



# Getting ready for Equally Safe at Work

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# Welcome to Equally Safe at Work



Thank you for your interest in the programme. This short guide is designed to support employers prepare by introducing key concepts, outlining early actions, and signposting helpful resources. Using it will give you a strong foundation before full participation.

Once enrolled, your organisation will be supported through a structured process including self-assessment, a tailored development session, and ongoing access to tools, resources, and one-to-one support — all aimed at making meaningful progress on gender equality and preventing violence against women (VAW).

Equally Safe at Work is delivered by Close the Gap and it supports the implementation of Scotland's Equally Safe strategy by helping organisations put proactive, evidence-based, and gender-sensitive policies into practice.

The programme is built around six core standards — leadership, data, flexible working, occupational segregation, workplace culture, and VAW — and offers a tiered accreditation system (development, bronze, silver and gold) with increasing depth of action at each level.

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# Key actions to get ready

While you don't need to be enrolled to get started, there are several early steps that can build momentum and lay the groundwork for a successful accreditation journey.



## 1. Build the foundations for change

Organisational change can take time, and learning from the evaluation of the programme has highlighted three key factors to be successful in the programme. Building this in early will help build sustainable practice:

- Secure visible commitment from leaders in the organisation to gender equality and tackling VAW.
- Ensure there's internal capacity — time and resources — to support this work.
- Start exploring the barriers facing women in your organisation and consider where improvements could be made.

## 2. Identify and connect key staff

Identify who will lead or support work on the programme. This may include colleagues working in HR, communications, data, equality and diversity, learning and development, as well as senior leaders and union representatives. Doing this will also support in the development of a working group to drive the programme forward. Sharing our **Why be involved leaflet** with key staff may be helpful for outlining the benefit of participating.

## 3. Join the Equally Safe at Work Community of Practice

The Community of Practice is a space for employers interested in or taking part in the programme to share best practice at events held throughout the year, which feature guest speakers, specialised topics, and peer learning opportunities. It also has a Knowledge Hub (KHub) page to connect with other employers and stay up to date on developments and resources.

Register here to join the **Community of Practice**.

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## 4. Use guidance on anti-racism and gender equality

Engage with Close the Gap's **Guidance for employers on taking an anti-racist approach to tackling women's workplace inequality** and use the **action plan checklist** to identify actions to tackle racism and sexism in the workplace.

## 5. Follow menopause and the workplace guidance

Review Close the Gap's guide on **Creating a menopause-aware workplace** and take steps to raise awareness, develop supportive policies, and remove stigma.

## 6. Complete 'Think Business, Think Equality'

Use Close the Gap's **free online tool** to assess your practices on gender equality in the workplace and begin your improvement journey. By completing the self-assessment, you receive tailored advice and an action plan which sets out the simple steps you can take.

## 7. Share guidance with line managers

Line managers play a key role in shaping inclusive, safe workplaces. Start by sharing practical guidance that helps them understand how to best support women in the workplace.

Useful resources include:

- **Guidance for line managers on violence against women and work.**
- **Guidance for line managers on sexual harassment.**
- **Key messages for responding to sexual harassment.**
- **Guidance for line managers on rape and sexual assault: best practice for supporting victim-survivors.**
- **Key messages for responding to disclosures or reports of rape and sexual assault.**



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## 8. Refer to Equally Safe at Work: A guide for union reps

Share the **Guide for trade union reps** to help union reps understand how Equally Safe at Work aligns with union bargaining priorities and drive action on gender equality and preventing VAW forward.

## 9. Review your workforce data

Begin gathering and reviewing data on workforce composition, occupational segregation (i.e. the unequal distribution of women and men across jobs and grades), **gender pay gaps**, and access to flexible working. Look for patterns or disparities that may indicate gender inequality. Consider **intersectional factors** such as how race and gender or disability and gender overlap and compound resulting in deeper inequalities.



## 10. Review your workplace policies through a gender lens

Start identifying which policies could impact gender equality in the workplace. Key areas to focus on include flexible working, recruitment, progression and promotion, learning and development, health and safety, or lone working. Ask: Who benefits from this policy? Who might be excluded? Are there unintended barriers for women or other marginalised groups?

## 11. Review evaluation findings to learn what works

Explore the **Equally Safe at Work: Findings from the evaluation in local government, NHS and third sector 2022–2023** to see what changes other employers have made.

Review the **Equally Safe at Work case studies (2019–2023)** to learn from good practice across sectors. Use these insights to spark ideas, anticipate challenges, and shape your own approach to accreditation. You can also **watch a case study on NHS Ayrshire and Arran's experience here**.

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## Next Steps



Taking action now will help your organisation build momentum and feel confident when the programme begins. Use this time to review, plan, and engage key colleagues. Early preparation will ensure you're well-placed to make the most of the support and resources available through Equally Safe at Work.

**Visit Equally Safe at Work and Close the Gap for more tools, resources, and updates, or email us on [esaw@closethegap.org.uk](mailto:esaw@closethegap.org.uk) with any questions.**



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Equally Safe at Work is delivered by Close the Gap,  
Scotland's expert policy advocacy organisation  
working on women's labour market participation.



**Close the Gap**

**[www.closethegap.org.uk](http://www.closethegap.org.uk)**

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