

LAW & POLICY GROUP

GRIST



UK LAUNCHES GENDER EQUALITY ROADMAP

By Mercer's Stephanie Rosseau and Fiona Webster
11 Jul 2019

The UK minister for Women & Equalities recently unveiled a vision for gender equality that aims “to shift the dial on women’s economic empowerment and close the national gender pay gap.”

HIGHLIGHTS

Key features of the initiative — outlined in [Gender Equality at Every Stage: A Roadmap for Change](#) — include:

- Consultations on increasing transparency in parental leave and pay policies, enhancing the employment rights of carers, reviewing workplace sexual harassment legislation to ensure that it’s “fit for purpose” and exploring opportunities to include flexible working opportunities in job advertisements
- Review of the enforcement of equal pay legislation (2020 is the 50-year anniversary of the UK’s Equal Pay Act 1970)
- Review of the online gender pay gap reporting service to determine what additional information employers should report to increase transparency about their gender equality policies and initiatives — for example, the provision of family-friendly policies or the retention rates of employees returning from parental leave
- Establishment of a taskforce comprising employer and other groups to consider further steps on redundancy protection and pregnancy and maternity discrimination aimed at “tackling the workplace culture that allows pregnancy and maternity discrimination to persist”
- Examination of older women’s financial stability, including the impact of recent private pensions reforms on women and the need for a review of the private pensions outcomes of women and other groups, such as self-employed people
- Reduction of gender disparities in apprenticeships:
 - The government will work with employers in sectors with the largest gender imbalances to understand and share effective measures to overcome gender disparities in apprenticeships.

- The government will provide guidance on support for apprentices who become pregnant and improved awareness of good practice in making available flexible and part-time options for apprenticeship.
- The launch of a national campaign, developed with key professional bodies, to help employers understand how to support employees who balance work with caring responsibilities and progress workplace gender equality, which will address:
 - Designing and offering flexible jobs by default
 - Enhancing shared parental leave and pay to align with maternity leave benefits
 - Maximizing employer support to employees returning from parental leave
- Provision of comprehensive information for parents about family-friendly entitlements including:
 - Child care support
 - Parental leave
 - Family-friendly employment policies
- Appointment of a new chair and remit for the Women’s Business Council, which will focus on economic sectors to tackle gender pay gaps

An accompanying [Gender Equality Monitor](#) brings together key government metrics used to monitor important gender equality issues, including their impact on the intersection of protected characteristics. The roadmap’s commitments will be integrated into individual government departments’ 2020/21 plans, and an annual progress report will be presented to Parliament with Gender Equality Monitor annual reports.

RELATED RESOURCES

- [Gender Equality at Every Stage: A Roadmap for Change](#) (HM Government, July 2019)
- [Press Release](#) (Equalities Office, 4 Jul 2019)
- [Press Release](#) (Equalities Office, 3 Jul 2019)
- [Gender Equality Monitor](#) (HM Government, July 2019)

Note: Mercer is not engaged in the practice of law, accounting or medicine. Any commentary in this article does not constitute and is not a substitute for legal, tax or medical advice. Readers of this article should consult a legal, tax or medical expert for advice on those matters.