



Echuca Regional Health

# Echuca Regional Health Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025



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## Message from the Chief Executive and Chairperson

We are pleased to present Echuca Regional Health's first Gender Equality Action Plan which represents an organisational commitment to promoting gender equality in the workplace.

Echuca Regional Health (ERH) is an outer regional health service that services the Shires of Campaspe and the cross-border Murray River Council, with a catchment population of approximately 50,000. The Health Service, in its 140th year, has an operating budget of \$98 million and a staff base of 1080 representing 625 equivalent full time staff. Echuca Regional Health provides a comprehensive range of acute, medical, surgical and sub-acute services plus residential aged care and a broad range of community healthcare services.

We are committed to providing a culturally safe environment for all our staff, volunteers and community and promote respect, diversity and inclusion in all areas of the service. Our health service has the power to influence the structures, norms and practices that influence gender equality and the Gender Equality Action Plan offers the strategic and deliberate approach required to do this work.

The plan has been developed in consultation with our people and will provide the blueprint for our actions and priorities over the next four years. The plan aligns with the Echuca Regional Health values and will enable all staff and volunteers to work in a safe and equal workplace, have access to equal resources and opportunities and be treated with dignity, respect and fairness.

**ROBYN LINDSAY**

*Chief Executive*  
Echuca Regional Health  
May 2022

**LARNA TARRANT**

*Board Chairperson*  
Echuca Regional Health  
May 2022

## Introduction - What is Gender Equality?

*The Gender Equality Act 2020 defines gender equality as 'equality of rights, opportunities, responsibilities and outcomes between persons of different genders.'*

Gender equality prevents violence against women and girls. It's essential for economic prosperity. Societies that value women and men as equal are safer and healthier. Gender equality is a human right. Everyone benefits from gender equality.

The Victorian Government recognises that gender inequality is even more of a problem when it intersects with other forms of inequality and disadvantage, such as Aboriginality, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, rurality and socio-economic status. There is no one size fits all approach to addressing it.

### What is intersectionality?

Gender inequality doesn't impact everyone in the same way.

The experience of gender inequality can be particularly compounded by the way gender-based discrimination intersects with other forms of diversity such as: disability, cultural diversity, Aboriginality, gender diversity and sexual orientation, this is intersectionality.

We need to understand the full complexity of a person's barriers or potential and that these can make it harder for them to bring their whole selves to work.

Intersectionality describes how different parts of a person's identity or circumstances - such as age, race, culture, disability, gender, location or religion - intersect and combine to shape people's life experiences, including discrimination.

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#### References:

Victorian Legislation Gender Equality Act 2020 ([legislation.vic.gov.au](http://legislation.vic.gov.au))

Kimberle Crenshaw, 'Dermarginalizing he intersection of race and sex' (1989) University of Chicago Legal Forum 139.



## Objective

Echuca Regional Health's objective of this plan is to support an inclusive, safe, responsive and accountable service for our community and staff by the promotion of gender equality in the workplace, taking into consideration all gender equality principles under the Act, including how intersectional gender inequality has been considered.

## Our Vision

Echuca Regional Health will work to redress the known causes and contributors to violence against women, by working to create safe, respectful and equitable workplaces, communities and environments. We commit to achieving gender equality by addressing the social, economic and political power inequalities between women and men within our organisation, as well as among the communities we serve and work within.

## Strategic Alignment

The Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) 2021-2025 aligns with Echuca Regional Health's Strategic priority of talented, capable and engaged workforce, within the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan.

## Leadership and Resourcing

Echuca Regional Health's Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025 (GEAP) aims to promote gender equality within our workforce and improve outcomes for people of all genders. Under the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) Echuca Regional Health is required to ensure adequate resources are invested to implement its GEAP. Properly resourcing the implementation of the GEAP is critical to delivering on our commitments to staff and meeting our obligation under the Act to make reasonable and material progress towards workplace gender equality.


The delivery of this plan will be overseen by the Executive Director of People and Culture with close oversight from the CEO and resourced through the People and Culture team.

Several actions identified in the GEAP include participation of employees from across the business in activities to raise awareness, knowledge, and skill development.

Echuca Regional Health has allocated an annual budget and resources to support delivery of the GEAP actions that have a cost. A significant number of actions within the GEAP will be delivered by our People and Culture team. If required, we will redirect budget to meet commitments set out in this GEAP.

Gender equality is included as a health promotion priority within Echuca Regional Health's prevention health promotion plan with a dedicated action to the implementation of the Gender Equality Act under that priority.

The Population Health team at ERH have dedicated EFT to support the implementation of the GEAP.





## Our Case For Change

Gender equality is an important moral and economic goal. It is well known that inclusive organisations have improved performance and innovation, better customer service, more satisfied and secure staff, and less harassment and discrimination.

A gender-equitable workplace is one in which all people are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities, regardless of gender, and are equally valued and rewarded. To realise this aspiration and its benefits, the following enablers are key:

- Building and maintaining gender-balanced teams and an overall workforce
- Developing and fostering a culture which is consistently inclusive of all genders
- Flexible mindsets and work practices

Echuca Regional Health is committed to improving the diversity, equity and inclusion practices that are informed by our workplace gender audit data and aligned to the gender equality principles of the Act.

Echuca Regional Health is the largest employer in the Shire of Campaspe. As a workplace we recognise that we are in a position to redress the gender inequities within our organisation and influence the culture within our workplace.

## Key Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
Gender Equality	Is defined as the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, trans and gender-diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men, trans and gender diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on their gender.
Gender Equity	Entails the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities on the basis of gender. The concept recognises that people may have different needs and power related to their gender and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances.
Sex	Refers to a person's biological characteristics. A person's sex is usually described as being male or female. Some people may not be exclusively male or female, which is referred to as intersex. Some people identify as neither male nor female.
Gender	Refers to the way in which a person identifies or expresses their masculine or feminine characteristics. Gender is generally understood as a social and cultural construction. A person's gender identity or gender expression is not always exclusively male or female and may or may not correspond to their sex.
Trans and Gender Diverse	Is an umbrella term used to describe all those whose gender identity does not match their biological sex.

## Echuca Regional Health's History of Gender Equality Action

Echuca Regional Health's catchment prevention health promotion plan has included gender equity for the prevention of family violence as a priority since 2017.

The Population Health team in partnership with key agencies, conducted a co-design process to understand community members lived experiences of gender equality and inequality, their beliefs, values and attitudes and their hopes for a more equitable society in Campaspe. The gender equity co-design process informed and designed the strategies of the 2017-21 and the 2021-25 catchment prevention health promotion plans.

Echuca Regional Health has been an active member on the Campaspe Family Violence Action Group since its formation in 2017. Gender equality and the prevention of family violence remains a key strategic priority for this group and strategies have been implemented in partnership through prevention sub-committee

Successful strategies implemented within the catchment prevention health promotion plan and Campaspe Family Violence Action Group include:

- 16 Days of Activism Campaigns including portraits for respect and hashtags for change
- Echuca Regional Health has led the development of the Campaspe early years gender equality plan and implementation of the Darebin gender equity in the early years resource pilot at 3 early years sites in Campaspe.
- Echuca Regional Health has previously undertaken a workplace gender equity audit/self assessment and development of an action plan utilising the workplace equality and respect resources of Our WATCH.
- Promotion of and participation in Gender Equality and Respect Training, including two staff trained as trainers in this training with Women's Health Loddon Mallee.
- Echuca Regional Health has developed, led or participated in many events, social marketing and promotion of gender equality since 2017.
- Echuca Regional Health, in partnership developed two digital stories/animated clips to portray messages around gender equality and healthy masculinity which were true reflections of local examples heard in the co-design research.





## Baseline Gender Audit Analysis

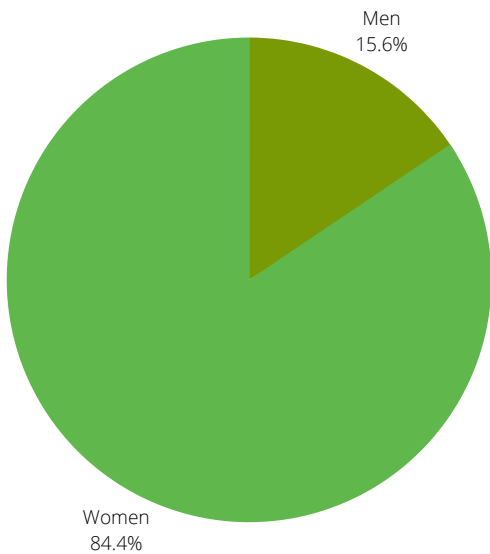
Echuca Regional Health's Gender Equality Action Plan, is informed by the audit that was undertaken in 2021 to provide insight into how we are performing in regard to the systems, structures, policies and practices that promote workplace gender equality. The initial audit provides a baseline that Echuca Regional Health has used to identify areas for improvement.

There are two separate but complementary data sets: workforce data (held in internal HR/Payroll systems) and employee experience data (People Matter Survey collected annually) that will be used to inform decision making.

Including both the workforce data and People Matter Survey data is critical to provide a full picture of the state and nature of gender inequality within Echuca Regional Health.

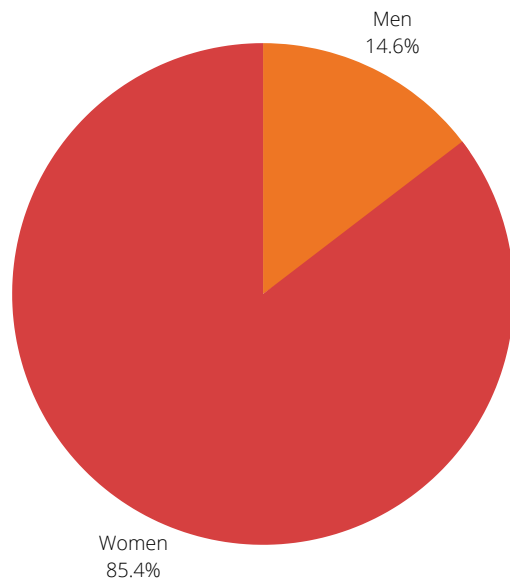
The following is an overview of the baseline audit analysis as at 30 June 2021.

**Figure 1. Overall gender composition of the workforce**



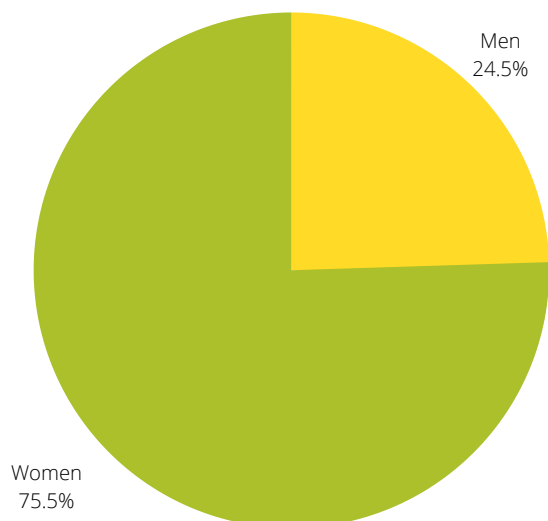
Echuca Regional Health has a largely female dominated workforce which is typical of a health service. Of 842 staff, 84.4% are women.

**Figure 2. Part-time/Casual representation**



785 staff work in a part time or casual capacity, close to 85% of these are women.

**Figure 3. Gender composition of Senior Leadership**



The classification framework used a methodology which consisted of a measurement of reporting level to the CEO. The levels are defined as follows, 0 represents the CEO and Board, 1 the Executive team, 2 Directors and General Managers, and so on up to 12. This assisted Echuca Regional Health with the analysis of data within the gender equality framework.

The gender mix of Echuca Regional Health Executives supports the representation of women at 71%, and the gender composition of the Board is 50/50. However, when analysing women who form part of senior leadership women represent 75% of the workforce.

## Gender Pay Gap

To assist with the analysis of any overall organisational gender pay gaps, the methodology provided by the Commission used the average (mean and median) annualised full-time equivalent salary gap between genders (for both annualised base salary and total remuneration) by classification and employment basis, and this was applied across Echuca Regional Health using the last pay period prior to 30 June 2021.

The gender pay gap is the difference between women's or people of self-described gender's and men's average full-time base annualised salary earnings, expressed as a percentage of men's earnings. For the purposes of the workplace gender audit, analysis is focused on the pay gap for each classification. The formula for the gender pay gap (percentage) is expressed as follows:

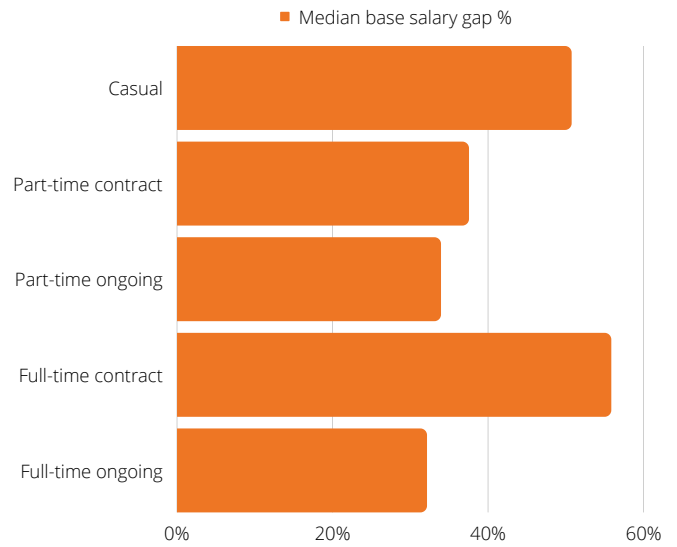
$$\left( \frac{\text{Salary received by men} - \text{Salary received by women}}{\text{Salary received by men}} \right) \times 100$$

$$\left( \frac{\text{Salary received by men} - \text{Salary received by people of self-described gender}}{\text{Salary received by men}} \right) \times 100$$

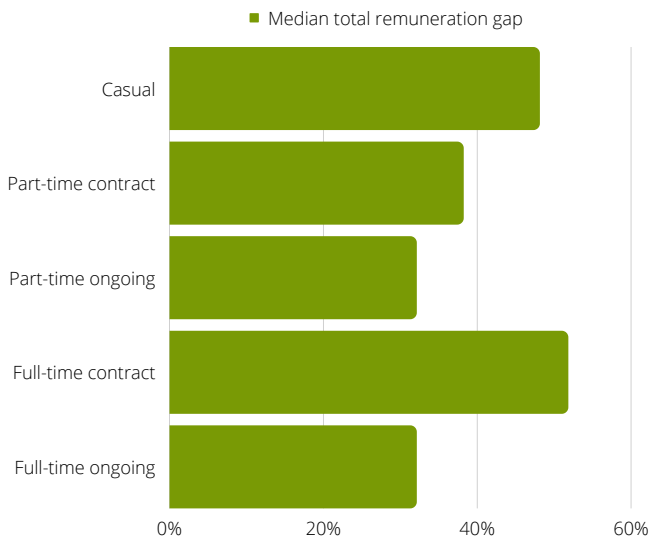
A gender pay gap that is positive (i.e. >0) means that the average annualised full-time salaries of men are greater than women or people of self-described gender, while a gender pay gap that is negative (i.e. <0) means that the average annualised full time salaries of women or people of self-described gender are greater than men.

The median base salary gap was predominantly the highest for women working under a full-time contract at 55.8% (see Figure 4). Overall the average pay gap across all pay types was 37.2%.

**Figure 4. Median base salary gap**



**Figure 5. Median total remuneration gap**



Total remuneration was also analysed, with the median total remuneration gap the highest for women in full-time contract positions at 51.8% (see Figure 5). We see here a reduction in the overall average total remuneration gap which sits at 34.5%.

## Sexual Harassment

Two incidents of sexual harassment were reported from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021. Both of those complaints came from women.

Despite the reported number above, the percentage of survey respondents who answered in the affirmative to experiencing some form of sexual harassment was 7%.

Of the staff that completed the People Matter Survey in 2021:

- 70% overall believe Echuca Regional Health encourages respectful workplace behaviours
- 60% overall believe Echuca Regional Health takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination
- 49% overall feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work

## Recruitment and Promotion


2021 People Matter Survey insights relating to recruitment and promotion at Echuca Regional Health include:

- 81% overall believe gender is not a barrier to success in the organisation
- 74% overall believe being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander is not a barrier to success in the organisation
- 78% overall believe cultural background is not a barrier to success in the organisation
- 81% overall believe sexual orientation is not a barrier to success in the organisation
- 63% overall believe disability is not a barrier to success in the organisation
- 71% overall believe age is not a barrier to success in the organisation
- 44% overall believe Echuca Regional Health makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions, based on merit
- 40% overall feel they have an equal chance at promotion at Echuca Regional Health

## Leave and Flexibility

At the time of submission Echuca Regional Health was unable to obtain the data relating to availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to family violence leave, flexible working arrangements and working arrangements supporting workers with family or caring responsibilities.

Of the staff that completed the 2021 People Matter Survey:

- 69% overall believe Echuca Regional Health would support them if they needed to take family violence leave
  - 53% overall are confident that if they requested a flexible work arrangement, it would be given due consideration
  - 62% overall believes Echuca Regional Health supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender
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## Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO)

ANZSCO is a skill-based classification used to classify all occupations and jobs in the Australian and New Zealand labour markets. It is used in Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Stats NZ censuses and surveys where occupation data is collected and is also used to measure and understand labour markets.

The structure of ANZSCO has five hierarchical levels – major group, sub-major group, minor group, unit group and occupation. The complete listing of these groups can be found on the ABS website Browse Classification, Australian Bureau of Statistics ([abs.gov.au](http://abs.gov.au)). Major Groups are the broadest level of ANZSCO denoted by 1-digit codes, and are formed using a combination of skill level and skill specialisation to create groups which are meaningful and useful for most purposes. There are 8 Major Groups in ANZSCO.

The Echuca Regional Health workforce consists of the following ANZSCO occupational groups within the 8 Major Groups (see Figure 6) broken down by gender composition.

**Figure 6. Gender composition of staff by occupation per ANZSCO codes as at 30 June 2021**

ANZSCO major Groups	Women	Men
1. Managers	5	5
2. Professionals	413	70
3. Technicians and trades workers	20	10
4. Community and personal service workers	142	11
5. Clerical and administrative workers	85	14
6. Sales Workers	-	-
7. Machinery operators and drivers	4	3
8. Labourers	46	22
<b>Totals</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>135</b>

## Consultation and Engagement

This plan has been developed in consultation with internal and external stakeholders to ensure the actions included were built on the experiences and aspirations of our people and community needs.

Echuca Regional Health formed a Gender Equality working group in March 2021. The group was made up of representatives across all divisions of the organisations and focused on the implementation of the Act and monitoring the ongoing requirements.

Presentations to internal stakeholders have been conducted and briefing and updates in staff newsletters, team meetings and huddles has occurred discussing the Gender Equality Act 2020 implementation and timelines for reporting.

The following stakeholders were engaged to enable the development of the plan:

- Internal Subject Matter Experts who own processes relating to:
  - Workforce reporting and analysis
  - Learning and Development/Career Development
  - Talent Acquisition
  - Remuneration
- Health Care That Counts and Staff Health and Wellbeing Committees
- Unions (including AMA, ANMF, HACSU, HWU, MSAV, and VAHPA)
- Women's Health Loddon Mallee
- Echuca Regional Health Executive
- Echuca Regional Health Health Board

Employees at all levels across the organisation, including through to the Board have had the opportunity to be involved in the development of this Action Plan and to understand the commitment it engenders for all who work with Echuca Regional Health.

The Board has provided full support for the actions outlined in the plan, including a commitment to the oversight of the implementation of the plan through regular reporting.

Consultation themes have added to the rich insights gained from the audit findings which provides the organisation a holistic understanding of the state and experiences of gender equality and the opportunities that exist to address this important priority.

Echuca Regional Health remains an active and contributing member of the Campaspe Family Violence Action Group, Victorian Health Organisation Gender Equality Network and a Gender Equality Act champions of change network meeting with Women's Health Loddon Mallee.

Objective	Action	Executive Sponsor	Timeframe	Measures of success
To understand and improve gender composition across the workforce	Analyse and respond to data where gender imbalances exist	EDPC	June 23	Actions are identified following the analysis
	Develop a framework for succession planning and talent identification to support equitable career development	EDPC	June 23	Succession planning framework is developed with gender equity a driving principle
	Review existing policies to ensure adequate consideration of gender and intersectionality	EDPC	Dec 22	Policy review is completed and amendments made based on gender and intersectionality
Objective	Action	Executive Sponsor	Timeframe	Evaluation Method
To improve diversity across our organisational representation	Track and maintain gender representation within organisational committees.	EDPC	June 23	Gender specific representation is clear with future targets developed responding to gender equity at ERH
	Investigate appropriateness of 40/40/20 principle in regard to available workforce	EDPC	June 23	Executive provided with a recommendation and has been actioned accordingly
Objective	Action	Executive Sponsor	Timeframe	Evaluation Method
Our practices and policies	Conduct gender pay gap analysis to identify specific issues, root causes and remediation strategies	EDPC	Dec 22	Gender pay gaps have been identified and an action plan developed to rectify issues

Objective	Action	Executive Sponsor	Timeframe	Evaluation Method
Foster a culture of reporting and develop understanding	Conduct analysis of complaints to determine relative actions	EDPC	Dec 22	Analysis is completed and available to Executive
	Evaluate reporting methods to ensure alternate ways to report other than VHIMS due to confidentiality	EDPC	Feb 23	Evaluation is completed with recommendations provided and actioned for improvements
	Consider and provide recommendation in regards to conducting sexual harassment awareness training across the workforce	EDPC	Feb 23	Recommendation provided to Executive and actioned accordingly
Objective	Action	Executive Sponsor	Timeframe	Evaluation Method
Process and systems aligned to promoting and attracting diverse candidates	Review recruitment process and language to remove accidental bias, stereotyping and barriers	EDPC	June 23	Increase in diverse range of applicants
	Develop training for managers and <b>HRBP's to build knowledge and awareness of gender and intersectionality issues/risks/benefits</b>	EDPC	June 23	Training developed and conducted with observed improvement of understanding during from leaders
	Develop specific recruitment marketing plan to promote gender equality initiatives and benefits of working for ERH generally	EDPC/CEO	June 23	Marketing plan implemented with proven increase in pool of applicants



	Develop reporting mechanism to monitor gender specific data during recruitment and promotion stage	EDPC/EDFC S	Dec 24	Results included in quarterly HR dashboard provided to Executive and Board
Objective	Action	Executive Sponsor	Timeframe	Evaluation Method
Systems geared to enable gender specific flexibility	Survey staff to gauge current utilisation, barriers, suitability and improvement suggestions	EDPC	Feb 23	Survey complete with outcomes shared and action plan developed Annual PM Survey
	Implement changes/adaptions following survey results against business requirements	EDPC	June 23	Action plan developed with improved uptake and responses in annual PM Survey
Objective	Action	Executive Sponsor	Timeframe	Evaluation Method
Appreciation of gender segregation and benefits of diversity	Active promotion of supporting more diverse non-traditional career pathways during recruitment, trainees, work experience, career expos	EDPC	June 24	Promotion activities have been defined with increased interest from non-traditional applicants
	Identify specific areas in which gender segregation occurs, understand how this looks and develop specific actions to improve diversity	EDPC	June 24	Managers and staff are educated on value of diversity and involved in discussions to increase diversity into their department profile

## **Measuring Progress**

The Gender Equality Action Plan introduces a number of outcomes over a four year period (2021 - 2025), with progress reports to the Commission by 1 October 2023.

Success will initially be monitored using indicators from the Gender Equality Act 2020. New data sources will become available as data collection improves, which will allow annual reporting to our executive committee. Evaluation of the action items via a combination of process and success measures outlined within the plan will ensure we continue to move in the right direction.

Importantly we will work closely with the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner and meet our reporting obligations as a 'defined entity' in the Gender Equality Act 2020.

