

Appendix One

GENDER ACTION PLAN 2021 - 2024 Year 2 - DRAFT

Gender inequalities are deeply embedded in our social, economic and cultural systems. There is overwhelming evidence that women disproportionately experience disadvantage and discrimination, a reflection of historical unaddressed inequality, but also that inequalities have been exacerbated by austerity, welfare reform and by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the twenty years since the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement's commitment to the 'full and equal participation of women in public life', statistics affirm the persistence of gendered inequalities, which continue to inhibit women's life opportunities in Northern Ireland. Men will benefit from gender equality as they too face gender-specific issues such as lower life expectancy, bad health, lower education levels and are impacted negatively by rigid gender norms.

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE COUNCIL			
-to ensure that BCC organisational culture, policies and practices empower talent development at all levels, for elected members and officers and remove any form of discrimination			
Action	Year	Who	Cost
Review Terms of reference / structure for Women's Network Group and develop a programme of events and activity.	2	WNG	£3000
Hold annual IWD event / celebrations for staff	2, 3		£6000
Deliver a mentoring programme for staff of all genders	2	HR	Corporate OD Budget
Develop guidance for managers to welcome staff back from periods of extended leave, maternity, parental leave etc	2	HR	Staff resources
Encourage all staff to work together to understand and champion gender issues through joint events, communications, workshops, outreach programmes etc	2 3,	HR Depts	Staff resources
Review and delivery Women's Leadership Programme for members and officers to include a focus on resilience and in particular around social media.	2	HR	£13000
Participate in NI Gender Diversity Charter assessment work towards attaining Silver level accreditation	2	HR	£2500 pa

Review “on boarding “ for senior staff and all staff to include leadership responsibilities around equality, diversity and inclusion and responsibilities of all staff	2	HR	Staff resources
Explore and challenge existing culture / perceptions around “presenteeism” , flexible working at a senior level, long hours culture etc. and develop actions to help address / change culture	2	HR WSG CMT	Staff resources
Ensure effective promotion of BCC as an employer that values and supports equality and diversity (external website, job info to potential applicants, press releases, City Matters article etc.)	Ongoing	HR MarComms Staff networks	Staff resources
Develop and agree Menopause guidance for staff	2	HR Women’s Network Group	Staff resources
Review frontline job opportunities including apprenticeships, and associated working arrangements and facilities, to make these opportunities more attractive to female applicant and promoting BCC role models deliver targeted employability outreach to get more women into work	Ongoing	CNS HR Place and Economy	Staff Resources
Retain ‘ platinum level’ status of the Onus Domestic Violence charter by continuing to raise awareness of domestic violence and abuse issues, support staff experiencing domestic violence and abuse and ensure employees know what support is available	2, 3	HR	£2000
Review, update and communicate maternity, paternity, and other parental / caring related guidance for staff and managers , including flexible working, as part of the review of the Work Life Balance Handbook	3	HR Depts	Staff resources
PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE COMMUNITY			
-with the purpose of increasing the representation of women in leadership positions throughout communities across Belfast by ensuring that processes are in place to increase women’s involvement in decision making in communities			
Fund annual external IWD event.	2, 3	Equality Unit	£6500
Recognise Transgender Remembrance Day and Transgender Day of Visibility	2, 3	HR Proud Staff network	LGBT+ Action plan
Increase awareness and understanding of the gender spectrum including “non binary”	2	HR HR Proud Staff network	LGBT + action plan

Working with BCC staff networks and external groups, hold a workshop to explore and identify “intersectionality issues” where women experience multiple barriers and identify actions to address	2	HR WSG	£1000
Hold an event for WSG to engage with the Youth Forum and to identify opportunities for future collaboration gender issues	3	HR WSG CNS / YF	£1000
Input into / support the Young Leadership Programme for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and Other Communities - e.g. via mentoring, hosting meetings, briefings etc.	2	WSG	£2000
PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECONOMY			
-to ensure all council policies and strategies influence and facilitate the active and fair participation of both women and men in the economy			
Identify opportunities for targeted employability outreach, ring fencing, employment academies etc. for women furthest removed from the labour market including City Deal opportunities	2,3	HR/ED Depts	Staff resources / Employment Academies
Working in partnership with Women In Business NI Belfast City Council have put in place a series of bootcamps and networking events for female entrepreneurs in 2022/23. The purpose of these activities are to engage female entrepreneurs in business start up activity, helping them to develop ideas, and create networks to support them to start a businesses. This will also include support for Women in Businesses annual conference.	2	Economic Development	£12,000
Enterprise and Employability support for underrepresented groups – Belfast City Council programme of support to enable underrepresented groups (including females) to overcome the barriers to starting a business or accessing employment opportunities.	2, 3	Economic Development	£90,000

Establish link with Area Partnership Boards where relevant, and other stakeholder groups to consider particular needs of women wishing to start their own business.	2, 3	Economic Development	Staff resources
Work with city partners to deliver a STEM employability event for girls.	3	HR ED External partners	£3000
PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE CITY -to ensure that the needs of women across the city are identified and used to influence and impact upon the regeneration of the city including social infrastructure design and community facilities provision			
As part of the ongoing baseline audit of all Council assets determine if Council assets are 'fit for purpose' in terms of the needs of all genders and that gender needs are looked at as part of the development of any new council asset. In particular link in with the Clean, Green and Safe survey.	2, 3	Capital programmes Department C&NS Place & Economy Dept	Staff resources Potential cost if additional works required
Support and raise awareness of the Raise your Voice Project to help address misogyny, sexual harassment and violence, in particular consider engagement with all stakeholders in particular, males.	2	HR External partners	£3000
As part of the ongoing area working /place shaping work and the Physical Investment Programme look at opportunities of how the needs of women can be better met across the city	2, 3	Capital programmes Place and Economy C&NS Strategic Hub External stakeholders	Staff resources Potential associated costs for future GAP
Work with City Partners to retain Onus Safe City status by funding training and awareness raising across the city. Explore the Safe Haven initiative and its potential link to Safe City activity.	2, 3	HR CNS ONUS and other external partners	£3000 + PCSP Resource

Deliver a pilot to provide free period products for staff Deliver a pilot to provide free period products for the public in Council buildings and facilities Evaluate both pilots and assess costs for future provision	2	CLS Dept CNS	Staff Resources / existing budgets
Fund a pilot to make available reusable period products for staff	2	HR /CNS	£2000
Develop an Anti-Harassment Policy for all Council facilities and Council-run events (linking in with Safeguarding Policy and relevant training)	Year 2	HR CNS P&E	Staff Resources

TOTAL APPROXIMATE COSTS Year 2 - £48 000 (excl ED funded initiatives)

N.B. Where ongoing COVID 19 restrictions limit planned activity, online / remote delivery will be explored and used where possible.

