an informal peer support network.

At the end of the pilot, councils were required to submit evidence to demonstrate that they had met the bronze criteria for each of the standards. Following an initial assessment, Close the Gap provided a progress report on the submissions to highlight areas where the councils needed to submit further evidence to meet the criteria. The pilot was extended by six months until June 2020 to provide more time for councils to meet any outstanding criteria. The pilot deadline was later extended to November 2020 as a result of Covid-19.

How Close the Gap supported councils

Close the Gap supported councils to meet the standards by:

- developing and delivering training to line managers on flexible working;
- developing and delivering training to line managers on VAW and work;

- developing awareness-raising material that was distributed in all the pilot councils;
- providing data summary reports to each council highlighting key findings from the employee survey and employee experience panel, and providing tailored recommendations;
- developing three pieces of guidance for line managers on VAW, supporting women during Covid-19, and VAW and work during Covid-19; and
- providing demand-led expertise and tailored problem solving.

Programme aims and outcomes

A core aim of the pilot was to determine whether an employer accreditation programme is an effective mechanism for supporting councils to progress work on gender equality and VAW. It also aimed to:

- Build capacity in employers on:
 - The link between women’s labour market inequality, gender inequality and VAW.
 - The impact of VAW on the workplace.
 - The employer role in preventing VAW.
- Support employers to develop gender and VAW-sensitive employment practice.

To determine the effectiveness of the programme, progress was measured against five outcomes:

1. Councils have improved employment policies and practice that are gender-sensitive.
2. Councils better understand gender equality and VAW.
3. Councils better understand their role in preventing VAW.
4. Tolerance of VAW is reduced in the workplace.
5. Successful completion of the pilot.

An evaluation plan was developed to outline indicators for each outcome, and to set out methodology for collecting data to measure progress against each indicator.

The impact of Covid-19 on the pilot

Covid-19 significantly impacted councils' ability to complete the pilot and ultimately extended the timescales of the pilot. This was because councils are essential delivery bodies in responding to the pandemic. Some key staff, including Equally Safe at Work leads, were redeployed into crisis management roles in the council. Significant pressures on workloads, including reduced staffing as a result of school and nursery closures, also affected the rate at which accreditation work was delivered.

Five of the seven councils submitted their final evidence in September 2020. The remaining two indicated that they would be unable to submit their evidence because of Covid-19 pressures, and it was agreed with Close the Gap that they would continue working towards accreditation but beyond the timescales of the pilot.

4. Evaluation methodology

A wide range of qualitative and quantitative evaluation data was collected throughout the pilot period.

1. Self-assessment data from councils on their employment practice on gender equality and VAW.

Self-assessment data was gathered from councils at the beginning and end of the pilot to determine how councils perceived their practice on gender equality and VAW. It also measured whether councils felt their practice had improved since the beginning of the pilot.

2. Quantitative survey data from employees on their attitudes and behaviour towards gender equality and VAW.

Quantitative data was collected through an employee survey that was distributed in each early adopter council. The survey gathered baseline data at the beginning of the pilot and then further data were gathered at the end of the pilot. Data were collected on employee attitudes and behaviour towards gender equality and VAW; experiences of working in the council; and access to equality and diversity training, flexible working, and learning and development opportunities.

The initial survey received responses from 2,578 employees across all seven councils. Of those responses:

- 79% were women;
- 54% were office-based;
- 18% were community-based;
- 27% were line managers;
- 61% were full-time;
- 17% were part-time;
- 67% were in the age bracket of 41-60; and
- 95% were White Scottish or White British.

When the survey was repeated at the end of the pilot it received responses from 1,576 employees from five council². Of those responses:

- 73% were women;
- 57% were office-based;
- 18% were community-based;
- 26% were line managers;
- 72% were full-time;
- 19% were part-time;
- 63% were in the age bracket of 41-60; and
- 91% were White Scottish or White British.

3. Qualitative data from employee experience panels with women working in lower-paid jobs in each council.

Employee experience panels were held in each council at the beginning and the end of the pilot. The panels comprised women working in lower-paid roles in the council including pupil assistants, catering workers, cleaners, care workers, admin workers and clerical assistants. The same groups of women participated in both panels. Qualitative data was gathered from participants on their experiences of working in the council.

4. Evaluation data for line managers' training.

Close the Gap developed and delivered two training courses for line managers in each council. One course was on flexible working and the other was on VAW. In total, 50 line managers attended the flexible working training and 50 line managers attended the VAW training. The training evaluation data measured to what extent the training sessions improved their knowledge of flexible working, and VAW, and to what extent their confidence in responding to disclosures of VAW had increased.

²The remaining two councils did not participate in the survey. It was agreed that one council would submit their evidence and run the survey at a later date; the other council distributed the survey and received no responses.

5. Survey data from working group members.

Each council was required to establish a working group to develop, and oversee delivery of, their Equally Safe at Work action plan. Survey data were gathered from working group members to capture their experience of the pilot. The survey was completed by 34 working group participants in six early adopter councils³.

A survey was also distributed to members of the shadow group which 10 out of 18 councils completed. The survey collected data on their experiences of participating in the shadow group and provided opportunity for further comment on the programme.

6. Qualitative data from interviews with Equally Safe at Work leads in the pilot councils.

Close the Gap commissioned an external evaluator to conduct interviews with the lead officers for Equally Safe at Work in each council. The interviews focused on each council's experience of the pilot and highlighted key successes and challenges, and the extent to which the programme has been effective in supporting councils to progress work on gender equality and VAW.

Limitations of the data

While a variety of data collection methods were used to gather evidence on staff attitudes and behaviours, it is not completely representative of all council employees in Scotland. For example, in a number of councils the sample size of respondents to the employee survey was less than 5% which is a fairly small sample. Additionally, attitudinal and behavioural change is difficult to measure and will take longer than the duration of the pilot to see progress. Despite the limitations, the data present useful insight into the experiences of different groups of employees, and on the efficacy of the programme more widely.

³ The remaining council did not participate in the survey at this stage because an extension to the submission deadline had been agreed so they could deliver higher quality and more sustainable work for the programme. During the pilot they identified several gaps in employment practice and wanted more time to be able to fully address the challenges.

5. Findings

This section sets out the key findings from the evaluation, using the programme outcomes to identify where change has happened. The outcomes for the Equally Safe at Work pilot were:

- a. Councils have improved employment policies and practice that are gender-sensitive.
- b. Councils better understand gender equality and VAW.
- c. Councils better understand their role in preventing VAW.
- d. Tolerance of VAW is reduced in the workplace.
- e. Successful completion of the pilot.

a. Councils have improved employment policies and practice that are gender-sensitive.

The evidence that was submitted as part of the accreditation process was used to measure whether councils have improved employment policies and practice that are gender-sensitive.

Changes to employment policies and practice as a result of the pilot

Violence against women

- Developing VAW policies that set out the role of HR and line managers; the support available for victim-survivors; and the links between VAW, the workplace and gender equality.
- Introducing support mechanisms for victim-survivors such as referrals to Women's Aid and Rape Crisis, access to an employee assistance programme, the provision of special leave⁴, and safety planning.
- Implementing a new centralised data system to gather intersectional data on employee experiences of VAW.
- Delivering internal campaigns for the 16 Days of Action⁵ initiative.
- Delivering a staff pledge campaign to eradicate gender-based violence.

⁴ Special leave is made available for victim-survivors of VAW of up to ten days. Reasons employees may use special leave may include taking time off to attend doctor's appointments, counselling appointment, solicitor's appointments, bank manager appointments to change accounts, moving schools, moving to a new house or police investigations.

⁵ 16 Days of Action is an international campaign for the elimination of VAW. It was started in 1991 by the Centre for Women's Global Leadership. The campaign aims to raise awareness about VAW as an enduring social problem that undermines communities and workplaces.

Occupational segregation

- Developing an initiative to address the under-representation of women in gardening and waste management.
- Developing a targeted recruitment campaign to address the under-representation of women among joinery and plumbing apprentices.
- Developing initiatives to improve the representation of men in childcare to challenge occupational segregation in the service.
- Creating opportunities for women to attend a women's leadership conference, and to access one-to-one coaching to address women's under-representation in senior roles.
- Developing a programme of job shadowing for women in lower and middle management to enable women's progression.
- Implementing data collection systems to record gender-disaggregated data on training and development opportunities to identify any gendered barriers to training.
- Introducing compulsory training for recruitment panels to ensure the process is free from gender bias.
- Establishing a requirement that recruitment panels must be gender balanced, set out in internal guidance.
- Using images of women doing traditionally male jobs in job advertisements.

Workplace culture

- Reviewing and updating equality policies to include information on occupational segregation, VAW, sexism, misogyny, and intersectionality.
- Reviewing and updating policies on pregnancy and maternity provision to include information on returning to work, expressing breast milk, and ensuring there are appropriate facilities in the council for expressing.
- Reviewing and updating policies on maximising attendance to include information on the benefit to victim-survivors of VAW.
- Improving communication with female catering workers by providing them with a laptop and protected time to check emails and the staff intranet.

Flexible working

- Reviewing and updating flexible working policies.
- Developing systems to collect data on flexible working, disaggregated by gender.
- Including information on the provision of flexible working in job advertisements.
- Introducing a day-one entitlement to the right to request flexible working.

b. Councils better understand gender equality and VAW.

To measure whether councils better understand gender equality and VAW at the end of the pilot, data was collected on:

- the ability of line managers to recognise the signs of VAW;
- employee attitudes towards gender equality; and
- employee perceptions of gender equality being a council priority.

Ability of line managers to recognise the signs of VAW

The survey data highlight that at the end of the pilot⁶ around two-thirds of line managers were confident or very confident about recognising the signs of sexual harassment (68%). Around half were confident or very confident about recognising the signs of domestic abuse (53%) and stalking (49%). Confidence levels were lower for rape and sexual assault (43%) and lowest for 'honour-based' violence (31%).

Line managers were more confident about recognising signs of sexual harassment than other forms of VAW. This could be because it is more closely associated with the workplace or because of increased awareness of sexual harassment due to #MeToo⁷.

Further training and capacity building among line managers would enable increased confidence in recognising the signs of VAW, especially around forms of VAW which some may not associate with the workplace.

⁶ This question was added to the survey at the end of the pilot and does not have baseline data to measure against.

⁷ #MeToo is a movement started in 2006 that gained global prominence in 2017. The movement highlights the widespread prevalence of sexual assault and harassment.

Employee attitudes to gender equality at work

Employee attitudes to gender equality at work remained much the same between the beginning and the end of the pilot. Table 1 shows that when asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with statements around gender equality, there was very little change over the pilot period. This was anticipated given the difficulty in creating attitudinal and behavioural change in a short period. Longer term attitudinal and behavioural change in the workforce will require leadership commitment to challenge workplace cultures which sustain gender inequality and prevent VAW.

Table 1: Employee attitudes on gender equality at work

	Strongly Disagree (%)		Disagree (%)		Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)		Agree (%)		Strongly Agree (%)	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
On average in Scotland men earn more per hour than women.	4	3	6	6	19	20	54	54	17	17
Women aren't as good as men at negotiating their pay.	20	21	29	31	27	27	20	18	3	3
Staff are inconvenienced when colleagues take a long time off for maternity, shared parental or adoption leave.	14	14	30	31	30	30	21	19	5	6
Some line managers and colleagues think men who take parental leave are considered less serious about their careers.	15	15	31	32	43	43	9	8	2	2

The table shows that:

- Over two-thirds of respondents (71% in 2019 and 2020) agreed or strongly agreed that 'on average in Scotland men earn more per hour than women'.
- Around half disagreed or strongly disagreed that 'women aren't as good as men at negotiating their pay' (49% in 2019 and 52% in 2020).

- Around two in five either disagreed or strongly disagreed that staff are inconvenienced when colleagues take a long time off for maternity, shared parental leave or adoption leave (44% in 2019 and 45% in 2020).
- Almost half either disagreed or strongly disagreed that some line managers and colleagues think that men who take parental leave are less serious about their careers (46% in 2019 and 47% in 2020).

Table 2 shows that there was a slight improvement in the extent to which employees disbelieved myths about VAW, as there was an increase in respondents who strongly disagreed with the statements. For example, at the beginning of the pilot, 47% of employees strongly disagreed with the statement ‘sexual harassment is often just a misunderstanding’. By the end of the pilot this increased to 54% of employees stating they strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 2: Employee attitudes towards VAW

	Strongly Disagree (%)		Disagree (%)		Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)		Agree (%)		Strongly Agree (%)	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Women who report sexual harassment are just easily offended by jokes.	51	53	36	34	11	12	2	1	0	0
Women should take attention from a male colleague as a compliment.	48	51	35	35	16	14	1	1	0	0
Sexual harassment is often just a misunderstanding.	47	54	40	35	11	9	2	2	0	0
Women often falsely accuse men of sexual harassment or sexual violence.	35	42	37	35	22	19	5	4	1	1
I feel unsure about what I can or cannot say in the office in case it's considered sexual harassment.	32	35	39	37	18	16	9	11	2	2

Employee perceptions of gender equality being a council priority

Employees generally thought that gender equality was prioritised by their council and this remained unchanged throughout the pilot. In the employee survey:

- Almost two-thirds (65%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed in both 2019 and 2020 that 'where I work there is a culture which encourages equality between men and women'.
- Just over half (58%) of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that equality and diversity are openly prioritised by their employer.
- Over half (58% in 2019 and 59% in 2020) agreed or strongly agreed that there is a positive workplace culture that feels inclusive to them.

The employee experience panels, however, highlighted a different perspective. The majority of participants were unaware that gender equality was a priority for their employer. This alternative perspective may be a result of the different demographic profiles represented in the employee experience panels and the survey respondents. The majority of survey respondents were office- and computer-based, while the majority of employee experience panel participants were not office-based and did not have regular access to a computer.

'HR aren't good at communicating or sharing information. There's a lot of things going on with HR, a new system. A lot of information is getting lost.'

Employee experience panel participant

c. Councils better understand their role in preventing VAW and advancing gender equality.

To measure whether councils had a better understanding of their role in preventing VAW and advancing gender equality, data were collected on:

- The confidence of line managers in responding to disclosures or reports of VAW;
- Employee confidence in reporting or disclosing VAW to their line managers; and
- How victim-survivors felt their disclosure or report was handled.

Confidence of line managers in responding to disclosures or reports of VAW

Women are often reluctant to disclose or report their experience of VAW at work because they are worried that they will not be taken seriously, or that nothing will happen. Therefore, it was important in the pilot to build capacity in line managers on how best to respond to ensure that victim-survivors are supported. In the employee survey, line managers were asked at the beginning and end of the pilot how confident they felt responding to disclosures of sexual harassment, stalking, domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault, and 'honour-based' violence.

Table 3: Confidence of line managers in responding to disclosures of VAW

	Not At All Confident (%)		Not Confident (%)		Not Sure (%)		Confident (%)		Very Confident (%)	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Sexual harassment	1	1	8	11	24	16	55	63	11	11
Stalking	1	1	8	12	27	22	52	55	11	11
Domestic abuse	1	1	8	11	26	20	52	58	13	11
Rape and sexual assault	2	1	10	11	22	20	53	56	14	12
'Honour-based' violence	3	3	12	13	33	30	41	46	10	9

Table 3 highlights a slight improvement in the confidence of line managers in responding to disclosures of VAW during the pilot period. Considering the limited timeframe of the pilot, this slight improvement is positive and demonstrates that some line managers may have been receptive to the training and guidance provided by Close the Gap as part of the pilot. The data highlights also that further work is required to build capacity among those line managers who are either not confident or unsure in responding to disclosures.

The role of training in increasing knowledge and understanding of VAW in line managers

Close the Gap delivered training on VAW to line managers in each council. The VAW training course aimed to build capacity on:

- the impact of VAW on employees and the workplace, and women's labour market equality;

- recognising the signs of VAW; and
- best practice on responding to and supporting victim-survivors at work.

The evaluation of the VAW training showed that, as a result, line managers have improved confidence around and understanding of how best to support victim-survivors in the workplace.

Table 4: Line managers' experience of VAW training	
	Agree or Strongly Agree (%)
The training increased my understanding of how to support employees experiencing VAW.	96
The training increased my understanding of how to respond to a report or disclosure of VAW.	96
The training increased my confidence in managing disclosures.	93
The training increased my confidence in responding to sexual harassment.	96
The training increased my confidence in responding to disclosures and reports of domestic abuse, stalking, rape and sexual assault and 'honour-based' violence	98

While the training evaluation demonstrates an increase in knowledge among participants it is unclear how learning has been incorporated in the practice of the line managers. Therefore, it is important that training is not a one-off event and that the knowledge that has been built is integrated into line management and wider workplace practice.

Employee confidence in reporting or disclosing VAW to their line managers

In the survey, council employees were asked how confident they would feel disclosing an experience of VAW to their line managers. Table 5 shows that there was little change over the pilot period, which is to be expected this early on because embedding good practice and changing organisational culture is a longer-term piece of work.

Table 5: Women’s confidence in reporting or disclosing an experience of VAW to their line manager

	Not At All Confident (%)		Not Confident (%)		Not Sure (%)		Confident (%)		Very Confident (%)	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Reporting sexual harassment to a line manager.	5	4	8	11	25	22	36	39	25	23
Disclosing an experience e.g. domestic abuse, sexual harassment, rape or sexual assault.	4	4	7	9	32	29	39	40	17	18

The table shows that:

- Around three in five respondents felt confident or very confident about reporting sexual harassment to a line manager at the beginning of the pilot (61%) and this remained much the same at the end (62%).
- Just over a third (38%) either were not sure or were not confident about reporting sexual harassment at the beginning of the pilot. This number remained the same (37%) at the end of the pilot.
- Over half (56%) stated at the beginning of the pilot that they were confident or very confident they would be supported fully by their employer if they disclosed other forms of VAW.
- This number slightly increased by the end of the pilot with 58% feeling confident or very confident. This means a significant proportion of respondents feeling not sure or not confident they would be supported fully.
- At the beginning of the pilot, 44% felt either not sure or not confident and at the end, slightly less (42%) reported feeling not sure or not confident.

A supportive workplace culture is necessary to enable women to feel their disclosure will be taken seriously and that they have trust in the reporting process. A negative experience when disclosing can shape a victim-survivor’s, and also their colleagues’, view of the reporting process and it is therefore important that all line managers understand how best to support victim-survivors. Culture change takes time and requires councils to demonstrate their commitment to gender equality, increase awareness of their organisation’s VAW policy, build capacity in line managers on VAW, and build women’s trust in the reporting process.

How victim-survivors felt their disclosure or report was handled

In the employee survey at the end of the pilot employees had experienced or witnessed 424 incidents of sexual harassment in the last 12 months. Of those cases, 87 employees responded on whether or not they had reported it to their employer.

- Over half (54%) had not reported it to their employer.
- A quarter (25%) had reported it to their employer, but felt it was not dealt with satisfactorily.
- Only 7% had reported it to their employer and felt it was dealt with satisfactorily.
- Only 1% reported it to a union rep.
- A further 10% preferred not to say.

This indicates a reluctance to report or disclose, and some significant challenges with handling complaints and providing adequate support.

At the start of the pilot, participants in the employee experience panels reported that they were not comfortable disclosing an experience of VAW to their line manager. Reasons for this included they thought it was inappropriate to talk about it at work; felt uncomfortable talking to their line manager about it; thought nothing would change from telling their line manager; they worried about confidentiality; and they had previous experience of not being supported by their employer.

'I wouldn't tell anyone, I would try to deal with it myself, I'd maybe tell a close friend. Something personal like that I'm not one for wanting to draw attention to myself in that sense.'

Employee experience panel participant

'There was a carer who was stalked one night, and she rang us. Nobody in the office called her back or gave her any feedback when she told them what happened, because "nothing actually happened". He followed her from house to house to house. She locked herself in a residence and closed the door and waited till he was gone. She had to ring someone to come and meet her. That was never followed up, they just dismissed it. Nobody in the office cared.'

Employee experience panel participant

When the panels reconvened at the end of the pilot, the majority of participants said they would tell their line manager or HR department if they were experiencing a form of VAW, which indicates an improvement from the beginning of the pilot. However, there is a continued need to build capacity in line managers to ensure employees feel comfortable coming forward as some participants were still unsure about disclosing or reporting.

'I'd be worried about the long-term effect; how will that impact me and my job in the future?'

Employee experience panel participant

'Well, yeah it's supposed to be [confidential] but there is so much stuff that's supposed to be confidential that isn't. You just think what does everyone think? Is it even worth saying anything? What if I wasn't believed or it was downplayed, and people thought I just took it personally?'

Employee experience panel participant

d. Tolerance of VAW has been reduced.

To measure whether there was a reduction in tolerance of VAW in the councils, data were collected on:

- The willingness of council leaders and staff to challenge VAW;
- Employee experiences of VAW;
- Formal reports to councils; and
- Disclosures in the employee experience panels.

The willingness of council leaders to challenge VAW

Of the councils who submitted evidence, four of the five councils demonstrated that they had met the leadership standard and recognised the importance of involving leaders of the council to progress work on the programme. One council did not meet the standard on leadership because several required details on gender equality and VAW were omitted from the leadership statements. This was because there was a perception among some senior personnel that there was a potential risk in emphasising the gendered nature of VAW, and that it may be alienating to some members of staff. This suggests that there is a need to build leadership capacity on VAW and gender equality.

Councils were asked to demonstrate how they had built capacity on gender equality at work and VAW in the leadership, and activities to do this included:

- Publishing internal and external statements from their chief executives and council leaders in support of the pilot. The statements were disseminated to all staff and in some councils received local press coverage.
- Engaging with elected members through awareness-raising events, inviting members onto the working group, and holding stalls outside committee meetings.
- Establishing a working group to oversee the delivery of Equally Safe at Work and ensuring that a senior member of staff participated.

Employee experiences of VAW

Employees were asked in the survey if in the last 12 months they had experienced a form of VAW while working for their current employer. Table 6 shows that there was little change in the number of women experiencing domestic abuse, stalking, rape or sexual assault, and 'honour-based' violence.

Table 6: Percentage of women who had experienced VAW				
	N	2019 (%)	N	2020 (%)
Percentage of women who had reported experiencing domestic abuse.	46	2.0	19	2.0
Percentage of women who had reported experiencing stalking.	26	1.0	15	1.0
Percentage of women who had experienced rape or sexual assault.	8	0.3	5	0.4
Percentage of women who had experienced 'honour-based' violence.	0	0	1	0.1

At the beginning of the pilot, respondents reported experiencing or witnessing a total of 1,760 cases of sexual harassment in the previous 12 months. At the end of the pilot, 424 cases of sexual harassment were experienced or witnessed in the previous 12 months. Table 7 includes the forms of sexual harassment that were most commonly experienced.

Table 7: Women’s experiences of sexual harassment

	N	2019 (%)	N	2020 (%)
Hearing colleagues making comments of a sexual nature about another woman or women in general in front of them.	566	24	141	12
Hearing unwelcome jokes of a sexual nature.	335	15	86	7
Receiving comments of a sexual nature about their body or clothes.	181	8	39	3
Experiencing unwanted touching such as a hand on the knee or lower back or shoulder rub.	134	6	35	3
Feeling uncomfortable when alone with a colleague.	172	8	44	4

Formal reports to councils

Councils were asked to provide data about VAW reporting. Three councils did not collect this data. Of the four councils which did collect it, they only collected data on sexual harassment, domestic abuse and stalking.

Table 8: Formal reports of VAW to the council

	Number of formal reports	
	2019	2020
Sexual harassment	Fewer than 5 ⁸	7
Domestic abuse	1	6
Stalking	1	2

The data highlights that very few cases are formally reported to the council. This aligns with other evidence that victim-survivors are more likely to disclose to their colleagues than formally report to their employer. It illustrates that further work is required to build trust in council reporting processes, and in highlighting the critical role of employers in supporting victim-survivors at work.

⁸ One council did not record a number if it was under five.

Disclosures in the employee experience panels

In the employee experience panels, a third of participants either disclosed an experience of VAW or had received a disclosure from a colleague. Of these:

- Some had reported this to their employer and had received support.
- Some had reported and were not supported or were discouraged by the reporting procedure.
- Some had told colleagues but not their line manager.
- Some were disclosing their experience for the first time.

This suggests that creating a non-judgemental space enables women to disclose their experience of VAW. It reaffirms that there are a significant number of women experiencing a form of VAW who may feel dissatisfied by a previous response to a disclosure or may not know who to go to for support.

Having a safe space and an environment conducive to disclosure is important. In the context of the workplace, victim-survivors may benefit from having a specific point of contact. Participants in one employee experience panel thought it would be useful if there was a designated member of staff who they could speak to who knew about VAW, support options, the relevant employment policies and the reporting process. For example, one of the pilot councils has designated gender based violence support officers who support victim-survivors in the council and signpost to agencies such as the local Women's Aid or Rape Crisis centre. This is a new initiative in the council and therefore it is too early to measure the effectiveness, but the council plans to monitor the impact and whether victim-survivors feel satisfied with how their disclosure or report was handled.

The data suggests that while some employees are becoming more confident in reporting procedures, there are still large numbers of employees not coming forward and receiving support. Effectively reducing the tolerance of VAW in the workplace requires long-term commitment from councils and further work to be done to build trust in the reporting process.

e. Successful completion of the pilot.

To measure whether councils successfully completed the pilot, they had to demonstrate that they had met the bronze level criteria by submitting evidence.

There were two evidence submission stages during the pilot, the initial submission was in January 2020, and the final stage was in November 2020. Six councils submitted evidence in January 2020 and received progress reports. Close the Gap took a flexible approach to the final evidence submission, as this was in the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic. Five councils indicated that they would be able to continue work on the pilot and submitted their final evidence in November 2020. Four councils received bronze accreditation.

Of the two councils that did not submit their final evidence:

- One council indicated before the first submission in January 2020 that the pilot highlighted key issues that needed to be addressed, and it was anticipated that the time required to do this effectively within the council would extend beyond the lifetime of the pilot.
- The remaining council submitted evidence for the first assessment in January 2020 and indicated that they were unable to continue work on the pilot due to Covid-19.

All seven councils received 'pilot accreditation' to recognise their important role in the pilot programme and in gathering key learning on local government employment practice that will shape the future development of the programme.

Submitting evidence

The evidence assessment process revealed that all five councils faced some challenges in understanding, and therefore meeting, the criteria of the programme. This highlighted a need to clarify the submission process, for example, clearly outlining what evidence needed to be submitted and how to demonstrate the relevance of the evidence to the criterion. It also highlighted a need to build gender competency within council leads and working groups to enable them to better understand the criteria, and how they would advance women's equality.

To demonstrate they had met the bronze tier, councils submitted a variety of evidence to be assessed which included:

- statements from chief executives and council leads;
- equality and diversity policies;
- VAW policies;
- flexible working policies;

- learning and development resources;
- plans for occupational segregation initiatives;
- recruitment and selection guidance;
- job adverts;
- employee codes of conduct;
- pictures of awareness raising events;
- training presentation;
- employee newsletters and leaflets;
- data tables;
- equal pay statements; and
- equality impact assessments.

Evidence was submitted through an online form on the Equally Safe at Work website. Councils were required to provide a narrative describing how they had met criteria and include resources and documents as evidence. Following the initial submission in January 2020, councils received a progress report that outlined further actions to be taken to meet the criteria. Five of the seven councils then submitted evidence for the final assessment after which Close the Gap had follow-up meetings to discuss the submission. The follow-up meetings were an opportunity to obtain further detail on work delivered, and seek clarification on any evidence gaps. It also provided an important opportunity to capture learning about councils' understanding of the criteria, and their experience of the evidence submission process. In some cases, the evidence that was submitted through the website did not meet some of the criteria. However, meeting with councils enabled detailed discussions on specific areas of work and identified additional evidence that could be provided to demonstrate how criteria were met.

Challenges with meeting criteria

There was variance in the evidence that was submitted and as well as the quality of the accompanying narrative. In some cases:

- The evidence was not relevant to the criteria, which could indicate either a misunderstanding of the criteria or that work had not been done to meet that specific criteria.
- The evidence was gender-blind, and it was therefore difficult to understand how it would advance women's equality.

- There were gaps in evidence; for example, missing evidence for specific criterion or missing data.

In response to the initial challenges that councils faced in submitting evidence, the online form was amended to include more specific questions for councils to elicit better quality information. The updated form also provided examples of what to submit for evidence. Councils were also provided with a brief guidance document outlining best practice in submitting evidence and what types of evidence to submit.

The criteria that councils found the most challenging were in the data, occupational segregation and workplace culture standards. Criteria that required councils to develop something new, such as policy or guidance material, were often met, for example, developing a violence against women policy. However, in cases where there was existing practice, such as improving data collection systems, or progression and development policies, some evidence that was submitted was gender-blind, and had not been refreshed to meet the criteria. This suggests that there may be a lack of deeper understanding around how some advanced women's equality.

In many of the accompanying narratives for criteria, there was a lack of gender analysis. This suggests that there is further work required to build gender competence in council leads to better understand the importance of gender and VAW-sensitive employment practice.

6. Key learning

What Equally Safe at Work council leads and working group members said about the pilot

In the interviews conducted by the external evaluator, Equally Safe at Work council leads shared their views on what worked well in the pilot, the personal and organisational learning that happened as a result of participation, enablers for implementation, and the main challenges they encountered.

What worked well

Council leads highlighted what they thought worked well, which included:

- The expert support and resources provided by Close the Gap;
- A clear framework and specific criteria to guide the work;
- Gaining rich data from surveys and employee experience panels;
- Having access to training on flexible working and VAW delivered by Close the Gap;
- Developing new partnership working between departments and services in the council;
- Networking opportunities with other councils in the pilot; and
- Shared learning between Close the Gap and other councils.

'The pilot has really allowed us to focus on gender inequality in the workplace and has provided a real impetus for us to do something about it. It's been an excellent programme.'

Working group member

Learning for council leads and their organisations

Council leads for Equally Safe at Work identified key learning from participating in the programme, which included:

- Gaining a better understanding of the links between VAW and gender equality;
- Realising the importance of creating a supportive workplace culture and building trust in the reporting process;
- Identifying the need to do more awareness raising with the male workforce;

- Understanding how women's inequality impacts their own workforce; and
- Identifying gaps in their own knowledge and understanding.

'I've always thought I knew about gender equality and VAW. I knew that there was an impact on women in the workplace but I hadn't got the links of low pay and employment vulnerability. The pilot made this much clearer in my mind. 75% of our workforce are women so understanding these links is vital.'

Council lead

'We've learned quite a bit more about our own organisation through the data: that we've a long way to go. We've recognised the significant impact of VAW on individuals but feel that we have more to do to build on how to change our culture.'

Council lead

Enablers for implementation

Council leads highlighted the factors which enabled them to operationalise the programme, which included:

- Commitment from the council leadership which was essential to securing participants in the working group;
- The involvement of senior leaders from different areas of the council to ensure a cohesive and cross-departmental approach;
- Commitment from elected members;
- Commitment from the chief executive and corporate management team;
- Trade union engagement;
- The involvement of partners from local VAW partnerships and close working relationships with local Women's Aid and Rape Crisis centres;
- Having a shared understanding in the working group of the importance of the programme for the whole workforce; and
- Having a diverse working group comprising people with ownership of, and competence around, each of the standards, for example an IT person for the data standard.

Main challenges

Council leads also highlighted a number of challenges they faced in implementing the programme which included:

- Conflicting internal workload priorities;
- A lack of staffing resource to carry out the work;
- It being seen as a standalone project rather than integral to council policy and practice for the long term;
- Getting the message across to a diverse and dispersed workforce, for example, reaching staff that are not office-based;
- The large amount of work required in a short space of time; and
- Limited resources.

'Every council is different but we had limited resources to work with, but we still made progress. A year is just not long enough particularly for sustainability. A common theme for us is how difficult it is to communicate with parts of the workforce which are not linked to computers. I think we'd have had better engagement if we'd had longer to plan and develop.'

Council lead

'It's a lot to fulfil all the criteria under the six standards and a challenge to fit this alongside our normal workload. Councils have reduced headcounts and posts have been deleted and there's less resource available.'

Council lead

A broader challenge for councils identified in the evaluation was making the links between gender equality and VAW, which was a significant conceptual leap for some of those involved. At the end of the pilot, it was also identified that there remained a gap in gender competence in councils. This was evidenced by the difficulties that some had, for example, in developing and reviewing employment policies to ensure gender-sensitivity. This highlights the need to build gender competence among key people within councils from the start of their participation within the pilot.

Critical success factors

Learning from the pilot identifies a number of critical factors for successful participation in Equally Safe at Work. The three integral components are:

- Leadership commitment;
- Resource allocation; and
- Understanding of, and commitment to, tackling VAW and advancing gender equality at work.

Leadership commitment

Councils that secured buy-in from the chief executive and other senior leaders delivered higher quality work. The councils that were most successful were ones where senior staff and chief executives were more open to reviewing their employment policies and practices, and were more receptive to guidance from Close the Gap.

Resource allocation

While all councils had working groups to oversee the delivery of the programme, council leads were responsible for co-ordinating the delivery of some criteria of the pilot, for example, recruiting employee panel participants or identifying line managers to attend the training. Councils that had more than one member of staff leading work on the accreditation programme were able to better progress through the criteria and problem solve to address any barriers. In some cases, where only one member of staff was responsible for the programme, progress was slowed because of capacity issues.

It is important that adequate resources are allocated to participating in the programme as it signifies that the council values the work being delivered. It also demonstrates commitment to addressing gender inequality and VAW by making it a priority to the council.

Understanding of, and commitment to, tackling VAW and advancing gender equality at work

An important factor in shaping progress with the criteria was the level of knowledge and understanding among those working on the accreditation. Commitment to developing meaningful work was also critical in driving the work forward. There were some challenges with those criteria which required a gender

lens to be applied to policy development and practice review. However, lead officers that had a good understanding of the importance of tackling gender equality in the workplace were better able to adapt and address knowledge gaps, and were more willing to work with Close the Gap to gain further expertise.

The evaluation has identified a need to build gender and VAW competence in councils leads and working groups as an important first step in working towards accreditation. This capacity building will ensure that key people within councils are better equipped to deliver high quality work that will advance women's equality.

7. Conclusion

The Equally Safe at Work pilot has been effective in engaging councils on VAW and gender equality, and has enabled positive changes to employment practice which contribute to the advancement of women's equality. The programme has built capacity in councils to better understand, respond to, and prevent VAW. It has also enabled councils to progress work on gender equality by developing improved employment policy and practice; gathering data that are critical to gender equality at work; and developing initiatives to address occupational segregation.

A key success factor of Equally Safe at Work is the prescriptiveness of the programme. Councils were provided with clear and specific guidance for improving employment practice across six standards, including best practice examples. Through this cross-sector approach, councils were able to make changes to employment practice, build capacity in line managers and others, and challenge harmful stereotypical attitudes and behaviours. Learning from the pilot also highlighted that for councils to be successful in the programme, it is critical that there is commitment from senior leaders, adequate resources to deliver the work, and crucially, an understanding of and commitment to ending VAW and advancing gender equality at work.

'[It's] not just an impactful accreditation programme which I look forward to the council's continuing engagement in, but an approach which makes good business sense to unlock the potential of women in the workforce who are safe and achieving their potential.'

Working group member

Case studies from pilot councils

North Lanarkshire Council

Providing specialist support officers to support victim-survivors of VAW.

North Lanarkshire Council established a voluntary role of Gender Based Violence (GBV) support officer, undertaken by existing staff members, who can be contacted by individual employees who are experiencing, or have experienced, VAW. Currently, the council has eight GBV support officers.

The GBV support officers receive training on the gendered dynamics of VAW and the impact of trauma on victim-survivors. They have a dedicated email address and a rota to ensure the email is regularly monitored. They signpost to support mechanisms within the workplace, as well as to external specialist support organisations such as the local Women's Aid or Rape Crisis Centre. The team also provides support to line managers on best practice when supporting victim-survivors.

As part of the pilot, the GBV support officers have implemented a system to collect intersectional data on employee experiences of VAW. This will be used to inform the council's approach and ensure that different groups of victim-survivors feel supported by the council.

The council also delivered an awareness-raising campaign where stickers were posted on the back of toilet doors and posters were distributed throughout the council to increase awareness of the GBV support officers and the support that is available to employees.

Aberdeen City Council

Building women's leadership capacity.

Prior to the pilot, Aberdeen City Council had encouraged employees to participate in a Leadership Exchange programme which is a cross-sector initiative which pairs leaders at middle, senior and executive levels to learn from each other, and improve leadership skills.

As part of the pilot, the council identified tackling the under-representation of women among senior leaders as a priority. The council examined the barriers women face in progressing into senior roles, and as a result developed a plan to encourage more women to participate in the Leadership Exchange programme. To enable participation, Chief Officers have been asked to nominate women in their teams for the programme.

Shetland Islands Council

Building capacity on VAW and work through e-learning modules and guidance for new managers.

To accompany the development of the VAW policy, Shetland Islands Council produced resources for employees to build understanding and awareness of the role of employers in supporting victim-survivors and preventing VAW. They developed an e-learning module on VAW and work which provides information on what VAW is and how to recognise it in the workplace. It also links to external support agencies including the local Rape Crisis Centre and Women's Aid group.

Shetland Islands Council also developed council-specific guidance on VAW which includes information on Equally Safe at Work and is included in inductions for new line managers.

Perth and Kinross Council

Positive action in recruitment to challenge occupational segregation.

In Perth and Kinross Council, to ensure all job advertisements included the availability of flexible working, standardised text was developed which all managers must include in the recruitment information when advertising for a new role. To make sure that recruitment practice was free from gender bias, standardised equality statements were also developed to be included in all job advertisements. This includes a statement for advertising roles characterised by occupational segregation, which challenges the notion of gender norms and stereotypes.

Midlothian Council

Supporting women to participate in women's professional networks.

In Midlothian Council, the HR team undertook a scoping exercise to collect data on women's professional networks within Midlothian and in nearby areas with the view to support more women into job- and/or industry-specific networking opportunities.

The council then published a list of available professional women's networks for employees. Employees register their interest with HR to ensure their participation is recorded by the council. They can also receive paid time off to participate in the network.

This initiative in the council links with their Making Performance Matter process which enables employees to explore their development needs with their line managers. Guidance for Making Performance Matter is provided to both employees and managers to ensure they're able to effectively use the process. Supporting women to participate in networks enables access to external expertise is one evidenced action to tackle women's under-representation in senior roles.

Shetland Islands Council

Improving communication with women catering workers.

In Shetland Islands Council women working in the catering department highlighted that they were often unaware of what was happening in the council, such as staff events or changes in employment policies, because they didn't have access to a computer at work.

This issue emerged through the Equally Safe at Work employee experience panels. In response, the council provided the catering staff with a computer so they can access the staff intranet, and a council email address so they can stay connected with what's going on in the council.

The catering staff now also have time during their shift to check the intranet for updates from the council.

Midlothian Council

Engaging with elected members to increase understanding and awareness of VAW at work.

Midlothian Council organised an awareness-raising event with elected members as part of their 16 Days of Action campaign to end VAW. The session had speakers from the local Women's Aid Group, Close the Gap, Midlothian's VAW Co-ordinator, the Head of Adult and Social Care in the council and the HR Manager.

The event focused on the role of the council in supporting victim-survivors and preventing VAW, and built understanding and awareness of how VAW impacts women at work and the wider Council.

The important role of elected members was highlighted and elected members discussed what could be done in the local community to raise awareness of VAW. One elected member agreed to work with local football clubs to raise awareness among men and boys about VAW.

Aberdeen City Council

Developing tailored approaches to addressing occupational segregation.

To address occupational segregation Aberdeen City Council undertook a detailed data analysis to identify which areas in the council required specific focus. Teams in the council have been divided into seven categories depending on the proportion of male or female employees. For example, category 1 includes areas where 90% or more of employees are either exclusively male or female. This includes Early Years, Building Services, Environmental Services, and Waste Services. Category 1 is designated a priority area for tackling occupational segregation.

The council have developed an action plan for each category which includes increasing women participating in an existing mentoring programme, offering part-time and flexible working, providing shadowing opportunities and offering individual development plans for male and female staff who are interested in a sideways move. The council is also exploring delivering a targeted recruitment campaign to attract women and men into non-traditional roles. The council will be monitoring the implementation of the action plan on a quarterly basis to monitor progress.

Early adopter councils

Convening working groups with expertise and authority to progress work Equally Safe at Work.

As part of the pilot, each council convened a cross-departmental working group to oversee the delivery of the Equally Safe at Work pilot. All working groups were required to have a senior member of staff who had authority to progress the work and in one council the Chief Executive was the chair of the working group.

Working groups comprised a wide range of expertise from across councils including trade union representatives, elected members, and representatives from HR, health and wellbeing, social work, IT, organisational development, community justice, media and campaigns, housing, and employee relations. By bringing together different expertise, councils were better able identify solutions to challenging criteria and progress through the programme.

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Appendix

Equally Safe at Work Framework

Bronze

Leadership

- 1.** The council has made a public statement signed by the Chief Executive and the Council Leader in support of the Equally Safe at Work pilot.
- 2.** The Chief Executive has made a written statement to all employees about the Equally Safe at Work pilot.
- 3.** An Equally Safe at Work action plan has been developed, and its delivery is overseen by a working group.
- 4.** Elected members have been engaged to build leadership capacity for Equally Safe at Work.
- 5.** Cross-departmental engagement with the local multi-agency Violence Against Women Partnership is visible.
- 6.** Delivery of an internal awareness raising campaign that highlights the links between gender inequality, women's labour market inequality and violence against women.

Data

- 11.** Gender-disaggregated employee data is collected.
- 12.** Intersectional gender-disaggregated data on employee experiences of violence against women is collected.
- 13.** Gender pay gap information has been published.

Flexible working

- 17.** A sample of line managers have attended a flexible working workshop.
- 18.** Flexible working training is included in inductions for new line managers.
- 19.** The availability of flexible working is included in job advertisements.

Occupational segregation

- 24.** An equal pay statement is published which includes horizontal and vertical occupational segregation information.
- 25.** Recruitment practice is free from gender bias.
- 26.** Development opportunities are gender-sensitive.
- 27.** Progression practice is reviewed and updated.
- 28.** Initiatives to address horizontal segregation are developed.
- 29.** Initiatives to address vertical segregation are developed.

Workplace culture

- 34.** Your equality policy has been reviewed, or developed.
- 35.** An employee code of conduct or equivalent is in place.
- 36.** A minimum of one policy has been reviewed to ensure gender- sensitivity.
- 37.** Equalities training has been updated.
- 38.** A sample of staff have received equalities training.
- 39.** Equality training is included in inductions.
- 40.** An equal pay review has taken place in the past two years or is planned to take place within the next year.

Violence against women

- 46.** A sample of staff have received violence against women training.
- 47.** Staff capacity on violence against women is built.
- 48.** A violence against women policy is developed.
- 49.** Awareness raising material is used.
- 50.** Support mechanisms for victim-survivors are in place.

Silver

Leadership

7. Collaborative working with specialist support services is visible.

Data

14. Intersectional data is collected and analysed.

15. Qualitative data on staff experiences is collected and analysed.

Flexible working

20. Audit of flexible working requests and refusals has been completed.

21. Barriers to uptake of flexible working have been identified.

22. Best practice in flexible working is shared and celebrated.

Occupational segregation

30. Spend on training and skills is gender-proofed.

31. Occupational segregation has reduced.

32. Intersectional initiatives are developed.

Workplace culture

41. A specific internal awareness raising campaign is delivered.

42. A plan is developed to track towards all staff receiving equalities training.

43. Employees and workers are paid the real Living Wage.

Violence against women

51. Staff feedback on reporting process is collected.

52. Employment policies are VAW-sensitive.

53. An anonymous reporting mechanism is developed.

Gold

Leadership

- 8.** Additional or existing resources are allocated for work on gender equality.
- 9.** Gender equality is integrated in strategic documents.
- 10.** Commitment to gender equality is visible outwith the organisation.

Data

- 16.** Intersectional data is collected and analysed.

Flexible working

- 23.** Flexible working is available for senior roles.

Occupational segregation

- 33.** Additional or existing resources are allocated for work on occupational segregation.

Workplace culture

- 44.** Childcare support is provided.
- 45.** Additional or existing resources are allocated for work on gender equality initiatives.

Violence against women

- 54.** Domestic abuse leave is provided.
- 55.** Additional or existing resources are allocated for work on preventing violence against women.
- 56.** Learning and best practice is shared with at least one other council.

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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