

Toolbox talk

Gender Equality

(material supplied by Equate Scotland)



Did you know?

Women make up <15% of the UK's construction workforce & <2% of trade roles

Equality is about treating everyone fairly – ensuring every person gets a fair chance and an equal opportunity to succeed in their education, careers, and personal lives.

This does not mean treating everyone the same as equality also means recognising that some people may have different needs or barriers that require extra support to provide a level playing field for everyone.

Equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) are often referred to together.

Diversity goes beyond giving everyone equal opportunities by recognising the huge benefits that having people from different backgrounds and circumstances can provide to workplaces and society more widely. Inclusion is the culture in which the mix of people can come to work, feel comfortable and confident to be themselves.

Why does it matter?

Construction is key to Scotland's economy, but in order to meet the rising challenges of climate change, population growth, skills gaps, and emerging technologies the industry needs to evolve and transform.

One way of doing this is to proactively recruit, train and retain a more diverse workforce.

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A deeper dive

Beyond the moral case for ED&I, workplaces with robust ED&I practices are proved to have better performance, innovation, decision-making, and problem-solving.*

We also know that:

- We are not using all the talents of all our people
- New skills are and will be in high demand tomorrow
- The construction sector is rapidly transforming to achieve net-zero carbon by 2045
- There is a lack of representation of our society in the industry

This is not just a challenge but also an opportunity to introduce new skills and new perspectives in the industry while building a fairer, more diverse and sustainable future for all.

[*More details can be found in the McKinsey report](#)



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Getting started

Understanding the barriers organisations face

Some of the challenges faced by organisations include not knowing where to start, not being able to measure the initiatives that are being implemented, addressing misconceptions about ED&I in the workplace, lacking resources internally to make this topic a business priority or not knowing who to ask for support or guidance.

What can organisations do?

At Equate Scotland, we believe that a universal approach to gender equality is needed and that implementing small, tangible and sustainable changes can lead to amazing results in the long term.

Change needs to come both from the ground-up and the top-down to ensure that whole culture change can take place, and everyone has a role to play in achieving this.

Here are some steps that employers can follow to take a methodical approach to gender equality:

Step 1.	Step 2.	Step 3.
Understand their 'why'	Ask for help and support	Encourage internal conversations and feedback
Step 4.	Step 5.	Step 6.
Set some initial targets or goals to work towards to	Think about evaluation from the start	Create a detailed plan and take action

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What can I do to make some progress towards gender equality?

As an employee there are a few actions you can undertake:

Step 1.	Step 2.	Step 3.
Encourage and start the discussion within your organisation	Set a good example: call out or report any unwanted behaviours	Ask women about their experiences and listen to their feedback
Step 4.	Step 5.	Step 6.
Find resources and support to grow your understanding of the topic	Ask questions and seek support (internally or externally)	Be an advocate for change



Take-aways

1.	2.	3.
It does not have to be a daunting task to get started	ED&I is a journey – organisations cannot do it all at once	Addressing inequalities in the workplace is everyone's responsibility

Established in 2006, Equate Scotland is the national expert in gender equality throughout the STEM sectors.

To learn more, you can visit their website:

www.equatescotland.org.uk

www.equatescotland.org.uk/resources

www.equatescotland.org.uk/equate-events-conferences

Additional materials available include:

[Getting started on gender equality](#)

[Industry Guide for the Construction sector](#)