

Report

Report to:	Equal Opportunities Forum
Date of Meeting:	6 March 2019
Report by:	Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	Equally Safe at Work Pilot
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise the Forum of the Equally Safe at Work pilot

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Forum is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the content of the report be noted.

3. Background

3.1. Stemming from the Scottish Government and COSLA's Equally Safe Strategy, Equally Safe at Work is an employer accreditation programme being piloted by Close the Gap in a small number of Scottish Local Authorities in 2019. The award consists of three levels; bronze, silver and gold.

3.2. Close the Gap is a charity working in Scotland on women's participation in the labour market. They support work in both the private and public sector to address women's inequality and to meet the requirements of the public sector equality duty.

3.3. Equally Safe recognises that violence against women is a cause and consequence of gender inequality. Addressing inequality in the workplace is, therefore, a fundamental step in preventing violence against women.

3.4. From research conducted by Close the Gap, it was established that there are no employer accreditation programmes focusing on gender equality at work and violence against women at work in Scotland or the UK, revealing a clear gap in provision.

4. The Pilot

4.1. The Equally Safe at Work pilot will focus on areas core to addressing women's inequality in the labour market, preventing violence against women in the workplace and supporting survivors at work.

4.2. South Lanarkshire Council is one of seven councils selected to be part of the pilot. The other councils are:-

- ◆ Aberdeen City Council
- ◆ Highland Council
- ◆ Midlothian Council

- ◆ North Lanarkshire Council
- ◆ Perth and Kinross Council
- ◆ Shetland Council

- 4.3. By participating in the pilot South Lanarkshire Council will not only be supported to develop a framework that supports women's workplace equality but will be afforded the opportunity to demonstrate leadership in the sector and community.

5. The Early Adopters Group

- 5.1. The Councils participating in the pilot will be part of a group formed to share learning and provide guidance on Equally Safe at Work (the Early Adopters Group). The purpose of the group is to create a community of practice, provide opportunities to share expertise and best practice, contribute to the development of the pilot and will be an opportunity to reflect on the process and contribute to the evaluation.
- 5.2. The benefits of group membership include:-
- ◆ participation in developing the first of its kind accreditation programme
 - ◆ being a sector leader on gender equality at work
 - ◆ receiving direct support and expertise from Close the Gap
 - ◆ knowledge exchange and information sharing
 - ◆ network building, in and outwith local government
- 5.3. The Early Adopters Group will:-
- ◆ share learning through the pilot process
 - ◆ discuss challenges and opportunities
 - ◆ share best practice
 - ◆ contribute to the monitoring and evaluation
 - ◆ advise on how best to roll out the programme across Scotland's public sector
 - ◆ be required to work towards achieving the bronze level of the accreditation programme

The Early Adopters Group will **not** be responsible for:-

- ◆ budget
- ◆ overseeing delivery
- ◆ monitoring progress achieved in meeting funding outcomes

6. Next Steps Summary

- 6.1. The following summarises the stages of the pilot and further details are provided in Appendix 1: -
- ◆ establish a local working group
 - ◆ completion of self-assessment
 - ◆ develop an action plan
 - ◆ distribute Employee Survey
 - ◆ provide evidence towards the criteria for each standard
 - ◆ evidence assessed by Close the Gap
 - ◆ receive accreditation

7. Employee Implications

- 7.1. Employees will be made aware of the pilot and its outcomes.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. The cost of participation in the pilot of Equally Safe at Work will be met by Scottish Government funding via Close the Gap.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1.** Taking part in this initiative will assist the Council in meeting its equality duties under the Equality Act. Failure to meet the duties can carry an unlimited financial penalty.
- 9.2.** There are no sustainable development issues with this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 10.1** An initial impact assessment in relation to the Pilot has been undertaken. The assessment identifies a positive impact for female employees of all ages.

Paul Manning

Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

14 February 2019

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Fair, open and sustainable
- ◆ Focused on people and their needs
- ◆ Working with and respecting others
- ◆ Excellent employer

Previous References

None

List of Background Papers

None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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Next Steps

Self-assessment undertaken

- ◆ to assess the council's practice
- ◆ template designed by Close the Gap to be completed at start and end of pilot

Working group (to be established)

- ◆ to include senior member of staff, and cross-departmental representation from equality, human resources, violence against women, and trade unions
- ◆ first meeting to be held February 2019
- ◆ working group to develop an action plan, outlining plans to meet the standards, to be shared with Close the Gap by end of February 2019
- ◆ gather evidence to meet the standards

Employee Survey - to collect baseline data on attitudes, behaviours and knowledge on gender equality and violence against women

- ◆ to be distributed until end of February in 2019 and then again in 2020
- ◆ to be sent out by email, newsletter, intranet, paper copy through unions (distribution methods to be agreed)

Meeting the standards

- ◆ provide evidence to meet the criteria for each standard
- ◆ all evidence to be submitted by 20th December 2019

Assessments

- ◆ evidence will be assessed by Close the Gap
- ◆ assessment completed early January 2020

Awarding

- ◆ Awarding of accreditation will happen in January 2020

Reporting – throughout the period of the pilot

- ◆ Working groups to report progress towards meeting the standards on a quarterly basis to CMT