



*SCOTTISH WOMEN'S BUDGET GROUP*

## **Submission to the WBG Commission on a Gender-Equal Economy Second call for evidence: Transformative Policies and Practices**

May 2019

### **About your organisation**

The Scottish Women's Budget Group (SWBG) campaigns for gender budget analysis in the Scottish budget, and across local authorities in Scotland. We bring together women from across Scotland who want to achieve better gender equality.

SWBG has focused on encouraging active gender analysis in the Scottish Budget process since 2000 and has been instrumental in securing significant changes to the process and awareness amongst officials and elected decision makers. Part of an international network of gender budgeting campaigners and practitioners, SWBG draws upon experience from the UK and elsewhere to inform and develop the approach to gender budget analysis in Scotland.

### **1. Which policies or practices, that you know of, have had a transformative impact on gender equality?**

- Equality Budget Statement
- 'Equally Safe'
- Gender Pay Gap Action Plan
- Workplace Equality Fund

### **2. What happened as a result of the policy or practice?**

#### **Equality Budget Statement (EBS)**

Introduced in 2009 as the first document of its kind across the governments in the UK,<sup>1</sup> the EBS focused policy officials and spending officials to consider the gender (and other) equality dimensions of spending proposals in the Draft Budget. It was also a focus for narrative on gender budgeting and the need for different approaches to policy making and economic models. The EBS has been of limited value in terms of how policy makers, and particularly parliamentarians, use the analysis contained within and is likely to be revised in 2019-20.

The most transformational benefit of the EBS has been the focus on equality analysis in the budget, which although inconsistent and at times rather poor, would not otherwise have happened. The EBS has featured prominently in the Equality Budgets Advisory Group that brings together SWBG, the statutory equality and human rights commissions, the Convention of Scotland Local Authorities, and most recently JRF, along with ad hoc presentation from feminist civil society and other government and civil society organisations. EBAG has consistently demanded

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/equality-fairer-scotland-budget-statement-scottish-budget-2019-20/>

improvements in the analytical content, and format of the EBS, and has used the EBS as the locus for critical engagement on the Scottish Budget process, and to highlight persistent areas of misalignment between policy objectives and spending allocations such as the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme, allocation for childcare expansions, and more recently social security, housing, and tax.

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### **Equally Safe**

Equally Safe<sup>2</sup>, launched in 2014, is Scotland's Strategy to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls (alternatively known as gender based violence). This policy has been transformative in that it shows the Scottish Government's approach has been, and continues to be, guided by the clear recognition of the gendered nature of violence against women including, sexual abuse, sexual violence, commercial sexual exploitation, harmful traditional practices and domestic abuse.

A range of activity has been undertaken across Scotland under this policy priority. Actions have included:

- Expansion of the delivery of the Rape Crisis Sexual Violence Prevention programme in schools, to increase the understanding of consent and healthy relationships.
- Work with Universities and Colleges to ensure the provision of a safe environment for students and staff, utilising learning from the 'Equally Safe in Further and Higher Education Project'
- Publication of refreshed media guidelines for reporting on domestic abuse.
- Pilot of an accreditation scheme for employers which will support employers to tackle gender based violence in their workplace.

The gendered analysis that underpins Equally Safe recognises that women and girls are disproportionately affected by violence precisely because of their gender. Such an approach can be transformative in that it recognises such violence stems from deep rooted and systemic gender inequality and the subordinate position women occupy in society in relation to men.

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### **Gender Pay Gap Action Plan**

The gender pay gap in Scotland for full-time employees has decreased from 6.6% in 2017, to 5.7% in 2018. The Scottish Government's first Gender Pay Gap Action Plan<sup>3</sup> was launched in March 2019. While it is too early to say whether this policy and actions attached to it have been transformational, it has the potential to be such by raising awareness of the causes of the gender pay gap and challenging issues contributing towards it, such as occupational segregation and inequalities in care and the labour market.

The plan was launched to support the Scottish Government meet its commitment of reducing the gender pay gap by 2021. There are over 50 actions, including:

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<sup>2</sup> Equally Safe Strategy. <https://www.gov.scot/policies/violence-against-women-and-girls/equally-safe-strategy/>. Progress Report <https://www.gov.scot/publications/equally-safe-year-one-update-report/pages/4/>

<sup>3</sup> 'A Fairer Scotland for Women: The Pay Gap Action Plan' Scottish Government (2019) <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-women-gender-pay-gap-action-plan/pages/11/>

- Supporting 2,000 women to return to work after a career break through the new Women Returners Programme worth £5 million over three years, building on the success of a pilot project run since 2017;
- Improving workplace practices, including support for women during menopause and for victims of domestic abuse, through the expansion of the Workplace Equality Fund (see below);
- Delivering a new careers strategy by autumn 2019 to provide advice and accessible guidance which will help to challenge stereotypes and occupational segregation;
- Refreshing the gender and diversity element of the Scottish Business Pledge<sup>4</sup>;
- Showing leadership as an employer by undertaking a Scottish Government Equal Pay Audit as well as researching the ways businesses can reduce their gender pay gaps;
- Urging the UK Government to strengthen and enforce the protection of women and carers against discrimination and dismissal – including strengthening paternity leave rights and introducing ‘safe leave’ which would provide victims of domestic violence with additional leave;
- Promoting gender equality within early learning and childcare, schools, colleges, universities and within employment support and the social security system;
- Commissioning a feasibility study for a ‘What Works Centre for Flexible Work’ to design, test and embed new approaches to increasing the availability of flexible working – in particularly for low income parents.

This action plan also has the potential to be transformative for gender equality as it refers to several other policy frameworks in Scotland which are contributing to tackling the gender pay gap and promoting greater gender equality. The Scottish Government has made a commitment to address the gender pay gap as part of economic policy making.

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### **Workplace Equality Fund**

The Workplace Equality Fund was launched in early 2018 to offer grants to reduce employment inequalities, discrimination and barriers for minority ethnic people, women, disabled people and older workers. The Fund was established to support delivery of the Scottish Government’s Programme for Government; Race Equality Framework; Disability Action Plan; and Scotland’s Labour Market Strategy.

The Fund supports employers to reduce employment inequalities and discrimination. Nine projects have been funded through the Fund’s first round. These projects will:

- support women returners back into the finance sector;
- help a range of companies become age-inclusive;
- build flexible and agile workplaces for companies in the construction, STEM, finance, technology, and furnishing sectors;
- improve mental health in the workplace; and
- deliver training in leadership and boardroom governance to women in the technology sector.

This fund could support the transformation of attitudes by helping employers to understand the drivers of inequality (not only gender equality) and how to act to address it.

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<sup>4</sup> The Scottish Business Pledge is a values-led partnership between Government and business. It is a shared ambition of boosting productivity, competitiveness, sustainable employment, and workforce engagement and development.

**3. Was the policy or practice implemented at local, regional, national or international level?**

- Equality Budget Statement – National\* (as it accompanies the Scottish Budget)
- Equally Safe – National policy with local implementation as a result of funding being made available to local projects
- Gender Pay Gap plan – National
- Workplace Equality Fund – Nationally available with local implementation (as part of Equally Safe policy)

**N.B.** 'National' refers to Scotland.

**4. Could the policy or practice be implemented in other contexts? If so, how? If not, why not?**

**Any additional comments?**

**Social Security**

It is important to mention recent reforms to Social Security as these have the potential to change women's lives and set back the benefits of other initiatives looking to increase gender equality. A group of organisations led by Engender in Scotland<sup>5</sup> published a report summarising why and how women are affected by social security policy and suggests ways in which new powers available to Scotland can be engaged to increase women's equality. Recommendations to the Scottish Government are presented in terms of systemic gender inequalities that dictate the impact of social security policy on women – paid work, unpaid work, domestic abuse and multiple discrimination. (attached)

**National Advisory Council on Women and Girls**

In 2016, The Scottish Government pledged to establish a First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls, (NACWG) to help drive forward action to tackle gender inequality.

Established in 2017, the NACWG is made up of 16 women and girls aged 15+. Its mission is to:

- Play a leading role in raising awareness of gender inequality in Scotland, drawing attention to the wide range of issues this creates for women, girls in Scotland today.
- Act as a champion for positive progress and policies that are making a meaningful difference to the lives of women and girls; encouraging Scotland to become a beacon for gender equality around the world.
- Be a catalyst for change by providing a challenging voice to the First Minister and her team. Identifying gaps in work to tackle gender inequality or ways of increasing the pace and scale of change.

The NACWG is not a working group, a review body or a delivery agent. It sets its own agenda, including what topics to cover, based on evidence from Scotland and beyond and provides annual

<sup>5</sup> 'Securing Women's Futures' Engender (2016) <https://www.engender.org.uk/content/publications/Securing-Womens-Futures---using-Scotlands-new-social-security-powers-to-close-the-gender-equality-gap.pdf>

reports to the First Minister<sup>6</sup>, demonstrating findings and making recommendations. In 2018, a summary of recommendations included– Leadership; Accountability; and Creating Conditions. The theme of the NACWG for 2019 is ‘policy coherence’, including looking at how policy is made in Scotland and how policies may work against each other.

We welcome submissions from communities and grassroots women’s groups and organisations, as well as from think tanks, trade unions, academics, civil society organisations, business, and the public sector at all levels. We are keen to gather examples from a variety of levels – local, regional, national, and international.

We welcome evidence in a range of formats. Written submissions should be no more than 3,000 words in total, and can be accompanied by supporting documents, web links or videos.

Our call for evidence is open until **31 May 2019**. Please send evidence to [marion.sharples@wbg.org.uk](mailto:marion.sharples@wbg.org.uk), or you can send hard copy evidence to:

Commission on a Gender Equal Economy  
Women’s Budget Group  
C/o- The Studio  
First Floor  
3-5 Bleeding Heart Yard  
LONDON EC1N 8SJ

Please ensure you give us your name, organisation (if relevant) and contact details, indicating if you would like us to treat your evidence anonymously.

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This evidence does not need to be treated anonymously.

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<sup>6</sup> ‘Generation Equal’ Scottish Government (2018) <https://onescotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2018-Report.pdf>