



Invitation to Tender

Title: AI and the Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in Scottish Government Policymaking

Deadline for receipt of tender proposals: 10am 19th October 2026

Delivery date: 01.02.2027

Background:

Engender is Scotland's feminist membership organisation, established over 30 years ago to advance equality between women and men. As a registered charity, we envision a Scotland where women and men have equal opportunities in life, equal access to resources and power, and equal safety and security from harm. We address persistent gender inequalities through evidence-based research and analysis, policy advocacy with decision-makers, and empowering women to campaign for systemic change.

Engender's Delivering Equally Safe project explores how the primary prevention of violence against women and girls (VAWG) can be embedded across different areas of public policy. Through this work, we have identified three key components of a primary prevention approach to policymaking:

- Women are fairly and equally represented in policymaking roles
- All policymakers use intersectional gender analysis in the policy process
- All policymakers mainstream primary prevention in their work

As the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools becomes more common in government policymaking and in wider society, there are important questions to answer about its impact on primary prevention and gender mainstreaming.

Various teams within the Scottish Government and wider public sector are already using AI tools, including large language models such as ChatGPT. The Scottish Government has published its own AI Strategy, which aims to drive responsible and inclusive growth through AI, and the UK Government is investing heavily in AI development.

At the same time, there is growing evidence that AI systems can reinforce harmful structural and social biases. Studies have found that a significant proportion of AI systems demonstrate gender

bias, or gender and racial bias together, and that large language models are more likely to associate women with the home and family, and men with business and career. Some models have also been found to generate sexist or misogynistic content.

Through the Equally Safe Strategy, the Scottish Government and COSLA have committed to preventing and eradicating VAWG and addressing the underlying attitudes and systems that perpetuate it, including through primary prevention. This research will assess how the growing use of AI in policymaking may affect that commitment.

Aim: To assess the potential impacts of artificial intelligence on the operationalisation of primary prevention in Scottish Government policymaking.

Purpose: Engender will use this research to:

- increase awareness of the gendered impacts of using AI in policymaking
- influence the Scottish Government's approach to AI, and its compatibility with existing policy commitments and legal duties on primary prevention of VAWG and gender mainstreaming in policymaking

Role of the consultant:

We are seeking a consultant to:

- map the use of AI in Scottish Government policymaking, with a focus on policy drafting, Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs), and evidence analysis
- identify potential risks and opportunities AI might pose to embedding primary prevention and wider gender mainstreaming in Scottish Government policymaking, with a particular focus on: women's representation in policymaking roles; use of intersectional gender analysis in the policy process; and the promotion of primary prevention in the policy process
- consider how AI could affect policy development in areas relevant to women's inequality, including social security, childcare and housing
- produce recommendations for the Scottish Government and other relevant stakeholders on the use of AI in a way that is compatible with the Equally Safe Strategy, the Equalities and Human Rights Mainstreaming Strategy, and the Public Sector Equality Duty

Research questions

- What tools are currently in use, and how are they being used by different teams?
- Do Scottish Government officials have adequate gender competence and expertise to identify harmful biases in AI-generated content?
- Are safeguards, governance and accountability mechanisms in place to address harmful biases and 'hallucinations'?
- What is the impact of AI on the Scottish Government's commitments to gender equality and the Equally Safe Strategy?
- How might the use of AI by the general public affect women's representation and participation in policy and decision-making processes?
- Are there any potential benefits to using AI in policymaking on primary prevention?
- What would a safeguarded approach look like or entail?

Methodology

We envisage that this research will require a mixed-methods approach. This may include:

- a desk-based review
- algorithmic auditing, where feasible
- stakeholder interviews

We are seeking a consultant with experience or knowledge of

- research and evidence gathering
- desk-based review and, where relevant, algorithmic auditing
- stakeholder interviews
- presenting findings
- intersectional gender equality
- the use of AI in public policy or a related field

Deliverables / Outputs:

- A report outlining the findings of the survey, interviews and desk-based review
- Case study interview transcripts
- Survey data presented in Excel
- Presentation of summary of findings at DES Conference 19th March 2027

Section 2

Evaluation criteria

To assist our evaluation of your tender submission, please ensure you clearly demonstrate how you meet each of the criteria with specific examples. Your responses should be supported by evidence/previous successful implementation of projects of a similar nature.

	Criteria
	Sound understanding of the use of AI in public policy and its potential gendered impacts Sound knowledge of intersectional gender equality and primary prevention of violence against women and girls Confident communication and attention to detail Track record of accurate data collection, evidence gathering and analysis Ability to work to timescales

Schedule of Charges

Bidders shall complete the schedule of charges below, estimating the number of days and any additional costs. The total fixed price will be inclusive of VAT and inclusive of expenses and all costs to be incurred. The maximum available for this stage of the project is **£10,000** (inclusive of the costs of engagement activities)

Expenditure	Quantity	Unit costs	Total
Sub-total			
VAT			
Total Price including VAT and expenses (<i>this figure will be used to calculate your price score</i>)			

Instructions to tenderers

Please submit your tender offer in accordance with all of the instructions, requirements and specifications set out in this document.

Nothing in this documentation, or any other communication made between Engender and any applicant, can be considered a contract or agreement at this stage.

All commissioned work will need to adhere to your institution's Research Ethics Guidelines, Code of Conduct and Safeguarding policies if applicable.

Tendering

Engender reserves the right to disqualify or reduce the evaluation score of any tenderers who do not fully comply with the requirements in the tender documentation, in particular the closing time and date.

Engender reserves the right to evaluate proposals on a variety of criteria. The tender with the lowest price will not automatically be accepted.

Engender is not responsible for and will not pay for any expenses or losses you incur during, but not limited to, the tender preparation, post-tender negotiations or interviews.

Return of Tender

You must complete and submit your tender response/proposal electronically by the tender response deadline of **10am 19.10.2026**. Please send completed proposals to Catriona Kirkpatrick at catriona.kirkpatrick@engender.org.uk with the subject line "AI in Policymaking".