



#GENERATIONEQUAL

First Minister's Advisory Council
on Women and Girls

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Step Change Necessary in Scottish Policymaking to Tackle Gender Inequality
The First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls calls for establishment of National Standards for Policymakers and increased scrutiny to ensure policies are fit for modern Scotland

Scotland is being urged to implement positive change in policymaking to progress gender equality.

In its second report, published today (22 January 2020), the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls (NACWG) has recommended establishing National Standards for the creation of new policies to ensure Scotland is driving societal change. It is one of seven recommendations made following the Council's review of policy coherence and gender equality in Scotland.

The NACWG's vision of a Scottish approach states it should clearly and directly feed into the National Performance Framework, the Sustainable Development Goals and national economic policy. The Council has a long-term ambition to further align Scottish law and policy with international human rights standards, with the suggested approach themed around Leadership, Accountability and Creating Conditions that support truly gender equal policymaking.

The research undertaken by the Council around Policy Coherence throughout 2019 found that the key to change is building equality into policy and systems from the ground up. While policies such as The Sex Discrimination Act (1975) and Equal Pay Act (1970) – now consolidated into the Equality Act (2010) - have protected women and girls from discrimination in employment, and in access to goods, facilities, and services, for decades, these laws only provide a remedy for when things have gone wrong rather than stopping gender inequality happening in the first place.

The NACWG also found that there was significant frustration with inconsistent engagement and participation processes around policymaking, with the issue of how to ensure equivalence between data and voice – giving equal weight to community evidence alongside academic research – raised time and time again. The report recommends Scottish Government, Local Government and Public Bodies should build on existing work already underway to create a genuine effort in co-production of policymaking with evidence of lived experience at its heart.

NACWG Chair, Louise Macdonald OBE, said: "Women are not niche; we are half the world.

"If a system – or any part of it – is gender-blind, then it is a bad system. We must stop seeing gender and intersectionality as a "complicating factor" in policymaking. It is a democratic responsibility to include women who are at the sharpest end of policymaking. Doing so is not just good for women and girls, it's good for everyone in society.



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“It's vital we all learn to understand "the gain" of gender equality. Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes which in turn, will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large.”

The report's recommendations are not limited to the Scottish Government and public sector bodies. It hopes that the business community will use this work to ingrain a gender equal approach in policymaking as a blueprint for a “whole sector” approach to gender equality and culture change to tackle deep-rooted issues such as occupational segregation.

These recommendations build on those made by The NACWG in its 2018 Report and Recommendations - of which, all eleven were subsequently accepted by Nicola Sturgeon – with the recommendations devised to work in tandem to drive forward the gender equality movement.

Louise added: “Our recommendations are ambitious – because they need to be. Scotland needs them to be.”

The NACWG 2019 report and recommendations can be found at: onescotland.org/NACWG

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Notes to editors

The Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2017/18 and 2016/17 pledged to establish a First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls. It is not a working group or review body. A 1,000-strong 'Circle' of ambassadors (all genders) is providing insights and evidence of gender inequality across all sectors to help the Council advocate wider societal change.

For 2019 NACWG's focus moved to exploring Policy Coherence and gender equality, continuing to frame its exploration of the topic under the themes of Leadership, Accountability and Creating Conditions, maintaining the ambition for its work and recommendations to not only focus on Scottish Government and public services. Whilst there are some areas where only they can lead, it is believed that much of what NACWG is calling for can be reflected or mirrored across all spheres of government, the third sector and business communities.

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