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A Fairer Scotland for Women: Gender Pay Gap Action Plan

In 2017 I provided evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Economy, Jobs and Fair Work committee inquiry into the gender pay gap in Scotland. One of the primary recommendations made in the committee's report '*No Small Change*'¹ was that the Scottish Government should develop a strategy for tackling the causes of the gender pay gap.

In response we established a working group, which I chaired, whose membership includes, Close the Gap, Engender, STUC, Equate Scotland and the Women in Scottish Economy research unit. I asked the group to develop recommendations for tackling the causes of the gender pay gap to inform the development of Scottish Government's Gender Pay Gap Action Plan.

I am pleased to let you know that the Fairer Scotland for Women: Gender Pay Gap Action Plan was launched this morning to coincide with International Women's Day. A copy of the plan can be found at - www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-women-gender-pay-gap-action-plan/

The Gender Pay Gap Action Plan is one of a number of plans, including the Fairer Scotland for Disabled People Employment Action Plan, the Fair Work Action Plan and the Future Skills Action Plan, that will support the implementation of the Labour Market Strategy.

Our Gender Pay Gap Action Plan is a first for Scotland, and goes further than any UK administration. The aim of the action plan is to bring together a cross-government approach to tackling the causes of women's inequality in the labour market.

¹ http://www.parliament.scot/S5_EconomyJobsFairWork/Reports/EJFWS052017R06.pdf



The plan will address labour market inequalities faced by women, particularly disabled women; minority ethnic women; older women; women from poorer socio economic backgrounds; and women with caring responsibilities. It sets out a range of actions that we plan to take over the coming years to further reduce the gender pay gap for employees in Scotland.

In addition to the Working Group the development of the actions within the plan were shaped by a series of thematic workshops that looked at the stages of a girl and woman's life where drivers of the gender pay gap are prevalent. Topics covered were, Early Learning and Childcare, School, Post-school, Employability, Employment, Economic Development, Social Security and Procurement. To supplement these discussions we consulted separately with employers, trade union officials, equality groups, school pupils, women's groups and with stakeholders from other Ministerial Working Groups.

The primary action within the Gender Pay Gap Action Plan is for the Scottish Government to demonstrate leadership in ensuring that gender issues are considered within policy design and services that advance women's equality, particularly in relation to the labour market and economy.

The action plan also outlines a series of actions for addressing gender stereotyping, sexual harassment and labour market inequalities:

- across Scottish Government functions, including the collection of data;
- through Scottish Government's relationship with its enterprise and skills agencies and employers, for example, through Letters of Guidance, procurement and financial levers;
- promoting gender equality within early years and child care, schools, colleges, universities, employability programmes and social security support; and
- encouraging employers in the public, private and third sectors to tackle the causes of the gender pay gap in their own organisations.

To complement the Action Plan, we have published an analysis which will present a logic model to set out the main causes of the gender pay gap. The analysis will also examine how the policy commitments in the action plan can be expected to impact the gender pay gap, while also considering gender equality more broadly along with its intersectional dimensions. A copy of which can be found at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-women-gender-paygap-action-plan/analytical-annex/>

We will measure the impact of this action plan across a range of indicators and measures which we will publish separately and share with the Committee.

The Scottish Government will also undertake to provide the Scottish Parliament with annual reports on progress in reducing the gender pay gap .

I would be more than happy to address any questions the Committee may have about the plan.

I am copying this letter to the conveners of the Education and Skills; Local Government and Communities; Finance and Constitution; Rural Economy and Connectivity; Social Security and Equalities and Human Rights Committees for their information.

JAMIE HEPBURN

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