

Workplace Equality Fund 2022 – 2024

Eligibility Criteria

What is the funding for?

To support employers in identifying, addressing, and diminishing longstanding barriers facing particular priority groups in entering and progressing within the labour market. More specifically, the intention of the fund is to incentivise and support collaborative projects which strive to reduce employment inequalities and cultivate positive practices in pursuit of a more inclusive working environment.

Who is the funding for?

The fund is aimed at employers – both private sector organisations and public sector organisations based in Scotland are invited to apply. To be considered, these organisations must:

- Apply with a third sector partner (i.e. a registered charity); the partner should have knowledge and expertise with respect to the specific equality issue that the employer is seeking to address;
- Demonstrate that agreement has been reached between partner organisations concerning the project; including required work, timescales, expected outcomes, and agreement to commit.

Third sector organisations – including registered charities – that are based in Scotland are also eligible to apply for the fund. To be considered, these organisations must:

- Demonstrate project need (i.e. that either they themselves require intervention to improve outcomes for members of the selected priority groups or that one of the project partners requires intervention);
- Demonstrate that they have access to the required knowledge and expertise in working with the selected priority groups – either from their own prior experience or from the prior experience of one of the project partners.

Partnerships may be newly established, or it could be an established partnership arrangement. If you are unsure as to whether your project makeup would be eligible, please feel free to contact us at enquiries@equalityadvice.scot.

Are there any restrictions on who can apply?

- There are no limits on the industry targeted or the location of the project (i.e. urban/rural) by the proposal – projects can take place within any sector, industry or geographic area provided that they demonstrate the impact on priority groups through addressing systemic inequalities in the workplace.
- Organisations must be able to demonstrate that:
 - they have an appropriate scale so as to be able to ensure substantive impact
 - they can provide workforce sector data illustrative of equality analysis and the gaps that they are looking to address
 - they are able to track project progress and outcomes
 - they are able to provide independently audited accounts to evidence robust financial status

How much can organisations apply for?

Organisations can apply for a grant for a period of up to 2 years. A project may ask for a maximum of £75,000 per year (i.e. £150,000 in total across 2 years). The figure can differ per year; for example, a project may ask for £75,000 in the first year and £40,000 in the second year.

Note that applications requesting a figure less than £20,000 per year are unlikely to be successful given the relative likelihood of weak impact on the priority groups.

Organisations should be prepared for the possibility that they are not offered the full amount that they apply for.

Please note that funding for year two is dependent upon the annual Spending Review and Scottish budget.

Funding will also be subject to satisfactory delivery and effective governance and may be reviewed if any concerns are raised by the Scottish Government, Advice Direct Scotland or organisations themselves.

What are the requirements of the fund?

Applications must focus on projects looking at workplace practices that will positively impact any priority group which could include:

- Women
- Women returning to the workforce following a career break
- Over 50's workforce
- Disabled workers

- Minority ethnic workers
- Workers experiencing gender-based violence
- Workers experiencing social isolation and/or loneliness
- Workers experiencing symptoms of the menopause
- Veterans and spouses of veterans

We will be particularly interested in projects that have considered a priority group from an intersectional perspective (e.g. workers experiencing symptoms of the menopause may constitute an example of the intersection between gender and age), and we therefore encourage applicants to consider the diversity within each priority group. Whether applications focus solely on one priority group, or consider the intersection between several priority groups, applications which demonstrate clear and measurable impact will be more likely to receive funding.

We also encourage applications proposing innovative projects which strive to embed fair work dimensions in the workplace; these projects will endeavour to:

- Promote progressive workplace policies which improve productivity and innovation;
- Promote greater workplace democracy, employee voice, and commitment;
- Encourage opportunities for employee development, skills development, and lifelong learning;
- Develop best practice in industrial relations to encourage constructive dialogue.

For all cases, applications must clearly show: (i) how they will achieve a reduction in workplace inequalities and challenges for their selected priority group(s), (ii) how they will measure and evaluate these positive impacts, and (iii) how they will draw from their collective expertise and experience in order to do so.

Organisations and employers bidding should also demonstrate how they themselves embed Fair Work First criteria. Successful applicants will be expected to complete the Fair Work First monitoring tool as part of the Scottish Government's national evaluation. The tool will be provided by ADS to successful applicants.

It is also a requirement of each project that they produce an output at the end of their project, e.g report/best practice guidance to ensure that the end product and learning from the project can be shared/disseminated.

What type of projects will the fund support?

The Fund will support a variety of different interventions, so long as they endeavour to reduce employment inequalities, discrimination, and barriers facing the priority groups mentioned above. As an illustration, we would welcome applications proposing projects which strive to:

- Allow organisations to develop their knowledge and skills around fair work principles and build their knowledge and capability to address systemic issues related to inequality;
- Increase the organisation's ability to: understand the employment challenges faced by priority groups, become better equipped to address these challenges, and undertake practical steps to address these issues within their workplace;
- Promote increased organisational transparency concerning recruitment and progression practices in pursuit of fairer processes;
- Create more inclusive working environments.

This is a non-exhaustive list; the fund is open to any eligible organisation(s) that propose projects in alignment with the fund aims and ethos. Note that organisational running costs will not be funded.