

Equally Safe at Work

A guide for trade union reps



Close the Gap

EQUALLY SAFE AT
WORK

About Equally Safe at Work

Equally Safe at Work is an innovative and world-leading employer accreditation programme developed by Close the Gap, Scotland's policy advocacy organisation working on women's labour market equality. It was developed to support the local implementation of Equally Safe, Scotland's national strategy to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls. The strategy recognises that violence against women (VAW), also known as gender-based violence, is a cause and consequence of wider gender inequality. Addressing gender inequality in the workplace is therefore a fundamental step in preventing VAW.

Equally Safe at Work supports employers in the public and third sectors to understand how VAW and gender inequality affect women in the workforce. It provides a framework to drive change and enables employers to address the causes of gender inequality in their organisation. It also supports employers to better understand their role in supporting women workers who have experienced gender-based violence.

The programme was piloted between 2019 and 2020 with a group of early adopter councils, resulting in four achieving bronze accreditation. Between 2022 and 2023, an expansion to a new cohort of councils, and pilots in the NHS and third sector resulted in 14 new employers gaining accreditation, taking the total to 18 in Scotland. A further 25 employers are engaged through the Equally Safe at Work Community of Practice which was introduced to facilitate peer learning across organisations and sectors.



Santa Claus was looking at the fox while giving he gave hic present to Mr.Snowman.

So Santa Claus decided to transform the fox into a reindeer who will be helping him give away presents on Christmas eve.

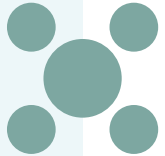
Why Equally Safe at Work is needed

While employers across the public and third sectors are increasingly recognising their important role in supporting victim-survivors and tackling VAW, there's still a long way to go. A key step for employers in progressing work on VAW is addressing women's workplace inequality.

Women's workplace inequality

The gender pay gap is a persistent feature of Scotland's labour market. Gender norms and stereotyping about women's capabilities and interests result in a stark segregation in the types of work that men and women do. In the workplace, this means that women are more likely to work in catering, nursing, admin, and care and support roles, while men tend to work as porters, in IT, refuse collection, and more technical or senior roles. A lack of quality part-time and flexible jobs, coupled with women's disproportionate responsibility for caring, contributes towards women's underrepresentation in management and senior roles. While pay modernisation programmes in the public sector have addressed some of the historical gendered pay inequalities, some women are still paid less than men for doing equal work.

As well, women's economic inequality reduces their financial independence, restricts their choices in employment, and in life, and creates a conducive context for VAW. Financial dependence and poverty are both primary risk factors that diminish women's resilience and options in the face of violence.



Violence against women and the workplace



VAW impacts all aspects of women's lives, and the workplace is no exception. One in four women in Scotland experience domestic abuse in her lifetime and three-quarters of women are targeted at work, with perpetrators commonly using workplace resources such as phones and email to threaten, harass or abuse their current or former partner. As well, over 70% of women report having experienced or witnessed sexual harassment in the workplace in Scotland, with this figure rising for young women, racially minoritised women and disabled women. This is a key issue for trade unions as it's likely to affect a significant proportion of your membership.

VAW has a profound impact on women's capacity to do their job. Women report experiencing trauma, stress, anxiety and depression as a result of VAW and can struggle to get appropriate support from their employer. This is because VAW is not often seen as a workplace issue and there are few examples of effective employment practice that is VAW- and gender- sensitive. Union reps have a key role to play in supporting victim-survivors in the workplace, and in ensuring that workplace policies and practices are informed by member experiences.



What employers have to do to gain accreditation

Equally Safe at Work is a tiered programme which enables employers to progress from building a foundation for change to embedding a strong culture of gender equality within the organisation. The bronze, silver and gold tiers are cumulative, and organisations progress to the next level once the required criteria at each stage are achieved and maintained.

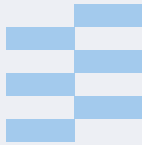


As part of the programme, employers must demonstrate they are meeting a variety of criteria across six standards related to women's labour market equality.

Leadership



Data



Flexible working



Occupational segregation



Workplace culture



Violence against women



To meet the criteria of the programme, employers undertake a number of activities including:

- Employment policy review and development
- Training for line managers and key staff on gender equality, VAW, flexible working, and sexual harassment
- Delivering awareness-raising campaigns
- Analysing employee data
- Publishing gender pay gap data
- Developing and/or reviewing equal pay statements
- Addressing barriers to recruitment, development, and progression
- Developing initiatives to reduce occupational segregation

Trade union involvement in these activities is a critical factor for success.



What employers receive as part of the programme

Close the Gap provides employers participating in the programme with a variety of guidance and resources. This includes:

- Awareness-raising material on VAW and gender inequality
- Guidance for line managers on VAW, sexual harassment, and rape and sexual assault
- E-learning modules for line managers
- Tailored 1-2-1 support
- Peer learning opportunities
- Case studies from employers and workers



How can Equally Safe at Work support union reps?

Trade unions played a key role in the early development of Equally Safe at Work through reviewing and shaping the criteria of the programme. As a result, a number of the actions and activities included in the programme align with work that many local union reps will already be involved in, such as improving fair work practices. Work developed as part of Equally Safe at Work will be relevant to the everyday support that union reps provide to their members. For example, ensuring that the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty are being met; that gender pay gap data is analysed and published; that steps are taken to secure equal pay; and that experiences of gender-based violence are both effectively addressed and prevented.

Equally Safe at Work can therefore be used as a bargaining tool for union reps to drive change forward in the workplace, support your members, and ensure that any changes being made as part of the programme are actually reaching women workers throughout the organisation.

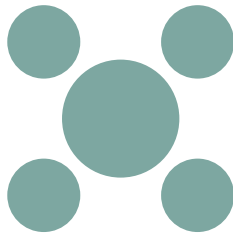
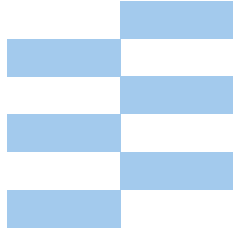
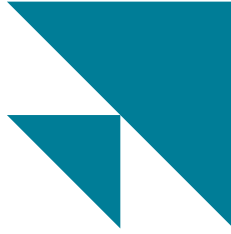


What union reps can do:

- Speak to your employer about getting involved with Equally Safe at Work.
- If your employer is already participating in the accreditation, join the organisation's Equally Safe at Work working group. This is a cross departmental group which is assembled to oversee the delivery of the programme. Trade union representation on the working group is important for employer success. This is an opportunity to influence the work your employer is doing as part of Equally Safe at Work so that women members are better supported.
- Find out more what your employer is doing as part of the Equally Safe at Work programme and identify opportunities to feed in.
- Raise awareness of Equally Safe at Work in your branch, and wider union.
- Link in with the Equally Safe at Work team to learn more about the programme and how employers meet the required criteria of the programme.
- Use Close the Gap's toolkit for trade union reps on the Public Sector Equality Duty and guide on tackling occupational segregation.



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Close the Gap

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

www.closethegap.org.uk

Close the Gap (SCIO) (known as Close the Gap) is a Scottish charity, no SC046842.