



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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A FAIRER SCOTLAND FOR WOMEN: GENDER PAY GAP ACTION PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

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MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

Jamie Hepburn MSP,
Minister for Business,
Fair Work and Skills



Our landmark Gender Pay Gap Action Plan, the first in the UK, was published two years ago to coincide with International Women's Day on 8th March 2019. A day that recognised and celebrated the contribution women have made to the domestic and global economy while acknowledging that more needs to be done to eliminate the persistence of the gender pay gap.

Since then we have experienced domestic and global upheaval, firstly with the onset of Scotland leaving the European Union and the uncertainty that brings to the protections provided by European Union European Pillar of Social Rights.

And then the world was impacted by a pandemic that no one saw coming. COVID-19 has affected every aspect of our lives but women in Scotland have faced particular challenges as a result and face longer-term impacts. Women have been crucial in keeping society together in these uncertain times undertaking the majority of frontline roles that were rightly recognised as essential. Some of the sectors consistently impacted by COVID-19 restrictions with subsequent effects on employment and income have high rates of female employment, for example more than half of those in employment in the Accommodation and food services and Retail sectors are women.¹ Women from ethnic minorities and young women are also more at risk as a higher proportion are employed in sectors affected by restrictions compared to other sectors.

Even pre COVID-19, women did a disproportionate amount of unpaid housework and caring in the household. The pandemic has exacerbated these roles and highlighted how important work traditionally seen as 'women's work', such as housework, cleaning and unpaid care is. With necessary school and nursery closures, we know that housework and childcare has fallen more on women than men, which may make it harder for them to maintain or take on employment.² This has prompted UN Women to estimate that the pandemic risks setting women's equality back 25 years.³

Our own [analysis](#) suggests the COVID-19 pandemic could exacerbate existing labour market inequalities for protected groups including women and overall the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as Brexit, may put pressure on both the gender employment gap and the gender pay gap in coming years.

Indeed, the IMF has warned that COVID-19 threatens to roll back worldwide gains in women's economic opportunities and widen persistent gender gaps.⁴ That is why we are committed to achieving gender equality and will do all we can to improve women's position in the labour market as a key part of delivering inclusive economic growth.

1 ONS, Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2019.

2 See for example: <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2019/10/Risky-business.pdf>; <https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/BN290-Mothers-and-fathers-balancing-work-and-life-underlockdown.pdf>

3 <https://data.unwomen.org/publications/whose-time-care-unpaid-care-and-domestic-work-during-covid-19>

4 [The COVID-19 Gender Gap - IMF Blog](#)

We achieved our overall ambition “to continue to reduce the gender pay gap for employees in Scotland by the end of this parliamentary term” (May 2021⁵). 2020 did see us achieve the lowest median gender pay gap for full-time employees on record at 3.0%. This is down from 7.2% in 2019 and lower than the UK as whole which sits at 7.4%. The median gender pay gap for all employees (including full- and part-time employees) in Scotland also fell from 14.4% in 2019 to 10.9% in 2020 – lower than the UK level (15.5%).⁶

While this is welcome progress, any level of gender pay gap is too high and it is particularly disappointing that employment gaps for minority ethnic and disabled women have marginally widened over the year. It is clear there is work to be done. Since publication of our gender pay gap action plan we have been taking forward a range of actions across government that we committed to in the plan.

We have shown leadership by taking steps to improve gender competence in policy making, ensure gender equality in procurement guidance, improve intersectional data, including the publication of research to support policy development. On 18 December we published Scotland’s first [Gender Equality Index](#) which sets a baseline against which Scotland will be able to measure its progress towards equality between men and women through time.

Since March 2020, we have committed over £1.2bn to support economic recovery. Including £100m to protect jobs and support those who have been made redundant or whose jobs are at risk. The recent budget includes an additional investment of £125m to support employability and skills provision. This includes the Young Person’s Guarantee and the National Transition Training Fund which supports those who are unemployed or at risk of redundancy to access training. Advancing equality and inclusion and working to eliminate discrimination will be central to these initiatives to ensure that no one is left behind.

In employment we have continued to support flexible working as a mechanism to support women and other workers with caring, home schooling or other commitments. COVID-19 has brought a rapid move to flexible working and a need to work from home wherever possible. We funded experts Flexibility Works and Timewise to provide advice and support to a range of businesses and employment organisations on flexible and home working to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

We also continue to support employers to advance equality in the workplace through our Workplace Equality Fund. In 2019-20 we provided funding of over £800,000 to 25 projects and our recent round of funding is currently supporting 12 projects with over £300,000 which will support protected groups such as women, ethnic minorities and disabled workers to enter, remain and progress in work.

⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2019/03/fairer-scotland-women-gender-pay-gap-action-plan/documents/fairer-scotland-women-gender-pay-gap-action-plan/fairer-scotland-women-gender-pay-gap-action-plan/govscot%3Adocument/fairer-scotland-women-gender-pay-gap-action-plan.pdf?forceDownload=true>

⁶ ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

Building on our previous 2018 programme, in 2020 we launched a new Women Returners Programme providing over £400,000 to 12 initiatives that promote workplace equality and support women to return to work following a career break with a particular focus on women that experience multiple barriers.

In 2020-21 we committed £7.35 million for Parental Employment Support Fund (PESF), this included £5 million of core PESF funding and an additional £2.35 million to enhance the support available for young parents, disabled parents and individuals accessing funded ELC entitlement. We have now committed a further £5 million to support disabled parents, bringing total in year investment to £12.35 million, and cumulative investment to £14.45 million. We have also committed £27m for Fair Start Scotland in 2021-22 to support unemployed disabled people and those with additional barriers to move into fair and sustained work.

We continued to pursue our commitments across other areas of work where drivers of the gender pay gap prevail. Work has commenced at local authority level to train nurseries and settings to be gender friendly settings, including implementation of the '[Gender Equal Play](#)' guide, published jointly by the Care Inspectorate and Zero Tolerance. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for the education system to adapt quickly and support education recover, the delivery date for several equality actions were postponed. We remain, however, fully committed to progressing this work in the coming year including the expansion of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) in particular ensuring that staff, the majority of whom are women, are fairly remunerated. We will also pick up on work commenced to consider an approach that treats child and adult care as economic infrastructure.

I thank all of those who have shared our common aim of reducing the gender pay gap in Scotland, none more so than the members of the Gender Pay Gap Working Group for their continued involvement and commitment to this important agenda. It is imperative going forward that we act to redress the impact the pandemic has had on women in the economy, ensuring that women's economic position is improved, that they have equal access to skills and career opportunities that allow them to progress to senior decision making positions and thrive in the labour market and wider society. The work that we have and will continue to undertake will assist in achieving this goal.

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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the actions set out in our [A Fairer Scotland for Women, Gender Pay Gap Action Plan](#), published on International Women's Day in 8 March 2019. This plan forms part of a suite of action plans, developed by the Scottish Government to help focus policies and resources on achieving sustainable and inclusive growth and a wellbeing economy. This progress report is published alongside the [Fair Work Action Plan progress report](#), and the second [Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan progress report](#), demonstrating our ongoing commitment to fair and inclusive work and employability support.

When we published the Action Plan in 2019, we also committed to publish annual updates reporting on progress. The first annual report of the Gender Pay Gap Action Plan was initially due to be published in March 2020, however due to the urgency in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, work around this was postponed. The annual report will therefore cover work undertaken to progress the actions from March 2019 when the report was published to early 2021.

This report takes the same form as the Gender Pay Gap Action Plan in that we will provide an update on action taken under each chapter heading detailing what we have done and what we will be taking forward.

We also agreed to monitor progress by producing a set of key performance indicators that report on progress from 2019 as the benchmark, to date. The indicators document that accompanies this report is available [here](#).

CHAPTER 1

LEADERSHIP

This chapter looked at how Scottish Government can show leadership in tackling the gender pay gap by looking more explicitly at our policies, including future Programmes for Government, through a gendered lens to allow particular attention to be given to the implications of policies in terms of gender. We want to enable women to fully, safely and equally participate in employment, which remains at the heart of our Labour Market action plans.

Within this chapter, we committed to a variety of actions to improve gender competence, support our wider Fair Work ambition, reduce the gender pay gap in Scottish Government and wider public bodies and improve data.

Improve Gender Competence

We committed to starting the process of work to ensure that our own policy makers, analysts and delivery bodies are sufficiently competent in their understanding of intersectional gender issues to design policy and services that advance women's equality, particularly in relation to the labour market and economy. This would include our contract with WiSE Research Centre for Economic Justice to carry out a project on improving the gender competence of analysts and policy makers, being run initially on a pilot basis in the Finance, Economy and Fair Work portfolio.

This project was primarily to improve gender outcomes in economic policy. It consisted of two elements: a training course on gender and economic policy for staff in the Economy directorate, and assistance with the development of two Equality Impact Assessments. Participants found both parts of the project to be very valuable.

Undertaking Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) is crucial in policy development. The Office of the Chief Social Policy Adviser has been working to design a review of the Scottish Government's approach to impact assessments. This will result in a range of recommendations setting out how the Scottish Government's approach to EQIA's could be improved in order to better support policy making, increase focus on National Outcomes, reduce complexity, ensure legal compliance and improve value for money. We will also be considering the outputs of a [literature review](#) published on 11 February 2021, providing evidence on other governments' approaches to assessing different policy impacts and their effectiveness. Going forward, this will be valuable for EQIA improvement and wider mainstreaming work.

In order to address gender inequality in Scotland, we established a National Advisory Council for Women and Girls (NACWG). The Council's [first report](#) published in January 2019, setting out eleven recommendations across a number of policies similar to those contained within our action plan. We published the [Scottish Government's Response to the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls 2019 Report Recommendations](#) in December 2020, setting out how we will implement the Council's recommendations.

In January 2020, the NACWG published its [second report](#) on 'Policy Coherence' considering how policy is made and setting out recommendations to ensure Scottish Government policy making is gender sensitive, including:

- Creating a stand-alone Equalities Directorate, and “Centres of Expertise” in all Scottish Government Directorates, on intersectional gender competence.
- Establishing a senior officials and leaders group to ensure intersectional gender competent policy coherence across Scottish Government policy development.
- Creating “Policy Makers National Standards” to support quality standards and accountability on intersectional gender competence in policymaking.
- The delivery by Scottish Ministers of an Annual Statement, followed by a debate, on Gender Policy Coherence to the Scottish Parliament.
- Creating a genuine effort in coproduction of policy making with evidence of lived experience at its heart.
- Ensuring adequate resourcing to enable the collection and analysis of robust intersectional data.

We have already established a new Directorate for Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights, and will progress the remaining recommendations as part of our 2020-21 Programme for Government commitment to develop a renewed and ambitious equality and human rights mainstreaming strategy. Our strategy will be underpinned by a comprehensive approach to improving data collation and analysis and by work to ensure the voices of those impacted shape our approach and policies.

The NACWG published its [third report](#) on the topic of “Creating an Intersectional Gender Architecture” on 27 January 2021. The report calls for the full devolution of equality to the Scottish Parliament, the integration of intersectional gender budget analysis into the Scottish Budget process and an expanded mandate for the Scottish Human Rights Commission to promote and protect women’s rights, including the power to take on cases on behalf of individuals. Other recommendations are directed to the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Human Rights Commission. We are currently considering our response and will publish a substantive response in due course.

We are committed to undertaking an ambitious and progressive agenda to ensure equality and human rights are embedded in all we do to mitigate against the disproportionate impacts COVID-19 has and will continue to have on different groups, including women, young women, pregnant women, women from minority ethnic communities, older women and disabled women. We will develop an equality and human rights mainstreaming strategy, as stated in our [Programme for Government](#) (PfG) 2020-21, that is underpinned by a comprehensive approach to improving gender competence in policy development, data collation and analysis, and that harnesses the voices of those impacted to shape our approach and policies.

“As we recover from the pandemic we must ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed into policy design and services so that we protect and advance women’s equality, particularly in relation to tackling poverty, promoting access to and progression within good jobs, and supporting business growth. Our gender pay gap action plan has worked to tackle the drivers of the gender pay gap across a woman’s life and since publication we have seen the gender pay gap fall to a record low in Scotland across all measurements. I welcome the progress made to date but our work must continue until the gender pay gap is eradicated once and for all.”

Christina McKelvie,
Minister for Older People and Equalities.

Improving data

We commissioned boosting of the Scottish component of the Office of National Statistics (ONS)’s 2020 Online Time Use Survey and our analysis survey looked at how time was used in Scotland in 2020 with a focus on gendered differences between women and men. We published [Time use in Scotland 2020:ONS Online Survey – gender analysis](#) on 16 December 2020. On 27 October 2020, we published the [Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2019: intra-household distribution of resources](#), which looks at how couples organise their income and financial responsibilities and how they conduct financial decision making.

On 28 January 2021 we published the [Equality and Fairer Scotland Budget Statement](#) 2021-22 which includes analysis of the budget by gender alongside other protected characteristics. This and previous statements have also included piloting of new tools for budget analysis. The Equality Budget Advisory Group are developing recommendations on the tools and processes needed to further analyse the impact of the Scottish budget on protected characteristics including gender.

Following a request from the Scottish Parliament’s Budget Process Review Group, we committed to explore cumulative distributional analysis of the budget: adding up direct and indirect taxes, social security and spending on public services and then examining how this spend was distributed across different groups within the population. An expert seminar held in October 2018 and hosted by the Chair of the Equality Budget Advisory Group (EBAG) concluded that despite technical challenges in capturing the entire social contract, there were steps that could be taken to extend and improve the analysis currently performed by the Scottish Government. This work started in 2019 with results originally due for release in 2020. However, the work was paused due to the COVID pandemic. It restarted in October 2020 and results of the feasibility study will be available during spring 2021.

We also made a commitment to improve the intersectional data available for all policy officers across national and local government to help with the development of future policies. Equality Analysts aim to develop the intersectional data available on the Equality Evidence Finder website www.equalityevidence.scot over the coming year. This work will form part of a new Equality Data Improvement Programme We published [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Impact on equality](#) on the 17 September 2020. This paper looks at labour market impacts of COVID-19 for different groups of people, including women, identifying a number of adverse labour market impacts that women are likely to experience due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to produce routine statistics, which have allowed us to monitor changes to women and other population groups’ position which can be found at [Scottish Government Labour Market Statistics](#). To further inform our policies and programmes in mitigating the impacts of COVID-19, we published [Inequalities by gender in the context of COVID-19 \(slide pack\)](#).

In response to the [National Advisory Council on Women and Girls](#) 2019 report recommendation 3 we committed to carrying out a thematic gender review of the new National Performance Framework (NPF) as a catalyst for system analysis and change. This will be taken forward as part of the next NPF review. Periodic reviews of the framework are mandated by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, and are undertaken to ensure that the framework continues to drive increased wellbeing.

We are proud to have published Scotland's first [Gender Equality Index](#) on 18 December 2020. This sets a baseline against which Scotland will be able to measure its progress towards equality between men and women through time. The index includes domains of power, health, work, money, knowledge and time. The index found that Scotland was furthest from full gender equality in the 'power' domain, which measures equality between women and men in decision making positions across the political, economic and social spheres. Most equality was found in the 'health' domain, which covered health status and access to health services.

Reduce the Gender Pay Gap in Scottish Government and its Public Bodies

Scottish Government leads the way as an employer and this is why we committed to undertake an Equal Pay Audit to help us to understand the causes of our own gender pay gap. Due to COVID-19 this work was delayed, however going forward we remain committed to this action in partnership with our trade unions by the end of 2021.

We also committed to work with our Non Departmental Public Bodies and Agencies through our Sponsorship teams to reduce their own gender pay gaps. To progress this the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture wrote to all public bodies in August 2019 with regard to taking forward action on Fair Work, which included work to address gender pay gaps. Work to address gender, race and disability gaps was also presented to the Public Sector Equalities Forum in December 2020.

We committed to undertaking a review of the specific duties underpinning the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). That review will take into account stakeholders' views and a range of evidence, such as the *Is Scotland Fairer?* report published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The aim will be to move from a culture of compliance to one that supports progress in delivering equality and a fairer Scotland.

We committed to undertaking a review of the specific duties underpinning the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), with the aim of moving from a culture of compliance to one that supports progress in delivering equality and a fairer Scotland. We remain committed to taking forward the review of the operation of the PSED in Scotland. The first stage will be the production of a report on the effectiveness of the PSED in Scotland, learning from the experience of seeking to discharge the equality duty during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have undertaken substantial engagement with stakeholder and equality networks throughout the pandemic, and reviewed a wide range of evidence, including reports in the Equality and Human Rights Commission *Is Scotland Fairer?* (first series), and we have therefore learned a great deal about the operation of the PSED in these circumstances. This learning will shape our interim findings and suggested next steps, which will underpin the second stage of the review. Work on this report is underway and we intend to publish it in spring 2021. The second stage of the review will involve engagement with equality stakeholders to develop specific proposals and will form part of the development of the new strategy for embedding equality and human rights in the work of the government, as per the commitment made in the September 2020 Programme for Government. This will ensure that the PSED is considered alongside the overall equality and human rights framework, which is vital given the importance of the PSED as a key legislative driver for change.

The Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 sets a 'gender representation objective' for a public board that 50% of its non-executive members be women. The purpose of the act is to redress the historical under representation of women on our public boards. It was announced in June 2019 that women now account for more than half of all board members of public bodies across Scotland, where appointments are made under the process overseen by the Scottish Government's Public Appointments Team. This is a great achievement and this legislation will ensure that women are enabled to participate in senior decision making forums. A progress report will be available in April 2021.

Embedding equality in procurements

We committed to develop our sustainable procurement tools and guidance to help buyers across the public sector in Scotland to identify and pursue equality outcomes in relevant procurements. It also helps buyers identify suitable public contract requirement from which we can develop an exemplary case study of how public sector equality duties can be met with respect to gender and procurement.

We launched our online platform in June 2020 providing easier access to the [National sustainable procurement tools](#). The guidance for practical application of sustainable procurement is also on the platform enabling public sector buyers to more easily access and reference information on how to identify and pursue equality outcomes in relevant procurements at various stages of the procurement process. The [equality](#) aspect of the sustainable procurement tools and guidance was endorsed by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The tender for search and selection services for executive appointments for the Scottish National Investment Bank is an example of pursuing equality outcomes in relevant procurements. The successful contractor was required to: align recruitment processes to the principles for fair work as set out in the Fair Work Framework; ensure that every

effort is made to maximise the potential for the Scottish Government's commitment to fifty-fifty gender balance on Boards by 2020 target is met; and to confirm if they have calculated their gender pay gap and developed an action plan for addressing the gender pay gap within their company.

Going forward, we will continue to raise awareness of equality in public procurement, encouraging public sector buyers to take a relevant and proportionate approach in their procurements, continuing to look for examples of where equality initiatives are applied in practice.

Policy Context: Public Sector Equality Duty

Our work on a fairer Scotland for women, and on closing the gender pay gap and improving women's labour market experiences, sits in the context of a wider equality framework, a key part of which is the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Public Sector Equality Duty (the PSED, or general duty) is a duty on public authorities, and those carrying out public functions, which is part of a piece of reserved legislation (legislation over which the UK Parliament has powers). It was created by section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. PSED obliges public authorities, and those carrying out public functions, to: a) advance equality, b) eliminate discrimination and c) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who don't.

This aspect of PSED is known as the general duty. The Act created powers for devolved administrations and governments to develop specific duties, to support the achievement of the general duty. The delivery of the PSED in Scotland is advanced by a suite of Scottish Specific Duties, created by Scottish Government regulations. There are ten specific duties in Scotland. These include (but are not limited to) duties to mainstream equality, to set and report on outcomes, to assess the likely equality impact of policies, to create equality conditions and criteria in public procurement, and to gather, use and report on employment data, including on gender pay.

In preparing this report we are mindful of the many connections between the strands of work detailed below and this equality framework, and of the points at which the Scottish Specific Duty regulations apply. The effectiveness of this overall framework is currently under review. (See page 10 for more information.)

Supporting wider Fair Work ambitions

Scottish Government adopted the [Fair Work Convention's framework](#) which continues to inform our approach to improving workplace practices and employee experience. This framework supports opportunity for all and recognises the need to remove barriers that make it harder for women to access and succeed in the labour market.

The Fair Work Convention launched the [Self-Assessment Tool](#) for workers in August 2020 which allows workers to self-assess how fair their work is and offers tailored advice. We will work with the Convention to understand the data gathered by the tool and establish the most effective interventions.

We published [Fair Work First: Guidance to support implementation](#) of the Scottish Government's flagship Fair Work First approach. Fair Work First asks those employers accessing and distributing public sector grants, other funding and contracts to apply Fair Work First criteria to help create more diverse and inclusive workplaces where workers have security of pay and contract, can develop and utilise their skills and have an effective voice in the workplace.

We have also launched our [Fair Work Employer Support Tool](#), enabling organisations to self-assess their working practices against the dimensions of Fair Work. The tool uses a series of questions and statements to offer tailored advice and resources that can help organisations strengthen their fair work practices. More detail on this tool is available in the Fair Work Action Plan Update report.

We will continue to work with the Fair Work Convention as we work to develop our vision for Scotland to be a Fair Work nation by 2025, and in developing metrics for measuring the impact and change driven by our fair work agenda.

Actions going forward 2021-2022

In addition to taking forward the work we have started above. We will also take forward the actions below.

- We will undertake an Equal Pay Audit by December 2021 to help us to understand the causes of the Scottish Government's own gender pay gap and take action to reduce it.
- We will continue to improve the intersectional data available for all policy officers across national and local government to help with the development of future policies.
- **Updated** – We will undertake a review of the specific duties underpinning the public sector equality duty and publish a report on lessons learned about the PSED regime during the pandemic in spring 2021 with further consultation on specific reform proposals later in the year.
- **New** – We will develop an equality and human rights mainstreaming strategy that is underpinned by a comprehensive approach to data collation and analysis, and that harnesses the voices of those impacted to shape our approach and policies. As part of this strategy and to inform the development of approaches across the Scottish Government, we will establish an Economy Centre of Expertise on equality and human rights to drive progress in this area. We understand that the effectiveness of all of this work must be underpinned by support for policy makers to become more skilled in applying an equality analysis to their policies and in this case the impact they will have on women.

CHAPTER 2

EMPLOYMENT

This chapter looked at what action could be taken to reduce the gender pay gap in Scotland over 2019-20 and within the current parliamentary term. Actions were developed to tackle discriminatory workplace practices that prevent women (especially those who experience multiple discrimination due to their age, race, pregnancy) from entering and/or progressing in work and that undervalue and underutilise their skills and potential which in turn is a drag on business and wider economic growth.

The Gender Index reported that within the 'work' domain, there was most inequality in labour market inactivity due to women bearing more caring responsibilities than men. Occupational segregation also contributed to gender inequality, with more women than men concentrated in the care industries.

Reducing the gender pay gap

The gender pay gap in median hourly earnings (excluding overtime) between men and women working full-time in Scotland has narrowed considerably from 18.4% in 1997 to 3.0% in 2020,⁷ the smallest gender pay gap since the series began.

In 2020, the gender pay gap for full-time employees working in Scotland was 3.0%, a decrease of 4.2 percentage points over the year. This decrease was mainly due to the median hourly earnings (excluding overtime) for full-time women increasing at a faster rate than the median hourly earnings (excluding overtime) for full-time men.

Median hourly earnings (excluding overtime) for full-time men increased from £15.27 in 2019 to £15.76 in 2020 (up 3.2%) while median hourly earnings (excluding overtime) for full-time women increased from £14.17 in 2019 to £15.29 in 2020 (up 7.9%). This is a welcome increase in earnings for women, especially as it is found in managerial, director and senior positions but it remains disappointing women's earnings are still behind that of men.

The median gender pay gap for all employees, including full and part-time employees, in Scotland fell from 14.4% in 2019 to 10.9% in 2020 – lower than the UK level (15.5%).

The median hourly earnings (excluding overtime) for part-time employees also show an increase. For part-time women, the median hourly earnings (excluding overtime) were £11.08 in 2020 (an increase from £10.33 in 2019). The median hourly earnings (excluding overtime) for part-time men also increased to £10.04 in 2020 (from £9.51 in 2019). Although the median hourly earnings (excluding overtime) for part-time women increased and were above the earnings for part-time men, part-time employees are paid less than full-time employees on average for both men and women. This reflects the lower paid sectors and occupations where part-time work is more common, in part driven by the lower value the labour market places on part-time work. Part-time work is also dominated by women (76.0% of those in part-time employment were women⁸)

⁷ <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/pay-gap>

⁸ ONS, Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2019

Pay and employment gaps are even wider for groups of women with protected characteristics. ONS⁹ data suggests that minority ethnic individuals are over-represented in jobs with increased exposure risks to COVID-19 (19.2% of workers in health and social care were from minority ethnic groups) and 14% of key workers overall (broader than just health and social care) are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The employment rate gap between white women and minority ethnic women (20.8 p.p.) in Scotland is significantly higher than the gap between white men and minority ethnic men (4.8 p.p.). The gap for women is driven by a much lower employment rate for minority ethnic women than white women (51.7% vs 72.5%). Evidence from Close the Gap suggests women often face intersectional gender and racial barriers that hinder employment prospects and career progression.

We recognise the importance of increasing employment rates for specific groups who are disadvantaged in the labour market, including minority ethnic communities.

The pandemic has further exacerbated this disadvantage and widened the social and economic inequalities experienced by these communities.

The Race Equality Framework for Scotland sets out how we will progress this over the period from 2016 to 2030 in partnership with its agencies and other key stakeholders. Our race equality employment actions aim to address the structural and institutional barriers that minority ethnic workers face. These actions will be taken forward within the context of our Fair Work policy.

We have published a [Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit](#) to support employers in their recruitment of people from minority ethnic backgrounds. In the second phase of this work, we will be developing guidance on how employers can use positive action to address under representation, retention and progression of staff in their workforce.

As part of our response to the [Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee's report](#), we are holding a public sector leadership summit on race equality in employment in March this year to support and seek a commitment from public sector leaders to tackle institutional racism. The summit will include key stakeholders representing minority ethnic communities and individuals who are able to share lived experience to inform discussions and actions following the summit. We will ensure that these stakeholders reflect the voice of minority ethnic women and who can raise awareness of the impact of the compounded discrimination they face in the employment.

The experience of women in Scotland's labour market tells us that disabled women face greater labour market barriers than non-disabled women and greater disadvantage than disabled men. However, the employment rate for disabled women has been higher than that of disabled men in recent years, which was again the case in 2019 (50.6% vs 47.0%).

Rates of economic inactivity can help explain this. Non-disabled women are around twice as likely to be inactive than non-disabled men driven by women being much more likely to be the primary carer/homemaker than men. For disabled men and women rates of inactivity are similar. This is because 'sickness' is overwhelmingly the most common reason given for inactivity by both disabled men (75.1%) and women (60.5%).¹⁰

Employment law is a matter reserved to the UK Parliament and the key tools we require to adequately address the gender pay gap, such as improving transparency in pay gap reporting is out-with our powers. However, while we continue to press for additional devolved powers to strengthen employment rights that work for Scotland, we are doing all we can with the powers we do have to reduce the gender pay gap and promote and support labour market equality.

⁹ ONS, Coronavirus and key workers in the UK, May 2020

¹⁰ ONS, Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2019

In April 2019, we called on the UK Government to amend the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 to mandate employers to publish a gender pay gap action plan alongside their reporting obligations. The Scottish Government does not believe that the Regulations go far enough as they place no obligation on employers to take further action on the findings of their pay analysis to effect meaningful change.

The Scottish Government also called on the UK Government to review the reporting threshold of companies with over 250 staff as this failed to take account of the business base in Scotland and excluded Scotland's small to medium size enterprises and third sector organisations. In 2016 we took such an approach by lowering the reporting threshold for listed public authorities from those with more than 150 employees, to those with more than 20. These requests so far have been rejected.

Ministers have also offered their backing to Stella Creasy MP's for her 'Equal Pay Implementation and Claims Bill' and support it's progression through the UK parliament. This bill if enacted, would improve pay transparency by giving women the 'right to know' the pay of a comparator.

Promoting the Living Wage

Tackling pay inequality is not only vital to reducing the gender pay gap but is key to increasing household income levels to tackle child poverty. Latest figures¹¹ show that the proportion of women earning less than the living wage in Scotland in 2020 was 16.4% (down from 19.4%), this compares with 13.8% for men (down slightly from 13.9%). The proportion of employees earning less than the living wage is highest in the Accommodation and Food Service Activities sector at 64.4% (up from 60.0%). A higher proportion of women and minority ethnic communities are employed in this sector, compared to other sectors, where part-time working and precarious hours prevail.

The Living Wage Hospitality Steering Group continue to inform Ministers on the challenges faced during the pandemic and stress the importance of the need for the real Living Wage, particularly in an uncertain labour market. We continue to work with Living Wage Scotland to inform and support our work with employers to expand payment of the real Living Wage.

The Living Wage Scotland place-based approach continues to grow. Since Dundee was announced as the UK's first Living Wage City in March 2019, other areas such as Glenrothes, Fife and Eildon in Borders Council area followed suit achieving the Make Living Wage Place award. Edinburgh and Aberdeen have also announced their intention to work towards Living Wage City recognition.

As highlighted in the Fair Work Convention's [Fair Work in Scotland's Social Care Sector 2019](#) report the Social Care Sector is highly gendered with women making up 83% of the workforce in 2019. In addition, given the predominance of women workers in the sector, the report also highlights that failure to address issues such as voice deficit and low pay will significantly contribute to women's poorer quality of work and Scotland's gender pay gap.¹² The Scottish Government has committed to support delivery of the real living wage for adult social care staff covering adult social care workers providing direct care and support to adults in care homes, care at home, day care and housing support.

Fair Work First

Through the limited powers we have available, we are driving forward our flagship Fair Work First policy using our financial powers to promote fair work practice. We continue to extend the Fair Work First criteria to as many funding streams, business support grants and public contracts as we can. The criteria requires employers to take action to tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace.

¹¹ ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/annual-survey-of-hours-and-earnings-2020/>
based on Living Wage rate of £9.30 in April 2020

¹² <https://www.fairworkconvention.scot/our-report-on-fair-work-in-social-care/>

On 29 January, we published our [Fair Work First Guidance](#). The guidance is the product of extensive collaboration involving the Scottish Government, public and third sector partners; employers and business representatives; the STUC and affiliated trade unions; CIPD and other HR specialists and supplier networks, and has the support of the Fair Work Convention. The guidance explains the Fair Work First approach, provides good practice examples to guide employers' approaches and, importantly, explains the Fair Work benefits for workers and organisations. This includes advice and best practice on [how to tackle gender pay gaps](#).

Working with the enterprise and skills agencies, and working across the Scottish Government, we will continue to expand the range of grants, contracts and business support budgets that Fair Work First applies to. We will engage with CoSLA and the NHS to extend the criteria to local government and health and social care sectors.

We are also developing a module for board members of Public Bodies to test their knowledge on Fair Work First, highlighting that Public Bodies should demonstrate leadership in progressing not only Fair Work First, but Fair Work more generally. Implementation of Fair Work First is set out in full in the Fair Work Action Plan Annual Report.

Delivering our Workplace Equality Fund

Due to our limited powers Scottish Government role is in providing encouragement, advice and support to employers to improve their understanding of the gender pay gap, why it exists and how taking action to reduce it can benefit business. Evidence has shown that recruiting from a diverse pool of talent improves staff wellbeing, productivity, innovation and can alleviate costs due to absenteeism or staff turnover and reduces recruitment costs. Diversity widens a business's customer base which can also lead to a higher demand for services or products and ultimately, profits.

Our Workplace Equality Fund originally set up in 2018 aims to address long standing and systemic issues with employer recruitment practices in the workplace. The fund supports employers to improve their diversity and inclusion strategies and support equality groups to progress in the labour market particularly in relation to addressing inequalities faced by minority ethnic people, women, disabled people and older workers. The 2019 fund supported for example AAI to deliver the Diversity Works project. AAI helped businesses to improve their recruitment practices in order to attract and retain talented Black and Minority Ethnic women.

In November 2020 a further call for applications under the Workplace Equality fund was launched to offer immediate support to equality groups in the current COVID-19 environment and ensure that work to promote and embed workplace equality continues so that equality groups are not further disadvantaged in the labour market as a result of the effects of COVID-19.

Supporting women transitioning through menopause while at work.

The gender pay gap for all employees (including full and part-time employees) working in Scotland was highest for those aged 50-64 at 17.5%.¹³ In 2019-20 our Workplace Equality Fund expanded its focus to encourage applications from projects that support women transitioning through the menopause and workers who are experiencing social isolation and loneliness (such as unpaid carers). Funding of over £800,000 was provided to 25 projects.

¹³ ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2020
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/annual-survey-of-hours-and-earnings-2020/>

CASE STUDY

Burness Paull – Funded by the Workplace Equality Fund 2019-20

Emma Smith – Burness Paull



At Burness Paull 63% of colleagues are female and the vast majority are either experiencing symptoms of menopause or peri-menopause now or will be in the future. We wanted to remove menopause as a potential barrier

to career development and support gender equality. We undertook various activities to breakdown the stigma and raise awareness of menopause including improving leadership support, reviewing existing policies, delivering employee and manager awareness raising and training sessions; establishing Menopause Champions; introducing a Menopause at Work Policy; launching a Menopause Hub on our intranet, running menopause yoga and wellbeing workshops and celebrating World Menopause Day. The result of our work means that menopause is now a workplace priority. With 96% of post-project respondents agreeing that Burness Paull is committed to raising awareness of menopause and has reduced the stigma around menopause. Nearly 75% of respondents agree that a colleague impacted by the menopause would feel supported at work and nearly 60% reporting they would now feel comfortable talking about menopause at work.

The Scottish Government continues to consider how to support women transitioning through menopause while at work informed by discussion with the STUC Women's Committee and the results of the report taken by STUC into women's workplace experiences of transitioning through menopause.

The 2019-2020 Programme for Government announced a commitment to develop a Women's Health Plan. The 2020-2021 PfG reaffirmed this and confirmed that the Plan will underpin actions to tackle women's health inequalities by raising awareness around women's health and improving access to healthcare for women throughout life. A specific priority of the plan is to ensure that women have access to specialist menopause services for advice and support on the diagnosis and management of menopause. This includes increasing the understanding and knowledge of women, families, healthcare professionals and employers relating to menopause. The plan is expected to be published later in 2021.

In February 2021, the Scottish Government showed leadership by publishing internal guidance for its own staff to meet our commitment to be a menopause friendly employer. This work is a core component of our wellbeing approach, encouraging staff to share experiences and signpost relevant guidance and support.

Delivering our Women Returners Programme

In our 2018-19 Programme for Government we committed to support women to return to work after a career break at levels commensurate with their abilities, skills and experience through our planned £5m three year Women Returners Programme. This commitment built on the success and learning from our 2017 pilot returners programme that supported women to re-enter the workplace by offering advice, guidance and access to paid work placements across a variety of industrial sectors where occupational segregation and the lack of women in senior positions was a concern. The programme has a particular focus on supporting women with other protected characteristics, for example older women, disabled women, minority ethnic women; and focus on sectors where women are significantly under-represented.

“Women Returners propelled me back into the world of work after a 4-year career break. The programme gave me the confidence and support I needed to believe in myself and the workshops that took place during the placement were key to me securing a permanent role. It was a fantastic and inclusive group that helped us to focus on our key skills and what we could deliver for the employers.”

Charlotte Darling – Women Returners to Financial Services Scotland Programme, 2018 participant

Due to the unprecedented challenges COVID-19 has had on employers and workers the programme was adapted to offer realistic support for employers in the current environment as staff are furloughed, self-isolating, working from home or subject to social distancing in workplaces that were allowed to open. Women returning to the labour market may also have faced more competition from a recently unemployed workforce with more updated experience and skills.

The programme criteria was therefore adapted to acknowledge the challenges employers and women returners face in the COVID-19 working environment.¹⁴ This programme is more important now than ever due to the disproportionate economic impact COVID-19 has had and will have on women.

On 4 November 2020 we launched a short, sharp Women Returners Programme to ensure that work to promote and embed workplace equality continues in this financial year (2020-2021) so that women are not further disadvantaged in the labour market as a result of the effects of COVID-19. Successful projects commenced in January 2021 targeting sectors where women are under-represented at senior levels and have a high gender pay gap such as the finance sector.

Successful projects include Supporting Women to Join the Scottish Aquaculture Industry, covering the Highlands and Islands, Argyll & Bute, Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles areas; the Women in the Rural Economy Training Fund¹⁵ administered by @LantraScotland and the RFEA – The Forces Employment Charity supporting Female veteran/spouse enter employment within Scotland.¹⁶

¹⁴ <http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/participants-and-barriers/women-and-work/women-returners/>

¹⁵ Scot Gov Greener on Twitter: “The Women in the Rural Economy Training Fund administered by @LantraScotland will give women the chance to develop their skills and talents with the help of £100,000 worth of practical training provided by the Scottish Government. Read more <https://t.co/DTbrfQC1W5> <https://t.co/lffQrnVvrk>” / Twitter

¹⁶ <http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/participants-and-barriers/women-and-work/women-returners/>

Refreshing the Scottish Business Pledge

We committed to refreshing the gender and diversity element of the Scottish Business Pledge to encourage actions and measures to address all aspects of diversity and inclusion, including addressing gender pay gap in business.

A refresh of the Scottish Business Pledge was launched on 10 October 2019 with action to address the gender pay gap a core element. In order to successfully sign up to the Pledge businesses must provide appropriate evidence that demonstrates they are collating evidence to calculate their gender pay gap and that they commit to an action plan to address any identified gap over time. To assist all sizes of employers this requirement was proportionate to the size of their organisation.

Ongoing work continues to implement the gender pay gap element on new submissions to the Scottish Business Pledge, as well as existing companies transitioning from the old structure. Due to the pandemic the deadline for transitioning has been extended to the 31 August 2021. Addressing gender pay gaps has been the single biggest challenge to businesses transitioning to the new criteria who often conflate this with their duty to ensure equal pay. To assist businesses with this element we delivered a webinar and provide Frequently Asked Questions on the Pledge website. We are also working with Close the Gap to provide support as part of our response to the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls' 2018 report recommendation to establish a Gender Beacon Collaborative.

The Gender Beacon Collaborative (the Collaborative) will bring together organisations from a range of sectors, including the Scottish Government, to implement gender equality policies and address the causes of their gender pay gaps. Private sector organisations will be supported by Close the Gap to produce and implement robust gender pay gap action plans by developing tools, materials, presentations and facilitating peer to peer learning within the Pledge Network. Public and third sector organisations will apply similar gender equality principles and methodologies but will instead work towards a gender equality accreditation programme called Equally Safe At Work (ESAW) which has been designed by Close the Gap for the needs of these sectors. The Collaborative is expected to launch later this year and will collate learning from the organisations involved to create a cross-sectoral model of best practice that will serve as a tool for future organisations.

In April 2019 we published the report [Addressing the gender pay gap: employer methods](#) to highlight and publicise best practice examples and the benefits addressing gender pay gaps brings to business. The research provides examples of employer experience of gender pay gap reporting, current and emerging strategies to engage with the gender pay gap and the challenges & benefits of this work.

Addressing the motherhood penalty,

COVID-19 has affected everyone across Scotland, yet evidence has shown that the effects have not been experienced equally. Scottish Government research¹⁷ found that adverse labour market effects ensuing from the necessary lockdown measures to protect public health could have a disproportionate longer-term impact on women, and that pregnant women and mothers' employment opportunities could be further adversely affected by any roll-back in EU-derived employment protections post Brexit.

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/the-impacts-of-covid-19-on-equality-in-scotland/>

The Ministerial Pregnancy and Discrimination Working Group continued to highlight issues that faced pregnant women and those returning from maternity leave including looking at the design of the UK government income support schemes that did not take account of equalities issues.

A number of issues were raised regarding how the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) (CJRS) and the Self-employment Income support Scheme (SEISS) were applied to pregnant women and those who had taken maternity leave in the year prior to the introduction of the schemes.

As pregnancy and Maternity pay and employment rights are a matter reserved to the UK Government, Scottish Ministers called on the UK Government throughout 2020 to address the issues inherent in the schemes, stressing the CJRS scheme should support vulnerable individuals such as women in low income roles and those on insecure contracts. Concerns were raised that CJRS may have been used inappropriately by employers in their dealings with pregnant employees such as its inability to allow part-time furlough and to allow parents to be able to be furloughed if they had caring responsibilities, as well as for periods of self-isolation and shielding. The SEISS was also criticised for failing to support women who had been on maternity leave during the qualifying period resulting in them receiving lower awards than others not on such leave.

We acknowledged the changes introduced on 1 July 2020 to expand the CJRS to allow employers to [furlough workers flexibly](#) and that it was further amended on 5 January 2021 to expressly [include childcare as a furlough condition](#). Eligibility for SEISS was also amended to widen the qualifying period however this did not go far enough to support the range of self-employed women's individual circumstances.

In October 2020, the Scottish Government introduced [the Self-Isolation Support Grant](#). This provides a grant of £500 to those in receipt of low income benefits and who have been asked to self-isolate by Test and Protect. Eligibility to the scheme was expanded on [7 December 2020](#) to include parents on low incomes who have to self-isolate because their children have to self-isolate; who are unable to work from home and lose income as a result of this self-isolation.

To help us understand the barriers that mothers face when returning to work we committed to fund research on the career trajectories of mothers returning to work based on longitudinal data from the Understanding Society survey.

This research [Understanding Society - Gender and Work in Scotland: research finding](#) was published on the 19 December 2019. This analyses data from Understanding Society on mothers returning to work and gender roles and attitudes.

Glasgow City Building employee

"Flexibility is an indicator of a progressive employer. One who appreciates their workforce and their importance in a good work life balance. As an employee I feel valued and return that in my commitment to the company in a way we can both benefit."

Promoting flexible working

Flexible working is crucially important to women who have caring responsibilities, whether that be childcare, adult or kinship care. Women are still regarded as the primary carers in households and the ability to access good quality flexible work not only allows them to manage their care commitments but enables them to continue to participate and progress in work. We have met our commitment to funding Family Friendly Working Scotland (FFWS) in 2019-20, providing them with £159,000 of funding.

FFWS provided business support and training to organisations to introduce or further develop their flexible working offer to employees, encouraging employers to advertise new roles as flexible, delivering events to explore and celebrate good practice in flexible working, engaging with the media on issues around flexible working and inputting into relevant Scottish Government policy as appropriate. This work supported people, particularly parents, to access good quality flexible employment that was right for their circumstances specifically through engagement with employers to introduce or further develop their flexible working offer.

In 2020-21 we continued to support flexible working and together with the Hunter Foundation through our Social Innovation Partnership, we supported a new Scottish social enterprise, Flexibility Works, by funding £175,000 to support and promote the development of flexible and family friendly workplaces. This funding includes offering vital advice and support to business and organisations on flexible working to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. In particular, Flexibility Works will support employers from low-income sectors to better understand what it takes to promote and embed flexible working within their organisations, with a view to opening up new opportunities for staff and improving their wellbeing.

As committed in the Child Poverty Action Plan, in 2019 we commissioned Timewise to undertake a feasibility study into a new centre for flexible work. This initiative was to investigate how increasing the availability of flexible working would assist priority groups such as low income parents, carers and parents with disabled children, as well as older workers, and those with health issues to access well paid, secure work rather than their options being limited to part time work in traditionally low paid sectors to accommodate their needs and commitments.

This study completed an analysis and consultation on the feasibility exercise found that the project should be less focussed on sectors and more on flexible hiring. This meant not creating a 'What Works Centre' but a 'What Works Network' with focus on building capabilities into the networks that currently exist. The proposal, agreed in July 2020 following amendments to reflect the impacts of coronavirus, aligns with the Scottish Government ambitions of Fair Work and assists the priority child poverty family groups. Over £130,000 of funding will be provided in 2020-21 to support delivery of this important piece of work.

TimeWise have been delivering high quality support to help 300 employers adapt to flexible working through COVID 19 and beyond. Timewise have also supported the recruitment of 40 employer-facing employability advisors who will help a further 1,000 employers and 1,000 individuals to implement and benefit from fair and flexible work opportunities. Priority groups will access support from 'fair flex' trained advisors which will ultimately reduce the inequalities they experience on a daily basis.

Timewise will also undertake analysis to track the state of the flexible vacancy market pre, during and post COVID-19. The Index is a unique report that was originally published in Scotland in 2018 and is published across the UK every year and used as a national benchmark. This year will be a unique period within which to monitor the flexible vacancy market in Scotland, to inform employers and policy makers where more action is needed regionally and in what sectors.

ILF Scotland

As a small organisation, we need to recruit and retain the best talent and in return we're rewarded by highly competent, highly motivated and high-performing individuals who give their all when they're on our time. We get their best and they get the best balance for them so it is a win-win situation for everyone.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis and lockdown measures, the Scottish Government published statutory [working from home guidance](#) to support employers, employees and the self-employed with the continuation of working from home.

We ensured key equality stakeholders informed the development of the guidance with a strong focus on gender. It provides advice to employers on how to consider and support the needs of people with protected characteristics including pregnant women.

Going forward we will continue to promote flexible working practices that support employers and workers during and post pandemic. In response to the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery Report we will ensure that women's equality and the role of flexible working is central in developing the new Centre For Workplace Transformation.

Tackling Sexual harassment

We continue to work to tackle sexual harassment both in the workplace and in wider society. Throughout 2019-20 we have worked to deliver the action points within the [Equally Safe Delivery Plan](#) to prevent and eradicate sexual harassment.

We have developed a pilot Equally Safe employer accreditation programme in order to lever better employment practice in tackling gender-based violence experienced by the workforce. Led by Close the Gap, the Equally Safe at Work project is working with seven local authorities to incorporate gender equality into their internal policies, from leadership to data collection, tackling occupational segregation to improving workplace culture. In recognition of the significant pressures on councils during COVID-19, Close the Gap took a flexible approach to the deadline for the final evidence submission, which was extended until November 2020.

Four councils will receive bronze accreditation in March 2021. The four councils demonstrated that they met all the criteria for each of the six framework standards by undertaking a variety of activities to address the causes of gender inequality in their council and to better support survivors. Activities included: developing an employment policy on violence against women; developing initiatives to address occupational segregation; and developing new, and improving existing, data gathering systems on employee experiences of violence against women, and other aspects of gender inequality.

All seven councils will receive 'pilot accreditation' to recognise the work they have undertaken in the pilot, and their important role in gathering key learning on local government employment practice that will shape the future development of the programme. We have commissioned Scottish Women's Aid to develop a framework of training on gender inequality and its links to violence against women and girls for public services which is one of the most difficult areas to achieve. This training programme, Equally Safe in Practice, is to support authorities to address this in the future.

The Scottish Government has committed to lead by example and, along with the public and third sector organisations, are working to achieve initially the Equally Safe At Work Bronze Accreditation.

Domestic abuse and employment law

Perpetrators of domestic violence can exacerbate women's barriers to participate equally in the labour market by preventing women from attending work and discouraging women from applying for promotion or positions where they would become the primary earner in the household. Similarly they can prevent women from attaining further education or learning opportunities that would further their professional development and career.

In October 2020 we supported BEIS in organising a roundtable of Scottish stakeholders to discuss the BEIS Domestic Abuse Review following their consultation on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace. This sought to gather views on the issues which domestic abuse raise in relation to work and the workplace, what support can be offered by employers and whether existing employment rights adequately address situations or issues raised by domestic abuse.

In August 2020 we launched the [Domestic Abuse Awareness Raising Tool](#) an online resource to improve understanding of domestic abuse. It is freely available and forms part of a wider programme of accessible resources to improve the capacity of public service staff in Scotland to recognise and safely respond to survivors of domestic abuse.

The resource reflects real experiences of women, children, men, LGBT people and the BME community. It also includes case studies that show tactics perpetrators use to manipulate victims and responders, as well as the impact of domestic abuse and coercive control on the whole family. It is intended that the resource will provide a basic introduction and can be supplemented by further specialist training.

In April 2019 the Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills called on the UK Government to improve legislation to protect women subject to sexual harassment at work or who are vulnerable to redundancy due to pregnancy or maternity.

Going forward we will continue to communicate with the UK Government with the aim of influencing the development of the new Employment Bill. We will urge them to accept our recommendations in response to the good work plan consultations. Strengthening and enforcement of protection to women (including pregnant women) and carers against discrimination and dismissal; strengthen paternity/partner leave rights and introduce the right for all employees to request flexible working from day one of employment.

Actions going forward 2021-2022

In addition to taking forward the work we have started above. We will also take forward the actions below

- We will continue to deliver our Workplace Equality Fund in 2021-22.
- We will continue with our commitment to deliver a Women Returners Programme in 2021-22.
- **New** – We will launch the Gender Beacon Collaborative to provide support to organisations from a range of sectors to implement gender equality policies and address the causes of their gender pay gaps.
- **New** – We will support employers to adopt Flexible Working practices in Scotland including working from home during and post pandemic.
- **New** – we will influence the development of the new Employment Bill urging the UK Government to increase protection for women experiencing harassment at work and discrimination due to pregnancy/maternity, calling on them to enhance parental leave and pay.
- **New** – In response to the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery Report ensure that workplace equality including women's equality is central in developing the new Centre For Workplace Transformation.

CHAPTER 3

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE

This chapter looked at the importance of tackling the drivers of the gender pay gap that begin at an early age so that every child can reach their potential regardless of gender. It looked at tackling practices that reinforce gender stereotyping in early years and childcare settings and taking action to address traditional occupational segregation by encouraging more men into the sector. The chapter also looked at the ELC workforce, recognising the value of the workforce that is largely made up by women. To support the workforce, we committed to ensuring the successful implementation of the real Living Wage for workers in provider settings delivering the funded entitlement. Affordable childcare has an impact on a woman's ability to participate fully in the labour market. We committed to evaluating our programme to expand ELC provision to 1140 hours per year to determine the impact of the investment and what actions can be taken to further strengthen women's equal access to the labour market.

Challenging gender stereotyping which leads to occupational segregation

Evidence shows that gender stereotyping from an early age has an impact on the decisions that girls and boys make about their future subject and career choices. To support work on tackling gender stereotyping, we committed to asking Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate to take account of gender equality in their scrutiny activities.

Education Scotland addresses gender equality and tackling stereotypes during school and ELC inspections through a focus on ensuring equality, wellbeing and inclusion.

The Care Inspectorate takes account of gender equality and stereotyping in their scrutiny activity through their Health and Social Care Standards which state:

- Standard 1.1: 'I am accepted and valued whatever my needs, ability, gender, age, faith, mental health status, race, background or sexual orientation.'
- Standard 1.2: 'My human rights are protected and promoted, and I experience no discrimination.'

Currently these standards are assessed under Quality of Care and Support and Quality of Staffing Themes. The Care Inspectorate will be launching a new Quality Framework for Early Learning and Childcare in the Spring of 2021. The framework reflects the Health and Social Care Standards including, I am accepted and valued whatever my needs, ability, gender, age, faith, mental health, race, background or sexual orientation.

In February 2020, we published a revised national practice guidance for early years in Scotland – [Realising the Ambition](#). This includes a section on the impact of conscious and unconscious gender bias. We also included a strong focus on addressing gender bias in a new online module on supporting early learning in STEM which was launched in January 2020.

We know that having a visibly diverse workforce helps tackle stereotyping. As women continue to be the overwhelmingly visible workforce in the ELC sector increasing the number of men in ELC settings will help children dispel messages that childcare is a job for women only. It can also provide male role models for some children who may lack this in their early lives. We committed to working in partnership with education and training providers and the third sector to test new ways to encourage men into the early learning sector, supporting our efforts to diversify the workforce. We worked with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) to create a new Challenge Fund to test innovative ways of recruiting and retaining males in ELC-related training programmes. The University of Highlands and Islands and West Lothian College were the recipients and deployed the funding to test different approaches to encouraging more males in to the sector throughout 2019. To ensure early lessons from this work were shared widely, a 'Men Into Early Years' conference was held in late September 2019. The two recipients of funding presented their work along with several guest speakers and colleagues from the third sector.

We were pleased to note an increase in males undertaking modern apprenticeships in 2018-19 (7% of starts were males vs 2% of males who are already working in the funded ELC sector) and going forward, the Scottish Government will work with partners across the skills landscape, and employers, to share good practice across the ELC sector, with the aim of increasing numbers of males entering ELC through all training routes.

Improve and expand on Early Learning and Childcare Provision

Our analysis on the [Impact of COVID-19 on Equality in Scotland](#) reported that women remain more likely to have caring responsibilities which make it hard to maintain or take up employment. Evidence also suggests that due to school and nursery closures, housework and childcare has fallen more to women than men. This disproportionately high increase of unpaid care continues to create barriers for women entering and maintaining in employment. This is why our work to improve and expand childcare provision continues to remain a key factor is supporting women in the labour market and to reduce the gender pay gap.

We remain fully committed to the expansion of funded ELC being underpinned by Fair Work principles and practices, in particular ensuring that staff are fairly remunerated. We also remain committed to ensuring the successful implementation of the real Living Wage commitment for funded provider settings that forms part of the Funding Follows the Child approach. This is an integral part of the landmark funding reached agreement between the Scottish Government and COSLA Leaders in April 2018 which provides the funding to allow local authorities to set sustainable rates for providers in the private and third sectors that enable them to pay all childcare workers delivering the funded ELC entitlement the real Living Wage from August 2020. In the light of the impact of the COVID pandemic, Interim Guidance on the Implementation of [Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard for ELC providers](#) was published on 30 July 2020. This reconfirmed that all settings are expected to commit to adopting and demonstrating Fair Work practices. And that settings should receive sustainable rates that are set at a level which reflects the payment of the real Living Wage to all childcare workers delivering the funded entitlement.

The expansion to 1140 hours of funded entitlement, from August 2021, will be supported by a transition to full implementation of Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard taking account of any need for continued flexibility as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We said in the next review of the national occupational standards and resulting qualifications for the early learning and childcare and out of school care sector, we would consider how to build addressing gender stereotyping and occupational segregation into training. Since the publication of Gender Pay Gap Action Plan, the National Occupational Standards have not yet been reviewed. However, work has been undertaken at local authority level to train nurseries and settings to be gender friendly settings, including implementation of the '[Gender Equal Play](#)' guide, published jointly by the Care Inspectorate and Zero Tolerance. When the national occupational standards are reviewed, we will build on the work outlined above to address gender stereotyping and occupational segregation into training.

School age childcare services play a vital role in enabling parents and carers to access work, addressing economic and social exclusion, and providing improved outcomes for children. Evidence points to the importance of school age childcare for the whole family - children can benefit from improved outcomes through opportunities for play and learning, and access to childcare can support parents to work, train or study. This is why we committed to developing and consulting on a plan for after-school and holiday childcare to further improve and expand early learning and childcare.

We published and consulted on our [Out of School Care in Scotland: A Draft Framework](#) for school age childcare. In March 2021 we will publish a Progress Report that sets out the steps we will take over the coming year to further develop our school age childcare policy.

For parents to be able to be able to take advantage of work, training or study opportunities, childcare needs to be affordable, accessible and flexible to meet their needs. This can be especially important for lone parents who are predominantly women and allow them to access training or work rather than their choices being limited to reduced hours or giving up work to look after their children. These opportunities for parents can therefore lead to increased earnings, which in turn helps to reduce levels of child poverty.

We have created the Access to Childcare Fund, worth £3m across 2020-2022 to test new models of school age childcare that will be accessible and affordable for low income families. The fund aims to support projects to deliver a range of activities, childcare, food and family support for children, including those from the six priority family types identified in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, including lone parents, a high proportion of whom are women. Projects will explore new models of school age childcare, including holiday provision, flexible delivery, specialist services for children with additional support needs, and increasing access to families most likely to be living in poverty.

CASE STUDY

Low Income Families Together (LIFT) - Muirhouse Community Centre



Through our Support and Advocacy services we identified a lack of childcare was having a huge impact on families, particularly single parents who needed access to after school care. We trialled a flexible childcare pilot with a cost to parents of just 50p. Children could come to the after-school care straight from school until 5.30pm. We had six weeks of excellent service delivery. Of the original 12 mums, eight are now working from home, two have sadly lost their jobs and two have other childcare arrangements in place. Children have since reported our service helped to increase mental well-being due to having a safe environment to learn new skills and improve their communication, meaning the children can take the lead in decision making and programme delivery of the service.

We know how much our families need a service like ours, especially in an area of deprivation like Muirhouse. We currently have a waiting list and as soon as guideline's allow, we will have our services up and running again as they have proven incredibly beneficial to the families we support.

We said we would undertake, by 2024, an evaluation to determine the impact the significant investment to increase the number of funded hours to 1,140 per year has had on improving the outcomes for children and on labour market outcomes for parents, particularly for women; and consider what further action may be required to further strengthen women's equal access to the labour market.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we took the difficult decision to suspend the statutory duty on local authorities to provide 1,140 hours of early learning and childcare from August 2020. A revised implementation date of August 2021 has now been set. The bespoke Scottish Study of Early Learning and Childcare (SSELC) will evaluate the impact of the ELC expansion on child, parent and family outcomes. All the baseline data for the SSELC have been collected and [published](#). We are working with stakeholders to assess the pandemic's impact on young children, their parents and the ELC sector and consider any changes needed to our evaluation strategy in light of this. The follow-up phases of the SSELC were due to begin in November 2022; however, the evaluation timetable is currently being reviewed in light of the revised implementation date of August 2021.

Actions going forward 2021-22

In addition to taking forward the work we have started above. We will also take forward the actions below.

- We will consider how to build addressing gender stereotyping and occupational segregation into training in the next review of the national occupational standards and resulting qualifications for the early learning and childcare and out of school care sector.
- **Longer-term** We will undertake an evaluation to determine the impact the significant investment to increase the number of funded hours to 1,140 per year has had on improving the outcomes for children and on labour market outcomes for parents, particularly on women; and consider what further action may be required to further strengthen women's equal access to the labour market.

CHAPTER 4

SCHOOLS

This chapter looked at how schools have a key role to play in helping young women make transitions into a broader range of more successful careers. It looked at addressing gender stereotyping, occupational segregation and sexist behaviours in schools. In doing so, the chapter recognised the need to ensure practitioners are adequately equipped in understanding gender equality, hold positive attitudes towards girls and boys, and have the opportunity to learn about gender issues, which is essential if all pupils are to become confident individuals, successful learners, responsible citizens and affective contributors.

The impact of COVID-19 on schools and education as a whole during 2020 and into 2021 can't go unnoticed. We have seen schools close, phased returns, protective measures being put in place and long periods of children learning from home. In this unprecedented time, it has meant that while these actions still remain relevant, some timescales have moved in order for us and the wider education system to respond to the pandemic.

We will also continue to pursue our gender equality ambitions in education and learning via the mechanism of the Deputy First Minister's Gender Equality Taskforce in Education and Learning. Given the evidence which suggests that girls and young women are disproportionately impacted by crises such as COVID-19, we will continue to work with education and children's and equality stakeholders to ensure that girls and young women's experience of the education and learning landscape is a gender competent one.

Challenging gendered subject choice

We want children in Scotland to receive an education which challenges gender stereotyping, and encourages them to pursue study which matches their interests and skills, resulting in more balanced participation in courses which are traditionally seen as 'for boys' or 'for girls', thus challenging later occupational segregation. Within the 'knowledge' domain of the Gender Equality Index the main driver of inequality was subject segregation which we know begins at school.

Building on the work schools are already doing, we committed to publishing an equality action plan in 2020 with issues of gender segregation in education at the fore. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for the education system to adapt quickly and support education recover, the delivery date for the equality action plan has been postponed. This will ensure the new Education Scotland Equality Strategy and Action plan takes account of the significant changes Scottish education has made to support educational recovery in light of COVID-19. We remain committed to this work and plan to publish this before summer 2021.

We highlighted in the original action plan that Education Scotland had recruited a team of six Improving Gender Balance and Equality Officers. We also committed to develop professional learning approaches in collaboration with practitioners in early learning and childcare and in schools with a specific focus on challenging gender stereotyping and addressing unconscious bias.

This work has been undertaken by the Improving Gender Balance and Equality Officers, who continue to engage with practitioners, schools and settings in diverse ways to build the confidence and capacity of education practitioners to challenge stereotypes and unconscious bias and embed equality in their practice. The team have engaged with 512 distinct establishments and have had over 4,900 practitioner engagements across sectors since forming in January 2019.

The professional learning and support they have provided has taken many forms. This includes close partnership working with individual schools, settings and clusters looking to adopt effective whole-school approaches to equality. Professional learning has also been provided through regional and national training sessions and a blended learning approach.

To continue their support during the pandemic, the team switched quickly to an online webinar format. Some 91% of respondents rated these online sessions as 'very good' and 'good' with 84% of respondents reporting that they were 'likely' or 'very likely' to share what they had learned with colleagues.

CASE STUDY

Bearsden Primary School in East Dunbartonshire Council



In 2020, Bearsden Primary in East Dunbartonshire Council approached Education Scotland's Improving Gender Balance and Equalities (IGBE) team for support. The initial request was for the IGBE team to provide professional learning to all staff to help them address gender stereotypes and unconscious bias. The session was developed in discussion with the school and included tools for reflection, suggestions for audits and identification of materials that could be used directly with children and young people. The session prompted discussion amongst teachers and personal reflections about unconscious bias. This led to a programme of activity which initially focussed on language used in the classroom and around the school. Further actions included an environmental audit, consideration of seating plans and the introduction of gender equality lessons.

STEM ambassadors were invited into the school during the school's STEM week to support the theme of gender equality and to help to subvert stereotypes. Through lesson activities, the school found that children already had a good awareness of anyone being able to do any job. However, learners' understanding was progressed through pupil enquiries with an equalities focus. These were then shared through an online blog to engage families in the conversation around equalities. Gender equality is now part of the school improvement plan at Bearsden Primary School, thereby ensuring it remains a continued focus for the school and community.

“The professional learning provided by the IGBE team has been incredibly valuable as it has generated important discussion in our school about our own unconscious bias and given us advice on how we can begin to change this in a positive way. The team have also supported our school in developing an action plan by providing us with lesson ideas and resources to use with the children relating to gender stereotypes and equality.”

Bearden Primary School

We want our young people to be encouraged and supported to make choices based on their own interests, talents and ambitions. We committed to build on the work Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is taking forward with parents on Apprenticeships, by asking them to expand this work to wider gender stereotyping which impacts on subject choices. SDS published their [Careers Information, Advice and Guidance Equality Action Plan 2019-20](#) in December 2019, which includes actions to tackle gender segregation in school subject and career choices. As Foundation Apprenticeship frameworks expand in schools, SDS will continue to monitor participation across key equality groups including addressing gender segregation. SDS have continued to capitalise on engagements with young people and their parents/carers to challenge gender stereotypes, for example at S2/3 subject choice. They have reviewed - based on discussions with partners - messaging to ensure that they are addressing the range of issues that discourage young people from pursuing non-traditional careers and incorporated this messaging into their group work materials. This builds on the content to challenge gender inequality across key points in our engagement with pupils from P7/S1 transition through to Senior Phase. The Improving Gender Balance and Equalities (IGBE) team is working with school clusters to explore and assess interventions to address gender imbalances in participation, curricular preferences and learner pathways at every stage (3-18 years).

We said we would deliver a new careers strategy to set the vision for high quality career information, advice and guidance services accessible to all, and which reflects the importance of challenging occupational segregation. We published [Careers Strategy for Scotland: Moving Forward](#) in February 2020 as well as the subsequent EQIA in April 2020 outlining how we will ensure that all individuals have access to careers support to fulfil their potential, taking into account the role careers advice can play in specifically tackling inequalities women can face in the labour market. The implementation planning work for the strategy was on pause due to COVID-19. This work has since been reinstated and the Strategy remains our starting point in developing our approach to CIAG in Scotland. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) are reviewing the current Careers Strategy based on the recommendations outlined in Sandy Begbie's [Young Person's Guarantee – No-One Left Behind report](#). We remain committed to supporting young people transition successfully into the labour market and recognise the challenges that they will face as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. These recommendations set out our commitment to ensuring that no young person is left behind.

We agreed within the Programme for Government to review actions within our Gender Pay Gap action plan, ensuring they remained relevant and fit for purpose. Part of this work included refreshing our action to accelerate progress on the DYW Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy interventions, to reduce gender imbalance and undertake a practice and improvement evaluation of equality outcomes in Developing the Young Workforce (DYW). This action will take the impact of COVID-19 on young women into account. The revised action is noted at the end of this chapter in the going forward section. Through the enhanced provision within DYW Regional Groups to support education-employer partnerships we continue to engage with a variety of third sector specialists partners, including Close the Gap, to assist in tackling gender segregation issues. We will do this by working with DYW School Coordinators and the expansion of DYW's digital provision in 2021-22.

We said we would work with employers to conduct a review to identify the extent to which industry led DYW regional groups and other school/industry partnerships are delivering actions that will address gender stereotyping and occupational segregation. We undertook an audit showing concentrated activity around gender, disability and care experienced young people. The report was presented to the DYW Programme Board and Equalities Working Group to determine next steps. Key Performance Indicators have been developed to measure progress. As part of the Young Person's Guarantee we have allocated funding to support tackling gender segregation through the work of DYW Regional Groups. We will look to upskill those working with employers and those working with young people.

Teachers play key role in addressing issues of gender stereotyping which in turn leads to occupational segregation. The General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) launched a new suite of [Professional Standards](#) on 13 January 2021, and will be enacted on 2 August 2021. These standards include a commitment to social justice through fair, transparent, inclusive, and sustainable policies and practices in relation to protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation) and intersectionality. They also seek a commitment to demonstrate to motivating, and including all learners, understanding the influence of gender, social, cultural, racial, ethnic, religious and economic backgrounds on experiences of learning, taking account of specific learning needs and seeking to reduce barriers to learning. Furthermore, the Guidelines for the Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Programmes states that the overall aim of programmes of ITE is to prepare student teachers to become competent, thoughtful, reflective and innovative practitioners, who are committed to providing high quality learning for every learner.

To ensure newly qualified teachers are adequately equipped in understanding gender equality, it is important that equality is threaded through all ITE programmes both practical and theory, including challenging gender stereotyping and occupational segregation. This is why we committed to work with the Scottish Council of Deans of Education to consider how gender and other equality issues can be made more prominent within ITE.

We met with the Scottish Council of Deans in August 2019 to consider how gender and other equality issues can be made more prominent within ITE. Across the sector we have seen many more women enrol on leadership programmes at SCQF 11 and also many more women taking up EdD and PhD opportunities within Faculties/Schools/ Departments of Education. We are seeing more women who are STEM graduates entering the profession than before and the Scottish Government's STEM Bursary scheme has helped provide the financial support to enable this. Scottish Council of Deans of Education (SCDE) reported to the LGBTI Inclusion Implementation Group on the progress ITE providers are making in terms of including LGBTI content in their curricula. Two ITE providers had sought (and one had already gained) LGBT Youth Scotland's Bronze Charter Mark. Each SCDE member institution sent a delegate to a one-day meeting in Edinburgh on the 19th February 2020 to discuss LGBTI inclusion, chaired by the former SCDE chair: Professor Ian Rivers. Based upon these discussions, five recommendations were established which the group agreed that each ITE provider could sign up to.

The Scottish Council of Deans of Education (SCDE) has identified 'Diversity' as the next thematic focus for its self-evaluation activity. This will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to examine progress in all aspects of diversity, while identifying tangible next steps to ensure teacher education institutions deliver appropriate training on gender stereotyping and segregation. The intended SCDE self-evaluation seminar on diversity in ITE was postponed due to COVID-19. This will now take place in June 2021.

Challenging sexist behaviour, including harassment and violence

There is evidence to show girls can be marginalised at crucial stages by sexist behaviours - including harassment and violence - which can go unchallenged and unrecorded. To help address this, the review of Personal and Social Education (PSE) contained a recommendation to convene a PSE Lead Officers network, which would initially focus on resources to address the issue of sexual harassment in schools. The Network consists of all local authorities and key third sector partners such as Rape Crisis Scotland, Zero Tolerance, Scottish Youth Parliament and Children's Parliament. They have met on several occasions since forming in 2019. This includes a Sub Group of the Network specifically tasked with looking at the sexual harassment recommendation, their initial work sought to create a definition of sexual harassment as well as collating information on good practice resources being used across the country. Zero Tolerance and Rape Crisis Scotland are part of this Sub Group. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Network has not met as education stakeholders focus on education recovery. Education Scotland did host a webinar on PSE on 23 June 2020.

To understand further the issues around sexual harassment and violence against girls in schools, we committed to collaborate with COSLA and the teaching unions to develop mechanisms to collect and report on this information. We established a gender-based violence working group jointly chaired by the Scottish Government and Zero Tolerance/ Rape Crisis Scotland. Membership includes representatives from Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES), Women's Aid, NSPCC, and Education Scotland. This will be supported by appropriate teaching resources to help school staff deliver confident and meaningful learning to combat sexual harassment and gender-based violence in schools. As well as the review of existing resources and development of new resources, the group will also seek to identify examples of effective practice and how to effectively monitor and record incidents of gender-based violence. This work is expected to be completed in 2022. The gender-based violence working group has continued to engage and meet virtually, allowing this work to progress as expected.

Going forward 2021-2022

In addition to taking forward the work we have started above. We will also take forward the actions below.

- **Updated** - take into account the impact of COVID-19 on young women continue to accelerate progress on the Developing Young Workforce Strategy interventions to reduce gender imbalance and undertake a practice and improvement evaluation of the equality outcomes in Developing Young Workforce as part of the delivery of the Young Person's Guarantee. This will involve the development of an evidence base of existing practice, the identification of good practice and the sharing of this across schools, colleges and the DYW Regional Groups.

CHAPTER 5

POST SCHOOL & SKILLS TRAINING

We know that as young women and girls commence on their journey from school to post school training their ideas on the types of jobs or career training they wish to embark on may already be fixed. This results in girls and boys being concentrated in training frameworks and choosing course subjects based on existing gender stereotypes. For girls this limits their potential to access well-paid occupations and careers such as those available in STEM occupations and perpetuates gender pay gaps in these sectors. Even for those women and girls who undertake training opportunities in non-traditional sectors they often do not use their qualifications or experience to enter such jobs due to discriminatory recruitment and workplace practices or leave jobs early due to a lack of support and feelings of being undervalued compared to their male counterparts.

This chapter will look at the work taken forward since publication of our gender pay gap action plan in 2019 and how the drivers of the gender pay gap have been addressed throughout the post-schools training and skills systems. It looks at what inroads the SFC, further and higher education institutions, SDS and contracted training providers have been making to improve equality and diversity through their Equality Action Plans.

Actions to be taken forward were inevitably impacted by the onset of COVID-19 which resulted in some actions being postponed or delayed. We know that COVID-19 is having a disproportionate economic effect on young people especially young women, reducing job opportunities just as they are starting out on their careers. For example, the employment rate of people aged 16-24 in Scotland fell by 7.0 percentage points over the year from October 2019 to September 2020, far higher than any other age group.¹⁸ We also know that young people leaving education or training this summer 2021 are likely to be particularly vulnerable to unemployment and long-term employment 'scarring' due to the sectors being most impacted by restrictions, for example Accommodation & Food (being large employers of young people.) Over 40% of young people in employment in Scotland work in the Wholesale & Retail and Accommodation & Food sectors, sectors dominated by women.¹⁹ Brexit is expected to be a further drag on economic growth in Scotland and may further weaken younger people's job prospects.²⁰

¹⁸ ONS, Annual Population Survey

¹⁹ ONS, Annual Population Survey, Oct 2019 - Sep 2020

²⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/research-and-analysis/2020/09/the-impacts-of-covid-19-on-equality-in-scotland/documents/full-report/full-report/govscot%3Adocument/Covid%2Band%2BInequalities%2BFinal%2BReport%2BFor%2BPublication%2B-%2BPDF.pdf>

Tackling occupational segregation

The Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board (SAAB) Gender Commission first met in October 2019. The group includes employers, STUC, education experts and a parent representative and was set up to address an identified gender imbalance in apprenticeships, to identify what works and what can be done to improve the balance in uptake. It is expected to draw preliminary conclusions in early 2021, with final recommendations to lead and shape the business response later in 2021.

The work complements existing activity on gender segregation in the workplace although it will be the first of its kind to do so specifically through the lens of apprenticeships and work-based learning in Scotland. The Commission's terms of reference are available on the Skills Development Scotland (SDS) [website](#). SDS provides governance support to the Gender Commission, its work however remains within the guidance and remit of the SAAB. Since the onset of COVID-19 the Gender Commission has met remotely holding regular thematic workshops.

COVID-19 has affected the uptake of Apprenticeships. Official statistics published on 9 February 2021 show at the end of Quarter 3 2020-21 there have been 10,604 Modern Apprenticeship starts. This is a decrease of 50.1% on the number of starts at the same time the previous year.

The most recent statistics published by Skills Development Scotland show that at the end of Quarter 3 2020-21, 38% (4,000) of starts were female and 62% (6,604) were male.

The number of starts by gender and occupational grouping at the end of Q3 2020-21 shows that males still dominate sectors such as construction (2,988 starts as opposed to 69 female starts), engineering (687 male starts as opposed to 46 female starts) and IT and other services (688 males compared to 342 females) Females still dominates industrial sectors such as sport, health and social care (2,232 females compared to 352 males) and Administrative and related (192 female starts compared to 61 males).

Gendered norms continue to exist in the subjects undertaken by students at further education colleges in Scotland. The 2019 Audit Scotland report²¹ shows that females still dominate classes such as Health and Social Work while males continue to enrol in classes such engineering, transport and construction, concluding that more change is needed to achieve gender balance across important subject areas.

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Read an [example](#) of working mum who took the chance to work, earn and learn while gaining her Engineering, Design and Manufacturing degree.

"My managing director thought I'd be a good fit for this opportunity. The Graduate Apprenticeship fits around my life and means I'm not spending lots of time away from my family.' Katy Beckett

²¹ <https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/report/scotlands-colleges-2019#&gid=1&pid=3>

SFC held their annual Gender Conference in January 2020. This event celebrated good practice within the HE/FE sector, and provided practical actions for institutions to advance and promote the themes of SFC's gender action plan (GAP). SFC also developed a network of institutional leads to continue to share best practice across the sector and drive forward work relating to the GAP. Work taken forward by the Gender Governance Group, overseeing the implementation of the GAP, was unfortunately suspended as a result of COVID-19 and this included the publication of updated institutional gender action plans. SFC is now working to streamline equalities work and has developed a Memorandum of Understanding with the EHRC to work together to identify persistent inequalities in the College and University Sectors. This will align with their [broader review of provision and sustainability of the sector](#). This activity will inform new equality outcomes for the SFC to be set by April 2021.

Promoting equality and diversity on Boards to identify opportunities to increase gender equality, including intersectionality, awareness in the training programme they run for board and staff members has been taken forward by the College Development Network (CDN).

This is a regular item at the Secretary to the Board Network which has included presentations from the Scottish Government Public Appointments team, the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland, and the Scottish Government's Public Bodies Unit and Equality Unit

College Development Network (CDN) has supported over 953 board members through its board training and development programme training, and has 398 members registered and participating in the collaborative online governance hub. Diversity and team building have been embedded into the national board development programme, with a number of workshops in partnership with Changing the Chemistry and the Commissioner for

Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland to further develop an understanding of how board diversity supports good governance. The first ever Virtual College Leadership and Governance Summit took place in April 2020, with sessions including 'Technology as an enabler in 2030'; 'The Three Horizons of Change'; and 'Creative Governance for an Innovative Sector'.

SG College Governance team have also worked with CDN to encourage Colleges to engage with Changing the Chemistry when recruiting board members and in their advertising strategies when SG is recruiting for the Chairs of their college.

The Scottish Government, via the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), provides funding to AdvanceHE (formerly the Equality Challenge Unit) in Scotland. Funding is in place with AdvanceHE until July 2021, an element of which supports the Athena Swan network in Scotland. Participation in the Athena Swan charter is not a SFC requirement for funding but institutions find it a useful tool to advance their work on gender equality. In 2019, 14 (13 Bronze, 1 Silver) Scottish universities and 97 individual academic departments held awards (77 Bronze, 18 Silver and 2 Gold). In the most recent round of submissions (November 2018) the overall success rate was 67% for Scottish awards against a UK success rate 66%. All institutions involved in the Charter process in Scotland that have renewed or upgraded their Athena SWAN award have reported significant increases in their proportion of female professors.²² The number of female professors from ethnic minority communities in Scotland has increased from 25 in 2018-19 to 40 in 2019-20. This makes up 5.4% of all female professors and 1.5% of all professors.²³

²² [University Outcome Agreements: Summary of Progress and Ambitions \(sfc.ac.uk\)](#)

²³ [HE Staff Data | HESA](#)

Individual Training Accounts

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) offer those who are unemployed or have low incomes up to £200 per year to increase their skills in specific sectors to help them into work or to progress in work. Data highlights the segregated nature of delivery, particularly in those traditionally segregated sectors such as Construction and Health & Beauty.

We will publish an EQIA, which has been developed following input from equality representative bodies, including Close The Gap. ITAs are a small programme and limited in how they can address occupational segregation but the EQIA sets out the action we will take to tackle this in the future.

Improve opportunity for Skills training for women and girls

We published our [Future Skills Action Plan](#) on the 3 September 2019. This set out our strategic response and approach to ensuring Scotland has a skilled and productive workforce, both now and in the future. In implementing the plan, we addressed gender-specific issues in the labour market, to ensure that the specific inequalities and barriers women face are addressed in future skills delivery.

We also committed to build on and improve the range of gender-disaggregated data used to develop skills planning policy, and ensure that the new skills planning and provision model addresses occupational segregation, and the underutilisation of women's skills as a central aim.

This action will be taken forward with the delivery of the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) aligning with the commitments in the Future Skills Action Plan.

In this academic year, 2020-21, the FWDF has been doubled to £20m and made available to non-UK Apprenticeship Levy paying SMEs for the first time to provide skills training to staff vulnerable to redundancy in affected sectors. New FWDF guidance has been completed on the criteria for delivering FWDF for SFC and SDS and was developed and informed with input from Close the Gap to enhance the guidance with regards to gender equality and to ensure that colleges and employers are more aware of ensuring that employees with protected characteristics, including women are given due consideration when planning training.

We continue to work with SFC to emphasise the need for enhanced equality data and closer monitoring on equality outcomes. SFC intend to have additional resource to enable this in the coming months.

National Transition Training Fund

An initial £25m National Transition Training Fund (NTTF) to support individuals, aged 25+, who have lost their jobs or are at risk of doing so, as a result of the pandemic was launched on 8 October 2020.

Across the three Strands of the NTTF: Strand 1 administered by SDS provides short, sharp training to mitigate the rise in C19 related unemployment, The second supports a range of sector focused initiatives and the third Strand is focussing on expanding further and higher education training projects and is administered by the Scottish Funding Council.

Equality data will be collected and delivery bodies reminded of the Scottish Government's ambitions in respect of tackling inequality. Where feasible, this will include intersectional data, particularly on sector based projects. Although many of the participants in the sector projects will already be in employment, we will monitor participation to measure impact on occupational segregation, and also to ensure that women are being offered opportunities to progress in sectors where they make up the majority of the workforce, such as Hospitality. All strands will gather equality data regardless of delivery mechanism. Data will be monitored across sectors to consider impact on occupational segregation.

The Scottish Budget statement for 2021-22 set out our ongoing commitment to NTTF and in the coming months we will review the first year of delivery and set out new or revised priorities for the Fund. This work will involve considering how we can support people to move to new jobs from sectors which are experiencing a drop in workforce numbers. Retail will certainly be one of these and we will work with SDS and other partners to ensure the predominantly female workforce is assisted to move to new jobs across the labour market, rather than those jobs traditionally taken by women.

We committed to ensuring closing the gender pay gap was prominent in the development of the Performance Framework for the Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board. This has been completed and the Performance Framework stacks the same indicators as the National Performance Framework 'the difference between male and female full time hourly earnings, expressed by a percentage of male full-time hourly earning'.²⁴

Through our £60 million investment in the Young Person's Guarantee this year and commitment of a further £70 million investment next year, we are building on existing education, employability, skills and training infrastructure to provide new opportunities and enhanced support to young people. Our aim is to ensure that every young person aged between 16 and 24 will be guaranteed an opportunity at university or college, an apprenticeship programme, employment including work experience, or participating in a formal volunteering programme. The Scottish Government is working with partners (including Young Scot, Glasgow Disability Alliance, Close the Gap, Intercultural Youth Scotland, Staf and LGBT Youth Scotland) to develop an Equality Action Plan to set out how every young person can access and sustain opportunities through the Guarantee. We will publish this Equality Action Plan over the coming weeks.

As part of this Equality Action Plan we are working to develop a suite of Equalities training to support DYW School Coordinators. This training will raise awareness of gender, disability and race equality issues with the DYW School Coordinators to support young people who are furthest from the labour market and encourage employers to adopt and embed fair and inclusive workplace practices. We will also take this opportunity to engage other individuals who are working on the Young Person's Guarantee in this training.

Our £100m Green Jobs fund, investing alongside a range of sectors - such as manufacturing, tech, and land based organisations - will support new and increased opportunities for green job creation across Scotland. This year we have also announced additional support for apprenticeships through our £15m Apprenticeship Employer Grant and £10m funding for pathways to apprenticeships.

²⁴ <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/measuring-progress/national-indicator-performance>

We have established two different funds to support greater gender balance within the Scottish agricultural industry and other land-based industries such as Forestry, where women are often under-represented. The Women in Agriculture Practical Training Fund and the Women in the Rural Economy Training Fund are both administered by Lantra Scotland, and women can apply directly to them for financial support to access training of their choice. We aim to level the playing field for women in Scotland, by encouraging uptake of training in these industries and creating a more inclusive training environment.

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Read an [example](#) of a young school leaver doing a Graduate Apprenticeship with Fife Council.

“My role gives me lots of site experience, particularly on our bridge projects. I think the best thing about a Graduate Apprenticeship is that it is such a good opportunity for me to work while I am at university and while I am getting experience.” Jenna Brown

Actions going forward 2021-2022

In addition to taking forward the work we have started above. We will also take forward the actions below.

- **Updated** – Continue to explore the opportunity to access intersectional gender-disaggregated data on employee beneficiaries of the Flexible Workforce Development Fund including sectoral information and the type of training accessed. This will inform future policy development with the aim of addressing occupational segregation in future rounds and support our immediate employment and skills response to COVID-19 in the financial year 2021-2022.
- **Updated** – Ensure gender and broader equalities will be a key consideration in the development and delivery of programmes to support our employment and skills response to COVID-19. Equality data to be gathered across the National Training Transition Fund and where possible broken down by sector to consider occupational segregation. New skills investment will focus on areas of jobs growth aligning with our national mission to create new jobs, good jobs and green jobs that are available to all regardless of gender.

CHAPTER 6

EMPLOYABILITY

This chapter looked at tackling the barriers which prevent women from participating in employability programmes and employment, including specific barriers faced by women with other protected characteristics.

It is essential that our employability programmes focus on tackling the barriers women face, and that they do not reinforce any of the causes of the gender pay gap, such as occupational segregation. Our aim is for women to be able to access high quality employability advice and support, tailored to their specific needs.

The impact of the pandemic and lockdown measures on Scotland's economy has been both rapid and severe. There continues to be a widespread expectation that groups already vulnerable in the labour market will be affected adversely by both COVID-19 and the government response to control the outbreak. Our analysis on the [economic impact of labour market effects](#) examined the potential impacts for those with various protected characteristics, highlighting women, young people, disabled people, minority ethnic people, low earners, lone parents and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage as most at risk. These factors, combined with a recognition that many of those further away from jobs will now face additional challenges in the labour market has introduced further impetus to our work.

We know that women in the longer-term are likely to be disproportionately impacted in the labour market due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We remain committed to strengthening employability support to mitigate these consequences as far as we can. It is more important than ever that we ensure our employability services meet the needs of women across Scotland.

Ensure the design of employability support services are gender sensitive

We committed to design programmes of employment support for individuals and parents, including the range of employment support activities announced in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, to challenge occupational segregation and improve women's quality of employment, pay and progression.

Our ambition, which is shared by Local Government is to deliver a Scottish approach to employability that focuses on the individual first and foremost. A person-centred system that is more flexible and responsive. The No One Left Behind approach to employability services is pivotal in supporting those who are most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of COVID-19, including women, young people and disabled people, and will be essential in supporting Scotland's economic recovery.

We published the [No One Left Behind: delivery plan](#) in November 2020 outlining the next stages in the collective approach to delivering an employability service which is flexible, joined up and responsive. Delivery has been amended to take account of the restrictions moving to online and telephone delivery.

In [A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan](#), published in December 2018, we committed to halving the disability employment gap in Scotland by 2038. Our Employment Action Plan included a commitment to invest from the Child Poverty Delivery Fund to support unemployed disabled parents experiencing poverty to progress towards and enter employment. Funding of £6m has now been made available to PESF to support this group - please see A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People - Employment Action Plan Progress Report (no 2) for further details.

We wanted to ensure this new programme included a gender-sensitive approach and committed to this in our Gender Pay Gap action plan. To ensure the programme meets the needs of service users, we undertook further engagement with disabled parents, disabled people's organisations and local authorities to identify priority needs and inform service delivery. This engagement will continue during delivery of PES, and we will ensure that gender and other intersectionalities are key in this work. As women tend to take on more childcare responsibilities, this is likely to have more of an impact for women.

In the plan we also committed to invest £12m in the Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF), over the delivery period 2019-2022, targeting those family groupings deemed at greater risk of experiencing poverty within the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, gender sensitive and meets women's distinct needs. The service offers person-centred holistic employability support to low income parents helping them to access and progress in work, increasing their earnings and lifting them and their families out of poverty. By taking a person centred approach services are gender sensitive and meets women's distinct needs. We undertook an Equality Impact Assessment for this programme, which highlighted the need to support lone parents as majority are female. As the policy has been implemented, we continue to look and assess the impact realised in relation to women and families.

"I worked evenings in a pub and struggled with money and childcare until I contacted Invest in Renfrewshire and met my Advisor who helped me through the Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF) to look for another job, create a CV and gain a relevant qualification: I am now in a permanent Job with Renfrewshire Council working in care home. I work within school hours Monday to Friday so I don't need to ask people for help to look after my children in the evenings, I am financially better off and I have more time to spend with my children and I love my new job."

(Participant, Renfrewshire)

"Parental Employability Support Fund has helped me gain the confidence I needed to apply for and find a job, with the support provided it made me feel that I was able to go out and deal with things and apply for the job I wanted. I would recommend to anyone who needed it to speak to the staff."

(Participant, East Renfrewshire)

Improve data

Improving data is a common theme across the chapters of Gender Pay Gap action plan. We are committed to developing the range of data being published on Scotland's new devolved employment services, building on the range of gender disaggregated data already published. This will include data reflecting on the gendered needs of service users and if possible, experience of domestic abuse amongst service users.

As standard, we publish quarterly statistics for Fair Start Scotland (FSS) including gender breakdowns for those joining the service, and those who go on to enter and sustain employment. We include gender breakdowns where possible for all employability support reported on in our statistical publication and evaluation reports. Overall, 37% of people who have joined FSS were women and 63% were men. The proportion of women has increased over time: from 35% in year 1, to 37% in year 2, 40% in the first and second quarters of year 3, and 43% in the most recent quarter.²⁵ The Scottish Government's evaluation of the second year of the service²⁶ highlighted that compared to the unemployed population of Scotland, women were underrepresented in FSS (37% of participants were female compared to 47% of Scotland's unemployed population²⁷).

Further breakdowns in NOLB/PESF data will be requested in order to ensure that outcomes and progress can also be analysed by gender. The Scottish Government gathers data on the number of children/age of youngest child of participants for FSS and also collects case studies on people with children as part of evaluation activity. Further work will be undertaken over the course of the next year to further explore the experiences of certain groups including women.

Actions going forward 2021-22

In addition to taking forward the work we have started above. We will also take forward the refreshed action below.

- **Updated** – Design programmes of employment support for individuals and parents, including the new employment support as announced in the Child Poverty Action Plan, to challenge occupational segregation and improve women’s quality of employment, taking into account the impact COVID-19 on women’s unemployment.

25 Scotland's Devolved Employment Services: statistical summary (www.gov.scot)

26 Fair Start Scotland - evaluation report 3: year two - overview - November 2020

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fair-start-scotland-evaluation-report-3-overview-year-two/>

27 ONS Annual Population Survey, Apr 19 – Mar 20

CHAPTER 7

SOCIAL SECURITY

This chapter focussed on social security and how women are twice as dependent on social security as men and have less access to resources, assets and occupational pensions. This is due to a number of factors including women being more likely to give up work to care and earning less than men, and challenges in accessing childcare. This situation is even more acute in households where women experience domestic abuse.

The design of a social security system can affect the gender pay gap in a number of ways. It can equalise access to income or exacerbate inequalities. It can act to enable women to access re-training or fully and equally participate in the labour market. It can force women to take employment which is detrimental to their wellbeing and long term earning potential.

The chapter recognised the disproportionate negative impact the UK Government's social security reform has on women and how we planned to mitigate this founded on the basis of dignity, respect and human rights to make the system fairer where we can.

We committed to a number of actions to address women's equality and make the Social Security system fairer. These actions are being delivered by the Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland. Social Security Scotland is the new Executive Agency created by Scottish Government to delivery social security benefits.

Incorporate Equality into the Social Security Charter

We said we would incorporate women's equality into the Social Security Charter, to animate the principle of equality and non-discrimination on the face of the Social Security (Scotland) Act and work with equality groups on the development of this Charter. We published the [Social Security Scotland: our charter](#) on 15 January 2019 and on 17 October 2019, we published the [Social Security Charter: measurement framework](#).

In developing the Charter and measurement framework, we ensured women were equally represented in the core group which was set up to co-produce these. We established a new core group which allowed us to include people with protected characteristics that were under-represented in the original core group including minority ethnic women and lone parents.

We delivered a bespoke workshop to minority ethnic women and women who use Perth Women's Aid services, to ensure their voice was heard in charter development. The Charter refers to developing policy that seeks to advance equality, non-discrimination and the human right to social security as defined in laws, treaties and guidance.

Gender impact assessments

We committed to ensuring that regulations for specific entitlements, including our new income supplement (Scottish Child Payment), are robustly gender impact assessed, and that their cumulative impact on women's equality is also impact assessed.

In the development of the new Scottish Child Payment, which helps support low income families in Scotland, we undertook an Equality Impact Assessment. The [Scottish Child Payment: Equality Impact Assessment](#) was published on 8 September 2020 and considers the potential effects of the payment and how it impacts on people with one or more protected characteristics. Statistics on who claims benefits indicate that women will benefit disproportionately from this policy overall. Lone parents, the majority of whom are women, are considered more likely to live in poverty and therefore eligible for the new benefit. Scottish Child Payment opened for applications in November 2020 and ongoing review of the Equality Impact Assessment will take place.

Social Security Scotland also remain dedicated to ensuring our Social Security Scotland policies are gender assessed. Social Security Scotland has embarked on a series of workshops to increase colleagues understanding of the need and process of Equality Impact Assessments. Our External Equalities Network, has representatives from a number of key stakeholder organisations including Close the Gap, Women's Aid and Engender. The network are invited to comment on all current Equality Impact Assessments. We are working with the Network to improve our understanding of and analysis of the data we collect.

Social Security Scotland undertake client diversity and equality analysis and the most recent publication is available here. All clients are asked to complete an Equality Monitoring and Feedback Form and this analysis reported that 91% of all applications for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods are made by women.

Signposting

Social Security Scotland are working to continuously improve existing signposting guidance and design new pathways to signpost our clients to organisations and services that can help improve their financial circumstances and wellbeing as committed to in our Charter.

Social Security benefits have been designed to remove barriers. For example clients only need to fill in an application for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods once to apply for all payments. During this application process, clients are informed about the new Scottish Child Payment.

Social Security Scotland communications and engagement

Extensive engagement has been carried out with a variety of stakeholders who provide services to women to improve take up of the benefits Social Security Scotland deliver. Also to develop client referral arrangements with a range of other advice and support organisations and to tap into existing expertise from stakeholders, so this can be utilised to support the design and delivery of a high quality public service. Events, information stands, talks and presentations have been delivered across Scotland to stakeholders including; midwives, health visitors, family nurse practitioners, community links workers, women's aid support staff and other third sector organisations who support women.

Furthermore when we develop communication and marketing plans for Social Security Scotland and each individual benefit, we work hard to make sure we consider diverse needs and how we reach clients. We consult with relevant Scottish Government policy areas and stakeholders to get insight to help us plan. In addition to this, we commission user research and testing to hear directly from those who we are trying to communicate with on what they need. In the case of communicating with women about our current live benefits we use channels like 'mums net' and we have literature included in the baby box.

Our experience over the past two years of promoting benefits has led to a number of things becoming standard in the way we communicate. Key to getting people to engage in our content is making sure that they recognise it is for them. This is why we are working hard to make sure that the people who appear in images and video show the full range of groups who we will serve.

Mitigate against UK Government reforms

We committed to identify where the UK Government social security reform is depleting women's capacity to participate in higher and further education, and in a fair and sustainable labour market. Longer-term following this we will consider what programmes and interventions need to be developed, taking into account the diverse needs of all groups of women in response.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic we are taking part in ongoing engagement with stakeholders, including NUS Scotland, to identify the urgent financial needs of students and what actions we can take to ensure that students are able to continue with their further and higher education. This has included working with colleagues to ascertain which social security benefits are available to students, and how these may be affected by students' circumstances. The Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science has established a Student Hardship Taskforce which includes student representation and a social security interaction focus from Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG).

Actions going forward in 2021-2022

In addition to taking forward the work we have started above. We will also take forward the actions below

- **New** – Social Security Scotland will publish our first Equality Strategy in 2021. A key commitment is to improve the accessibility of our data and understanding of intersectionality.
- **New** – As part of our Charter Measurement Framework we will establish a baseline measurement of the percentage of staff who said they know about a range of advice and advocacy services and the percentage of staff who said they know how to refer people to advice and advocacy services.

CHAPTER 8

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Tackling inequalities, including gender economic inequality, and providing fair work unlocks people's creativity, confidence and wellbeing which builds the business case for a strong, inclusive economy. It helps our businesses to innovate and grow, it helps them to compete more effectively on the world stage. It helps develop, attract, and make, the most of our talent in Scotland. Delivering this type of ambition relies on investing in the quality of our infrastructure, our public health, and the support that is available to those who need it.

This chapter looked at actions to ensure gender was considered as part of our approach to economic growth by considering an approach that treated child and adult care as economic infrastructure, improving female rates of entrepreneurship, looking to address how current transport provision can create further barriers to women accessing employment and educational opportunities and ensuring that future changes to the labour market such as automation consider gender implications.

Unpaid Care

Historically domestic responsibilities such as child and adult care and housework have fallen to women which limits their ability to access training and job opportunities. Pre-COVID, women did a disproportionate amount of unpaid housework and caring in the household. For example, a much higher proportion of economically inactive women (25.3%) cite 'looking after family/home' as a reason for inactivity in the labour market, compared with men (6.8%).²⁸ COVID-19 has exacerbated these gendered norms with school and nursery closures, housework and childcare has fallen more on women than men, which may make it harder for them to maintain or take on employment.²⁹ Compared with fathers, mothers are spending less time on paid work but more time on household responsibilities and the differences in work patterns between mothers and fathers have grown since before the crisis.

Unpaid care drives the gender pay gap as women are more likely to work in part-time roles at lower pay, are a higher and increasing proportion of workers on zero hours contracts, and are more likely to be 'second earner' in opposite sex couples.

All of these features of women's labour market participation are a product of gendered assumptions about women's roles and proclivities that are reinforced by the way in which our society has organised work and domestic life.³⁰

²⁸ ONS, Annual Population Survey, Jul 2019 - Jun 2020.

²⁹ See for example: <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2019/10/Risky-business.pdf>; <https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/BN290-Mothers-and-fathers-balancing-work-and-life-underlockdown.pdf>

³⁰ See Close the Gap (2018), Women, work and poverty in Scotland: What you need to know.

Survey data from Carers UK suggests there may now be as many as 1.1 million unpaid carers in Scotland, 61% of whom are women.³¹ To support carers we continue to promote awareness and flexibility for unpaid carers in the workplace through Carer Positive. The Carer Positive employer accreditation scheme encourages organisations in Scotland to have fair and flexible working practices for employees to help ensure that carers can return to and remain in work alongside their caring role. As of February 2021, 207 employers have been assessed as Carer Positive, including 50 employers at the higher 'exemplary' or 'established' levels. The total number of employees working for Carer Positive organisations in Scotland has now reached 449,000. This has increased from 68 employers with 249,000 employees in December 2016. A Coronavirus Carer's Allowance Supplement of £230.10 paid in June, backed by an investment of £19.2 million benefitting around 83,000 unpaid carers.

Going forward we will look in more detail at how women's disproportionate unpaid care responsibilities drives the gender pay gap, bringing together work being taken forward across policy areas in government and investigate potential mechanisms to address this issue.

Treating childcare and social care as economic infrastructure

An initial scoping meeting was held with relevant cross-government policy officials in March 2020 to consider this issue.

The discussion noted that physical infrastructure like roads, rail and broadband provide services that help the economy to function efficiently. As such they are viewed as "economic infrastructure", and investment in them tends to pay greater attention to the contributions they make to growing the country's economic potential, in addition to the benefits to users. This can sometimes lead to more favourable investment decisions for these. While provision of childcare and social care services contribute to the efficient functioning of the economy in an equally beneficial way, mainly through their impact on the labour market, policy assessment of their value has tended to focus mainly on benefits to users, with limited consideration for knock-on impacts to the wider economy.

Women tend to have higher inactivity rates than men partially driven by the fact that women disproportionately take on unpaid childcare and social care duties. SG has already taken significant steps to expand provision of ELC, starting from Aug 2021 to 1140 hours a year, for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds. If child care and social care provision is extended so that it is available to all people, to fit with the concept of 'economic infrastructure', it has potential to unlock for the economy and society even more talent and skills, and to increase efficiency in our labour market through higher employment rates for parents and other unpaid care providers and specifically women. Higher levels of employment would boost consumption and economic growth throughout the economy, and contribute to improving wellbeing.

31 16 Carers UK (2020), Carers Week 2020 Research Report

In treating childcare and social care as economic infrastructure in common with “physical infrastructure”, the focus needs to be on understanding their benefits beyond users, durability of impacts, impacts on local economy and wider social outcomes. And, to be most effective as economic infrastructure, childcare and social care provision must be designed to have the same attributes that are often associated with the efficiency of physical infrastructure. This work was paused due to COVID-19 and will be taken forward during 2021-22 and will be considered in the context of the joint Scottish Government and COSLA Reform of Adult Social Care Programme.

How transport infrastructure investment impacts on the gender pay gap in transport appraisal

Our second [National Transport Strategy](#) (NTS2), published in February 2020, is a catalyst for change, setting out a compelling vision for the kind of transport system we all want for Scotland over the next 20 years. There are four priorities to support this vision: to reduce inequalities, take climate action, help deliver inclusive economic growth, and improve health and wellbeing. We have reflected in the NTS2 that the gendered division of labour means that women tend to take on a disproportionate level of care and domestic tasks compared to men, and that this influences their travel behaviour. Inadequate provision of transport to suit this behaviour can create further barriers to women accessing employment and educational opportunities.

Although work on implementing the Strategy was paused due to COVID-19, we recommenced activity and have since published the NTS2’s first annual [Delivery Plan](#) on 17 December 2020. We continue to develop our understanding of transport and gender challenges through a number of Impact Assessments. The first [interim report](#) (published 12 October 2020) on the Transport Transition Plan Equality Impact Assessment found that the pandemic is having a disproportionate impact on the basis of gender. Specifically, women are disproportionately represented in health and social care sectors, along with hospitality, tourism and retail occupations, sectors and roles which increase exposure to COVID-19 and are more likely to need travel to work. Women are more likely to rely on public transport, and to engage in less direct journey patterns to facilitate caring responsibilities. Public transport use is noted as an aggravating risk factor, which puts women at an even greater risk of exposure to the virus when commuting, working, visiting a doctor or doing essential shopping. This is especially the case with single parents, the majority of which are female, who are less likely to have a car due to financial circumstances.

In addition, we recognise that improved data collection and analysis on, for example women’s travel patterns and experiences, is necessary to set baselines and robustly evaluate the impact of interventions and investment in the transport system. We are arranging for future statistical publications to feature a section on gender and transport, making visible the gender disaggregated data that we collect through Scottish Household Survey.

We are looking at how to improve data collection and analysis with a focus on women's travel patterns and experiences. Further work in this area is planned for 2021, including themes such as safety when travelling and access to employment through transport. Outputs from this work will feed into the update to STAG as set out in the NTS2 Delivery Plan and this action in the Gender Pay Gap Action Plan, and set the direction of future work on gender and transport. The updated appraisal guidance will include the consideration of the causes of the Gender Pay Gap in transport appraisal and is due for review and publication later this year.

Increase support for female led enterprises

We committed to ensuring that tackling the gender pay gap is considered and included in work on the new Scottish National Investment Bank's Equality Impact Assessment. This will take full account of research, learning and engagement with WiSE Centre for Economic Justice and other relevant stakeholders. This will ensure the Bank's intended leadership role with regards to diversity and inclusiveness in its governance, operational arrangements and its Investment Strategy is fully embedded. An EQIA was published in February 2019 alongside the Scottish National Investment Bank Bill. This was further revised following feedback from gender equalities groups. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-national-investment-bank-bill-revised-equality-impact-assessment/>

Implementation of several relevant provisions of the Scottish National Investment Bank Act 2020 includes the requirement to develop a Gender Equality Strategy and to conduct periodic equal pay reviews.

We continue to nurture a strong ecosystem of support for entrepreneurs in Scotland to ensure that together, existing and new women-led businesses can create the jobs and opportunities on which our recovery will be built. As a Government, we are fully committed to tackling the entrepreneurial gender gap. Through our Women in Enterprise Framework, we continue to support a range of initiatives to increase participation of women in business in Scotland.

The Scottish Government, is developing a new model for the delivery of gender-specific, gender-aware and gender-tailored business support, under a refreshed Women in Enterprise Framework which will be developed over 2021-2022.

Making gender mainstreaming central to the work of the Enterprise & Skills Strategic Board

Through our Fair Work First approach we are promoting fair work practices across the labour market in Scotland, including through our partnership with the enterprise and skills agencies. We expect the criteria which asks employers to take action to tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace to improve workplace experiences for women.

In its report, Coronavirus (COVID-19): measures to mitigate the labour market impacts, published July 2020, the Enterprise & Skills Strategic Board Sub Group recognised the important role for Fair Work in addressing the labour market emergency through the alignment of Fair Work principles with the agencies' business support interventions. This includes a recommendation to develop appropriate tool kit with services to enable businesses to consider innovative workplace practices consistent with the principles of Fair Work and enabling the adoption of efficient working practices. Accordingly, the agencies have committed to embedding Fair Work First criteria in existing and new schemes and funds. Additionally, Scottish Enterprise has worked closely with its business partners to develop Fair Work Employer Support Tool aiming to help employers adopt fair work practices, which was published in January 2021. These tools will support gender mainstreaming within business and other organisations across Scotland.

The annual strategic guidance from Scottish Ministers to the enterprise and skills agencies makes clear their expectation that Fair Work First criteria will be applied to the agencies' functions as both employers and the stewards of substantial public funding through which they deliver Scottish Government priorities, including in relation to tackling the gender pay gap.

Considering gender in the future labour market

Given the importance of automation and artificial intelligence to the economy and future labour market, we looked to ensure that closing the gender pay gap and its causes are central to all relevant policy analysis in this area.

Scotland's Future Skills Action Plan highlights both the challenges and opportunities of artificial intelligence (AI), automation and digitalisation in our future labour market. Commentators fail to agree on the long term impacts on jobs but it is clear that the changes to how we do our jobs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have accelerated a move to on-line services that are unlikely to be reversed. It is therefore key that as we develop strategies setting out Scotland's ambitions in areas like AI, diversity should be a key principle of the actions underpinning them.

The Scottish Government is committed to developing an AI strategy to help ensure that Scotland maximises the potential economic and social benefits of AI, and sends a strong signal to the world about our ambition. Due to be published in spring 2021, the intent is for the strategy to have benefit to people in Scotland as its core guiding principle, be aligned with the National Performance Framework and also aim to enable economic growth. The strategy will set out a vision for AI in Scotland and the principles – addressing areas including diversity, human rights, inclusivity, fairness and justice, as well as accountability and transparency around the use of AI – that will guide work to realise this. Gender equalities experts Close the Gap participated in the AI Strategy Ethical & Regulatory Frameworks Working Group.

Tackling the Technology Gender Gap Together is a workstream originating from research commissioned by Skills Development Scotland's Digital Technologies Skills Group to better understand the gender imbalance in the technology job roles and in the technology sector.

This research evolved into an action plan and, in partnership with industry, Skills Development Scotland launched a gender action plan to look at interventions designed to target females at each stage of the tech talent pipeline and workforce. From increasing access of young girls to tech learning, through to supporting employers to attract, recruit and progress more females within their tech workplaces.

This work is ongoing and has included:

- Collaboration with Girlguiding Scotland and Education Scotland to offer Scotland's first tech skills badge to Girlguiding members 5-18yrs
- Working with Education Scotland to blend technology learning into subjects that have greater appeal to females including French, History and English
- Working with Equate Scotland to deliver a best practice guide and webinars for tech employers to learn how to better attract, recruit, retain and progress females in their workforce
- Working with Girlgeeks Scotland to create training and resources to support younger females in technology occupations to act as role models for school-age children
- Series of events to raise awareness of the need to tackle the gender imbalance in tech with practical advice and case studies of best practice from a range of partners including schools, clubs, college, universities, training providers, employers and support organisations who have all been successful in engaging and supporting females into digital technology
- Integrating diversity and gender into everything that is delivered for digital skills, for example, ensuring that Digital World and promotional careers activities all consider how to target women.

The number of women in tech has risen from 18% to 23.4% but we know much more needs to be done to encourage more females into technology and we continue to work with partners through our industry-led technology gender workstream.

Actions we will take forward in 2021-2022

In addition to taking forward the work we have started above. We will also take forward the actions below

- Develop an approach to treat investment in childcare and social care as economic infrastructure.
- we will look in more detail at how women's disproportionate unpaid care responsibilities drives the gender pay gap, bringing together work being taken forward across policy areas in government and investigate potential mechanisms to address this issue

MONITOR AND REPORT

Our Gender Pay Gap Action Plan committed to providing the Scottish Parliament with annual reports on the progress of actions plan via the then Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee now the Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee. The next report will be provided in March 2022.

Scottish Ministers from the Fair Work and Gender Equality Ministerial Working Group meet biannually to ensure work to reduce the gender pay gap is taken forward across portfolios. The next meeting is in Spring 2021.

We have also developed a set of indicators measuring the progress women are making across a range of skills and labour markets indicators and measures which will accompany this report.

NEXT STEPS

Although we have achieved our headline goal to reduce the Gender Pay Gap by 2021 across all measurements we know that gender pay gap is persistent and that we have yet to feel the full impact that BREXIT and COVID-19 has and will have on the Scottish economy in the coming year. We will therefore continue our work to reduce the gender pay gap throughout the reporting year 2021 to 2022.

We will develop an equality and human rights mainstreaming strategy that is underpinned by a comprehensive approach to intersectional data collation to improve the gender competence of policy makers across government. We will also establish an Economy Centre of Expertise on equality and human rights to drive progress in this area. Reviewing the public sector equality duty will be a key task to ensure public bodies apply an equality analysis to their policies including the impact they will have on women.

In the absence of powers over employment legislation and within our devolved powers we will influence and support employers to embrace diversity in the workplace and address gender pay gaps. We will continue to deliver our Workforce Equality Fund and Women Returners Programme in 2021-22 and support them to adopt flexible working practice that not only benefit women but all workers. We will build new forums to offer support and best practice to employers in implementing gender equality policies including launching the Gender Beacon Collaborative and a Centre For Workplace Transformation. We will also call on the UK Government to increase protection and provision for women at work including tackling harassment at work and discrimination due to pregnancy/maternity.

Within early learning settings and schools we will continue to break down gender stereotypes and occupational segregation in the next review of the national occupational standards and resulting qualifications for the early learning and childcare and out of school care sector. We will also continue to accelerate progress on the Developing Young Workforce Strategy interventions to reduce gender imbalance and undertake a practice and improvement evaluation of the equality outcomes in Developing Young Workforce as part of the delivery of the Young Person's Guarantee.

In our future skills delivery options we will continue to explore the opportunity to access intersectional gender-disaggregated data within the Flexible Workforce Development Fund and Transition Training Fund. This will investigate possible breakdown by sector to consider and address occupational segregation. We will ensure that new skills investment focussing on areas of jobs growth such as green Jobs consider gender equality in their design.

In designing the new employment support as announced in the Child Poverty Action Plan, we will challenge occupational segregation and improve women's quality of employment, taking into account the impact COVID-19 on women's unemployment. Social Security Scotland will also publish its first Equality Strategy in 2021 with a key commitment to improve the accessibility of data and understanding of intersectionality.

We will look in more depth at the impact the disproportionate responsibility of unpaid care impacts on women's access to labour market opportunities and consider possible mechanisms to address this issue. This will include reinstating work on developing an approach to treat investment in childcare and social care as economic infrastructure.



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