

Guidance

Overview

Updated 13 May 2026

Applies to England, Scotland and Wales

- Contents
- [Actions to include in your plan](#)
 - [Reducing your gender pay gap](#)
 - [Supporting employees experiencing menopause](#)
 - [Considering your employees' characteristics](#)
 - [Creating meaningful change](#)
 - [Deadlines for the 2026 to 2027 reporting year](#)
 - [Approving your plan](#)
 - [Organisations or groups with more than one legal entity](#)
 - [If you need support and advice](#)

 Print this page

Employers with 250 or more employees have the option to produce and publish a voluntary action plan alongside their gender pay gap data. Subject to legislation, these will become mandatory from spring 2027.

The purpose of action plans is to support employers to take effective action to improve workplace gender equality. Action plans will show the steps you are taking to:

- address your organisation's gender pay gap
- support employees experiencing menopause

You will be able to highlight work your organisation is already doing to improve workplace gender equality.

Producing your voluntary action plan

You will create, submit and publish your action plan on the [gender pay gap service](#). Your published action plan will be available to the public along with your gender pay gap data.

Actions to include in your plan

You will be asked to select at least 2 actions to include in your plan – see [Step 2: Choose your actions](#).

To help employers take effective action, we have provided a [list of recommended, evidence-informed actions](#), along with accompanying guidance. This guidance adds to existing resources available from public and private sector organisations and employer bodies.

Each action guidance page includes information on their benefits and how best to implement them. They were developed using expert insight and research, which included:

- research into [how to improve gender equality in the workplace](#) by the Behavioural Insights Team
- a [literature review on menopause in the workplace](#) by the Department of Work and Pensions

These reflect our best evidence at the time of writing. We will review and develop the actions to ensure they evolve alongside new evidence.

Help us develop our evidence

We invite organisations and individuals to submit high-quality research to add to the evidence base for the listed actions. This will help us review and develop our understanding of these actions.

We also welcome research to support any other evidence-based actions that could be considered in the future.

[Find out more and submit evidence.](#)

Reducing your gender pay gap

As part of developing an action plan, employers must choose at least one action to address their gender pay gap. The gender pay gap is the difference between the average pay of men and women in an organisation.

Research shows that there are a [range of factors that influence the pay gap](#), including differences between men and women in:

- time spent doing unpaid care work and full-time work history
- the sectors and organisations they work in

This guidance includes actions employers can take that aim to limit the impact of these factors, and therefore may contribute to closing the gender pay gap and improving gender equality.

The majority of organisations will have a 'positive' pay gap, meaning men are paid more than women on average. However, actions in this guidance may also support organisations with a 'negative' pay gap, and organisations may wish to consider how these actions could be used in those circumstances.

The gender pay gap is different from equal pay. Equal pay is covered by the Equality Act 2010, and requires employers to pay men and women the same for work of equal value. Read more about [equal pay and the law](#) on the Acas website.

Supporting employees experiencing menopause

Employers must also choose at least one action that supports employees experiencing [menopause](#). This includes both perimenopause and postmenopause. Typically, menopause is experienced by women aged between 45 and 55 years. However, this is not always the case, so any steps to provide menopause support should be accessible to employees of other ages.

The recommended actions may also benefit employees experiencing other health conditions related to menstrual health which can impact their wellbeing and may disadvantage them in the workplace including:

- [endometriosis](#)
 - [fibroids](#)
 - polyendocrine metabolic ovarian syndrome (PMOS) – previously known as [polycystic ovary syndrome \(PCOS\)](#)^{[\[footnote 1\]](#)}
- While expanding actions to benefit other conditions is not a requirement of action plans, we support steps that employers may choose to take that benefit a greater proportion of their employees.

Considering your employees' characteristics

You should consider how employees may be disadvantaged in the workplace due to the overlapping impact of their sex and other characteristics, such as:

- ethnicity
- disability status
- socio-economic background

For example, menopause support should account for the fact that women with additional health conditions, or those from different backgrounds, may navigate symptoms and workplace adjustments differently.

Consider how your actions may affect different groups of employees in different roles in your organisation. Where possible, use data on the demographics of your workforce to help choose actions that will be relevant for your organisation.

Creating meaningful change

We want action plans to encourage employers to make meaningful and sustainable changes to reduce their gender pay gap and support employees experiencing menopause.

Building a culture that supports gender equality and wellbeing can take time, and general goals aimed at improving cultures are often not effective on their own. Committing to specific actions can be an important step to support cultural change and improve gender equality. We encourage organisations to go beyond choosing 2 actions – one each on the gender pay gap and menopause – and select more where possible. This is an opportunity to be ambitious and demonstrate your commitment to workplace gender equality.

Selecting actions that align specifically with your organisation may further help create meaningful change. To support you in this, each action in our guidance includes specific advice on implementation and suggested metrics to help you track progress effectively. You can read more about how to define these priorities and set effective targets in [step 1: Understand the issues in your organisation](#).

Deadlines for the 2026 to 2027 reporting year

You can voluntarily produce and publish your first action plan any time during the 2026 to 2027 reporting year by the following deadlines:

- 30 March 2027 – for most public authority employers
- 4 April 2027 – for private, voluntary and all other public authority employers

Read guidance on [working out which type of employer you are](#).

Approving your plan

If you are in the private or voluntary sector, you must include the name of a 'responsible person' when you submit your action plan.

The responsible person should usually be a director, partner or senior officer. They will be responsible for confirming that the information you have submitted is accurate.

Currently most public authority employers do not need to do this. [Work out which type of employer you are](#) (Gender pay gap reporting guidance for employers).

Organisations or groups with more than one legal entity

You must submit an action plan for each separate legal entity with 250 or more employees.

There is a similar requirement for [reporting your gender pay gap data](#).

You can choose to submit:

- a separate plan for each legal entity, with different actions and supporting narratives that are relevant to that part of your organisation or group
- the same actions and supporting narratives, copied into separate action plans for each entity – for example, you might do this if you have one diversity and inclusion strategy for your whole group

If you need support and advice

Email gpg_reporting@geo.gov.uk if you need help:

- with technical difficulties
- managing your account
- using the gender pay gap service to create your action plan
- with assistive technology (such as screen readers) and cannot access all or part of the service

We cannot give case-by-case guidance on how you should create your action plan.

If the available guidance does not cover your questions, get professional advice.

1. [Polyendocrine metabolic ovarian syndrome, the new name for polycystic ovary syndrome: a multistep global consensus process - The Lancet ↗](#)

[↑ Back to top](#)

Services and information		Government activity
Benefits	Education and learning	Departments
Births, death, marriages and care	Employing people	News
Business and self-employed	Environment and countryside	Guidance and regulation
Childcare and parenting	Housing and local services	Research and statistics
Citizenship and living in the UK	Money and tax	Policy papers and consultations
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