

SUBMISSION FROM FIFE COUNCIL

You asked for:

1. Details of any specific education initiatives aimed at addressing gender segregation in the labour market – for instance, encouraging schoolgirls towards typically male-dominated sectors like science, engineering, technology and mathematics.
2. Information on how we promote equal pay and how our pay, broken down by gender, reflects that.
3. Any good practice examples from within our organisation relating to gender equalities.

1. From an educational perspective the broadening of the curriculum through Curriculum for Excellence encourages a wide range of approaches to support learners to become well prepared and enabled to access different job opportunities. In Secondary Schools processes are in place to enable staff to examine the uptake of courses in terms of gender. School staff use this information to inform course selection processes. For example if there is a low uptake from girls of a particular Science subject staff would work to look at how to encourage girls to select that. Secondary schools' partnerships and liaison with local business and industry is widespread. This is supported through discussion with local elected members to determine the local context – its opportunities and needs. School Staff and colleagues in Community Learning and Development work closely together on this.

2. As part of our public sector equalities duties we will be reporting on our commitment to equal pay and providing information on the gender pay gap and occupational segregation. This information will be published by 30th April 2013. How we promote equal pay and how our pay, broken down by gender, reflects our commitment to equal pay involves a number of factors, including:

- A robust, analytical job evaluation scheme to assess the relative worth of jobs and we believe that this provides a robust means of achieving a fair and transparent grading structure which is free from sex bias and which satisfies the principles of equal pay for work of equal value. Job evaluations are based on the responsibilities and duties of the job, measured against 13 factors. Personal data such as gender, disability, age, ethnic origin, or other protected characteristics are not taken into account when assessing pay for the job.
- The availability of flexible working practices and the removal of barriers for women into employment. 65% of our workforce is female. 54% of our female employees work part-time or flexibly, for a number of reasons. We provide a range of flexible working practices, including part-time working, job sharing and term-time working, to employees at all levels across the Council.
- An understanding of gender distribution across the workforce and of occupational segregation. Our analysis shows examples of horizontal occupational segregation where the holders of jobs such as Cleaners, Catering Assistants, Playworkers, Home Carers, and Clerical Assistants are predominantly female. We also have examples of vertical occupational segregation with females clustered in lower grades and lower levels of management in comparison to males.

- An understanding of the reasons that might account for any differential in the pay of men and women – the gender pay gap. Our recent analysis of the basic hourly pay for men and women shows a gender pay gap of 9.36%. That is, on average, across our Council's workforce, women earn 9.36% less than men. We believe there are a number of reasons for this difference, including the higher number of women in the lower pay grades, the higher number of women who work part-time, and the higher number of men in more senior (higher-earning) positions.

In practice, where women and men do the same job, they are paid the same grade. Our practices for salary placing of new appointees and for incremental progression through grades are the same for men and women. We undertake equality impact assessments on our employment policies, procedures and practices to ensure there is no unlawful discrimination and no unjustifiable adverse impact on the basis of gender or any other characteristic protected in equalities legislation.

In the information we will publish by 30th April 2013 we are setting out the steps we will take to build on our work on equal pay.

3. Many of our examples of good practice in relation to gender equalities relate to flexible working. These are perhaps seen as the 'norm' in the Council, for example, one Team Leader in a public facing service states: "In my team we accommodated an employee who wanted to return to work on a part-time basis following maternity leave. We worked out an arrangement of some hours in the office and some hours out of the office at meetings or working at home. To my mind whether the 4 hours at home were over one evening or two evenings did not matter."

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