

UN CEDAW – response to Call for Evidence

Sustrans Scotland's response to the Call for Evidence by Engender Scotland on UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Introduction

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle. We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute.

In replying to this call for evidence, Sustrans Scotland wishes to highlight a specific area of continued gender inequality, namely in transport planning, and the impact of this on the effectiveness of implementation of active travel policies.

Our response to the Call for Evidence is limited to questions 1 and 2

Question 1: What is the current status of the concerns identified by the UN CEDAW Committee in its last report on the UK? In other words, what are your outstanding concerns with women's rights in these areas (or any other areas) in Scotland?

For example:

- *Examples of areas where women's rights are not being realised and inequality persists*
- *Gender-disaggregated data that shows a difference between men's and women's experiences, especially where this relates to women from different protected groups*
- *Areas where inequality or breaches of rights have worsened over the past 5 years*

The Scottish Government has set ambitious targets for increase in walking and cycling in Scotland.

Although these ambitious targets are set for the population as a whole, there are no specific policy measures to bridge the gender gap in active travel.

More men cycle than women

In Scotland, 4% of men and 2% women cycle 1-2 times a week as a means of transport; and 5% of men and 2% of women cycle 1-2 times a week just for pleasure or to keep fit (Transport Scotland, 2015: cited in Cycling UK, 2017).

A bias towards male cycling is most evident on the National Cycle Network (NCN) where Sustrans Scotland's 2013 surveys found that 74% of cyclists on the network were male (Sustrans, 2015).

Taking Scotland's largest city as an example, data taken from the Glasgow Travel Behaviour survey (total respondents n=1,100 Glasgow residents) demonstrate that the most popular form of transport in Glasgow is walking but a slightly higher proportion of women walk (84%) than men in Glasgow (80%). Cycling is the least popular form of travel for women in

Glasgow, and men (16%) are three times as likely to cycle compared to women (5%). This is a substantial gap that suggests factors in addition to geography or environmental determinants that influence travel choices.

Women's Experiences of walking and cycling are different

Sustrans Scotland's recently published research on women's experiences of walking and cycling in Glasgow explored the reasons behind women's lower propensity to walk or cycle compared to men. The research combined a literature review, focus group research and an online survey.

Key barriers to women walking and cycling more include concerns about personal safety, and lack of consideration among planners of how women's travel patterns differ from men's (for example, greater trip-chaining amongst women). Please see Sustrans Scotland's report: Women's Experiences of Walking and Cycling in Glasgow

Lack of representation of women in senior decision making roles in transport means that women's travel patterns and experiences may not be taken into account.

In terms of senior positions within the public sector, transport has the lowest percentage representation of women with only 6.25% (Engender, 2017) of senior posts compared to other public bodies. Of Scotland's top 500 companies, only 13% of all board posts are held by women and over half (56%) of the firms have none at all. Just 4% of Chief Executive Officers are women (Social Value Lab, 2016).

Our research shows that there are differences in journey choices made that are closely associated with gender. As competing priorities and preferences exist for different genders, an inequality in genders employed at a high level in transport planning introduces the potential for structural discrimination, or planning that favours male patterns of travel.

The findings from our primary research and literature review would indicate that women's transport needs or distinct travel patterns are not factored into transport policy or planning in Scotland. It is our contention that the underrepresentation of women in senior decision-making roles in transport in Scotland may be one of many factors behind this.

The absence of evidence to show how women within the UK participate in the creation of transportation policy suggests that gender equality is low on the agenda for this topic.

At the same time, while little UK-based literature exists, Europe-wide research conducted over the past decade has shown that transportation as a sector is dominated by men. Most political committees and advisory boards have less than 15% female membership and none have equal representation (Transgen, 2007).

Hasson and Polevoy (2011) review the literature surrounding this issue and highlight Sweden as being the gold standard for gender equality in the transportation sector. In establishing the Gender Equality Council for Transport and IT in the 1990s, Sweden's national Government recognised the need for both men and women to influence the transport systems design, structure and administration. Further exploration of best practice for socially inclusive consultation processes is likely to be helpful to understand how this may be applied and incorporated into Scottish transport policy and planning processes.

Question 2: Thinking about the policy development process (i.e. from generating an idea to the coming into force of a Bill, strategy or programme) where has this not been aligned with the ambitions of CEDAW (e.g. not taken account of CEDAW)?

For example:

- *A sense of the extent to which CEDAW is considered during the policymaking process, with examples of where this has or hasn't happened*
- *A sense of the extent to which women's equality and rights are considered during the policymaking process, with examples of where this has or hasn't happened*

Scottish active travel policy is currently underpinned by three key documents: the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland, The National Walking Strategy and A Long Term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland 2030. This is complemented by policies at the local authority level such as Active Travel Plans and Cycling and Walking Strategies.

At both national and local levels, there is currently relatively little reference to issues of inclusion and diversity within transport policy and programmes. While equality impact assessments have been conducted as part of some local authorities' active travel plans, these have not necessarily resulted in meaningful attempts to address equality issues through the implementation of such plans.

As such there is significant scope to bring these policies in line with the varying needs and barriers to mobility faced by people of different gender, age, ethnicity, income and ability.

Response compiled by Claire Daly, Policy & Communications Manager, Sustrans Scotland.