

The Scottish Women's Convention's  
response to the Scottish  
Government's consultation on:

# Equality Evidence Strategy 2023-25



October 2022

## Premise

The Scottish Government are aiming to assess how equality evidence is used across Scotland and how they can better use this information to influence policy in the future. They began a process to develop and improve equality data through the Equality Data Improvement Programme (EDIP) in April 2021, with this consultation building on the work carried out since then.

This consultation specifically focuses on a wider planned approach to engage with stakeholder organisations throughout the development of the Equality Evidence Strategy 2023-25. They have sought views on the overall vision for equality data improvement, barriers to collecting data and who currently produces equality evidence.

The data collected from this consultation will guide equality evidence collection goals for the future in Scotland, as well as helping the Government to tackle barriers to collection good quality, equality evidence.



## The Scottish Women's Convention (SWC)

The SWC is funded to engage with women across Scotland to ensure that their views are represented in policy and decision-making processes. The SWC uses the views of women to respond to a variety of parliamentary, governmental, and organisational consultation papers at Scottish, UK and international levels.

The SWC gathers information using different methods, including roadshows, thematic conferences, surveys, and both in-person and online roundtable events. This submission presents the views of a range of women, reflecting their opinions, ideas and lived experience. Working together with many other equalities organisations and community groups, we use our broad network to ensure that women from a range of backgrounds are heard and acknowledged. We are continually reviewing innovative ways of engaging with women and developing our trauma-informed and culturally sensitive practice to support vital contributions from as many women as possible.

## Proposed Actions

### **To what extent do you think that the proposed actions would adequately deliver on our ambition for a robust and wide-ranging equality evidence base?**

Partially.

We at the Scottish Women's Convention are strong believers in the value of lived experience, and as such feel that there should be more inclusion of qualitative data gathering and analysis. By utilising this form of data, the Scottish Government can consult with stakeholders and citizens, viewing them as individuals rather than datasets.

We would also welcome further inclusion of a gendered approach to the issues discussed: for example, women experience public transport in a different way from men, with this being further intersectionalised based on personal characteristics. Women have told us about how unsafe they feel on public transport, and that they did not feel that their needs had been considered. By gathering gender-based data like this, the Scottish Government can effectively meet the needs of women and girls.

- "They don't give enough thought to how they design local transport routes and where they put houses and businesses. They are often in remote areas which make me feel unsafe."
- "CCTV would make us feel safer on public transport as there would be video evidence if you needed it."

### **From your perspective, where are the most important actions outlined in the draft improvement plan? Please select up to 5.**

- Action 1
- Action 2
- Action 14
- Action 15
- Action 16

We believe that the disaggregated data proposed in Action 1 and Action 2 is essential for improved equality monitoring, and as such the inclusion is welcomed. Disaggregated data will allow Scottish organisations to accurately monitor protected characteristics and as such will provide opportunity to tackle disadvantage. Furthermore, as an organisation that promotes gender equality across Scotland, we support Actions 14, 15 and 16 which aim to address gaps in equality data. In particular, we welcome the inclusion of an intersectional approach which considers the many different barriers individuals can come up against. We believe that increased data will allow for better equality monitoring, as well as understanding the levels of discrimination minority groups experience.

### **Please tell us which actions you think you should be revised and how:**

Due to the rising cost of living across Scotland, we believe that Actions 12 and 13 should be revised to consider the cost of living crisis. Women have told us that they are increasingly worried about the rising costs they have witnessed across food shops, energy bills and fuel stations. As such the Scottish Government should attempt to understand how these rises will impact Scottish life, and in particular carry out an intersectional approach which will assess how different groups have been impacted. Women are more likely to experience poverty in their lifetime, and therefore it is integral that the Government understand where and why this is occurring in order to mitigate disaster.

- “I work with families who count every penny. In the past few weeks I have had more contacting me for help/support than ever before.”
- “Actually, for during the winter I said to my daughter that she would be in sleeping with me to try and cut fuel costs down and keep warm.”
- “The cost of living is a significant crisis with increased costs impacting most areas of daily life: food, energy, mortgage.”
- “The cost of living crisis presents different challenges to different groups.”

### **Are there any additional improvement actions that you think should be considered that are achievable within the 2023-25 time period?**

Yes.

Scotland is a country with a wide-ranging geography, and as such considerations must take this into account. The current actions do not regard the major distinctions between rural and urban, with both having differing priorities and needs. It would therefore be valuable for the Scottish Government to consider gathering improved data across urban and rural areas to better understand their needs. From speaking to women in rural areas we can say that their needs vary greatly from women who live in large cities, for example women in rural areas have told us that their services are becoming increasingly centralised and due to poor transport and infrastructure it is difficult to access. While in cities women have comparatively better transport access but feel that due to an oversaturation of service-users struggle to get appointments. It is therefore important to consider geographical implications and how this impacts data collection.

- “It’s almost getting back to the services we used to have... the centralisation has killed it.”
- “So, we get a ferry from Barra to Eriskay, and then a taxi gets you there, which then takes you all the way through to Benbecula, and then you’ve got to wait 5 hours for a plane, which takes you to Stornoway... and then a taxi gets you there, and then you’ll get to the hospital.
- “I’m wary about phoning [the doctor] again because I know they’re overloaded and I know the services aren’t there.”

### **Use of Equality Evidence:**

### **How often do you or your organisation use equality evidence?**

Occasionally.

When speaking with women, we ask that they carry out an 'equality and diversity form' which gathers data on protected characteristics. The data we collect is then used to guide data analysis, as well as understand which gaps in data we have. For example, we may find after an event that very few 18–30-year-olds attended and so would strive to consult this age group to gather data from a representative proportion of society. We access equality evidence by speaking directly with women and asking that they complete an 'equality and diversity form'.

### **Do you face any barriers to using equality evidence?**

Yes.

As a small organisation with low staff numbers, we struggle to collect good quality, equality evidence. In order to rectify this, increased funding which could free up resources would allow for better collection of data.

### **Equality Evidence Collection:**

**Do you or your organisation produce any equality evidence sources? For example, do your organisation involve stakeholders in finding out what issues they think are important through surveys or focus groups, pull together or carry out your own analysis of existing information, or commission independent research and analysis.**

Yes.

At the Scottish Women's Convention, we carry out regular surveys which focus on a range of subjects: for example, the rising cost of living or perceptions of violence against women and girls. These surveys give us a brief insight into issues and show us what is important to women across Scotland. We also carry out 'roundtables' or focus groups to understand a problem in more detail. These also allow us to collect good quality, qualitative data which aligns with our priorities of focusing on lived experience. This type of data collection is also carried out in 'roadshows' which we carry out annually and tend to go to rural locations to prevent our knowledge being purely central belt focused.

## Conclusion

Having listened to women, our three key recommendations on this topic are:

- Further consideration of the intersectional element of data collection is key, with disaggregated information allowing for an inclusive approach to be taken.
- The varied geography of Scotland creates unique challenges to data collection, and as such new and innovative methods must be integrated into equality information collection.
- Better support for third sector organisations would create further opportunity for equality data collection.

The SWC is grateful for the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government's consultation on **EQUALITY EVIDENCE AND STRATEGY 2022-2025**. As an organisation, we will continue to work with women from across Scotland to gather voices and experiences relating to this topic and its effects on women's equality.

For further information or to share your views, please contact:

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