

## Appendix One

### GENDER ACTION PLAN 2024 – 2027 ( Year 3) - DRAFT

#### Year 3 April 2026 to March 2027

Gender inequalities are deeply embedded in our social, economic, and cultural systems. There is overwhelming evidence that women disproportionately experience disadvantage and discrimination. Please see attached Appendix A. This is a reflection of historical unaddressed inequality, but inequalities have also been exacerbated by austerity, welfare reform and by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the 25 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 also benefit from gender equality as they too face gender-specific issues including lower life expectancy, bad health and lower education levels and are impacted negatively by rigid gender norms.

<b>PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE COUNCIL</b>			
to ensure that Belfast City Council organisational culture, policies and practices empower talent development at all levels, for elected members and officers alike, and remove any form of discrimination			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Budget year 3</b>
Fund and develop a programme of events for Women's Network Group	3	WNG	£4,000
Fund and develop a programme of events for the Men's Network	3	MN	£4000
Hold annual IWD and IMD events/celebrations for staff	3	HR WNG	£6,000
Prepare for NI Diversity Chartermark assessment with the goal of attaining Gold level accreditation	3	HR	£3,500
Ensure effective promotion of Belfast City Council as an employer that values and supports equality and diversity (interlink, external website, job information for potential applicants, media releases, City Matters, social media.)	Ongoing	HR P&E MarComms Staff networks	Staff resources

Retain Onus Domestic Violence Charter 'platinum level' status 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	3	HR	£2,000
Increase awareness of sexual harassment and violence against women and girls through promotion of the Raise Your Voice campaign and in particular for male employees	3	Corporate HR	£3,000
Review and relaunch and recommunicate gender /family friendly policies.	Ongoing	HR	Staff resources
Deliver activity to develop skills for working in a political environment - e.g., mock committee, CMT and DMT sessions, Managing in a Political Environment course	3	HR Democratic Services	Staff resources
Clarify criteria and better promote women's development opportunities and programmes.	3	Corporate HR	Staff Resources
Carry out and report on the Council's Gender Pay Gap analysis.	Annually	Corporate HR	Staff Resources
<b>PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE COMMUNITY</b>			
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.	Ongoing	CHR	£10,000
Work with TEO to deliver Strategic Framework to EVAWG	3	All depts	Staff resources
Hold an event for WSG/ WNG to engage with the Youth Council and to identify opportunities for future collaboration on gender issues	3	HR WSG CNS / YF	£1,000
<b>PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECONOMY</b>			
to ensure all council policies and strategies influence and facilitate the active and fair participation of both women and men in the economy			
Review frontline job opportunities including apprenticeships, and associated working arrangements and facilities, to make these opportunities more attractive to female applicants.	Ongoing	CNS HR	Staff resources / Employment Academies

<p>Deliver targeted employability outreach to get more women into work by promoting Belfast City Council role models</p>		<p>Place and Economy MarComms</p>	
<p>Enterprise support for underrepresented groups – Belfast City Council offers a programme of support to enable underrepresented groups (including women) to overcome the barriers to starting a business or accessing employment opportunities.</p> <p>Working in partnership with a range of organisations across the city we will put in place targeted interventions to engage women in this support and engage female entrepreneurs in business start-up activity, helping them to develop ideas and create networks to support them to start a business.</p> <p>Through the Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed) we are working towards a target of 50% of female led organisations supported through the service. If successful, 420 female start-ups and 206 growth potential female-led businesses supported in 26/27</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Enterprise and Business Growth</p>	<p>£207,207 (indicative pro-rata spend based on female engagement through community outreach and mentoring)</p>
<p>Employability support for underrepresented groups – Belfast City Council programme of support to enable underrepresented groups (including women) to overcome the barriers to accessing employment opportunities through the delivery of Employment and Upskilling Academies.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engagement with women-specific provision to encourage and actively support women into under-represented sectors through access to Employment Academies in fibre, tech, logistics/transport and construction as well as business services, health and social care and working with children.</li> <li>- Upskilling Academies for those in low paid employment in female-dominated sectors (education, health and social care, working with children sectors) which include Level 2 through to Level 5 qualifications to enable people to access better jobs within these sectors.</li> </ul>	<p>3</p>	<p>Employability and Skills</p>	<p>£450,000 (indicative spend pro rata, based on female engagement in Employment Academies)</p>

- Active barrier-removal to participation on Employment Academies – such as embedding childcare provision, travel and subsistence expenses etc.			
Develop understanding of gender budgeting and how it might be applied in BCC - for directors, finance officers and Belfast Agenda team	3	HR Finance CMT	£1000
<b>PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE CITY</b>			
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 our assets meet the needs of all genders and that gender needs are considered as part of the development of any new council asset.	3	Property and Projects Department C&NS Place & Economy Dept	Staff resources  Potential cost if additional works required
Work in partnership with city stakeholders to shape and feed into research, data collection and co-design opportunities that could inform Council's understanding of and approach to ending violence against women in girls in public spaces.	3	Property and Projects Department C&NS Place & Economy Dept	Externally funded project
Work with city partners to retain Onus Safe City status by funding training and awareness raising across the city.	3	HR CNS ONUS and other external partners	£3,000 + PCSP resource
Work with the TEO to implement The Period Products (Free Provision) Act 2022	3	Facilities	TEO funded
Enhance our engagement process to ensure that women and girls are given the opportunity to participate in the consultation on capital projects from the earliest stage to ensure better outcomes.	Ongoing	Property and Projects Department	Staff resources

Carry out research into developing a set of guidelines with women and girls in mind in relation to the design of capital projects.	3	Property and Projects Department	Staff resources
<b>Total draft plan for Year 3</b>			37,500

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