

Covid-19: Gathering and using data to ensure that the response integrates women's equality and rights

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INTRODUCTION

Engender is a feminist policy and advocacy organisation working to realise women's economic, social and political rights and gender equality in Scotland. We do this work because men and women, boys and girls, are still living different lives in 21st century Scotland, and have different access to resources, to power, and to safety.

Covid-19 has exposed many of these gendered differences in men's and women's lives, including the value that we place on the unpaid care and paid care work that is predominantly done by women¹ and women's exposure to the risk of men's violence.² Engender has described critical issues for the initial phase of Covid-19 response in our first briefing on Women and Covid-19.³ These include gender mainstreaming, women's health and healthcare,⁴ personal protective equipment⁵ and its distribution,⁶ childcare, social security, provision of social care,⁷ financial inequality and insecurity,⁸ mental health, and men's violence against women.

¹ Folbre, Nancy (2020) "The Care Theory of Value." Care Talk. <https://blogs.umass.edu/folbre/2020/04/08/the-care-theory-of-value/>.

² Gelder, N. van, A. Peterman, A. Potts, M. O'Donnell, K. Thompson, N. Shah, and S. Oertelt-Prigione (2020) "COVID-19: Reducing the Risk of Infection Might Increase the Risk of Intimate Partner Violence." *EClinicalMedicine*

³ Engender (2020) Women and Covid-19. <https://www.engender.org.uk/content/publications/Engender-Briefing---Women-and-COVID-19.pdf>.

⁴ Papp, Susan, and March Hersh (2020) "A Gender Lens for COVID-19 by Susan Papp & Marcy Hersh - Project Syndicate." Project Syndicate. Project Syndicate. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/covid19-response-requires-a-gender-lens-by-susan-papp-and-marcy-hersh-2020-03>.

⁵ TUC (2017). Personal Protective Equipment and Women. Trades Union Congress. <https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/PPEandwomenguidance.pdf>.

⁶ Oppenheim, Maya (2020) "Female NHS Staff at Risk Due to Not Being Able to 'Access Protective Gear Correctly Sized for Women.'" *The Independent*, April 21. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-ppe-women-wrong-size-doctors-nurses-uk-cases-a9476766.html>.

⁷ Women's Budget Group (2020) "Social Care and Covid-19." <https://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Covid-and-social-care-briefing-FINAL-1.pdf>.

⁸ Close the Gap (2020). "Coronavirus Brings New Focus to Women's Continued Workplace Inequality." Close the Gap. <https://www.closesthegap.org.uk/news/blog/coronavirus-brings-new-focus-to-womens-continued-inequality-/>.

Covid-19 demands an emergency response. Evidence tells us that in working at pace, governments, agencies, and other public bodies can overlook critical differences between men’s and women’s lives. In the Ebola, Zika, and SARS pandemics, this led to significantly worse outcomes for women and girls.⁹ In order to rapidly develop public policy and legislation that works for women, it is imperative that public bodies and agencies, including Scottish Government, analyse and use evidence that captures women’s experiences. During Engender’s 27-year history, we have worked to advocate for better quality gender-sensitive sex-disaggregated data. We were formed with the purpose of ensuring that the detail of women’s lives was visible, counted, and understood in policymaking processes.¹⁰

In this short briefing we set out the key features of gender-sensitive sex-disaggregated data and what we think this should mean for the data gathered and analysed by Scottish Government and other public bodies at this critical time. Annex A of this briefing includes a glossary of terms.

1. WHAT IS GENDER-SENSITIVE SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA?

Gender-sensitive sex-disaggregated data is broken down by sex, so that it is possible to compare and contrast differences between men and women. It is not just counting women and men, though, and comprises statistics and other information that adequately reflect gendered differences and inequalities in the situation of women and men.

Gendered stereotypes, roles, and norms permeate every aspect of life, but some of the differences visible in Scotland include: the clustering of women into undervalued, underpaid, and precarious work in different occupational sectors and industries from men;¹¹ women’s underrepresentation in senior, decision-making positions in Scotland, including as political representatives;¹² women’s experience of men’s

⁹ See Davies, Sara E., and Belinda Bennett (2016) “A Gendered Human Rights Analysis of Ebola and Zika: Locating Gender in Global Health Emergencies.” *International Affairs* 92 (5): 1041–1060. doi:10.1111/1468-2346.12704.; Smith, Julia (2019) “Overcoming the ‘Tyranny of the Urgent’: Integrating Gender into Disease Outbreak Preparedness and Response.” *Gender & Development* 27 (2). Routledge: 355–369. doi:10.1080/13552074.2019.1615288.

¹⁰ Engender. “You’ll Have Had Yer Feminism? Episode 1.” On the Engender. <https://www.engender.org.uk/content/on-the-engender-podcast/>.

¹¹ Close the Gap (2019) “Close the Gap Working Paper 20: Gender Pay Gap Statistics.” Close the Gap.

¹² Engender (2020) *Sex and Power in Scotland 2020*.

<https://www.engender.org.uk/content/publications/Engenders-Sex-and-Power-2020.pdf>.

violence;¹³ and women's overrepresentation as providers of unpaid care to children, disabled people, and older people. Black and minority ethnic, disabled, lesbian, bisexual, trans, older, younger, pregnant and rural women, women of different faiths, women with insecure immigration status, and unpaid carers all have specific experiences as a result of overlapping discrimination and inequality.

Gender-sensitive analysis and use of evidence must pay attention to these gendered differences in lived experience. For example, some transport statistics are produced by asking transport users to complete travel diaries that ask about, and then report on, the longest part of a multi-stage journey. Sex-disaggregated data would be produced by asking these transport users for their sex and then publishing the results. Gender-sensitive data would take account of the way that women frequently chain trips together on different forms of transport as a result of their caring roles.¹⁴ This might, for example, see more women than men drop small children at nursery or school on the way to work, or women breaking trips home from work to go to the supermarket. Gender-sensitive transport data can help us to interrogate how the design of transport systems affects the gender pay gap.¹⁵

The critical methodology for ensuring that states, agencies, and public bodies integrate consideration of the differences between men's and women's lives into policymaking is called gender mainstreaming. In 1995, following the UN's Fourth World Council on Women, the UK and many other UN member states signed up to the Beijing Platform for Action on twelve critical areas of concern to women's equality and rights.¹⁶ This included a firm commitment to gender mainstreaming and to developing associated programmes of data collection and analysis.¹⁷

¹³ Scottish Government, and COSLA (2018) "Equally Safe: Scotland's Strategy for Preventing and Eradicating Violence against Women and Girls." Scottish Government.

¹⁴ Department for Transport (2015) National Travel Survey: Trip Chaining: 2002-2014. Department for Transport.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509447/nts-trip-chaining.pdf.

¹⁵ Valiquette, François, and Catherine Morency (2010) "Trip Chaining and Its Impact on Travel Behaviour." In , 21. Lisbon, Portugal.; Massey, Doreen. 1994. Space, Place and Gender. Cambridge: Polity.; Scottish Government (2019) "A Fairer Scotland for Women: Gender Pay Gap Action Plan." <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-women-gender-pay-gap-action-plan/>.

¹⁶ The European Institute of Gender Equality tracks work within EU member states and the Commission to enable work against the 113 Beijing Platform for Action indicators. This is available here:

<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/browse/bpfa>

¹⁷ United Nations, and World Conference on Women (1995) "Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Fourth World Conference on Women." In UN Women. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/01/beijing-declaration>.

A significant amount of work has been done by supranational institutions since 1995 to support states to develop gender statistics. This has led to the production of tools for statisticians and analysts by institutions such as OECD,¹⁸ UN Statistics Division,¹⁹ and the World Bank.²⁰

1.1 Features of gender-sensitive sex-disaggregated data

Since 1995, and the rise of gender mainstreaming, consensus has also developed about the critical features of gender-sensitive sex disaggregated data. These features, lightly composited here from lists produced by the UN Gender Statistics Manual²¹ and the European Institute of Gender Equality Gender Statistics Database²² are:

- a) Data are collected and presented by sex as a primary and overall classification;
- b) Data reflect gender issues, such as childcare spending and provision;
- c) Data are based on concepts and definitions that adequately reflect the diversity of women and men and capture all aspects of their lives; and
- d) Data collection methods take into account stereotypes and social and cultural factors that may induce gender bias in the data.

1.2 Requirement to gather and use gender-sensitive sex-disaggregated data

Engender would argue that the principal reason to gather and use the data about men's and women's lives that we list below is to design and deliver the most effective responses to Covid-19.

However, it may be helpful to know that gathering and using gender-sensitive sex disaggregated data is a requirement placed on Scottish public bodies by both domestic law,²³ in the form of the public sector equality duty in the Equality Act

¹⁸ OECD (2019) "Gender-Disaggregated Data - Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development." Accessed July 19. <http://www.oecd.org/gender/governance/toolkit/government/assessment-of-gender-impact/disaggregated-data/>.

¹⁹ UN Statistic Division (2020) "UN Gender Statistics Manual." Accessed February 17. <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/genderstatmanual/Default.aspx>.

²⁰ World Bank. 2020. "Gender Data Portal." Accessed February 17. <https://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/>.

²¹ UN Statistics Division (2020) "UN Gender Statistics Manual." Accessed February 17. <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/genderstatmanual/Default.aspx>.

²² European Institute of Gender Equality (2020) "Gender Statistics Database." European Institute for Gender Equality. Accessed February 17. <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs>.

²³ EHRC Scotland (2016) "Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty: Scotland." https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/redraft_of_psd_tech_guidance_-_v6sc.pdf.

2010, and international obligations, in the form of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.²⁴

2. WHAT DATA DO WE NEED IN ORDER TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO COVID-19?

Scotland will be responding to the effects of Covid-19 at least for the next several years. There are likely to be medium-run impacts on women's health, wellbeing, labour market experience, relationships, and caring roles. Understanding these impacts and designing policy to mitigate harms and advance women's equality and rights means gathering, analysing, and using gender-sensitive evidence. It is also important to use gender-sensitive sex-disaggregated data to establish a baseline against which the short-term and long-term impact of the policy response to Covid-19 can be monitored and evaluated.

If we take each of the features above and apply them to Covid-19 then we can begin to generate a list of the data that should be collected and used. We have created a worked example using the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme,²⁵ which is a UK Government programme designed to prevent redundancies. This example is not exhaustive and focuses on a relatively small number of relevant issues to illustrate a gender-sensitive approach.

2.1 Gender-sensitive data feature one:

Data are collected and presented by sex as a primary and overall classification

All data from statistical and non-statistical sources should be gathered using an approach that captures the sex of individuals. The data should then be presented in such a way as to enable meaningful comparison between men and women. In producing data about specific programmes such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, this means being able to describe how many women and men are recipients.

²⁴ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2019) "Concluding Observations on the Eighth Periodic Report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland." United Nations. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolNo=CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/8&Lang=En.

²⁵ "Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme." (2020) GOV.UK. Accessed April 22. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>.

It should be possible to find out:

- How many men and women are benefiting from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme by having 80% of their wages paid to their employer;
- How many men and women-owned businesses are benefiting differently from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, by having 80% of their wage bill met; and
- What is the value of the benefits to men and women-owned businesses of having 80% of their wage bill met.

2.2 Gender-sensitive data feature two:

Data reflect gender issues, such as childcare spending and provision

Reflecting gender issues requires that all data from statistical and non-statistical sources should integrate considerations that are particularly salient for either women or men, as a result of gendered roles, for example women's greater responsibility for unpaid care. In considering the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, this would involve reflecting on how the scheme is being used to sustain childcare and care services in Scotland, and protect their staff from redundancy. Not only are women more likely to work in these sectors, but their service provision has a direct impact on whether or not women can participate in paid work, because they replace women's unpaid labour.

This means it should be possible to find out:

- How many childcare and care businesses, including nurseries, are benefiting from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme by having 80% of their wages paid to them as employers;
- What proportion of different types of childcare businesses and care businesses (private or third sector, for example) are benefiting from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme by having 80% of their wages paid to them as employers; and
- Which occupational and industrial sectors are benefiting from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme by having 80% of their wages paid to employers, as a proportion of businesses within those sectors, and as a proportion of all businesses.

2.3 Gender-sensitive data feature three:

Data are based on concepts and definitions that adequately reflect the diversity of women and men and capture all aspects of their lives

Data must be produced in a way that pays attention to the differences between women and men's lives. In thinking about the Coronavirus Job Protection Scheme this might take account of the fact that women spend less time than men on paid work, spend more time on household management, housework and domestic labour, and spend more time on childcare.²⁶ Women in opposite-sex headed households are also likely to earn less than men.²⁷ Women may therefore be more likely to seek or accept furlough as a result of caring responsibilities, which may in turn entrench gendered patterns of who provides this care.

This means it should be possible to find out:

- How many women and men are being furloughed as a result of their caring responsibilities (which is a criterion within the programme); and
- The mean and median value of the 80% of the wages that are being respectively paid to women and men who are being furloughed as a result of their caring responsibilities.

2.4 Gender-sensitive data feature four:

Data collection methods take into account stereotypes and social and cultural factors that may induce gender bias in the data

The instruments that are used to gather statistical data, and the mechanisms used to gather administrative data should be live to women's and men's lived experience and specifically to stereotypes and gendered social factors. In the context of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme this might include considerations such as women and men's attitudes to pay differentials between couples,²⁸ attitudes to women working in the formal labour market while there are young children within the

²⁶ Scottish Government (2019) Centre for Time Use Research Time Use Survey 2014-15: Results for Scotland. Scottish Government. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/centre-time-use-research-time-use-survey-2014-15-results-scotland/pages/5/>.

²⁷ Close the Gap (2019) "Close the Gap Working Paper 20: Gender Pay Gap Statistics." Close the Gap.

²⁸ Byrne, Alyson, and Julian Barling (2017) "When She Brings Home the Job Status: Wives' Job Status, Status Leakage, and Marital Instability." *Organization Science* 28 (2). INFORMS: 177-192. doi:10.1287/orsc.2017.1120.

household,²⁹ and questions about the inaccuracy of self-reported data about household and reproductive labour.³⁰

This means that it should be possible to find out:

- How much childcare, care, and domestic labour women and men are doing during Covid-19;
- Whether men and women perceive themselves to be doing a fair share of childcare, care, and domestic labour women during Covid-19;
- How additional childcare, care, and domestic labour is impacting on men and women's paid work, relationships, leisure time, health and wellbeing.

This will enable analysis on the impact of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme on women's equality and rights. This means it should be possible to put data about the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in the context of:

- Scottish Government's gender pay gap action plan;³¹ and
- Gendered patterns of enterprise and business ownership in Scotland.³²

3 ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Scotland will be responding to the effects of Covid-19 at least for the next several years. In addition to gathering, analysing, and using the types of data that we describe in section 3, we have some specific recommendations to make to public bodies.

Public bodies and agencies, including the Scottish Government hubs established to respond to Covid-19, should:

²⁹ British Social Attitudes. "British Social Attitudes 35 - Gender," 31.

³⁰ "BSA30: Gender Roles." (2020) NatCen. Accessed April 22. <https://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/latest-report/british-social-attitudes-30/gender-roles/attitudes-have-changed-but-have-behaviours.aspx>.

³¹ Scottish Government (2019) "A Fairer Scotland for Women: Gender Pay Gap Action Plan." <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-women-gender-pay-gap-action-plan/>.

³² Women's Enterprise Scotland (2020) Women's Enterprise in Scotland and COVID-19. Women's Enterprise Scotland.

- Consider new survey questions for existing National Statistics as well as publishing sex-disaggregated data where this is already gathered, such as in the Faster Indicator Releases.³³
- Ensure that data collection that is pan-GB or pan-UK has a sample size sufficient to have sex-disaggregated Scotland-only data.
- Develop or bring in gender competence to those functions responsible for designing surveys and other data collection tools, recognising that gender analysis requires specific knowledge and skills;
- Ensure data commissioners and users within policy teams have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the available data to perform further analysis for policymaking;
- Integrate gender-sensitive data analysis with gender mainstreaming approaches to policymaking and programme and service design; and
- Ensure that modelling is gender-sensitive, taking account of the fact that there are complex non-linear relationships between inputs and outputs and that gender analysis will be critical in understanding how modelling relates to women’s and men’s lives.³⁴

We explore some of these issues further in a recent submission to the Chief Statistician’s working group on sex and gender,³⁵ which is available at our website.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact: Emma Ritch, Executive Director, Engender

Email: emma.ritch@engender.org.uk

ABOUT US

Engender is a membership organisation working on feminist agendas in Scotland and Europe, to increase women’s power and influence and to make visible the impact of sexism on women, men and society. We provide support to individuals, organisations and institutions who seek to achieve gender equality and justice.

³³ “Coronavirus and the Social Impacts on Great Britain Data - Office for National Statistics.” (2020) Accessed April 24.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/datasets/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritaindata>.

³⁴ Aldred, Rachel (2014) “What’s Wrong with Modelling the ‘Worst Case.’” Rachel Aldred.

<http://rachelaldred.org/writing/consultations/whats-wrong-with-modelling-the-worst-case/>.

³⁵ Engender (2020) “Sex/Gender: Gathering and Using Data to Advance Women’s Equality and Rights in Scotland.”

ANNEX A: GLOSSARY

To avoid confusion, we offer the following working definitions within the scope of this briefing.

Sex

Whether you are a man or a woman.³⁶

Gender

Gender is a socially constructed set of norms, roles, and relationships that is constituted in our social mores, laws, processes and policies. It is time and culture specific and functions as a hierarchy.

Gender-sensitive data

Statistics and other information that adequately reflect gendered differences and inequalities in the situation of women and men in all areas of life.

Sex-disaggregated data

Data that is broken down by sex, so that it is possible to compare and contrast differences between men and women.

Gender-disaggregated data

This is a widely used, if literally inaccurate, synonym for data that is both gender-sensitive and sex-disaggregated.

(To) gender (e.g. policy or data)

To make gender-sensitive, i.e. to ensure gendered differences and inequalities in the situation of women and men are reflected.

Gender-competence

This refers to the skills, knowledge and analytical capability to develop statistics, data, policy, or programmes that are well-gendered; that take account of the socially constructed difference between men's and women's lives and experiences.

Gender mainstreaming

This involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of statistics, policies, regulatory measures and spending programmes, with a view to promoting equality between women and men, and combating discrimination.

³⁶ In terms of equality data collection, this would also include an 'other' option, in which individuals may describe themselves as e.g. non-binary.