

[00:00:00.330] - Alys Mumford (VO)

Hello, dear listeners, we've got a bit of a funny episode for you this week in that the tech failed us halfway through and we lost Marsha. Despite the best efforts of the incredibly helpful Lynne from Zancastr, we haven't been able to recover the second half of her recording. But we thought press on and release this episode anyway, just a few weeks behind schedule.

[00:00:17.460]

In it you'll hear us talking about events from the end of June/start of July. Enjoy the wee nostalgia trip.

[00:00:39.610] - Amanda Stanley

Hello and welcome to On the Engender, the briefing with me, Amanda Stanley and my wonderful host, Alys Mumford. Hello, Alys

[00:00:48.790]

Would you like to kick us off to begin with before we before we get into things about what's been going on in the past two weeks in the U.K. and Scotland?

[00:00:56.980] - Alys Mumford

Sure, yeah, quite, quite a lot! And a reminder that listeners can go to Engender's rolling blog, where we're updating what's going on with the parliament, with the Scottish Government, if you want to know what's what's been happening in terms of legislation. But this week, we've seen Scotland go into phase two of lockdown easing, which means we can see two households in an outdoor space, pretty exciting. And people that have been shielding have been told that they can they can get outside and they can see one other household outside, which is obviously a big, big relief to lots of folk.

[00:01:30.610]

We've just seen announcements about schools in Scotland. And down in then in the UK, conversations are happening around relaxing the two metre rule to one metre. There's lots of differences of opinions around the different track and trace, around Cummings still being in post, there's a whole lot going on.

[00:01:49.060]

But here in Scotland, that's where we're at, moving into into phase two. I guess in the wider world, we've seen Black Lives Matter protests continuing and some really interesting conversations around removal of statues, around the need for inclusive education and some really, really huge wins happening around the UK and around the world on police forces, on removal of problematic emblems and things.

[00:02:15.160]

So, yeah, really sort of exciting time for that movement.

[00:02:19.210] - Amanda Stanley

Definitely. And I mean, even just from recording these the past few weeks, it's been interesting just when we come to the table every every time with our new, like, what's been going on in the world this week. And it's interesting just to see that development in itself. It's kind of nice to have something like this podcast, I think, to remind us that change is happening.

[00:02:37.930] - Alys Mumford

For sure, because I think one thing that has characterised lockdown for a lot of folk is "what, you know, what even is time?" I mean, even just the days of the week is really, really difficult to track what's going on and when things happened. So, yeah, I find it quite useful, just googling 'what happened this week?', to try and remind myself.

[00:02:56.380] - Amanda Stanley

So on the podcast today, we are joined by our regular guest, Engender's Emma Ritch and Marsha Scott, the CEO of Scottish Women's Aid. We're going to be talking about how we can achieve equality in practice through the wonderful world of EQIA.

[00:03:08.770] - Alys Mumford  
That's Equality Impact Assessment.

[00:03:10.900] - Amanda Stanley  
And PSED

[00:03:10.950] - Alys Mumford  
That's the Public Sector Equality Duty.

[00:03:14.350] - Amanda Stanley  
But first off, let's start with some cheer. Alys, what's been good this week for you?

[00:03:19.270] - Alys Mumford  
I had my birthday this weekend, so I've got an easy one. And I got to see some pals for an incredibly rainy picnic in a park, which was very nice, and some delicious cake. So a very selfish, good thing this week.

[00:03:35.560] - Amanda Stanley  
Happy Birthday, also.

[00:03:35.890] - Amanda Stanley  
Thanks! Marsha, welcome to the podcast.

[00:03:38.650] - Marsha Scott  
Thank you very much. Lovely to hear all your lovely voices.

[00:03:42.220] - Alys Mumford  
And can you give us a bit of positivity to start the recording with?

[00:03:45.880] - Marsha Scott  
Well, I was going to talk about the Children Scotland Bill, but I feel like the picnic has, sort of pointed out that what I was...

[00:03:56.350] - Alys Mumford  
You're just going to shame me for my cake positivity.

[00:03:59.430] - Marsha Scott  
No, no, I think I am a nerd and that worries me constantly. So I guess what I'll talk about is Scottish raspberries and strawberries this week. Oh, my God.

[00:04:11.680] - Amanda Stanley  
That's especially lovely. When I was little, I used to spend most of my summers picking strawberries in the local farms around where I lived, and it was just the best. What a great day out for everybody. You get to do a thing. You get to eat the things after. Love it.

[00:04:26.530] - Marsha Scott  
And you have red lips and face and fingers and

[00:04:29.890] - Amanda Stanley  
your white T-shirt stained

[00:04:36.890] - Marsha Scott  
It's kind of magical when you're a kid. And when you're an adult!

[00:04:37.120] - Amanda Stanley  
And when you're an adult, yeah. Have you have been using the strawberries or raspberries or anything

in particular?

[00:04:41.020] - Marsha Scott

Bingeing, really. Large bowls, or maybe just as a vehicle for cream.

[00:04:51.220] - Amanda Stanley

That's an honest response. I enjoy that. Emma, what about you?

[00:04:54.610] - Emma Ritch

So this week, President Trump's rally was beset by very poor attendance, which is probably a good thing given the fact that Coronavirus and fascism both continue to rage in America. And this was partly attributed to online action by, quote, "tiktok teens" and "K-pop stans" who used their online skills to book up tickets and also compromised the data gathered for the Trump 2020 campaign. And as well as being quite a cheering thing in and of itself, it also kicked off some really good writing about politics, about fandom and the activism of teenage girls.

[00:05:30.050] - Amanda Stanley

I love that story, also, when I found out about it, it was so good. I also enjoy how you were like, quote unquote, 'K-pop stans'.

[00:05:39.330] - Alys Mumford

Also, I would like to hear a super-cut of all of the broadcasters saying that phrase and clearly not understanding what it means. Amanda, what's what's your positive?

[00:05:50.040] - Amanda Stanley

You know, I realise that there's going to be a trend from this podcast now seeming like I get presents delivered to me all the time, which is true. But I was actually I was watching the football (and we spoke about we were going to talk about sports before this) but I was out watching the football and I had a text message from Beth Chalmers, who did some photos for us during our last project on Engender anniversary. And she messaged me and was just like 'something on your stoop for you.' And then I went outside and she left some homemade elderflower champagne for me, which is delicious.

[00:06:21.480] - Alys Mumford

WOW.

[00:06:21.630] - Amanda Stanley

I know it was incredible. And like, she picked the elderflower and has been brewing it. And it's like only maybe two or three percent. It's very weak, but it's so delicious. So that was a really unexpected surprise and like such a small gesture, but also like a little fairy godmother delivering things to me. Take that, birthday cake!

[00:06:53.950] - Alys Mumford

Fair. Amazing, so I feel very cheered. Thank you. So continuing this positive trend, we're going to move onto the happiest topic of all EQIA and PSED - I say that ironically, Emma is actually probably grinning at her computer. Emma, can you tell us what PSED and EQIA are?

[00:07:12.900]

Yes. Back in the day, by which I mean the early 2000s and before, anti-discrimination law worked in only one way in Scotland, and that was that it gave women and other protected groups a way to get compensation or restitution after discrimination had already happened. Feminists, though, had been agitating for a different approach. They wanted governments, the European Commission, the UN, other public bodies to you have to think about preventing discrimination before it happened and actually use all of their budgets and programmes of work to advance women's equality and not just fix things when they went wrong.

[00:07:51.820]

And that idea is called 'gender mainstreaming'. The Public Sector Equality Duty is a gender mainstreaming duty and it places a requirement on Scottish government, on universities and colleges, local authorities, health boards, lots of other public bodies, to eliminate discrimination against women and to advance equality between women and men. And before the Public Sector Equality Duty, before PSED, we had a Gender Equality Duty (called GED) that did pretty much the same thing for women's equality. And those duties have been operating in Scotland since 2007. Equality Impact Assessment - EQIA - is part of the Public Sector Equality Duty and it's a process that government and other public bodies need to use to apply all of what we know about women's different lived experience to the particular law or policy or service or programme that they're working on.

[00:08:51.940]

So, for example, if a local authority was doing an impact assessment on whether they should close down a local library, they should think about the fact that women are more likely to care for young children. And so they might use things like bounce and rhyme sessions. Women are less likely to have access to a car and so might be more reliant on a patchy bus service that won't take them to the library in town more often and are more likely to get Social Security payments and less likely to have a computer - so they may need to use the library computers to deal with a universal credit application, for example. So public bodies need to publish their impact assessments so that women's organisations, activist groups and citizens can see why they're making the decisions that they're making.

[00:09:37.830] - Amanda Stanley

Thanks so much for that thorough rundown, Emma. Marsha, Scottish Women's Aid is the national organisation working for an end to men's violence against women. Why are these ways of measuring impact quality important for your work?

[00:09:50.370] - Marsha Scott

Well, the big picture question or answer really is that if we are serious about ending domestic abuse and the other forms of violence against women, we have to grasp the nettle of ending women's inequality - because women's poverty, women's lack of power in public spaces and in places where decisions are made that allocate resources in our communities and families and country and women's lack of safety in their personal lives, all are sort of a toxic cocktail, I suppose, that that feed domestic abuse and violence against women. And of course, violence against women is a cause and consequence. So it works both ways in terms of a tool that keeps women unequal. And so when we're when we're talking about seriously ending domestic abuse rather than putting some sticking plaster on the on the outcomes and harms caused by it, then we have to be willing to look really seriously and closely at the elements of women's inequality. And Both PSED and Equality Impact Assessment give us some tools for doing that.

[00:10:59.540] - Alys Mumford

We were chatting before we started recording about why we say P-SED, not P.S.E.D. I'm pleased to hear about GED, I didn't know about GED.

[00:11:08.000]

So this sounds great, sounds like something feminists fought for, sounds like something we really need. Obviously I'm sensing there's a big 'but'. We know that libraries are still closing, public toilets are closing. We know that decisions are being made that further entrenches women's equality. So why are we talking about them? Why aren't they doing what they're supposed to?

[00:11:27.290] - Emma Ritch

I mean, the gaps identified by feminist organizations are legion. So we see problems with a lack of leadership on Equality, Impact Assessment and the public sector policy accountability. If you don't do it, there isn't much consequence for public bodies. There are resourcing issues - so organizations just haven't committed enough staff time or budget to being good at this work. And there's also a massive, massive problem with gender competence. So people within public bodies, including government, just don't know enough stuff about gender and women's and men's lives in order to apply that knowledge well or even understand the areas in which they need to get more knowledge

and apply it to the policy that they're working on.

[00:12:10.880]

There's also an issue with the regulations themselves, which are specific in Scotland. They're quite complicated, but essentially they require public bodies to produce a lot of bits of paper, but not do very much. We also see that the bit inside Scottish government that enables the rest of the organisation to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty requirements is the Equality Unit, and they are utterly outmatched by the scale of the work that is happening and the low levels of gender competence across government.

[00:12:40.610]

And that was why the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls made some recommendations to increase the capacity of the Equality Unit by scaling it up to a directorate, but also to create expertise into each of the other directorates of government. And where we see specialist needs in other directorates that are focused on gender, for example, in justice, working on violence against women, I think we see much better outcomes for women's equality and rights.

[00:13:07.850] - Alys Mumford

Marsha have you got anything to add there on what Emma's just said there about violence against women?

[00:13:11.610] - Marsha Scott

Yeah, I mean, I to be honest, I think that it's all much of a muchness in the sense that you can't do policy on violence against women unless you understand gender and you can do policy on gender unless you understand violence against women.

[00:13:24.360]

But I think what I would say is with my sort of 'big system hat' on is that the the problems that we see all across the piece that Emma has, as usual, so comprehensively described, lead to a failure of investing in infrastructure that will actually implement or deliver and and maintain gender competence.

[00:13:51.830]

And, you know, I suppose if I were a conspiracy theorist, I would say this is really not an accident, that the system has resisted transforming in this way. And and we see little examples of it all the time. I've had two conversations in the last 48 hours with officials who, when asked where where the Equality Impact Assessment was on the on the work that they're promoting, essentially dismissed it by saying, well, one of them said, well I just haven't done the documentation.

[00:14:25.010]

And that, you know, the the real message that came across there was that that Equality Impact Assessment is it is - to this woman - a box ticking exercise rather than an analytic process that transforms the outcome of what she's doing.

[00:14:43.760] - Alys Mumford

I mean, it sounds similar to the conversations we have had last week about the budget and the equality statements around the budget being used as an afterthought and not actually being used to shape what we're talking about. And I'm interested because PSED is the Public Sector Equality Duty - that's not just talking about women. It's talking about all the protected characteristics, presumably.

[00:15:02.930] - Emma Ritch

Yeah, that's absolutely right. So it covers nine different protected characteristics, including race and ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and others. So, yes, it's supposed to cover really all of the reasons one might need protection from anti-discrimination law and to advance equality.

[00:15:22.040] - Alys Mumford

I mean, it sounds like that would be a really good set up, therefore to think intersectionally about these things. You know, to look at the library example, all of the things you said that are true for women are increased when you're looking at women of colour, for example, or disabled women. So is it helping in that way at all - to allow policy makers to make those links between discriminations?

[00:15:42.160]

No, I think absolutely not. And one of the reasons for that is that the methodology often used for impact assessment really kind of operates sequentially. So it seems like officials go through the list of protected characteristics one at a time, and then draw together some really quite scant evidence about the different experiences of different groups and then, potentially, somewhat apply it to a policy, although really we're seeing EQIAs of such poor quality in Engender that they aren't really even recognizable as trying to do that function.

[00:16:17.800]

But intersectionality seems very remote, both from the way the regulations are set up themselves, but also just in terms of the competence and practice happening inside organizations. Intersectionality is often used as a concept by public bodies in quite a cynical way to deflect focus on gender. And so when we say, oh, you need to consider this particular way that women use public transport, the response we get is "well we don't have information or data on the way people from particular ethnic minorities use transport. And therefore, we're not really going to think about any specific groups whatsoever." So it's almost anti-intersectionality being used as a trump card to avoid paying too much attention to any one particular protected group.

[00:17:03.750] - Alys Mumford

That's definitely what Kimberlé Crenshaw had in mind.

[00:17:07.240] - Emma Ritch

Pretty sure.

[00:17:09.310] - Amanda Stanley

That's so incredibly frustrating, yeah.

[00:17:11.410] - Alys Mumford (VO)

Aaand here's where we lost Marsha. Be assured that everything else she said in the episode was insightful and entertaining. And there was lots of "I agree with Marsha"s, which we've edited out. And apparently we had a fairly long conversation about ducks, which I now have no memory of.

[00:17:25.930] - Amanda Stanley

So I guess we're looking to our current landscape after all this discussion. Why is it so such a particular issue when we're looking at Covid?

[00:17:33.010]

So before Covid, we at Engender were very concerned that Equality Impact Assessment was happening too late in the policy process, that there wasn't enough gender competence within government to see it happen well, and our assessment was that this was one of the major stumbling blocks to mainstreaming in Scottish government and other public bodies. And I think during Covid-19 we have seen those exact same patterns play out, but just at hyperspeed. And so the compressed policy development cycle at the moment where officials are working really hard and unfamiliar teams to get very complex and tricky policy written means that there is a lot less time for us gender advocates to hear about what's going on and try and push in some expert knowledge and analysis from outside. And that means that where teams were already applying some good gender analysis, as in, I would say, domestic abuse, the Covid-19 policy did pay attention to women's needs. But where teams were less familiar with the evidence or analysis, we've seen them produce what we call gender blind policy, which is policy that doesn't take account of women's needs.

[00:18:38.560] - Alys Mumford

One of the frustrating things, as you sort of touched on there, about trying to ensure the response to

Covid is gendered, which is what Engender has been doing, is that feeling of, well, 'if you've been doing things right before, we wouldn't be in such a mess now.' But given that we are where we are with these decisions happening quickly in the midst of Covid as we are, what needs to happen now to try and improve things around PSED and EQIA?

[00:19:00.730] - Emma Ritch

Well, we're going to keep throwing in analysis from outside, but I think three main things need to happen. One of the things I think we need to do first is that both Scottish government and women's policy organisations need to reflect on and write up what this massive stress test of the EQIA process has shown us. The second thing I think needs to happen is that the National Advisory Council on Women and Girls recommendations on gender mainstreaming need to be implemented. And the third thing is that this year we were supposed to be engaging with the review of the Public Sector Equality Duty that would have enabled equality organisations and public bodies both to reflect on how the specific Scottish regulations need to change to make them work. And that review has been delayed for some years. And I think we need to make some progress on that.

[00:19:49.120] - Amanda Stanley

Thank you so much, Marsha and Emma, I guess to rounder us out of this episode, maybe we could just have a little, as we do at the end, have our recommendations for the following two weeks. Alys, why don't you start?

[00:20:01.300] - Alys Mumford

Sure. Well, I was going to recommend the National Theatre live-stream of Small Island, but by the time this podcast goes out, it will be off YouTube. Apologies. So I'll recommend the book instead, Small Island by Andrea Levy, really relevant to time, it's looking at the Windrush generation. But broader note, the National Theatre Live Productions are cracking and they come out on Thursday and then they're available on YouTube for a week. So I recommend them generally. How about you Amanda?

[00:20:31.630] - Amanda Stanley

This weekend, obviously, we've seen the return of the Premier League men's football in the UK, but this weekend sees in America the National Women's Soccer League start back again, which is home to many famous US women's national team players, but also the Scotland captain, Rachel Corsie. She plays for Utah and they are doing a Utah Challenge Cup, and it's free to watch on Twitch here in the UK. And actually, for once, the games are being played in the morning in America, which means I don't have to stay up until like 4:00 in the morning where I usually do to try and watch the game. So it'll be like a little 6:00 PM thing, anyway, it starts this weekend. Support sports and teams, get some live sports on the go.

[00:21:10.640] - Alys Mumford

Amazing. I am not a sports person and I have missed sports a lot.

[00:21:14.660] - Amanda Stanley

Will we heard about, the boating.

[00:21:19.730] - Alys Mumford

What happens before we press record stays before we press record, I definitely did not watch the 2012 boat race this weekend.

[00:21:29.030] - Alys Mumford

Marsha, have you got anything you can recommend to our listener?

[00:21:32.210] - Alys Mumford (VO)

Marsha's recommendation was for a TED talk by the wonderful Marilyn Waring. We'll put the links in the show notes.

[00:21:37.040] - Alys Mumford

Amazing, thank you. I'm pretty sure we've mentioned that on the podcast previously. So if you are a

regular listener, you have no excuse now not to go watch that documentary. Thanks for that Marsha. Emma, finally, have you got anything you can recommend for the next couple of weeks?

[00:21:49.520] - Emma Ritch

To go back to the TikTok teens and K-pop stans, I'm sure I'm not alone in finding it beyond enraging that the interests of teenage girls are assumed to be culturally irrelevant, stupid and bad. And I want to recommend two things that counter that narrative. Hannah Ewan's has written an excellent book called *Fan Girls*, which is a love letter to the expertise and community of fans and the *Learned Fangirl* website and Twitter account are both great sources of writing on fans, fandom and feminism.

[00:22:23.160] - Alys Mumford

Incredible, what a good recommendation. Yeah, there was a blog post about this ages ago about One Direction Stan, and I remember describing the blog post to lots of people before then just going "do you know what, I'll just send it to you to read". Really, really good point. And that's us, isn't it? Amanda, you want to close us out?

[00:22:40.610] - Amanda Stanley

Yeah. Thank you once again to Marsha Scott and to Emma Ritch and to you also Alys

[00:22:47.750] - Alys Mumford

Thanks, and to you, Amanda.

[00:22:49.040] - Amanda Stanley

This has been the briefing and we'll be back in a fortnight. Until then, stay safe.

[00:22:57.200]

Thanks for your patience with this episode. We hope it was worth the wait (unlike most EQIAs). Normal practice will resume soon.