



ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025

CONVENER'S WELCOME

The landscape of gender equality in Scotland remains one that is too often shaped by stubborn barriers, devaluation of women's needs and contributions, and under-representation in decision-making. This leaves many women, particularly those from marginalised groups, disproportionately exposed to economic inequality, cuts to public services and the social safety net.

In the last year, Engender has worked hard to draw attention to women being buffeted by these social and economic winds. We have engaged with government, parliamentarians, public bodies, partnership organisations and women directly to push for improved policymaking and service design that better responds to women's realities.

The team's work has spanned women's health through a new campaign to secure modernised abortion law, engagement with the Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry, and development of a new phase of the Women's Health Plan. We have retained a strong focus on economic support for women, and improvements to social security including scrapping of the two-child limit, and introduction of a 'fund to leave' for women facing domestic abuse. Mainstreaming gender across policymaking continues to be a primary goal. We advocated for this across government, including via the National Advisory Council on Women and Girls and our work on primary prevention of violence. Our Equal Media and Culture Centre and Equal Representation in Politics projects have also raised vital awareness of the increasing challenges faced by marginalised women in these arenas.

As the political context grows more complex and threats to equality increase, our work and commitment to the most marginalised is becoming more critical than ever. Our manifesto for the 2026 election, **Investing in Women, Transforming Communities**, challenges political parties to support an ambitious but achievable vision for change.

This won't be possible without the solidarity of Engender's members, partners, and supporters. We're grateful for your continued support in demonstrating that an intersectional feminist future for Scotland is both possible and achievable.

In Sisterhood, Lucy Mulvagh Convener

ENGENDER'S WORK FOR INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST POLICYMAKING

Engender works to combat intersectional gender inequality in Scotland through evidence-based policy analysis, research and advocacy. We develop practical recommendations to improve women's access to resources, empowerment and safety across a wide range of policy areas. The last 12 months have presented significant challenges and changes in the political environment surrounding policy and legislation focused on progressing equality, making our work more vital than ever.

Throughout 2025, we have continued to focus on improving Scotland's approach to gender and equalities mainstreaming, including successfully influencing the **May 2025 Programme for Government**, securing renewed commitments on women's health and a stronger inclusion of gender in the next Child Poverty Delivery Plan. Our continued participation in **the National Advisory Council on Women and Girls** has enabled us to help shape the forthcoming Scottish Government equality strategy for women and girls.

Ahead of the upcoming Scottish election in 2026, **we published our manifesto: 'Investing in Women, Transforming Communities'**, which features policy asks across ten key areas to improve women's lives. We worked with partner organisations to inform our asks and continue to engage with all major political parties to influence their upcoming election platforms. One of the key areas in our manifesto is our longstanding call for the Scottish Government to **reform the Public Sector Equality Duty in Scotland**, which is a legal mechanism that could significantly advance gender mainstreaming.

Addressing the intersection of gender inequality, poverty, and women's deep financial insecurity has remained crucial for us this year. We've worked to advocate for greater recognition of how gender inequality drives child poverty in the next **Child Poverty Delivery Plan**, and have collaborated with the anti-poverty movement, including backing the Poverty Alliance's **campaign against planned Aberdeenshire nursery closures**, which would have disproportionately affected

women. We also continue to develop our work on **examining women's unpaid caring** responsibilities and financial precarity by hosting workshops with partner organisations, which will inform our future work.

Our advocacy for a **social security system that works for women** continues. We've continued our efforts to press for **individual payments of Universal Credit**, and have supported ongoing calls to **abolish the misogynistic two-child limit**, which Engender has steadfastly opposed since its introduction. The **Minimum Income Guarantee Expert Group report**, published in June 2025, included our recommendations that any future roll-out must address gendered implications.

One of our most significant achievements over the past year has been our work to **advance reproductive rights in Scotland by developing and launching a bold new campaign called 'Let's change the Act.'** Alongside a coalition of diverse organisations and experts, we are actively campaigning for the full decriminalisation and modernisation of abortion law in Scotland. This work builds on the influence of our 2024 report on the decriminalisation of abortion in Scotland. We have engaged with civil servants, Ministers, MSPs, the Crown Office, and Police Scotland to share our findings. We have also contributed significantly to the **Scottish Government's 'Abortion Law Review Expert Group'**, which published its landmark report calling for a modern, health-based framework for abortion in November 2025.

Our work on reproductive rights has developed in an increasingly concerning political context, where we are seeing **disinformation and active threats to core women's rights issues**. In September, we came together in solidarity with organisations across the women's sector to provide a strong stance against links that have been made between immigration and violence against women and girls, and stand in solidarity with anti-racist campaigners and organisations. We've been proud to support the work of **Women Against the Far Right Scotland** and our Executive Director spoke at the September launch of their campaign.

As core participants in the **Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry**, we successfully lobbied for Equalities and Human Rights impact hearings alongside partners in the women's sector. Our Executive Director delivered oral evidence to the Inquiry at these sessions, and the Inquiry counsel has incorporated gendered impact questions

throughout subsequent testimony, demonstrating our influence. We remain active in the **Women's Health Plan working group** that is tasked with informing the shape the next phase of the plan. We have focussed on the need for a more intersectional approach that recognises health inequalities experienced by marginalised women and a greater awareness of the gendered impacts of mental health policy.

We continue to **promote women's human rights** by engaging with the United Nations' international monitoring mechanisms. Alongside giving evidence to the **UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)**, we published an updated ICESCR shadow report. The UK is due to be examined by the **UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee** and we are gathering evidence for our CEDAW shadow report for Scotland, which will be published next year. We have been holding creative workshops with women and partner organisations across Scotland that have engaged over 150 women to date.

This year, we have published briefings, evidence and analysis on the following topics:

Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 | Scottish Parliament (Recall and Removal of Members) Bill | NPCC Guidelines on Child Death Investigations | Mitigation of the Two-Child Limit | The Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2026-3031 | The Public Sector Equality Duty | Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming Strategy | Proxy Voting for Councillors | Women's Political Journey: Exploring the election process | Primary Prevention of VAWG: Spotlight on Planning | The draft SSI to add 'sex' as a protected characteristic to the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 | Beyond Promises: What Works in Getting More Women Elected | Uniting Local and National Efforts, Across Sectors to End Violence Against Women and Girls | Scottish Government Abortion Law Review report |

All of these are available on **Engender's** website.

Boards and advisory bodies that Engender sat on:

First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls | the Equally Safe in Practice Advisory Group | the Joint Strategic Board of Equally Safe | Gender-Based Violence and Learning Disability Working Group | Primary Prevention Expert Group | Homelessness Policy Network | Abortion Rights Scotland steering group | Abortion Expert Group Rep and Advisory Group for the Scottish Government | the Human Rights Bill Advisory Board | Civil Society Working Group on Incorporation in Scotland | the Carers Benefit Advisory Group | Five Family Payments Reference Group | the Scottish Campaign on Rights to Social Security | The United Kingdom Joint Committee on Women | End Child Poverty Coalition | Minimum Income Guarantee Steering Group | Women's Health Plan Implementation Programme Board | the Write to End Violence Against Women Awards | Centenary Action Group 'Women Count' Steering Group | Equal Representation Coalition | COSLA Barriers to Elected Office group | PiPA |

ENGENDER'S DEVELOPMENT WORK

EQUAL MEDIA AND CULTURE CENTRE (EMCC)

This year has seen the new EMCC team take strides forward in research, monitoring and advocacy for gender equality in the creative and media sectors in Scotland. Research projects have included a Scotland-specific report into women's lived experiences of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives in the creative industries, and research into the efficacy and impact of Creative Scotland's EDI Action Plan requirement for funded organisations, which acts as a shadow report to the Scottish Government's Independent Review of Creative Scotland. The EMCC has also partnered with other organisations on new research, including Film Hub Scotland on a survey and analysis into gender equity in film exhibition, and we continue to support research by Creative Balance into Black and people of colour (BPOC) -led spaces in the creative sectors.

Our advocacy work has been strengthened by the creation of an EMCC manifesto for the 2026 Holyrood elections, calling for a fairer future for culture in Scotland. The manifesto has garnered formal cross-sector endorsements from culture organisations, and we are engaging with political parties ahead of the 2026 election.

The inaugural EMCC Conference took place in September 2025, a half-day event featuring panels on advocacy and EDI and data, and the launch of the EMCC manifesto to an audience of professionals from across the creative sectors. Feedback for the conference has been hugely positive.

The EMCC has coordinated a coalition of sector professionals and organisations representing BPOC and women creatives to advocate for better inclusion in the Creative Scotland Independent Review process. The coalition was successful in gaining an additional roundtable for BPOC creatives as part of the Review, and secured a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture to discuss concerns.

We have grown the profile of the EMCC over the last year, publishing a number of blogs and increasing the reach of our communications with growth in both email subscribers and followers on social media.

EQUAL REPRESENTATION IN POLITICS

Gender-equal representation is crucial for a diverse and inclusive society. We want to make sure women can shape and influence politics, ultimately leading to better outcomes for everyone.

In 2025, our research on women's political experience and journeys launched in two parts. The first report explored the election process and women's experiences of abuse, exclusion and bias, with vital recommendations for improvement. It revealed widespread misogyny and proposed concrete actions for political parties and governments. The second report analysed Scottish parties' use of positive action measures (PAMs), including quotas, and explored candidate diversity across recent elections. This research has generated strong media coverage, and was supported by tailored engagement with MSPs, councillors, and political parties. Alongside this research, we produced an online video series featuring female politicians speaking about their experiences, which received very positive feedback.

Our joint research with Engender's Delivering Equally Safe project on violence against women in councils continues to develop. We are currently working with a cross-party advisory group and other relevant stakeholders on the recommendations for our report. With their input and a focus on capturing lived realities in this policy development, we plan to launch this work in early 2026.

We are working in collaboration with the Equal Representation Coalition to develop an Equal Representation Charter. This charter will outline commitments on equal representation for political parties and will be launched after the upcoming Holyrood elections. The goal is to make the Charter intersectional, inclusive and impactful and to ensure broad cross-party support to make parliament and politics a welcoming space for all women.

In partnership with the Improvement Service, we are creating a hub showcasing Scotland's councils' good practice on women's representation, gender-sensitive governance, and feminist policy. This resource hopes to inspire culture change in Scottish politics.

DELIVERING EQUALLY SAFE

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is one of the most pervasive human rights violations in the world. Unfortunately, in Scotland, this violence continues to occur at endemic levels with devastating physical and psychological impacts for women and girls. Primary prevention is the only way to eradicate VAWG once and for all. This means addressing the root cause of this violence, which is gender inequality.

Our Delivering Equally Safe project focuses on embedding the concept of primary prevention into all areas of public policy. In particular, this means developing policies that actively address inequality and promote women's safety.

In line with this, in 2025, we launched a briefing series that focuses on how different areas of public policy, which are not typically associated with VAWG, can be used to prevent it. We have published briefings on transport and housing policy, alongside Instagram Reels and blogs. We also had opportunities to promote this work in the media and at events with policymakers, such as party conferences and meetings of Transport Scotland's Equality Group.

Primary prevention must be embedded in all aspects of Scottish Government policymaking. Therefore, we continued to lobby for changes to the National Performance Framework (NPF) by calling for a standalone gender equality outcome to be added to any future NPF and the inclusion of targets to prevent VAWG.

We produced research into how primary prevention is being delivered at the local level across Scotland. This research gathered insights from 51 people working across 30 of Scotland's 32 local authorities. We found that although people

working at the local level believe primary prevention is crucial, several barriers exist to its full implementation.

We launched this research at our annual Primary Prevention and Policymaking conference. This event was attended by over 30 policymakers and policy professionals from various sectors and included a presentation of this research, stakeholder workshops and a speech by COSLA's Spokesperson for Community Wellbeing.

Our Delivering Equally Safe project continues to be supported by an Expert Group on Primary Prevention, which meets throughout the year to discuss the direction of this work.

ENGENDER'S COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT WORK

Launching our new communications strategy this year, we've seen growth in Engender's engagement and communications work.

We've held an increasing number of events, highlighting key issues for women's equality and foregrounding the need for feminist policymaking in Scotland. We kick-started the year by hosting our AGM, focused on decriminalising abortion and went on to host or speak at events within the culture sector, at the Labour Party conference, on housing issues, anti-racism, International Women's Day, equality, diversity and inclusion, and many other topics, including marching with thousands of others at the Scotland Demands Better anti-poverty rally outside the Scottish Parliament in October. Our annual Delivering Equally Safe conference brought together a wide range of stakeholders both from within and outwith the VAWG sector, working together to bring about change.

This year, we also launched the Let's change the Act campaign, a bold new national campaign calling for the full decriminalisation of abortion in Scotland and the replacement of the Abortion Act 1967 with a modern, health-based framework. We have long campaigned in this area, and the Let's change the Act campaign brings together partners including health and legal experts, human rights, equality and anti-poverty campaigners. The campaign attracted 550 individual members and

over 40 organisational members within a fortnight of launching and continues to grow.

We have also hosted a record number of workshops this year via our CEDAW consultation series. These community engagement workshops have been hosted across Scotland, connecting with a diverse range of women about their rights, needs and views. The outcomes of these sessions will inform our CEDAW shadow report and our broader work. We have hosted 15 CEDAW workshops and a further 16 internal or external events.

Our blog continues to engage readers and has covered topics including Equal representation in politics, violence against women and girls, racism, workplace precarity, housing, financial inequality and more. We've seen growth and positive interaction across all our social media platforms, and launched two new channels this year which have quickly grown and helped us engage new, invested audiences. We've continued to raise Engender's profile in the media, gathering coverage on a range of topics including housing, VAWG, sexism, EDI and more. We've been working behind the scenes on our membership systems to support membership growth and retention and are delighted to welcome new members in the year ahead.

Thanks to those organisations with whom we've worked this year:

Scottish Government | Public Health Scotland | Scottish Human Rights Commission | Innovo Law | Close the Gap | Scottish Women's Aid | Rape Crisis Scotland | Zero Tolerance | EQUATE Scotland | Women 5050 | Equality Network | Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights | CEMVO | Stonewall Scotland | LGBT Health and Wellbeing | Inclusion Scotland | Glasgow Women's Library | COSLA | National Library of Scotland | Poverty Alliance | Citizen's Advice Scotland | Child Poverty Action Group | Shelter Scotland | Aberlour | Ubuntu Women Shelter | BEMIS | The Young Women's Movement | Edinburgh University | Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre | Scottish Trans | Scottish Youth Parliament | Scottish Women's Budget Group | First Minister's National Advisory Group on Women and Girls | Glasgow Caledonian University | Human Rights Consortium Scotland | Amnesty Scotland | The Fawcett Society | Women's Equality Network Wales | Northern Ireland Women's Platform | ElectHer | the ALLIANCE | the STUC | Strathclyde University | The Women's Support Project | Dundee International Women's Centre | Glasgow Disability Alliance | One Parent Families Scotland | Abortion Rights Scotland | Back Off Scotland | BPAS | Humanist Society | NUS Scotland | Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists | Royal College of General Practitioners Scotland | Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Health | Coalition of Carers in Scotland | Carers Scotland | Carer's Trust Scotland | MECOPP | Scottish Women's Rights Centre | JustRight Scotland | Centenary Action Group | The Jo Cox Foundation | The Improvement Service | Pass the Mic | We Are Here Scotland | Creative Balance | Culture Counts | Musician's Union | National Union of Journalists | Bectu | Society of Authors | Scottish Artists Union | Scottish Women in Sport | The Association of Journalism Education | Scottish Documentary Institute | Film Hub Scotland | Federation of Scottish Theatre | Stellar Quines | Parents and Carers in the Performing Arts | Migrant Women's Press | Glasgow Film Festival | Jali Collective | Creative Edinburgh | Creative Dundee | Scottish Contemporary Art Network | University of Strathclyde | Sanctuary Queer Arts | Independent Arts Project | Cyrenians | SWAN Autism Scotland | Voluntary Health Scotland | Women Against the Far Right Scotland | Age Scotland | Women's Enterprise Scotland | Women's Resource and Development Agency | 50:50 Northern Ireland | East Lothian Intergenerational Network | Fa'side

Women and Girls Group | Perth Women's Collective | Scottish Refugee Council
| ScrapAntics | British Red Cross | Apna Ghar Women's Project | Citizen's Advice
Scotland | ESOLPerth | Shakti Women's Aid | Scottish Ethnic Minority Deaf
Charity | Borders Older Peoples Forum.

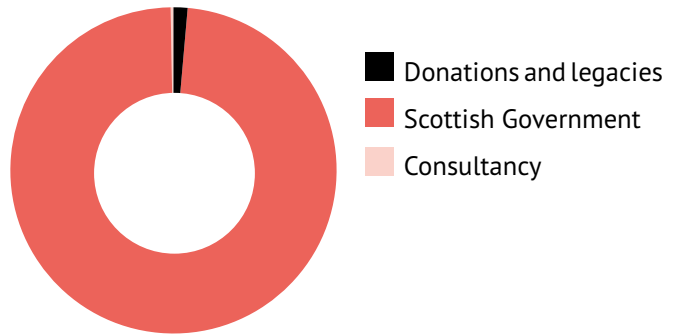
And our funders:

Scottish Government Equality and Human Rights Fund | Delivering Equally Safe
| Awards for All | Scottish Government Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights
Directorate | the Centre for Reproductive Rights and all of the individual members
and donors whose contributions help us carry out our work.

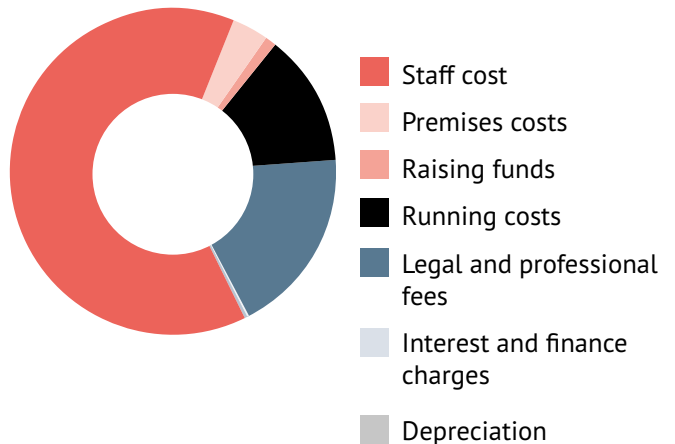
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

APRIL 2024– MARCH 2025

INCOME	
Donations and legacies	£9,186
Scottish Government	£617,193
Consultancy	£850
Total	£627,229



EXPENDITURE	
Staff costs	£406,296
Premises costs	£22,455
Raising funds	£6,237
Running costs	£84,065
Legal and professional fees	£118,251
Interest and finance charges	£1,465
Depreciation	£1,966
Total	£640,735



ENGENDER'S STAFF AT DECEMBER 2025

Catherine Murphy

Executive Director

Policy Team

Jill Wood

Policy Manager

Lucy Hughes

Policy and Parliamentary Manager

Development Team

Catriona Kirkpatrick

Head of Development

Katie Goh

Project Manager (Equal Media and Culture Centre)

Sharon Holland

Communications and Engagement Officer (Equal Media and Culture Centre)

Jessie Duncan

Development Officer (Equal Representation)

Noomi Anyanwu

Development Officer (Equal Representation)

Hannah Brisbane

Delivering Equally Safe Policy Officer

Hadia Aslam

Administrator

Communications and Engagement Team

Jade Stein

Communications and Engagement Manager

Maxine Blane

Communications and Administrative Assistant

ENGENDER'S BOARD 2024-2025

Lucy Mulvagh (Convener)

Louise Brodie (Treasurer)

Emily Hutchinson (Deputy Convenor)

Camila Cavalcante

Kristin Hay

Suzanne McLaughlin

Zara Kitson

Rachel Palma Randle

Iffat Shahnaz

Samar Ziadat

Engender's board of directors is responsible for the governance and strategic direction of the organisation. Directors bring a vital range of skills and experiences to guide Engender, and support the staff in delivering the organisation's aims. The board usually meets five times a year, and directors are elected annually at Engender's Annual General Meeting.


We would like to thank all our board members for their contributions to Engender's work this year.


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