

Workplace Equality Fund Impact Report

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:
Good for Business



Commissioned by



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

An independent evaluation by

impact | FUNDING
PARTNERS

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Introduction

The Workplace Equality Fund (WEF) was launched in 2018 to support employers to address long standing barriers particular groups face in entering and progressing in the labour market so that everyone in Scotland has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. The WEF has funded projects to the value of £1,860,729 over the past three years. Scottish Government commissioned Impact Funding Partners (IFP) to provide an independent evaluation of the WEF as a mechanism for improving workplace equality.

This report assesses the uptake, outcomes, efficacy of fund use and evidence of sustainable change. It explores potential policy and practice implications in the light of learning from the evaluation, and makes recommendations for future workplace equality initiatives, taking into account the current economic climate (including the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and Brexit).

Executive Summary

Scottish Government commissioned Impact Funding Partners to provide an independent evaluation of the Workplace Equality Fund as a mechanism for improving workplace equality.

This report assesses the uptake, outcomes, efficacy of fund use and evidence of sustainable change. In the light of learning from the evaluation, it makes recommendations for future workplace equality initiatives, taking into account the current economic climate.

Evaluation methodology is described on P50

**WEF funded
58 projects
to the value of
£1.8m
over three years
(four funding rounds)
2018-2021**

The Workplace Equality Fund (WEF) was launched in 2018 to support employers to address long standing barriers particular groups face in entering and progressing in the labour market so that everyone in Scotland has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. It is funded by the Scottish Government. It supports organisations with equality expertise to work with businesses to reduce labour market barriers to equality priority groups entering, remaining and progressing in employment.



Impact on business

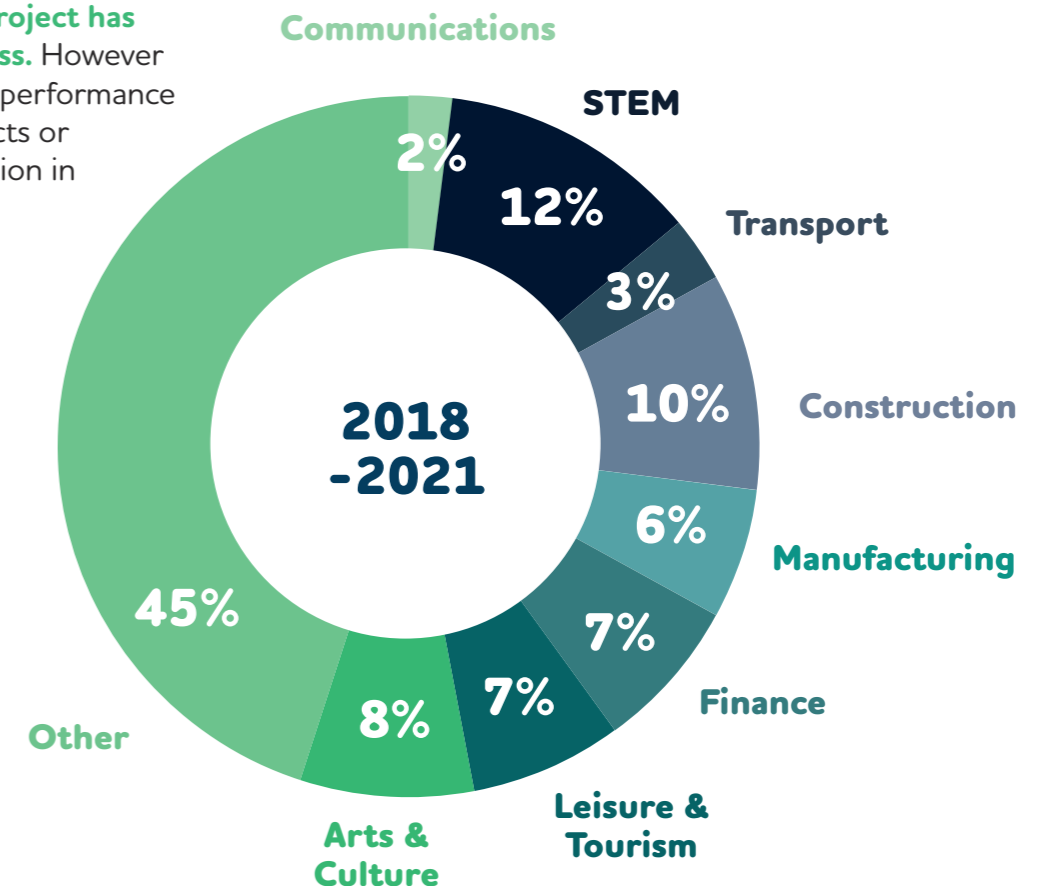
58 funded projects reached all target business sectors with the exception of Agriculture and Fishing. 290+ businesses participated in projects, and the business reach was greatly extended as resources were shared with more employers. Several large employers participated in more than one project. However direct uptake by business was weak (just 6 directly funded employers).

Third sector organisations led and accelerated the orchestration of WEF projects across the private sector, bringing vital knowledge and skills to businesses, many of which are at an early stage of addressing equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

More than half of projects (53%) were initiated directly as a result of the WEF. The majority would have made little or no progress without funding, and only 4% would have been completed.

96% of businesses surveyed agree that their the WEF project has been good for business. However very few cite business performance criteria for their projects or for diversity and inclusion in their business.

Funding allocation by business sector³
(3 years aggregated)



Executive Summary

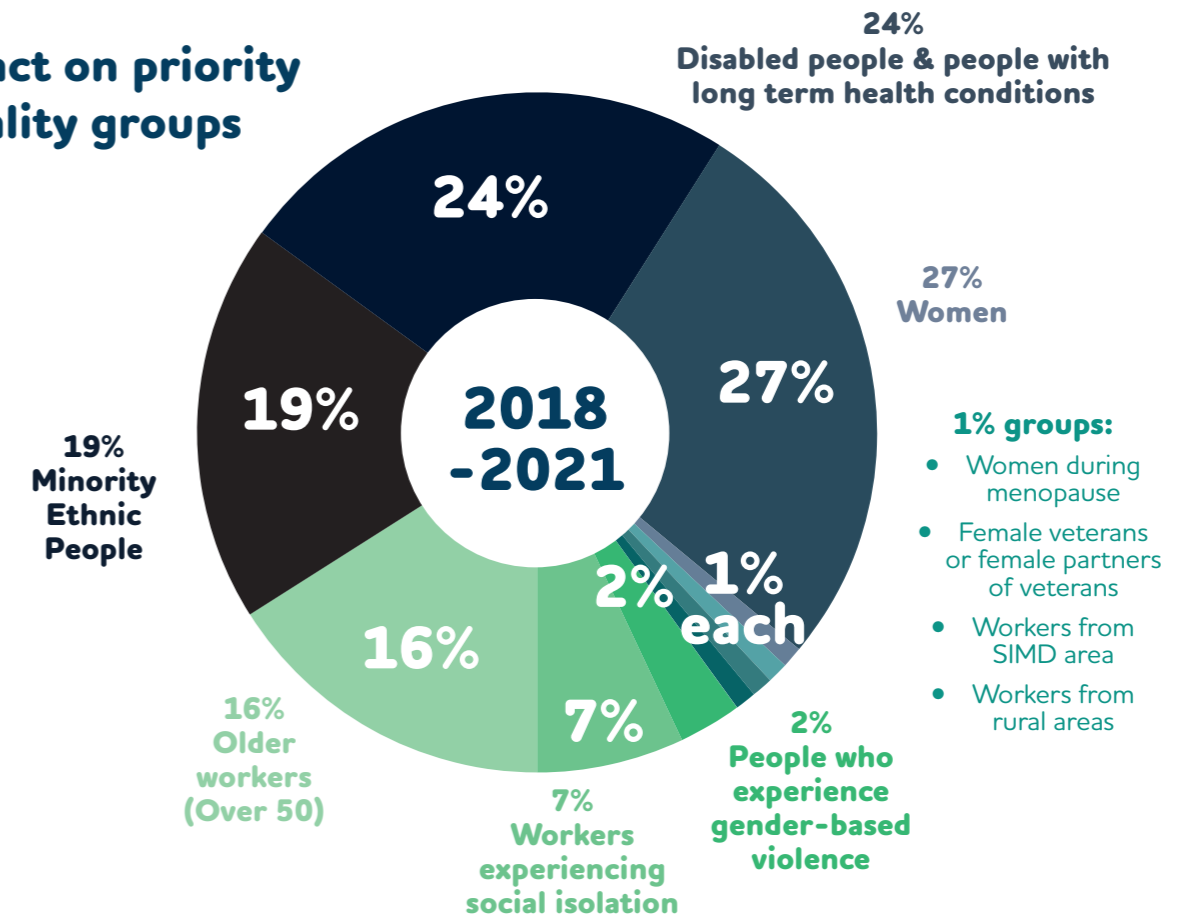
As the WEF has evolved over the funding period, so too have the outcome criteria and performance measures captured in a given period. This means that it is not possible to provide a definitive picture of outcomes across the life of the fund. However, a snapshot of Year 2 outcomes and outputs, supported by project reports and primary research provides a helpful indication of how and to what extent the WEF effected specific changes.

At first glance, the **WEF had marginal direct impact in creating specific new employment or career progression opportunities for individuals in priority equality groups** (Outcome 1, Year 2⁵). It is important to view this finding in the context of three key factors:

- Pandemic constraints meant that planned recruitment initiatives, work placements, internships or new intake did not proceed, were suspended or could not be sustained. Many businesses committed to resume this activity when possible. In the short term, economic projections suggest that employment and progression opportunities for priority equality groups will be curtailed.
- Evaluation ceased at the end of each project funding period. Further employment/ progression opportunities may have arisen post-project, although numbers are likely to be small, at least in the short term in light of the pandemic impact on employment generally. Creating a framework for consistent, systematic tracking of workplace equality metrics against benchmarks would enable long term assessment of the impact of future Scottish Government interventions – a key recommendation of this report.
- The majority of businesses participating in WEF projects were in the early phases of addressing equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace. **80% of the WEF activity was to build knowledge and skills internally and develop more inclusive attitudes and understanding in their existing workforce.** This is where the WEF has had the greatest impact, providing the stimulus to increase skills and knowledge, improve workplace and recruitment policy and practice and develop training and resources (Outcome 2), laying foundations for a more inclusive workforce in future. Impetus was the top ranked (68%) benefit to business of participation in a WEF project, alongside access to external expertise (68%).

Progress towards creating more inclusive working environments through partnership working between employers and employees (Outcome 3) is less clear, and in any case is dependent on achieving greater workforce diversity and policies and practices to support it. Businesses found it difficult to evidence beyond the provision of staff training and well-being initiatives. Third sector delivery partners made the case for longer project cycles to develop, review, revise and embed programmes for sustainable change in the workplace – another central tenet of this report's recommendations.

Impact on priority equality groups



The top line overview (above) of fund allocation by priority group does not provide definitive evidence of the relative impact of the WEF on each group because:

- The majority of projects were entry level initiatives (i.e. unconscious bias training, workplace equality assessment toolkits) covering multiple priority groups.
- Projects ranged from diversity and inclusion training for hundreds of employees in businesses of all sizes, through to discrete, local interventions to support employment for people in priority groups at an individual level.
- Some projects focused more heavily on one of several groups identified in their plan.

Project reports and anecdotal evidence suggest that more **tangible progress has been made in addressing barriers and opportunities for women, older workers and disabled workers than for other priority groups.** Progress in workplace equality for minority ethnic people is a particular concern, given that 50% of projects targeted this group. Third sector organisations report that there is more activity – much of it yet to come to fruition – than is captured in short-term project reports, but that too many employers stop short at reviewing policies and inclusion training for staff. Further support is needed to help employers to actively engage with the communities they aspire to include.

Appendix 1 lists funded businesses with their target priority groups.

Executive Summary

Challenges and barriers

The economic impact of the pandemic will have a disproportionate adverse effect on people in equality priority groups. Women, young people, carers, minority ethnic people and disabled people are predicted to be especially disadvantaged.

As employers focus on survival and recovery, it will be crucial to promote the business case for continued investment in equality, diversity and inclusion.

International migration to Scotland is projected to decline. Consideration should be given to including migrants and refugees – people who are often highly skilled and underemployed – as a priority group in any future WEF intervention.

The shift to online and remote working during the pandemic has increased inclusion through more flexible working and access to online training and resources. It has also brought digital exclusion to people without the technology and skills to access online information; upskilling and access to affordable technology will require support.

Time is the biggest barrier to business participation in WEF projects. Longer lead times are needed to secure business buy-in, build effective partnerships and deliver meaningful, lasting outcomes.

Business understanding of diversity and inclusion policy and practice remains low, particularly among SMEs which lack capacity and resources to develop workplace equality. **There is ongoing need for entry level workforce equality training to tackle centuries of institutional inequality in many sectors.**



Has the WEF resulted in sustainable change?

It is too soon to assess whether the short term outputs and outcomes of the WEF funded projects will result in long term improvements in workplace equality. Funded organisations are not required to report progress beyond the life of the funded period of their project. Ongoing tracking and evaluation of funded projects is required to determine whether the WEF will have lasting impact.

There is a need for baseline data against which progress can be benchmarked. Priority equality groups have changed since the last census. The 2022 census affords an opportunity to introduce a workforce equality matrix for employers to report against annually, and from that to develop systematic collation of data to inform potential future workplace equality interventions.

Short funding cycles are unattractive to both third sector organisations and businesses. **Extended project cycles would yield greater cost-efficiency, stronger partnerships between employers and third sector organisations, and more meaningful, sustainable change in workforce equality.**

Many resources have been created and shared widely as a result of the WEF projects. There is potential to curate and disseminate resources to more businesses and organisations and reduce the risk of duplicated effort in future.

Increased partnership working and peer support/learning networks is a valuable legacy which should be sustained. 80% of businesses forged new partnerships and 72% have sustained these beyond the life of the fund.

58 WEF projects have undoubtedly helped 290+ businesses directly, and many more indirectly, to make strides in workplace equality development. However, it must be noted that employers participating in this evaluation, and those making strong progress are likely to be highly engaged and already on the road to workplace equality. They represent a tiny proportion of Scotland's private sector businesses, a further consideration in the scoping recommendation.

“ ... establishing mechanisms for peer-to-peer support and collaboration is an especially effective mechanism for delivering such diffusion. ”

Financing Scotland's Recovery February 2021

Executive Summary

Recommendations & future scoping

The WEF has created the impetus for change in the relatively few businesses it has touched. Further workplace equality funding and support is required to ensure that these seeds flourish, and that more seeds are sown in the very many private businesses yet to engage, in particular SMEs. The challenge has increased because the profit (or survival) motive is likely to trump the moral case for equality action in tough economic times. Now, more than ever, there is a need to help businesses recognise, and make the business case for ambitious equality initiatives.

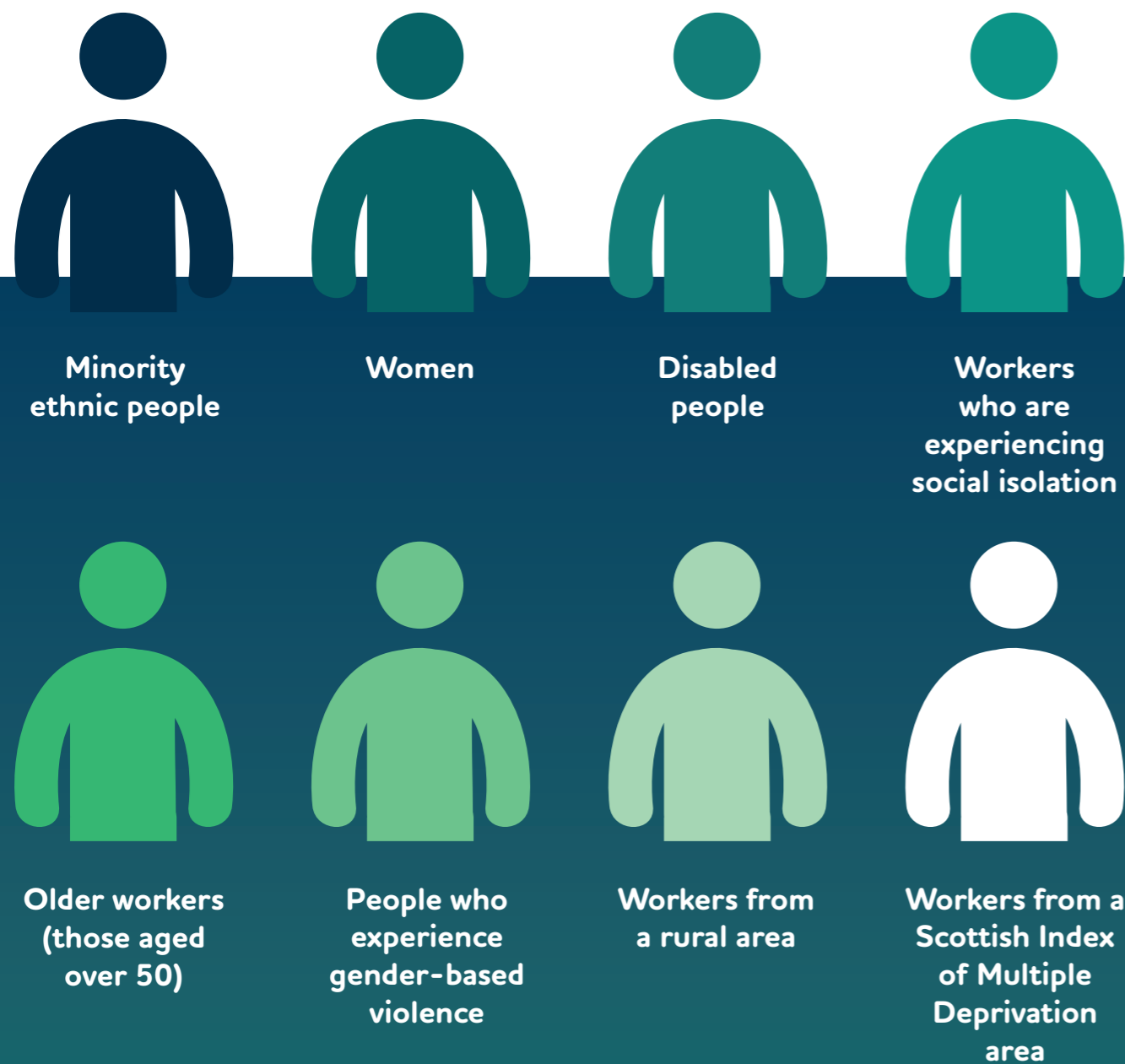
Key recommendations include:

- A renewed funding initiative to provide the stimulus for employers to progress beyond awareness raising towards more tangible equality outcomes.
- An extended funding cycle of at least 3 years to facilitate a plan-do-check-act-plan' approach which embeds a culture of continuous improvement and sustainable change in workplace equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Consultation with businesses and sector umbrella bodies to develop active partnerships to co-produce and promote workforce equality projects relevant to their sectors.
- Bringing third sector experts together to design equality projects for greater impact and an additional focus on support for people facing multiple disadvantages and barriers to employment.
- The creation of a learning network to bring people together to share knowledge, learning and resources and accelerate Scotland's progress towards greater workplace quality.
- Sufficient lead in time to allow for germination of projects and partnerships.
- Build awareness and engagement of the WEF amongst the private sector.
- Keep the priority groups clear, concise and encourage focus on intersectionality.
- Minimum grant level £10,000 and maximum £75,000 per annum.
- Third sector and businesses eligible to apply to support change in private business or the public sector.

Fund overview

The Workplace Equality Fund is funded by the Scottish Government. It supports organisations with equality expertise to work with private employers or businesses to reduce labour market barriers to equality groups entering, remaining and progressing in employment.

It aims to address labour market inequalities for the following priority groups:



WEF has funded
58 projects
to the value of
£1.86m
over the past
three years.¹

Initially, the fund aimed to attract direct applications from the private sector which accounts for 80% of jobs in Scotland, and particularly from SMEs (employing <250 people) which comprise 98% of private business. Uptake by the private sector was low: only 6 private businesses were directly funded. However, 290+ businesses participated in 58 projects co-ordinated for the most part by third sector organisations.

In 2020 eligibility for the fund was extended from collaborations between charities and the private sector to include the public sector. This third round was not open to direct applications from private businesses. This fund, running over a shorter delivery period (Jan – March 2021), sought to support projects that demonstrated immediate short, sharp labour market interventions, given the economic impact of Covid-19.

The average value of funding awarded per project was £32,081; fund awards ranged from £9,500-£49,925. There were no successful applications for the maximum award of £100,000, so the cap was reduced to £50,000 (Round 2, 2018/19).

Policy context

Scottish Government Directorate: Equality and Human Rights Division and Directorate for Fair Work, Employability and Skills

Scotland's Economic Strategy focuses on the complementary goals of boosting competitiveness and tackling inequality. It is an approach supported by a growing body of international evidence which shows that countries with more equal societies typically enjoy stronger, more sustainable growth over the long run.

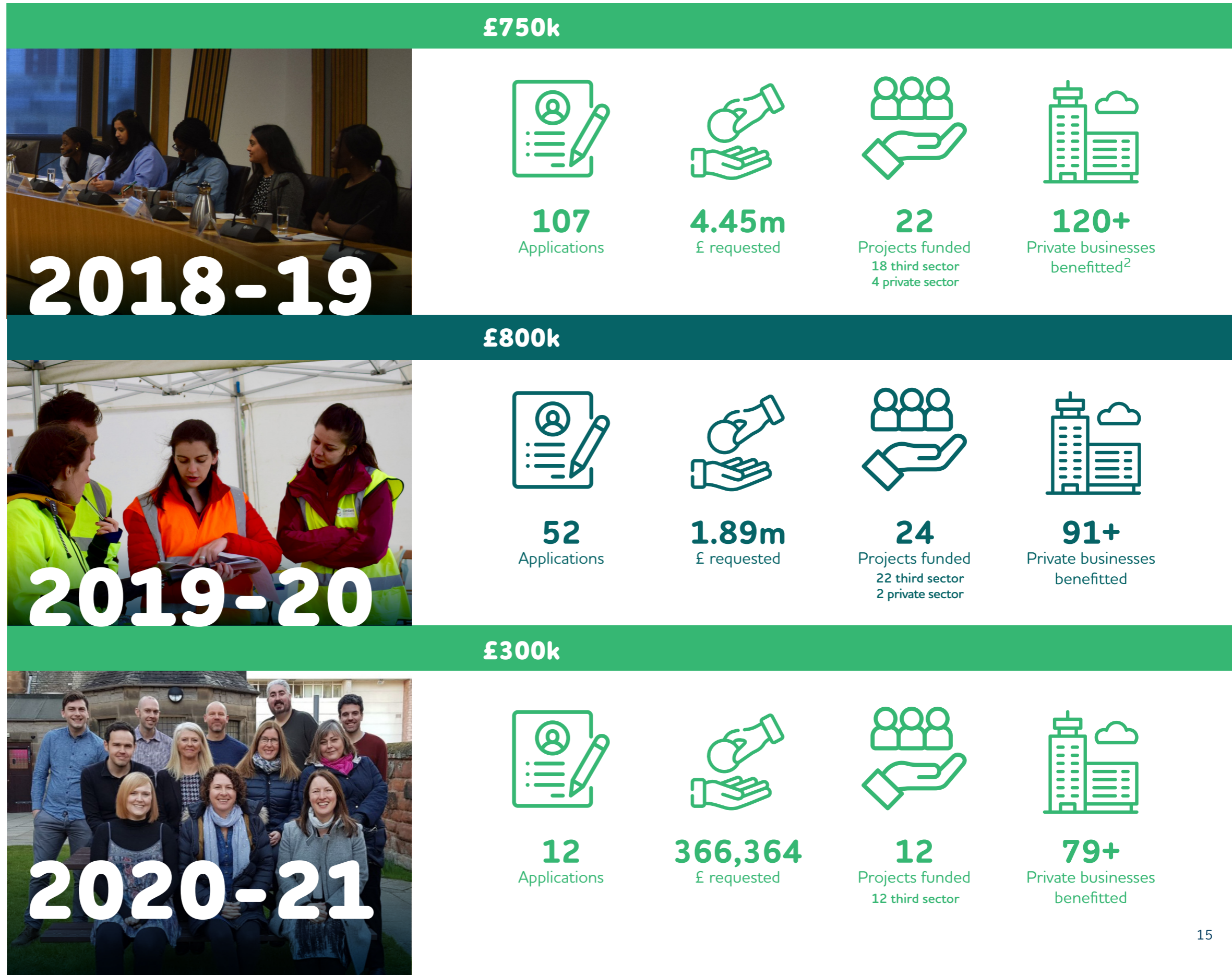
Helping employers to understand and take action to address the drivers of inequality is key to the Workplace Equality Fund and to inclusive economic growth.

The Workplace Equality Fund supports the delivery of the Scottish Government's Programme for Government; Fair Work Framework and Action Plan; Race Equality Framework; Disability Delivery Action Plan; Scotland's Labour Market Strategy and Fairer Scotland Action Plan; Gender Pay Gap Action Plan; A Fairer Scotland for Older People – A Framework for Action; A Fairer Scotland for Disabled people- Disability Action Plan and its first Progress Plan; the Equally Safe strategy and delivery plan; Child Poverty Action Plan; Connected Scotland strategy. It also contributes towards achieving outcomes within Scotland Performs, and the National Performance Framework.

In response to the Report of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery "Towards a Robust, Resilient Wellbeing Economy for Scotland", Scottish Government has made an explicit commitment to embed equalities and human rights at the heart of policy and decision-making processes with the establishment of a Directorate of Equality, Inclusion, and Human Rights.

How the fund was allocated

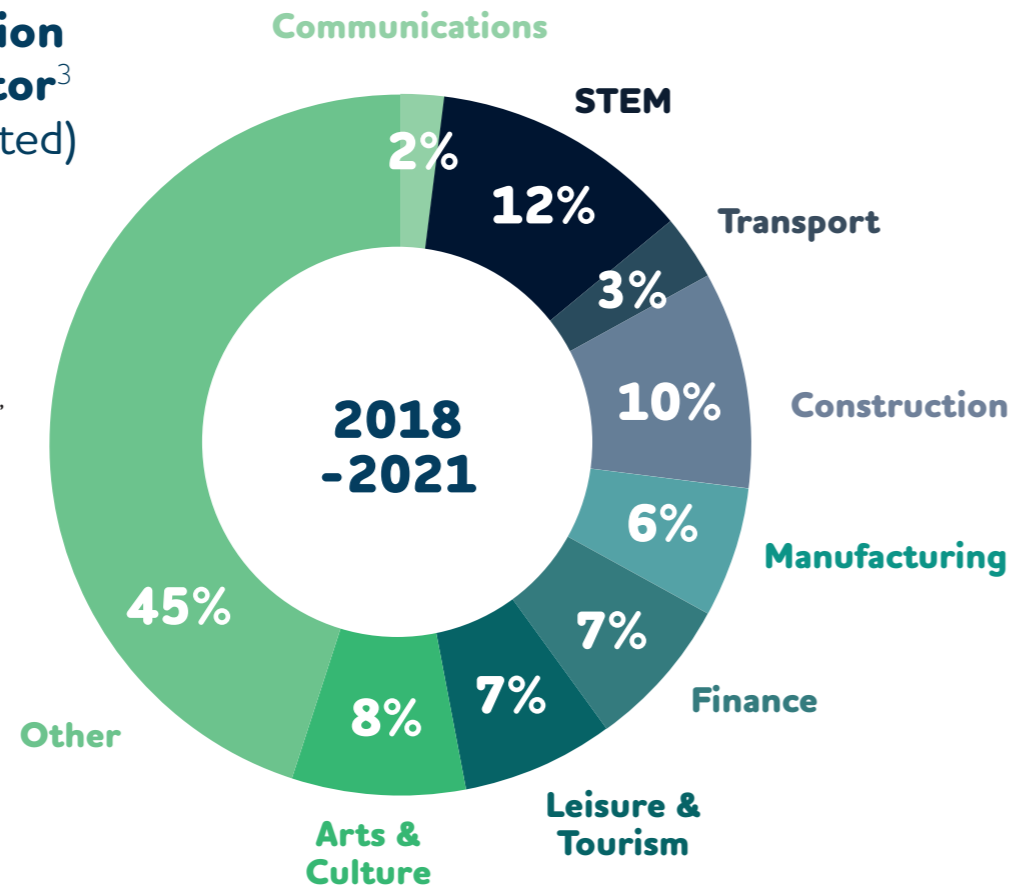
The scope of the WEF was broad in terms of both target sectors and equality/inclusion outcomes. Funded projects range from diversity and inclusion training for hundreds, if not thousands of employees in businesses of all sizes, through to discrete, local interventions to support employment for people in priority groups at an individual level.



How the fund was allocated

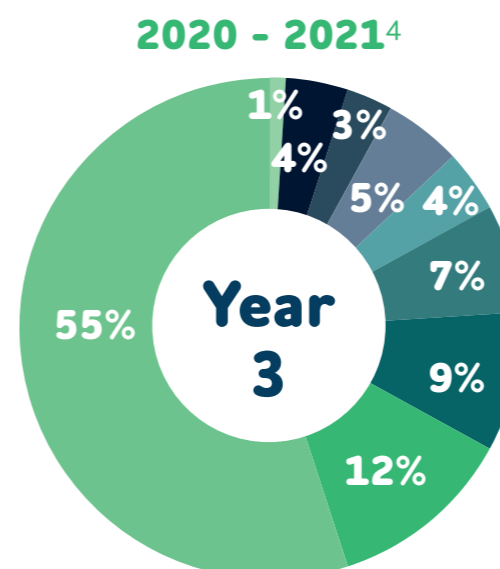
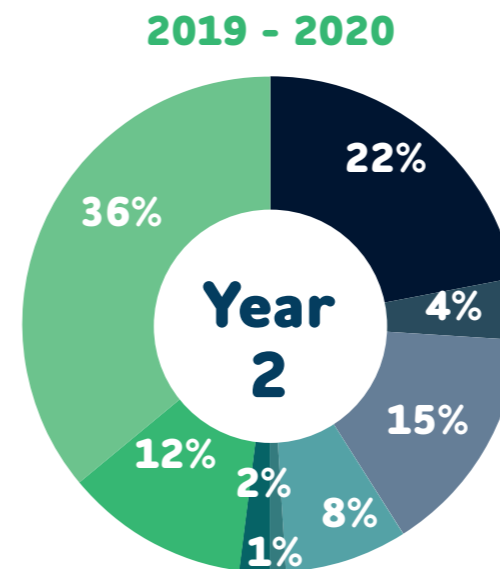
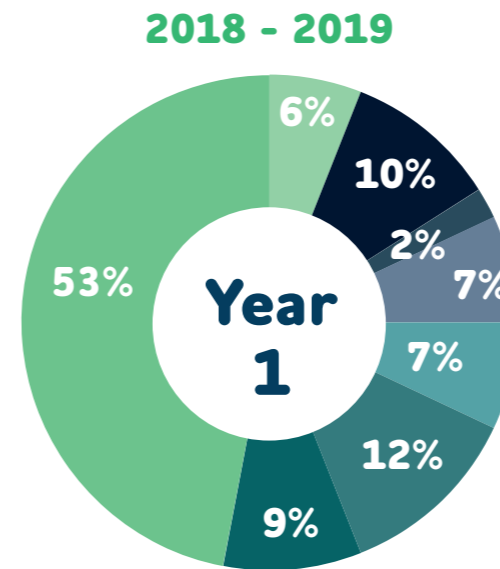
Funding allocation by business sector³ (3 years aggregated)

Funded projects reached all of the priority sectors, with the notable exception of Agriculture and Fishing. Other sectors benefitting from support included care, childcare, communications, facilities management, IT, legal, other public sector, recruitment and retail.



Sector	No. of businesses	Percentage
Other*	113	45.2
STEM sector	31	12.4
Construction	24	9.6
Arts & Culture	20	8
Leisure & Tourism	16	6.4
Finance	16	6.4
Manufacturing	16	6.4
Transport	8	3.2
Communications	6	2.4
Total	250	100

* Other Sectors	No. of businesses
Other	27
Retail	17
Legal	15
IT	12
Employability & Training	10
Public sector	9
Childcare	7
Care	6
Facilities Management	4
PR & Marketing	4
Recruitment	2
Total	113



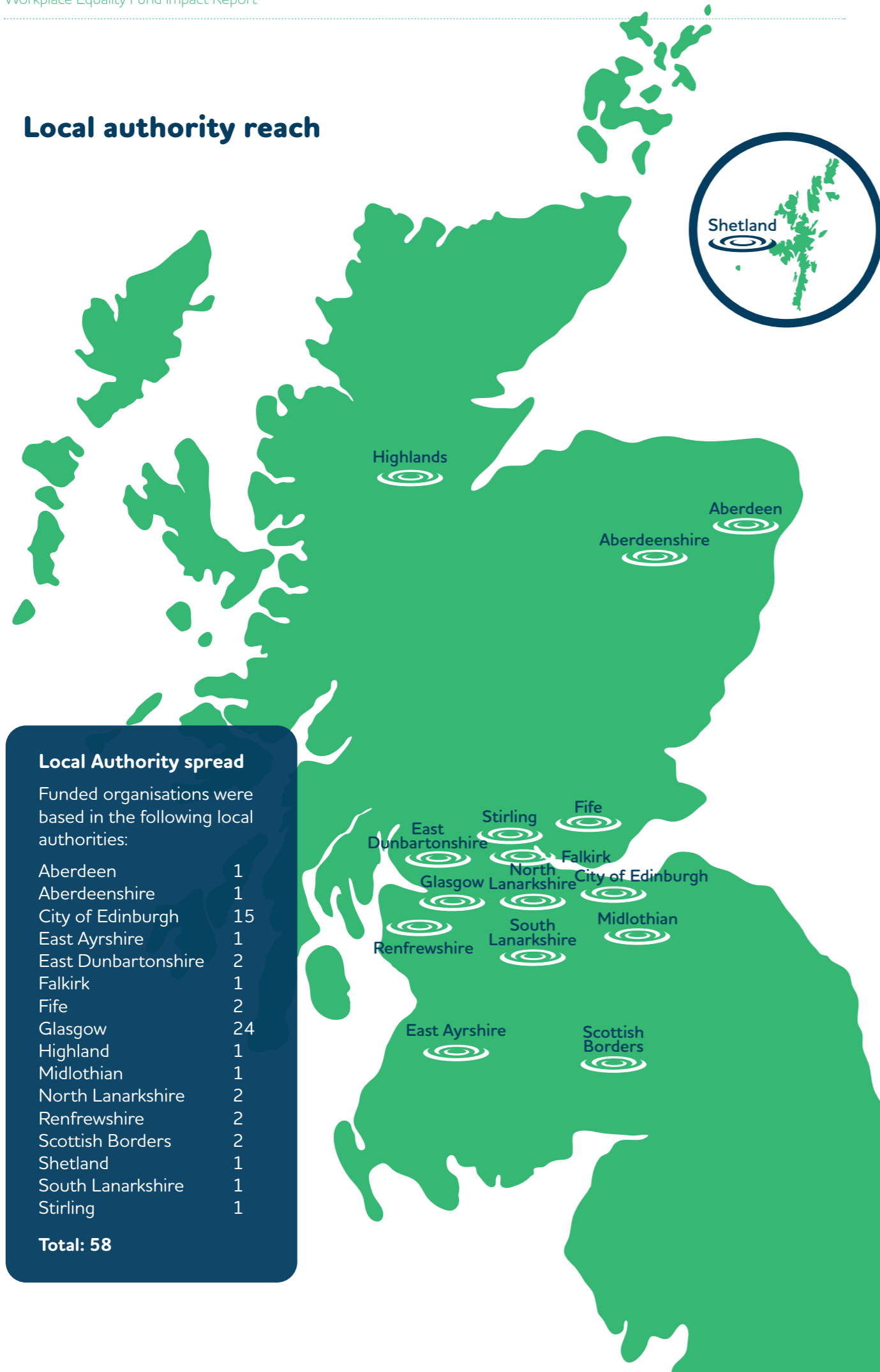
A significant achievement of the WEF has been to stimulate business interest in improving workforce diversity and inclusion. The WEF attracted 171 applications for a total value of £6.71m, evidence of a high latent demand for support and a strong appetite to address barriers to workplace equality.

However, a review of rejected applications shows that many organisations (both private and third sector) were unable to demonstrate concrete plans to address the aims and outcomes of the WEF specifically, often focussing on awareness raising and research or providing support and training for individuals in target groups rather than sustainable employer change.

Unsuccessful early applications betrayed an assumption of a 'one size fits all' approach to multiple priority groups. High profile coverage of the gender pay gap, racial diversity and disability on screen and stage, and the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement may have prompted employers to 'do something' about equality without firm foundation for their plans. In year one, applications relating to minority ethnic and disabled people were weakest. Impact Funding Partners targeted membership and umbrella organisations for both priority groups, and delivered guidance and workshops to help organisations to more effectively target specific priority groups and to reinforce the sustainable employer change agenda. Two-thirds of successful applicants for the WEF 2019-20 portfolio of 27 projects had attended an information session. (note 3 of these projects did not go ahead) These learning and support opportunities were valued highly; there is strong demand for more of these, and earlier in project cycles in future.

- STEM
- Transport
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Finance
- Leisure & Tourism
- Arts & Culture
- Other
- Communications

Local authority reach



Local Authority spread

Funded organisations were based in the following local authorities:

Aberdeen	1
Aberdeenshire	1
City of Edinburgh	15
East Ayrshire	1
East Dunbartonshire	2
Falkirk	1
Fife	2
Glasgow	24
Highland	1
Midlothian	1
North Lanarkshire	2
Renfrewshire	2
Scottish Borders	2
Shetland	1
South Lanarkshire	1
Stirling	1

Total: 58

Key factors preventing more direct applications from private business included low levels of:

- visibility and awareness of funding opportunity.
- understanding of business benefits associated with a diverse and inclusive workforce.
- skills and resource to apply for and deliver a project to a tight timescale (short application window and project period, exacerbated with the additional pressures brought by COVID-19).
- ability to make a case for support related to the aims and outcomes of the fund.



With low uptake from the business sector, the fund was extended to large and multi-national businesses with operations in Scotland, alongside third sector organisations with expertise in diversity and inclusion working in partnership with the private sector. The involvement of large businesses is helpful as a beacon setting the best practice bar for aspirational SMEs in the same sectors. In Year 3, eligibility was restricted to third sector organisations with business or public sector partners.

It follows that third sector organisations have led and accelerated the orchestration of the WEF projects across the private sector. However, many third sector applications fell at the following hurdles:

- lack of confirmed private sector partners.
- unrealistic plans in timescale.
- focus on 'employability' skills and baseline research, rather than sustainable change in employer practice and policy.
- inability to demonstrate need/how plans would realise outcome criteria.



Project delivery reach

Each funded organisation delivered their projects across Scotland as follows:

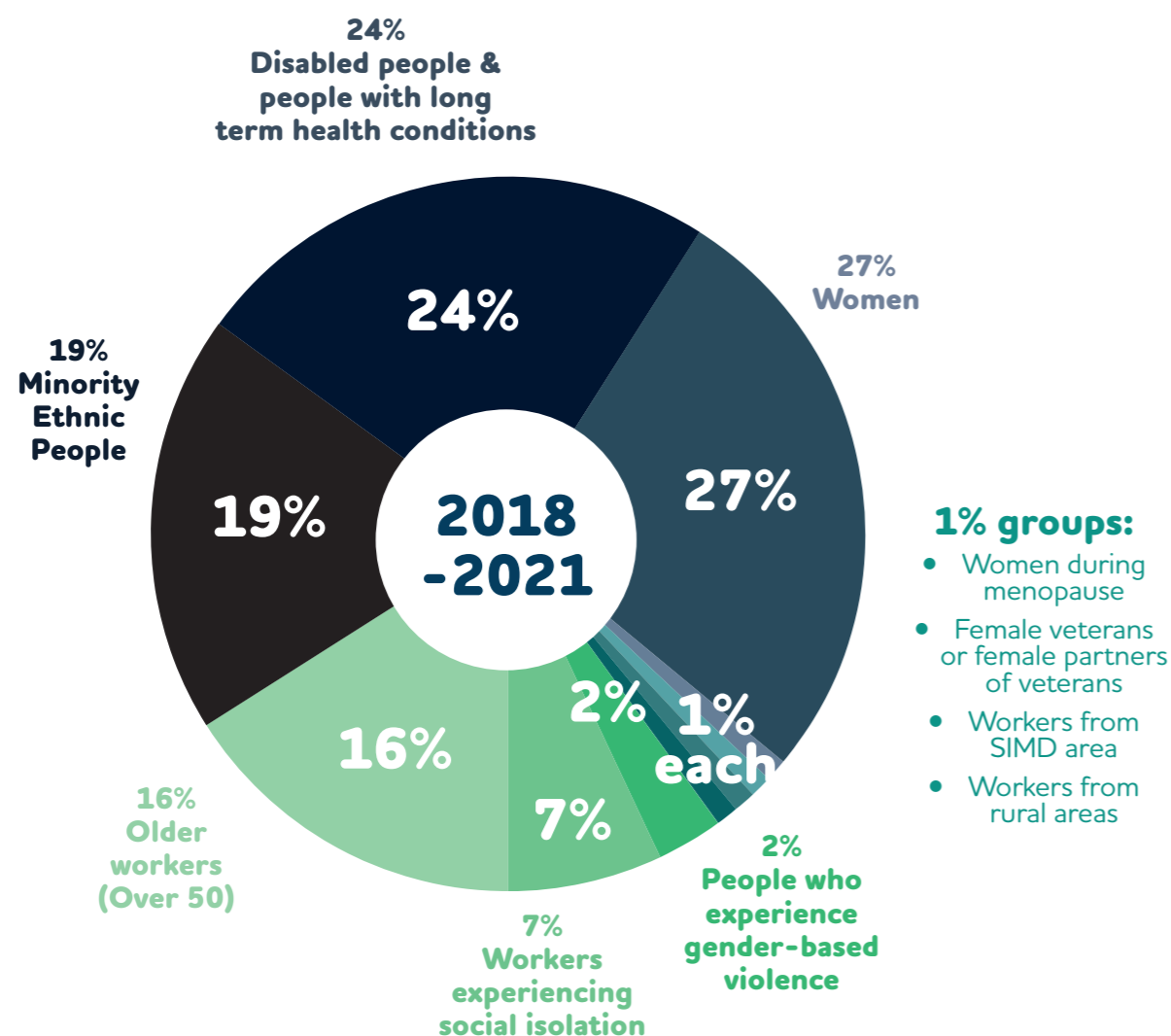
Scotland-wide	32
Aberdeen	2
Aberdeenshire	1
Argyll and Bute	1
Clackmannanshire	1
Dundee	1

East Ayrshire	2	Renfrewshire	4
East Dunbartonshire	2	Shetland	1
East Renfrewshire	4	South Ayrshire	1
Edinburgh	8	South Lanarkshire	2
Falkirk	2	Stirling	2
Fife	2	West Dunbartonshire	2
Glasgow	11	West Lothian	1
Highland	1		
Inverclyde	3		
North Ayrshire	1		
North Lanarkshire	3		

How the fund was used

Funding allocation by priority group

The great diversity of the funded projects defies simple categorisation. Projects frequently benefitted multiple priority groups and/or businesses sectors. Applicants often included multiple groups in the mistaken belief that it would increase the likelihood of funding; Impact Funding Partners provided guidance to tailor projects more specifically to certain groups and outcomes.



Priority Group	£	No. of projects
Women	495,061.94	31
Disabled people & people with long term health conditions	440,938.36	28
Minority Ethnic People	355,224.07	24
Older workers (Over 50)	294,342.13	18
Workers experiencing social isolation	122,913.56	10
People who experience gender-based violence	47,362.69	4
Workers from rural areas	28,761.77	3
Workers from a SIMD area	28,761.77	3
Other	19,174.51	2
Women during menopause	14,094.10	1
Female veterans or female partners of veterans	14,094.10	1
Total	1,860,729.00	125

The top line overview (left) of fund allocation by priority group does not provide definitive evidence of the relative impact of the WEF on each group because: :

- The majority of projects were entry level initiatives (i.e. unconscious bias training, workplace equality assessment toolkits) covering multiple priority groups.
- Projects ranged from diversity and inclusion training for hundreds of employees in businesses of all sizes, through to discrete, local interventions to support employment for people in priority groups at an individual level.
- Some projects focused more heavily on one of several groups identified in their plan.

Project reports and anecdotal evidence suggest that more **tangible progress has been made in addressing barriers and opportunities for women, older workers and disabled workers than for other priority groups**. Progress in workplace equality for minority ethnic people is a particular concern, given that 50% of projects targeted this group. Third sector organisations report that there is more activity – much of it yet to bear fruit – than is captured in short-term project reports, but that too many employers stop short at reviewing policies and inclusion training for staff. Further support is needed to help employers to engage actively with the communities they aspire to include.

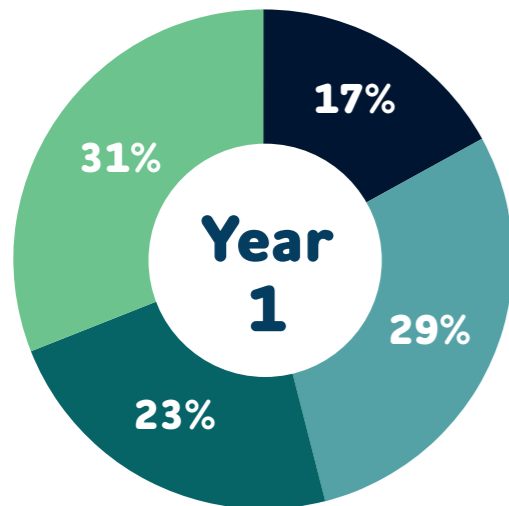
Appendix 1 lists funded businesses with their target priority groups.

How the fund was used

Funding allocation by priority group

Individual year breakdowns

2018 - 2019



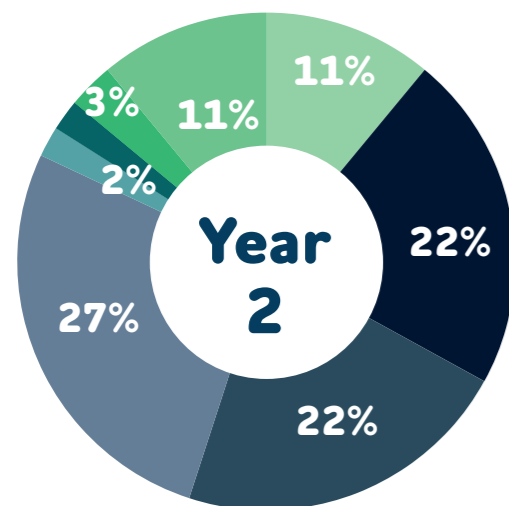
31% Women

29% Disabled people & people with long term health conditions

23% Older workers (over 50)

17% Minority Ethnic People

2019 - 2020



11% Older workers (Over 50)

11% Workers experiencing social isolation

3% People who experience gender-based violence

2% Female veterans or female partners of veterans

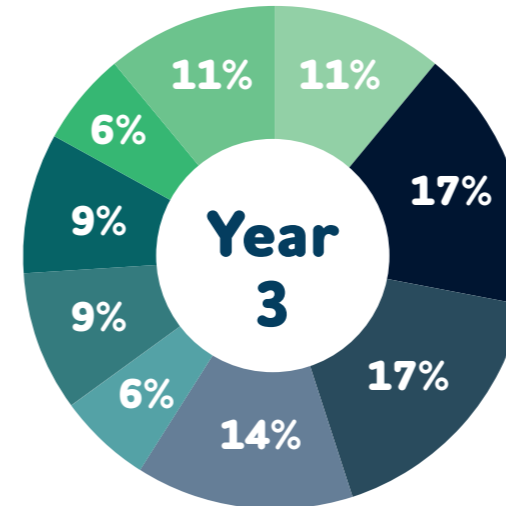
2% Women during menopause

27% Women

22% Disabled people & people with long term health conditions

22% Minority Ethnic People

2020 - 2021



11% Older workers (Over 50)

11% Workers experiencing social isolation

6% People who experience gender-based violence

6% Other

9% Workers from a SIMD area

9% Workers from rural area

14% Women

17% Disabled people & people with long term health conditions

17% Minority Ethnic People

“Moving staff into a remote working environment has proven a huge step forwards in how we can reach potential partners, employers and parents across Scotland and beyond. Rural Scotland has always been left behind with support services and projects; now they can be part of our everyday work.”

VIAS

The reach of many projects was boosted by the shift to online working, necessitated by the pandemic, as events and training were made accessible remotely to more participants e.g. Enable Scotland/Balfour Beatty Train the Trainer resource was shared with 52 employers.

However, as more private sector employers joined online training provision, third sector partners reported working with too many businesses. Future funding should consider breadth vs depth of engagement; third sector organisations will require more resources to deliver to a wider audience.



Outcomes

As the first Scottish Government initiative to seek to work with the private sector on workplace equality, the WEF has evolved, with changes in approach over the funding period.

Accordingly, outcome criteria and performance measure captured in a given period have altered over time. This means that it is not possible to provide a definitive picture of outcomes across the life of the fund. However, a snapshot of Year 2 outcomes and outputs, supported by project reports and primary research provides a helpful indication of how and to what extent the WEF effected specific changes.

As Year 3 funding period concluded on 31 March and many Year 3 projects were still in train, for consistency this section focuses on findings from funding rounds in Years 1 and 2.

Creating a framework for consistent, systematic tracking of workplace equality metrics against benchmarks would enable long term assessment of the impact of future Scottish Government interventions.

Outcome 1:

Employment opportunities and progression in the workplace are improved and improvements are embedded into the workplace.

Outcome 2:

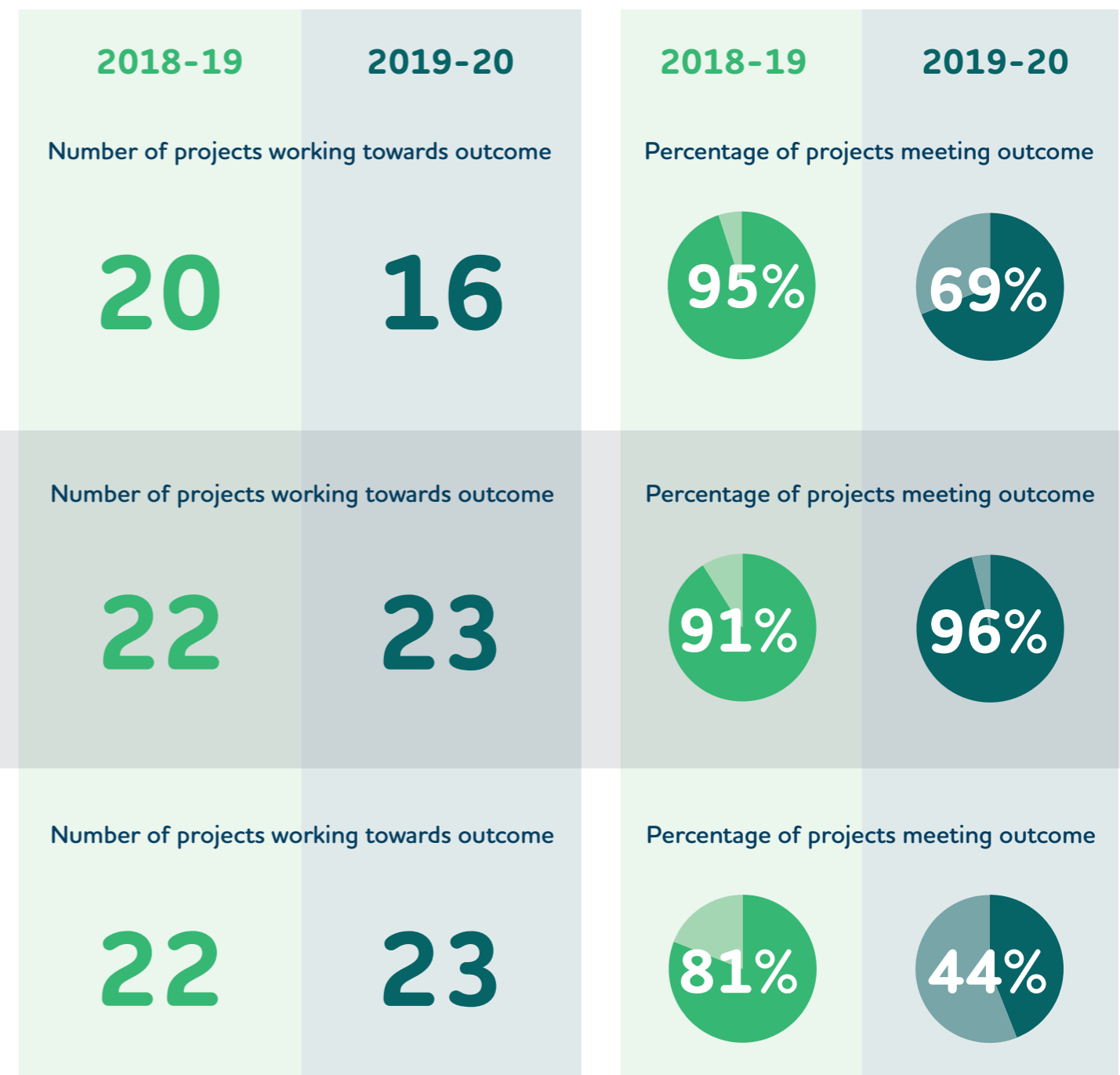
Knowledge, skills, policies and practices are improved in order to address employment inequalities, discrimination and barriers/challenges within the workplace.

Outcome 3:

A more inclusive working environment is created through employees and employers working in partnership to address employment inequalities and introduce positive practices.

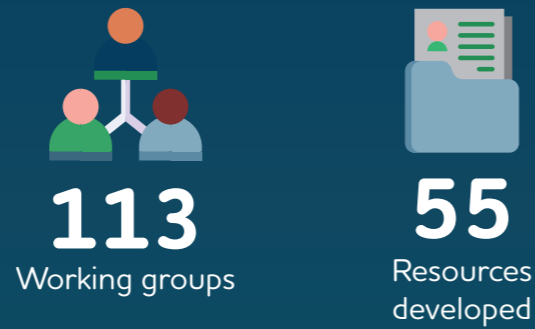
Aim of fund

To support private sector employers to address long standing barriers particular groups face in entering and progressing in the labour market, so that everyone in Scotland has the opportunity to fulfil their potential.⁵



Outputs

These statistics were collated only for Year 2, but provide a helpful indicator of how and to what extent WEF effected specific changes.



The direct impact of the WEF (Year 2) in creating specific new employment or career progression opportunities for individuals in priority equality groups has been marginal. In a few projects, planned work placements, internships or new intake did not proceed, were suspended or could not be sustained as a result of pandemic constraints (i.e. as Bridges/Oakminster care home placements for refugee migrant carers; Adopt an Intern placements).

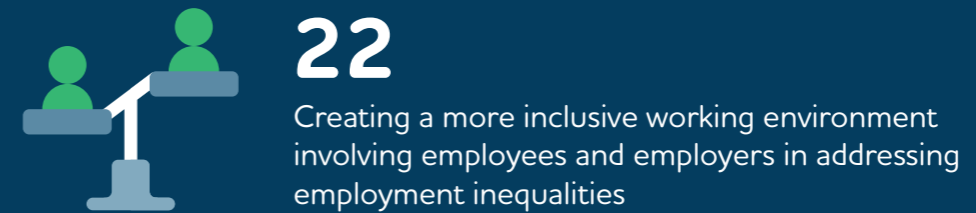
Further employment/progression opportunities may have arisen post-project reports (most businesses committed to resume placements when possible), although numbers are likely to be small, particularly in light of the pandemic impact on employment generally. Ongoing tracking of project outcomes would enable long term assessment of impact.

However, the majority of businesses benefitting from the WEF funding are still at an early stage

in their journey towards workplace equality, and it is here that the WEF has made the most significant impact. By providing the stimulus to increase skills and knowledge, improve workplace and recruitment policy and practice and develop training and resources, the WEF is laying foundations for a more inclusive workforce in future.

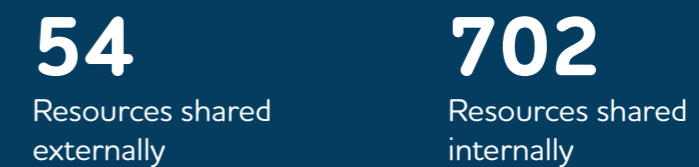
Progress towards creating more inclusive working environments through partnership working between employers and employees (Outcome 3) is less clear, and in any case is dependent on achieving greater workforce diversity and policies and practices to support it. Businesses found it difficult to evidence beyond the provision of staff training and well-being initiatives. Third sector delivery partners made the case for longer project cycles to develop, review, revise and embed programmes for sustainable change in the workplace – another central tenet of this report's recommendations.

A survey of businesses involved in the WEF projects 2018-20 shows:



Businesses and funded organisations shared the resources and toolkits they developed either by themselves or through the Impact Funding Partners website. **14 funded organisations shared a range of material on Impact Funding Partner's website which was viewed in total 295 times.**⁶

Businesses were asked how many people were given access to the material which they had shared independently.



Impact

Survey findings

The majority of businesses participating in the WEF projects were in the early phases of addressing equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace. The main focus **(80%) of their WEF activity was to build knowledge and skills internally** and develop more inclusive attitudes and understanding in their existing workforce. These twin goals are their Equality, Diversity and Inclusion priorities, followed by policy and practices review and change.

The pattern of specific outputs observed in Year 2 is reflected in the findings of a survey of 30 businesses which have benefitted from the WEF.⁷

Just over half (53%) of funded projects were initiated directly as a result of the WEF, and the fund was instrumental in facilitating the majority of projects.

Completed

Only 4% of businesses could have completed their projects without funding

Progressed to great extent

16% would have progressed to a great extent

Little progression

60% would have made little progress

No progression

16% none at all

“ We would not have been able to progress this programme without the WEF. While many organisations acknowledge the issues of retaining women in the technology sector, few understand the relationship between diversity and enhanced productivity/revenue and few release budget support for this purpose. With funding we can advocate and start to turn the tide. ”

96% of businesses agree that their the WEF project has been good for business, although very few cite business performance criteria for their projects or diversity and inclusion in their business.



72% of businesses reported that they are continuing their initiatives beyond the life of the fund, most included caveats that work was paused as a result of the pandemic and lack of resources.

60% of businesses claim to be planning further workplace equality initiatives but, with a few exceptions, those plans are aspirational, couched in terms of future Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) strategies, and subject to resources/funding.

40% have no plans for further projects.

Employer interviews indicate an underlying concern that further initiatives will rely on board- or senior management-level buy-in to compete with other post-COVID priorities which may push diversity and inclusion down the agenda.

Collection and use of diversity data following a project period has risen nominally from 60% to 64%. However, few businesses are systematically capturing diversity data beyond their recruitment and monitoring needs. Arts, culture and media businesses are more pro-active in this regard than e.g. construction and manufacturing, despite the WEF investment in increasing diversity in those sectors. A framework for diversity data monitoring in Scotland could be helpful.



Impact

Survey findings

72%
would now be keenly interested in applying directly to a future WEF.



The key benefits to business of participating in the WEF funded projects included:

Impetus (68%)

For employers who could mobilise within the tight funding cycles, short time-frames drove delivery of initiatives that may otherwise have been side-lined by competing priorities, had they not committed to a WEF project. In many cases the WEF provided a route-map to equality issues that businesses had recognised but not known how to address.

Access to external expertise (68%)

Third sector organisations with expertise in specific priority equality groups have provided vital support, especially to businesses at the early stage of seeking to ensure that they avoid “saying or doing the wrong thing”. They have also accelerated projects for businesses of all sizes, with know-how and capacity which even the largest commercial businesses find difficult to resource in-house. There is however, a lack of concrete evidence that the seeds sown through training and resources provided are embedded and will thrive. Again, ongoing evaluation would be needed to track resulting change.

“ We were thinking of setting up an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion group, however this was very much lower down on the list. Having the EPOW project assist us, we were able to deal with organising the group more quickly and gaining the interest of staff who have since contributed to it. ”

Lambert Smith Hampton

“ We had made a start but needed outside expert help to really challenge us and provide practical support. We would not have progressed so quickly without this support. ”

Resource to do more (44%)

The WEF enabled some employers to dedicate staff/consultant time to workforce equality projects. Even in businesses that have well-developed strategies for inclusion, there is a heavy reliance on volunteer ‘champions’ to manage projects alongside their ‘day jobs’. For small and non-commercial enterprise (i.e. in the arts and culture field), the cost of developing and implementing new policies is simply unaffordable.

Opportunities for networking

Shared learning and peer support were highly valued. Many respondents called for more events like Impact Funding Partner’s online Learning Festival and Sustainability Workshop, and channels to connect with and share learning from other funded projects earlier in the process.

“ Funding meant we could allocate a % of my time to this project. Given the pandemic it is unlikely that would have happened. Without Henpicked: Menopause at Work, we would not have been able to run colleague or manager training or any of the wellbeing workshops that have been hugely appreciated. ”

80%
of businesses have forged new partnerships and

72%
have sustained these beyond the life of the fund.

“ We now look to work with FEAT and build on the work we completed together and reciprocate support in their numerous other programmes for people in Fife. ”



Case Studies

It is clear from project reports and primary research that many WEF projects have made rapid strides in workplace equality development to tight timeframes, and despite the additional pressures of the pandemic. Given the broad scope and variety of funded projects, the interventions supported by the WEF are most clearly demonstrated by the cross-section of initiatives below.

Reducing mental health stigma and discrimination

Scottish Association for Mental Health partnered with the See Me in Work campaign and 4 businesses (Scotrail, Apex Hotels, Burness Paull LLP, Babcock Rail) to pilot new approaches and good practice to reduce mental health stigma and discrimination in the workplace. The programme's closing event shared learning from the pilot with 87 people from 65 companies, mainly private sector. See Me is now funded by Scottish Government and Comic Relief.

Two in three people will suffer mental ill health and DWP estimates that 300,000 lose their job each year due to long term mental ill health. Many businesses approach this as a well-being issue, focussing on awareness training without creating the conditions for conversations to take place.

“The vast majority of managers were allies, seeing the business and wellbeing benefits of providing mental health support to their teams. They didn't know what a supportive conversation looked like and they didn't want to make a challenging health situation worse by saying the wrong thing. That's what led See Me to create 'Let's Chat', a concise practical tool for managers.”

Disabled people

Family friendly working in the arts sector

The Federation of Scottish Theatre partnered with PiPA (Parents in the Performing Arts) to pioneer innovative flexible working policies and practice with 10 arts venues/producing companies/performing companies.

Freelance and contract workers make up 70% of Scotland's performing arts workers. The tradition of long, unsocial hours makes it difficult for many with parental and care responsibilities to pursue a career in performing arts; the precarity they face has been magnified by COVID closures (with unemployment for many) and 70% are considering exiting the sector entirely.

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society is one of 20 organisations involved in the project. When it was approached by Flexibility Works to collaborate on this project, it had only one working parent on staff who had taken maternity leave. It now has 5 pregnant staff planning maternity leave and 6 working parents. For the first time new recruits are now offered flexible or part time contracts from the beginning of their employment. Managers are more comfortable having discussions with staff and interviewees about caring needs and working patterns.

“You've taken us on a great (flex working) journey, it feels genuinely owned by the whole team and we are delighted with the results.”

Shona McCarthy, CEO,
Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society



Women (parents/carers)

Bridging the age-inclusion gap

Age Scotland – Age Inclusive Matrix – TAQA, Sodexo, Newsprinters, Tokheim (workforce total 1,400)

“One thing that has been initiated and has worked well is the uptake of flexible working/job share by men offshore who have family or carer responsibilities. This has allowed, say 1 week offshore to 5 onshore, where the usual pattern might be 4 weeks offshore, 4 weeks onshore. This is totally counter culture in oil and gas and our Board/ the organisation was originally very much against flexible working. There has been a lot of interest in and uptake of flexible working.”
(TAQA)

Together with sister charity Age Northern Ireland, and Business in the Community, Age Scotland has secured funding from National Lottery to extend the Age Inclusion Matrix to a further 10 companies with programme enhancement based on learning from this pilot. The project led to the development of an Age at Work Policy and Practice Forum with Scottish Government, Edinburgh University, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Business in the Community.

Older workers



Embracing diversity in the construction supply chain

GenAnalytics worked with the City Building supply chain which includes 140 SMEs and larger businesses in the West of Scotland to raise awareness of the business value of having a diverse workforce. A toolkit was created to support the supply chain to develop diversity and inclusion strategies.

Construction remains one of the least diverse sectors. Women comprise just 11% of the workforce and there is a wide gender pay gap.

GenAnalytics published a report on equality barriers and opportunities in construction, sponsored a national conference with the Herald, and has led the charge for collating diversity data.

Despite the WEF investment in several projects to improve diversity in construction and civil engineering, progress is questionable. E.g. Construction Scotland and CEMVO projects, funded in Year 3, are supporting businesses that have yet to embrace diversity at any level. Wider promotion and distribution of resources and toolkits already produced could be useful.

Women / Minority ethnic / Disabled people

Progression/retention of legal professionals

Burness Paull introduced a programme of initiatives, training and HR policy change to create and sustain a workplace culture that supports employees through the menopause. Their experience has been shared with other employers.

Menopausal people are the fastest growing working population with 8/10 in active work. One in 4 will suffer serious symptoms and 60% of women say it has a negative impact on their work. Burness Paull made the connection between menopause and gender inequality, particularly at senior levels where women are under-represented in the legal sector.

“ Burness Paull’s campaign has broken new ground in best practice, brought to life with inspiration and passion. It’s a fully inclusive campaign, rightly involving everyone – menopause isn’t an issue for women, it’s a life skill. Outstanding. ”

Henpicked

Women (menopause)

Progression/retention of staff in STEM sector

Women’s Enterprise Scotland developed its WES 100 programme to provide leadership and governance training to 20 women in the STEM sector, working with 10 SME leaders. Participants also developed inclusive policies and action plans to improve diversity and inclusion in their workplaces.

Just 10% of senior managers in STEM sector are women.

At the start of the programme just 20% said they had the skills and were ready to lead. By the end of the programme that had risen to 57%. Several participants have since progressed their careers.

“ WES 100 was an absolute game-changer. I gained the personal confidence to double my small business, and support and challenge others when it comes to equality. Inclusion is now a factor in my choice of business partners too. ”

WES 100 participant

Women

Reducing labour market barriers

There are no standout case studies which illustrate substantial material change or uplift in employment opportunities for minority ethnic people. Given that 50% of projects included minority ethnic people as a target group, and that this group remains a high future priority for businesses, it is striking that the majority of WEF funded activity on this front remains focused on ‘entry level’ support for employers to begin removing barriers to inequality. Year 3 reports from CEMVO, International Youth Scotland and WSREC indicate that **there is still a pressing need for starter level support (i.e. unconscious bias training/toolkits to address workforce inequalities), and a keen appetite from business to address ethnic minority inclusion.** However, there is little evidence of how this will translate into action. As CEMVO observes, there is no ‘public duty’ obligation on the private sector to take action.

There are many products and services on the market already, beyond those funded by the WEF. The question is whether additional WEF funded resources will make a difference. Survey respondents recognised the importance of having a variety of different approaches to develop innovative solutions, even within the same sector/priority group, so that it doesn’t fall to a single organisation or model to provide all the answers. **There is a risk of duplication of effort, and a clear opportunity for Scottish Government to focus work on more progressive approaches to minority ethnic workplace equality.**

Bridges’ project offers a **compelling glimpse of the transformative potential, albeit on a small scale.** Bridges focussed on preparing employers and potential employees from the female minority ethnic refugee community for work in health and care environments. Using a skill set and qualities matrix, they helped women without formal qualifications or English language skills to navigate the complexities of application forms to demonstrate their suitability for roles, and gain confidence to apply. Care home teams received diversity and inclusion training and a review of recruitment practice, while potential employees were given vocational training.

The employment gap for migrants and refugees is around 15%, and for women even higher.

Sadly, COVID lockdown meant that planned work placements were deferred. Oakminster Care Homes, Advinia (formerly BUPA) and Glasgow City Council Social Work Department are keen to pursue this programme and recruit from this priority group.

Minority ethnic people



Challenges and barriers

The pace of recovery from the COVID pandemic is unknown, but consensus among leading economic advisors to Scottish Government is that the resulting economic slowdown will have a disproportionate adverse effect on people in equality priority groups. Women, young people, carers, minority ethnic people and disabled people are predicted to be especially disadvantaged by job disruption, unemployment, underemployment and loss of potential. Workforce training of all kinds is likely to be curtailed.

Among WEF stakeholders, opinion is split about including young people in future WEF interventions, as the group is served by other strands of policy and funding. There is a call to embed equality in the curriculum and support people at the younger end of the group spectrum.

Third sector organisations echo the despair of their community groups facing continued exclusion from the job market.

“ It is heart-breaking to see people who were ready to enter employment back at square one. ”

“ Great. After training, businesses can claim increased recognition of barriers and how to deal with them. But will they do it? No way to tell. ”

“ I tend to see people after they have left work because of a condition, it would be better if we could intervene early. ”

Stakeholders recognise that the profit motive will trump the moral case for equality action by businesses in tough economic times. It will be crucial to promote the business case for continued investment in equality, diversity and inclusion in sector-relevant terms (and bearing in mind that not all businesses are desk-based).

Scotland's population growth is projected to come from migration. UK Government policy and the impact of Brexit mean that international migration to Scotland is projected to decline. Third sector organisations are keen to see migrants and refugees - people who are often highly skilled and underemployed - specifically included in any future WEF intervention. Apart from this, there appear to be no specific Brexit implications for greater inclusion, beyond the usual economic pressures to European trade.

They also highlight the opportunity cost of not investing in workforce equality, resulting in higher social, care and unemployment costs.

The pandemic has introduced unexpected benefits as well as challenges. The mass move to remote working has opened employers' eyes to the possibilities of flexible working, which can increase access and work opportunities for several disadvantaged groups. The shift to online training greatly increased reach and inclusion, as more people could access sessions and resources remotely. However, there was also digital exclusion of people without the technology and skills to access online information, and urgent upskilling was, and still is required.

Furlough and remote working arrangements hindered delivery of many projects in Years 2 and 3, particularly planned engagement with equality group communities. Remote working put workers with child and adult caring responsibilities under more pressure and many were unable to continue with project programmes. Furlough brought respite to some priority groups, particularly those with health conditions, access needs and caring responsibilities, but their need for support will resurface when (and if) they are able to return to workplaces.

Support is needed to remove physical barriers to access in offices/workplaces and to improve business understanding of Access into Work provision.



Challenges and barriers

Business barriers

The biggest barrier to bringing business on board with WEF projects (after awareness) is traction. Usually this depends on finding a ‘champion’ manager who will lead ‘on the ground’, and buy-in from company HQ. In large companies the message and the proposal are often lost in translation through the hierarchy and will only gain approval if it chimes with the corporate agenda. The bigger the business, the longer it can take to get approval at multiple levels – often too long for short term project cycles.

Scottish businesses, dominated numerically by SMEs, often have very small management teams with little strategic capacity or resource (staff and financial) to take on new projects. The greater their business need, the less likely that they are confident in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy and practice or know how to access funding. Small enterprises that have policies in place often cannot afford to put them into practice.

“ It takes effort, if not money, to employ people who face barriers. If an employer has 100 applications for a junior role, they might well take the easier route. ”



“ We had a great manager on the ground in a housing construction company, who lined up all his subcontractors, although he couldn’t practically afford the time. But if one leaves – and people turnover is high – they all fall down. ”

Third sector funded partner.

There remains a need for entry level workforce equality training to tackle centuries of institutional inequality in many sectors, and further support is needed to help employers at entry stage to progress from basic compliance with employment legislation to engage actively with the communities they aspire to include. Preparing employers to welcome employees from priority equality groups should match employability programmes.

Awareness of the WEF is low in the private sector, even among businesses that have benefitted from the fund. Longer lead in times and sector-relevant promotion could address this in future. Sector umbrella organisations and trade associations could play a future role in promoting and disseminating learning from past and future initiatives. Organisations suggested by stakeholders are listed in recommendations.

Employers and employees interviewed were asked about their knowledge of the respective Fair Work Assessment tools. Awareness was low on both counts, although the pandemic will have undoubtedly hindered the publicising of these resources. There was some recognition of the Fair Work First criteria and the Fair Work Dimensions (Effective Voice, Opportunities, Security, Fulfilment and Respect), but even here the connection between this and the intentionality of the WEF was not strong as might have been expected, given that applicants were asked to demonstrate the approaches they are taking or will take to meet the Fair Work First Criteria. There is an opportunity, therefore, to make any future fund criteria more explicitly linked to the Dimensions and a requirement that organisations actively promote Fair Work First as a condition of funding.



Has the WEF resulted in sustainable change?

It is too soon to assess whether the short term outputs and outcomes of WEF funded projects will result in long term improvements in workplace equality. Funded organisations are not required to report progress beyond the life of the funded period of their project. Ongoing tracking and evaluation of funded projects is required to determine whether the WEF will have lasting impact.

There is little baseline data against which progress can be benchmarked. Stakeholders noted that priority equality groups have changed beyond recognition since the last census. Some estimate that the minority ethnic population is four times bigger, particularly in conurbations. There is an **urgent need for systematic collation of data to inform potential future workplace equality interventions**. The 2022 census affords an opportunity to introduce a workforce equality matrix for employers to report against annually.

72% of businesses aim to continue their initiatives beyond the life of the fund, and 60% plan further initiatives, but subject to resources, funding and strategic priorities. Most have paused equality plans as a result of the pandemic, and are resigned to making slower progress at least in the short term.

Third sector organisations are clear that the short funding periods of the WEF to date (particularly the latest 10-12 weeks round) did not allow for a depth of engagement that will result in sustainable change in workplace equality practice. Extended funding cycles would give greater cost-efficiency. Only the largest organisations have the resources to deploy staff flexibly; the rest face cash-flow difficulties, and problems attracting and recruiting candidates of high calibre to funded posts. Businesses are not attracted to short term projects and larger businesses take longer on get on board. As a result, many third sector partners do not apply for short term funds. These considerations are reflected in the scoping recommendation for a future fund.

Many resources have been created and shared widely as a result of WEF projects (to a much greater extent than user data has been captured). There is potential to curate and disseminate resources to more businesses and organisations and reduce the risk of duplicated effort in future.



Increased partnership working and peer support/learning networks is a valuable legacy. 80% of businesses forged new partnerships and 72% have sustained these beyond the life of the fund. Third sector organisations have also benefitted from cross sector/and priority group networking. Learning and support opportunities provided by Impact Funding Partners were valued highly; there is strong demand for more of these, and earlier in project cycles in future.

A significant achievement of the WEF has been to stimulate business interest in improving workforce diversity and inclusion. 72% would now be keenly interested in applying directly to a future WEF. The WEF attracted 171 applications for a total value of £6.71m, evidence of a high latent demand and a strong appetite to address barriers to workplace equality.

58 WEF projects have undoubtedly helped 290+ businesses directly, and many more indirectly, to make strides in workplace equality development. However, it must be noted that employers participating in this evaluation, and those making strong progress are likely to be highly engaged and already on the road to workplace equality. They represent a tiny proportion of Scotland's private sector businesses, a further consideration in the scoping recommendation.

What next?



Strengths

- Breadth of scope.
- Instigation of new projects/enabling more effective provision of planned projects across sectors and priority groups.
- Third sector active support.
- Strongest priority sectors; Women, Disabled people and Older workers.

Weaknesses

- Depth of engagement.
- Funding cycles too short to embed or measure sustainable change.
- Visibility/awareness of the WEF.
- Visibility/awareness/use of resources produced through projects.
- Priority groups – minority ethnic, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, Social Isolation and Loneliness, rural.
- Weakest priority sectors – Agriculture & Fishing.
- Inconsistent framework for KPIs/outcomes.
- Low awareness and understanding of Fairwork principles, insufficient business knowledge of equality policies and practice.

Opportunities

- Build on successful initiatives/extend support for more businesses to implement proven models.
- Promote and share models for success – cascade through sector umbrella bodies/trade associations.
- Educate private sector about business benefits of diversity.
- Create a framework for diversity data monitoring (possibly using next census as 'peg' for campaign).
- Align the WEF with Scottish Government policies to address factors underlying inequalities.

Threats

- Diversity and Inclusion low priority/low resource/lack of understanding/knowledge/skills available in businesses dealing with COVID/BREXIT pressures.
- Potential recruitment freeze/rising unemployment, disproportionate impact on disadvantaged groups.
- Lack of follow through and continuity risks any future WEF funds duplicating/repeating previous projects.

Future Vision

Whilst some progress has been made by those engaged with the fund over the last 3 years, much remains to be done. The fund has created the impetus for change in the relatively few businesses it has touched. However, much of this has been entry-level awareness raising, unconscious bias training and policy reviews. These building blocks are important, but we need to recognise that Scotland is still largely at the beginning of a journey to dismantle historic structural inequalities and embed real change in practice.

National policy aims to enable larger numbers of people from the priority groups to gain employment and progress in their careers. The impact of the pandemic has seen women, young people, minority ethnic people, carers and disabled people especially disadvantaged by job disruption, unemployment, underemployment and loss of potential.

72% of businesses already engaged with WEF projects intend to continue their initiatives beyond the life of the fund, and 60% plan further initiatives, but this will be subject to resources, funding and strategic priorities. Further workplace equality funding is required to ensure that these seeds flourish, and that more seeds are sown in the very many private businesses yet to engage, in particular SMEs. The challenge of doing this has increased because the profit (or survival) motive is likely to trump the moral case for equality action in tough economic times. Now, more than ever, there is a need to help businesses recognise, and make the business case for ambitious equality initiatives.



Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the evidence of our evaluation of the WEF 2018-21.

Timeframes and Funding Cycle

The focus groups highlighted the benefits of an improvement cycle of activity, rather than stop-start initiatives linked to short term funding. This would enable more of a 'plan-do-check-act-plan' approach, and flexibility at the review stage to introduce further support or fresh approaches as necessary. Opportunities to learn from, and share learning with, their own and other sectors would help to build momentum and spread success.

To enable this approach and achieve the ambitions of the fund, there needs to be at least a 3-year contract. This will continue to provide the stimulus for organisations to access external expertise, but will enable them to take the work beyond awareness raising and progress towards more tangible equality outcomes.

“ It could take 10 years working with one business to tackle structural inequalities. ”

“ Funding short term costs more, as the set-up period is the costliest, particularly for smaller organisations that do not have the infrastructure. You are also more likely to need a full-time member of staff. ”

“ 3 month's funding means we can't be creative – we had to just go with a basic out of the box package. ”

“ The quality of work you can achieve and the quality of staff you can attract is impacted by short timescales. ”

Key characteristics of the new fund would include:

- Working with Scottish Government to consult with businesses and sector umbrella bodies to identify their specific needs and develop active partnerships with leading sector organisations to co-produce and promote workforce equality projects relevant to their sectors.
- Bringing third sector experts together to design partnership projects for greater impact and increased support/understanding of intersectionality.
- Continue a range of initial awareness raising/educational activities, but work with fewer businesses in depth to achieve meaningful, sustainable projects and outcomes.
- A phased and structured delivery plan with:
 - A period of 4 months for the fund manager to set up and exit fund operation.
 - A lead in time of 4 months between launch of fund and the application deadline to enable promotion and establishment of employer/third sector partnerships.
 - A 12-month initial project delivery period with businesses.
 - Follow up by the expert partner to review progress and provide further support.
 - Forward planning with expert partner and evaluation of outcomes and impact achieve

Recommendations

Priority groups

The priority group spectrum is already wide. Focus groups did not wish to see increased labelling and ‘pigeon-holing’ of further groups and sub-groups. Some clustering of the existing priority groups would be helpful; for example, ensuring that refugees and migrants – people who are often highly skilled and underemployed – are supported within the minority ethnic priority group. Third sector organisations highlighted the difficulty of discerning where the priorities lie amidst such broad criteria. They are keen to see clear recognition in any future intervention of the importance of intersectionality: people facing multiple disadvantages and barriers to employment too often fall through the gap when support is focused on narrow groups.

Taking account of this feedback, and the fact that funding impact is diluted when the target is too broad, we recommend that priority groups should be clearly defined, with no option for “other, please specify”.

Employability work should be funded to get the priority group ready for the project with business partners (funding for this type of work seems to have diminished). Conversely it is important to invest time in preparing the businesses to support the priority group(s).

Focus group opinion was split over the question of including young people as a priority group, given the predicted outcome of COVID for youth employment. On balance the view (from Scottish Government and third sector) is that this group is served through other interventions.

Scottish Government may of course wish to re-visit the priority groups in the context of other policies/strategies/plans and support provided.

“ Organisations often say they work with young people when in fact they only work up to age 14 and 15-24 year olds are excluded. ”

“ There is an attainment gap for minority ethnic young people and a lack of pathways into actual paid employment. ”

Eligibility

The change to include the public sector in Year 3 seems to be a positive one. As major employers in the public eye, operating and still recruiting in all areas of Scotland, they can play an influential role in demonstrating equality best practice.

Businesses should be encouraged to apply directly to the fund in order to get the widest possible engagement. The application process should provide guidance to businesses to make a business case for increasing diversity and improving inclusion in their workforce. We have seen that many are unaware that they were part of a funded project where they were part of a third sector led project.

Third sector organisations should continue to be able to apply to support employers. In particular, applications should be encouraged from organisations led by people with lived experience and the capability to reach into communities of interest (as opposed to applicants lacking those capabilities who would need to rely on expert groups for help). This would not exclude others from applying, however track record of delivery would be weighted in the assessment process.

Sectors

The priority sectors defined in funding rounds to date have not informed the choice of businesses which were awarded funding.

An alternative approach would be for The Scottish Government to identify sectors and geographical areas where either labour market need is greatest or where there is potential for the biggest economic impact. For example, if Brexit is likely to lead to labour market shortages in agriculture or fisheries or in social care, then encouraging these sectors to look afresh at widening diversity would be the target. It is however important that the fund remains open to all sectors.

Recommendations

Promotion

There needs to be a real push to increase awareness of the fund amongst private business. The traditional membership bodies who were contacted previously (e.g. Chambers of Commerce, Business Gateway and Scottish Enterprise) were not mentioned as sources of support by the businesses through this research. Employers did however speak of the importance of initiatives being driven through or in collaboration with specific industry bodies, e.g. Oil and Gas UK, Photonics Society, etc. Adequate time must be given to build awareness and understanding with employers and third sector organisations and stimulate high quality applications.

Value for Money

Stakeholder feedback for this evaluation has provided a strong reminder of high level of benefit which arises from investment in equality. Worklessness is expensive in personal, societal and financial terms. Any new fund should be promoted in the context of the wider cost benefits of the employment of excluded groups and the prevention of job loss.

Size of grant

In order to achieve meaningful, sustainable, embedded change that actually leads to jobs and not short-term training or placements, proper investment is needed.

The minimum grant in Year 1 was £9,500 and in Year 2, £9,697. It is unlikely that an organisation can achieve the sustainable change the fund seeks with less than this per annum. It is recommended that the minimum level of the fund is increased from £5,000 to £10,000 (with a maximum of £75,000). The focus groups suggested that £50,000 per annum was roughly the right amount. However, for some it may be higher. The average grant award across the 3 years was just over £32,000.

The focus groups noted that were economies of scale the longer a project ran. A three-month project is very costly, particularly if you are not a large organisation with the necessary infrastructure already in place.

To encourage third sector organisations (especially the smaller ones with perhaps particular expertise and 'lived experience') grant payments should be made in advance. Few organisations are able to sustain cash-flow with payment in arrears.

Fairwork Framework

It is clear that business awareness and understanding of the Framework is very low. The fund could be used as a vehicle to help explain, illustrate and champion the Fairwork First principles and stimulate their adoption.

Capacity Building Support

The third sector has found previous learning and networking opportunities invaluable. Even during the focus groups, IFP was connecting people who wanted to follow up further opportunities for joint working. There is a real appetite amongst the organisations engaged to understand the changing nature of the workforce demographic and how to diversify their workforce to survive and thrive.

It is recommended therefore that a learning network associated with the fund is created and supported to bring people together to share knowledge.

Monitoring and Evaluation

A clear framework of outcome indicators should be established to enable the efficacy of the fund to be tracked over the engagement period and beyond. Some of these indicators have emerged as part of the evaluation process.



Methodology

Impact Funding Partners conducted a three-stage evaluation programme, employing D S Solutions as an independent external quality assurance partner to bring impartial assessment of what has been achieved, what has not, and recommendations for future workplace equality development.

Stage 1: desk-based research.

Evidence was collated from 46 completed project reports and 12 2021 projects still in progress at the time of research to quantify activity by sector, target priority groups (other data sets etc), identify short-term outcomes and interrogate process, criteria and learning.

Stage 2: primary research.

An online survey was sent to 145 businesses who have benefitted from the fund to seek further evidence of outcomes, gather evidence of impact and seek feedback on the WEF process. 30 surveys returned (21% response rate).

Key stakeholder interviews were conducted with a selection of 7 businesses to gather views on process, criteria, achievements, challenges and learning. Priority was given to evidence from year 1 projects which concluded activity in June 2019, given the challenge of evaluating impact and change for those that recently concluded in October 2020 and those still underway in March 2021.

Interviews were conducted with 4 employees from WEF target priority groups.

Stage 3:

4 focus groups were convened to scope out how the WEF could be developed for maximum impact on the people and sectors it seeks to support, taking into account the changes that have been brought about by current economic circumstances. (14 funded organisations and 9 Scottish Government policy officers).

Evaluation constraints

The evaluation schedule meant businesses had just 2 weeks to return the survey; availability and capacity of personnel with the knowledge to complete the survey further limited the number of responses. In many instances the business was not aware that their activity had received funding, or the staff involved had moved on. Respondents are likely to be the most highly engaged WEF beneficiaries. Despite these limitations, the survey findings and subsequent interviews with employers, employees and stakeholders echo and reinforce feedback from end of project reports and therefore provide a valid basis for evaluation.

Promotion of fund

In 2018/19, with a limited lead time, the fund was mainly promoted through a press release from Scottish Government, on social media, and by direct emails to businesses and organisations across Scotland. Emails were sent by Impact Funding Partners to contacts in both the priority groups and business sectors that the fund aimed to support.

With more time to promote the fund in 2019/20, Impact Funding Partners developed and implemented a full promotional plan. This involved:

- Meetings with intermediaries and directly with businesses.
- Application and information sessions.
- Email to enhanced mailing list.
- Impact Funding Partners social media and website.
- Press release to local press.
- Grant databases (Grantfinder, Funding Scotland etc.).

The 2020/21 round of funding was delivered and managed by Scottish Government. With a very short lead time to the fund launch, a webinar was held for interested parties, to share information about the fund and how to apply.

WEF Information Sessions

For the 2019/20 WEF fund, Impact Funding Partners delivered four information sessions. They were designed to present the fund, answer questions and offer advice on the application process.

- 98 people registered for information sessions across the 4 sessions. (Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow x2). 78 people attended sessions.
- 22 organisations which attended sessions (28.2%) then applied to the fund. 18 of those 22 organisations were awarded funding – an 81.8% success rate for applicants who had attended an information session.
- Of the full portfolio of 27 projects exactly 2/3rds (66.66%) of the successful applicant organisations had attended an information session.

The 2020/21 fund was delivered and managed by Scottish Government. They held a webinar to promote the fund to interested organisations. 10 organisations attended the webinar, but none went on to apply for funding. Some organisations who attended noted that they would not proceed as it was not possible to deliver an impactful project in the three month fund delivery period, without lead in time to develop partnerships with businesses.

Footnotes

- 1 | £1,860,729 awarded in funding. This and underspends over the 3 years funding period resulted in a total spend of £1,805,380.
- 2 | Many projects had extended indirect reach to more businesses through dissemination of information and resources. Data on extended reach has not been consistently collated.
- 3 | These figures are based on the information provided by funded organisations. It should be noted that not all organisations provided the information, particularly in 2018/19, meaning the percentages don't fully reflect the number of businesses benefitted.
- 4 | In addition to these figures, Deaf Action delivered online training to 489 people, from 150 businesses and organisations. This includes some councils, businesses and education settings across the UK.
- 5 | A different set of outcomes was used for Year 3 (funding period concluded 31 March), but projects were not required to report against these. For consistency this report focuses on findings from funding rounds in Years 1 and 2.
- 6 | Most survey respondents did not answer or could not supply the data about resources shared. 6 of 30 companies had shared resources internally. 4 of 30 companies had shared resources externally 54 times.
- 7 | survey sent to 145 businesses, 30 responded (21%). See evaluation constraints P52.

Appendix 1

Funded Organisation	Business	Industry sector	No. of employees	Priority groups
AAI Employability	AEGON	Finance	2020	Three current workstreams – Gender, Wellbeing and Proud (LGBT+). As part of I&D strategy we are expanding them to Age, BAME, Disability and Social Inclusion. Each workstream has the Exec Advocate leading their work.
	Millar & Bryce	Other	112	Young people and female returners
	Free Agent	STEM	-	As opposed to targeting, I'd say we are more thinking how we can raise awareness of our opportunities within key demographic groups.
	Peak Scientific	STEM	237	Women, Under 30s
	Mitajv	Other	4	Women, BME groups
	Age Scotland	Mackenzie Construction	Construction	
Schuh		Retail	700	Women, Older workers
eCom Scotland		STEM	37	Women, Older workers
Falkirk Council Social Work		Public Sector		
Filshill		Retail	210	Women, Older workers
Stirling University		Public Sector	1780	Women, Older workers
Balhousesie Care		Care	1400	Women, Older workers
Rolls Royce		STEM	1350	Women, Older workers
NHS National Services		Public Sector	3500	Women, Older workers
Age Scotland		Charity	68	
Caesar & Howie		Legal		
Parks Motors		Retail		
Morton Fraser		Legal		
W.L. Gore		STEM		
St Andrews University		Public Sector		

Funded Organisation	Business	Industry sector	No. of employees	Priority groups
Action on Hearing Loss	Sky Livingston	STEM		
Bauer Radio	Bauer Radio Ltd	Arts & Culture	612	Minority ethnic people, women, disabled people
Bridges Programme	Oakview Manor care Home	Other	90	Women Workers from Refugee and Migrant Communities
	Florence House Care Home	Care	50	Women Workers from Refugee and Migrant Communities
	Chesterpark Care Home	Care	100	Women Workers from Refugee and Migrant Communities
	Cumbrae House Care Home	Care	60	Women Workers from Refugee and Migrant Communities
	Oakbridge Care Home	Care	95	Women Workers from Refugee and Migrant Communities
Burness Paull LLP	Burness Paull LLP	Legal	478	Women
CSREC	The Macroberts Arts Centre	Arts & Culture		Ethnic Minorities & Protected Characteristics Groups
	The Macdonalds Hotels	Leisure & Tourism		Ethnic Minorities & Protected Characteristics Groups
Enable	Balfour Beatty	Construction	1557	Disabled people
Fife Centre for Equalities	Sky Dunfermline	Transport & Communication	943	BAME, minority ethnic groups
Flexibility Works	The Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society	Arts & Culture	33	Women, older workers
Federation of Scottish Theatres	Edinburgh Fringe Society	Arts & Culture	33 permanent over 100 fixed term annually	Parents and Carers
	Scottish Opera	Arts & Culture		Parents and Carers
	National Theatre Scotland	Arts & Culture		Parents and Carers
	Stellar Quines	Arts & Culture		Parents and Carers
	Scottish Ballet	Arts & Culture		Parents and Carers
	Edinburgh Playhouse	Arts & Culture		Parents and Carers
	Kings Theatre Glasgow	Arts & Culture		Parents and Carers
	Theatre Royal Glasgow	Arts & Culture		Parents and Carers

Funded Organisation	Business	Industry sector	No. of employees	Priority groups
Genanalytics	Morgan Sindall Construction Scotland	Construction	140	Women, Older Workers, Ethnic Minorities, Individuals with a disability
Glasgow NW CAB	Jacobs Engineering Ltd	Construction	8367	Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) Groups
Glasgow Opportunities	Helping Hands Therapy	Care	2	Disabled people
	J.G. Ross (Bakers) Ltd	Manufacturing		
Highland Tsi	Pat Munro	Construction	170	Staff with long term physical and/or mental health conditions
Flexibility Works	The Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society	Arts & Culture	33	Women, older workers
Outside the Box	Ace Place Nursery	Other	30	Women
	Acre Wood Nursery	Other	12	Women
	Cadzow Nursery	Other	20	Women
	Indigo Childcare Group	Other	25	Women
Port of Leith Housing Association	TB Mackay Ltd	Other	98	Women, ethnic minorities
	J Smart and Co Ltd	Construction	126	Women, ethnic minorities
	CCG Ltd	Construction	131	Women, ethnic minorities
	Cruden Homes (East)	Construction	60	Women, ethnic minorities
	Queensberry Ltd	Other	31	Women, ethnic minorities, disabled
	TEYE Ltd	Other	16	Women, disabled
	Brown and Wallace	Construction	56	Women, ethnic minorities, disabled
	Mitie Property Services	Other	103	Women, disabled
	Dalton Demolition Ltd	Other	20	Women, ethnic minorities, disabled
	Cala Homes (East) Ltd	Construction	179	Women, disabled
Scotland's Bravest	Murdoch MacKenzie Construction Ltd	Construction	36	Women, ethnic minorities, disabled
	Bear Scotland	Transport & Communication		Disabled workers, Female veterans or spouses
	Balfour Beatty	Construction		Disabled workers, Female veterans or spouses

Funded Organisation	Business	Industry sector	No. of employees	Priority groups	
Scottish Engineering	RUA Medical Ltd	Life Sciences	25	Improving the level of diversity and inclusion within our workforce	
	Catalent CTS (Edinburgh) Ltd	Pharmaceutical / Life Sciences	230	Women, Returners, LGBT+	
	Soapworks Ltd	FMCG	84	We have an aging workforce and therefore are looking at how we can support those employees alongside bringing in younger employees. Want more women in senior/ managerial roles.	
	Diodes Incorporates	Engineering	289	Women, returners, graduates and a younger workforce	
	New Acoustics Ltd	Construction & Engineering	6	Women, older workers	
	The L.S. Starrett Company Ltd	Manufacturing	160	Women and younger workforce	
	MAHLE Engine Systems UK Ltd	Manufacturing	185	Women and older workers	
	Hayward Tyler Fluid Handling Ltd	Engineering	24	Women	
	Escape Recruitment Services Ltd	Supply chain supporting Engineering and Manufacturing businesses across Scotland	25	Women, older workers, returners to work, workers with transferable skills, workers who can only work part-time etc.	
	Distell International	FCMG	240	women, women in leadership roles, older worker	
	Fife Fabrications Ltd	Engineering	112	All	
	Coherent Scotland	Industrial microelectronics, materials processing, Scientific researching	148 (160 inc. open positions)	Women	
	CB Technology Ltd	Electronic Contract Manufacturer	69	Would like to attract younger employees (under the age of 30), we believe we have a diverse group already but we do not have many younger members of staff	
	Aggreko Manufacturing Ltd	Engineering, Manufacturing and Design	225	Women	
	STEP	SSP Recruitment Solutions Ltd	Other	23	Disabled, minority ethnic people and older people
	Scottish Engineering	ATG Engineering	Engineering	170	Women
VIAS	Abellio-ScotRail	Transport & Communications	5305	Learning disability and autism	
	Springfield Properties PLC	Construction	712	Learning disability and autism	
WSREC	Lambert Smith Hampton	Other	1378	Women, minority ethnic, LGBT	

Appendix 2

WEF criteria 2018 – 2021

2018 – 2019

Fund Outcomes

- Employment opportunities and progression in the workplace are improved for participant groups and consideration is given to how this can be embedded into the workplace to ensure lasting change.
- Knowledge, skills, policies and practices are improved in order to address employment inequalities, discrimination and barriers/challenges within the workplace.
- A more inclusive working environment is created through employees and employers working in partnership.

Priority Groups

- Minority ethnic people; Women; Disabled people; and Older workers (those aged over 50).

Eligible Organisations

- Any private business currently operating with a base in Scotland.
- Any third sector organisation, currently with a base in Scotland, that has agreement in place, prior to application, to work with a specific private business(es).

2019 – 2020

Fund Outcomes

- Employment opportunities and progression in the workplace are improved for the priority groups and improvements are embedded into the workplace to ensure lasting change.
- Knowledge, skills, policies and practices are improved in order to address employment inequalities, discrimination and barriers/challenges within the workplace.
- A more inclusive working environment is created and continued through employees and employers working in partnership to address employment inequalities and introduce positive practices.

Priority Groups

- Minority ethnic people; Disabled people; Older workers (those aged over 50); People who experience gender-based violence; and Workers who are experiencing social isolation and/or loneliness; and Women (following consultation, the Scottish Government would like to also highlight their support to: women during menopause; female partners of veterans; and female veterans).

Eligible Organisations

- Any private business currently operating with a base in Scotland.
- Any third sector organisation, currently with a base in Scotland, that has agreement in place, prior to application, to work with a specific private business(es).

2020 – 2021

Fund Outcomes

- Promoting progressive workplace policies which improve productivity and innovation.
- Promoting greater workplace democracy, employee voice and commitment.
- Encouraging opportunities for employee development, skills development and lifelong learning.
- Developing best practice in industrial relations to encourage constructive dialogue in a range of different sectors and workplaces.

Priority Groups

- Minority ethnic workers; Older workers (those aged 50 and over); Disabled workers; Women; Veterans; Workers experiencing social isolation and loneliness; Workers who have experienced or suffered domestic abuse; Workers from a rural area; Workers from a SIMD area; Other group (please state).

Eligible Organisations

- To be eligible to apply, organisations need to be a *body (including a charity) which is established for charitable, benevolent or philanthropic purposes' as defined in the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. *Eligible organisations should aim to have identified a private employer or public body to work with prior to submitting an application to the fund.

An independent evaluation by



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