

## Title: How do you solve a problem like unequal pay?

### Description

This lesson enables learners to explore the possible future of equal pay, discover some of the possible solutions that have been advanced by more gender-equal countries, and consider what actions need to be taken by the Government, businesses and individuals to ensure equal pay for women.

### Age

14-18 (KS4+)

### Aims:

By the end of this lesson learners will:

- Be aware of possible solutions to gender pay inequality, including examples from more gender-equal countries
- Be aware of the impacts of COVID-19 on the UK's progress towards gender equality in the workplace and at home
- Be aware of the different ways in which a citizen can bring about positive change in their community

### Curriculum links

## England

### Learning objectives (secondary)

Citizenship | KS4 | human rights and international law

Citizenship | KS4 | the different ways in which a citizen can contribute to the improvement of their community, to include the opportunity to participate actively in community volunteering, as well as other forms of responsible activity

Citizenship | GCSE | Edexcel Paper 2, Theme D: Power and Influence (Media, The UK's role in the rest of the world, Rights and responsibilities in challenging global situations)

Citizenship | GCSE | OCR: Rights and Responsibilities (1.1);

Citizenship | A Level | Unit 4: Global Issues and Making a Difference (Human rights; Conflict and its resolution).

SMSC - Spiritual | | ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's faiths, feelings and values

SMSC - Spiritual | | sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them

SMSC - Moral | | interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues and ability to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues.'

SMSC - Moral | | ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and to readily apply this understanding in their own lives, recognise legal boundaries....

History | KS4 | engage in historical enquiry to develop as independent learners and as critical and reflective thinkers

History | KS4 | develop the ability to ask relevant questions about the past, to investigate issues critically and to make valid historical claims by using a range of sources in their historical context

History | KS4 | recognise that the discipline of history and a knowledge and understanding of the past helps them to understand their own identity and significant aspects of the world in which they live, and provides them with the basis for further wider learning and study.

History | KS4 | knowledge and understanding of the chronology, key features, individuals, events, developments and issues in the specified content

History | KS4 | understanding of the historical concepts of continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity and difference, and significance by making connections, drawing contrasts, analysing trends and framing historical questions

History | KS4 | the ability to create their own structured accounts, including written narratives, descriptions and analyses.

English Language | KS4/GCSE | OCR: Spoken Language Endorsement (03/04); Communicating Information and Ideas (01); Exploring Effects and Impact (02)

## Scotland

### Outcome summary

Literacy | Listening and Talking: | LIT 4-04aAs I listen or watch, I can clearly state the purpose and main concerns of a text and make inferences from key statements;

Literacy | Listening and Talking: | LIT 4-04aAs I listen or watch, I can gather, link and use information from different sources and use this for different purposes.

Literacy | Listening and Talking: | LIT 4-09aWhen listening and talking with others for different purposes, I can:communicate detailed information, ideas or opinions;

Health and wellbeing | | HWB 0-09a / HWB 1-09a / HWB 2-09a / HWB 3-09a / HWB 4-09aAs I explore the rights to which I and others are entitled, I am able to exercise these rights appropriately and accept the responsibilities that go with them. I show respect for the rights of others.

Health and wellbeing | | HWB 0-13a / HWB 1-13a / HWB 2-13a / HWB 3-13a / HWB 4-13aThrough contributing my views, time and talents, I play a part in bringing about positive change in my school and wider community.

Religious and moral education | | RME 4-09bI am able to apply my understanding of a range of moral viewpoints, including those which are independent of religion, to specific moral issues and am aware of the diversity of moral viewpoints held in modern Scotland and the wider world.

Social Studies | broaden my understanding of the world by learning about human activities and achievements in the past and present.

Social Studies | develop my understanding of my own values, beliefs and cultures and those of others.

Social Studies | | SOC 3-01aI can use my knowledge of a historical period to interpret the evidence and present an informed view.

Social Studies | | SOC 4-04aBy studying groups in past societies who experienced inequality, I can explain the reasons for the inequality and evaluate how groups or individuals addressed it.

Social Studies | | SOC 4-06aHaving critically analysed a significant historical event, I can assess the relative importance of factors contributing to the event.

Social Studies | | SOC 4-17aI can critically analyse the relative importance of the contribution of individuals or groups in bringing about change in a significant political event.

# Wales

## Learning outcome

Welsh Baccalaureate | KS4 | Participation in a Global Challenge · Identify, consider and form a personal opinion on a global issue, e.g. equality

PSE | | Active citizenship

PSE | | Sustainable development and global citizenship

## Resources

- [Slideshow](#) (plus access to the internet to show embedded videos)
- Teacher notes
- Post-it notes/whiteboard
- Pledge cards (printable in [A3](#) or [A4](#))
- [Parental consent forms](#) (copy and amend as necessary)

## LESSON STEPS

### Starter/stimulus/warm-up (5 minutes)

To begin the lesson, **recap** what the learners have explored over the three previous lessons:

- The UK's history of gender pay inequality (from the post-war period to the Dagenham strike and current equal pay challenges)
- The legal right to equal pay in the UK (**ask** for a volunteer to briefly recap this - everyone is entitled to equal pay for the same work, work of equal value or work rated as equivalent)
- The difference between unequal pay and the gender pay gap
- How to calculate the gender pay gap
- The extent of the gender pay gap in the UK, levels of pay inequality in some of the UK's biggest companies and where the UK sits in comparison to other similar countries
- Drivers/causes of the gender pay gap (**ask** the learners to call out some examples)
- How to define income inequality

- The relationship between income inequality and a range of health and social problems (**ask** learners what this relationship is)
- The gendered and racialised nature of economic inequality, poverty, low-pay and the undervaluation of certain sectors of work - noting the existence of the ethnicity and disability pay gap

### Main activity (30 minutes)

**Break** learners into small groups or pairs and hand out post-it notes. **Ask** learners in their groups to consider the possible reasons why there is still unequal pay 50 years after the Equal Pay Act.

Circulate around the room to get an idea of the responses. After 5-10 minutes, **ask** for contributions from learners and continue the discussion in open plenary, getting students to stick their post-it notes up on the whiteboard.

Encourage discussions around the following areas:

- pay secrecy - employees don't know what their fellow colleagues are earning and so don't have the information to challenge unequal pay. Women often find out they are being unpaid by "mistake".
- legislation has no "teeth" - the Act has proven ineffective at preventing unequal pay and it is easy for companies to get away with it.
- lack of data - gender pay gap reporting doesn't tell us anything about unequal pay, so there is no overarching way to know how many people are experiencing unequal pay.
- responsibility is on the individual woman to correct the mistake, not the company.
- taking a case to Tribunal is costly, time-consuming and emotionally draining.
- continuing misogyny in the workplace and society at large - bosses may (consciously or subconsciously) rate women's contributions and performance lower than it is and therefore pay less, and work deemed "women's work" is valued at a lower rate overall (e.g. dinnerladies v. caretakers).
- women fear being side-lined at work, or labelled "troublemakers".
- even though it is illegal, a woman may fear losing her job or facing disciplinary action for discussing salaries or speaking out against unequal pay (and may be threatened with this by her employer).

**Mention** that the World Economic Forum has said it will take 200 years as matters currently stand for there to be gender parity in the workplace<sup>1</sup> - this ignores intersectionality (eg race / disability / age etc) which means that it will be over 200 years.

**State** that it's not all doom and gloom - enforcing equal pay is possible. According to the WEF's 2020 Global Gender Gap Report, Iceland is "the most gender-equal country in the world."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Iceland is a female powerhouse.

<sup>1</sup> World Economic Forum (2019) [Global Gender Gap Report 2020](#)

<sup>2</sup> World Economic Forum (2019) [Global Gender Gap Report 2020](#)

Women make up 43% of board of directors positions; half the seats in Iceland's parliament are filled by women; it was the world's first country to elect a female president, and today, it also has a female prime minister.

**Explain** that in 2018, Iceland enacted legislation that requires companies with 25 or more employees to secure equal pay certification on an annual basis - this essentially puts the onus on employers to prove that they are following the law.<sup>3</sup> This is designed to ensure that jobs of equal value are compensated equally, regardless of the gender of the person who holds them. With this, the country holds companies accountable to prove they're paying men and women fairly, and failure to do so can mean daily fines for companies.

**Show** the [video](#) on Iceland's 2019 legislation. **Ask** learners to raise their hands if they think introducing something like this in the UK would be a good idea.

**Outline** policies/legislation enacted by other countries (slides 6 and 7):

- France has introduced fines for large companies (up to 1% of their total payroll) for scoring poorly on five gender pay indicators (including promotions, pay increases and the gender ratio of the 10 best paid employees).<sup>4</sup>
- Ontario (Canada) is bringing in legislation that will ban companies from asking about applicants' pay history and force them to disclose a salary range on external job advertisements.<sup>5</sup>
- In Sweden, all but the smallest companies must conduct a yearly pay audit to analyse wage policy and whether equal pay practices are being followed. Those with more than 25 employees have to publish an action plan to address any disparities.<sup>6</sup>
- New Zealand's parliament has passed an Equal Pay Amendment Bill that ensures workers are not paid less because of their gender, focusing on pay equity by ensuring women in historically underpaid female-dominated industries receive the same remuneration as men in different but equal-value work.<sup>7</sup> The new bill makes it easier for workers to lodge pay equity claims because it sets clear guidelines for comparing pay between women in female-dominated professions and men with "substantially similar skills, responsibility, and service" in male-dominated occupations.

**Split** the class into five groups and **allocate** each group one of the places that has been discussed (Iceland, France, Ontario, New Zealand, Sweden). **Ask** the learners to consider which of the "hurdles" (up on the whiteboard) this approach is tackling and to discuss whether they think the approach will be effective at addressing the problem. After 5 minutes, ask the groups to feed

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<sup>3</sup> Lowest Rates (2020) [A look at the gender pay gap in 10 countries around the world](#)

<sup>4</sup> BBC News (2019) [Is equal pay actually possible?](#)

<sup>5</sup> The Global and Mail (2018) [Ontario government quietly stalls implementation of pay transparency law](#)

<sup>6</sup> Eurofound (2018) [Pay transparency in Europe: First experiences with gender pay reports and audits in four Member States](#)

<sup>7</sup> Global Citizen (2020) [New Zealand Passes Substantial Bill to Ensure Pay Equity Between Men and Women](#)

back on the country they were focused on. Alternatively, go through each country together in an open plenary.

**Introduce** Fawcett Society's Equal Pay Bill 2020 (slide 8):

- The Fawcett Society, a women's rights organisation, is proposing a change to the UK's current legislation that seeks to improve pay transparency, including:<sup>8</sup>
  - Giving women who suspect they are not getting equal pay a 'Right to Know' what a male comparator is paid (this means cases can be settled out of court);
  - Extending gender pay gap reporting to companies with 100 or more employees;
  - Introducing gender pay gap reporting by ethnicity;
  - Requiring employers to publish an action plan to tackle gender pay gaps;
  - Requiring employers to tell employees about their right to equal pay from the beginning of their contract;
  - Updating pay discrimination law by giving women back their lost pension rights when they win a case, as well as injury to feelings compensation

**Ask** learners which hurdles the Fawcett Society's Bill aims to address (e.g. removing onus from the individual, pay secrecy, increasing transparency for more companies and enforcing accountability, improving individuals' knowledge of rights).

**Explain** that Covid-19 has shown us a lot about how we view and value women's work. **Read out** the news headline on slide 9.<sup>9</sup> **Ask** the learners what they think the findings of the research suggests about women's work (elicit answers that women are clearly capable of taking up leadership positions - is this evidence that there's no good reason for women to be paid less than men when they take up these roles?).

**Read out** the headlines on slide 10.<sup>10</sup> **Ask** the learners what the headlines suggest about the expectations put on working women (elicit answers around women still being considered responsible for the lion's share of childcare, being undervalued and being considered disposable in the workplace).

Final plenary (10 minutes)

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<sup>8</sup> Fawcett society (2020) [50 years since Equal Pay Act, Fawcett launches Bill to modernise law](#)

<sup>9</sup> Daily Mail (2020) [Women leaders saved lives from Covid-19 by acting 'more quickly and decisively' to enforce lockdowns than in countries led by men, study finds](#)

<sup>10</sup> The Guardian (2020) [UK working mothers are 'sacrificial lambs' in coronavirus childcare crisis](#)

The Independent (2020) ['My brain is exploding': Women reveal stress of losing jobs during coronavirus as studies show they're more likely to be laid off](#)

Reuters (2020) [Lack of childcare found 'destroying' UK mothers' careers amid COVID-19](#)

**Wrap up** by asking learners whether they believe things can change.

**State** that equal pay is not just a women's issue, but an issue for everyone - men play an important role in acting as allies, and ultimately ensuring equal pay for equal work benefits everyone (using Iceland as an example).

**Hand out** the print out pledge cards ([A4/A3](#)) and ask the learners to spend 2-3 minutes writing a personal pledge that they will take to fight for pay equality, now or when they join the workforce (e.g. openly sharing your salary with your colleagues, taking equal parental leave from work, standing up for what you are worth and putting yourself forward for promotion, as a boss - taking steps to ensure equal pay, campaigning for change, voting for a party that has policies to improve equality, etc.).

**Take a photo or video** of each of the students with their pledges, and ask them to read out their pledge and why they think it's important. [Please ensure you have received [consent forms](#) from parents before sharing these images with The Equality Trust]

**Show** the link to the "test your knowledge" slide - **ask** learners to take a few minutes filling in the [short survey](#) to see how much they have learned over the series of lessons.

Finally, **ask** learners to go to the [link](#) shown on the final slide (or hand out [paper forms](#)) and fill in a short feedback form on how they found the lesson today.

### Follow-up ideas

#### Read

- [Is equal pay actually possible?](#) (BBC News)

#### Watch

- Sam Smethers [discusses](#) why women need salary transparency (Fawcett Society / The Equality Trust)

#### Take action

- [Sign up](#) to The Equality Trust's #EqualPay50 newsletter to find out how to get involved with the campaign, through writing letters, supporting online and joining protests/demonstrations

### Get creative: homework

Organise an assembly on equal pay, choosing any aspect from the lessons that you'd like to cover the most - this could involve a role play of one of the historic (or recent) equal pay cases.