Achieving Equal Pay in the Workplace

Your Guide to Changing Policy and Practice

Making the Case for an Equal Pay Audit

Discriminatory inequalities in pay between women and men doing equal work are unlawful.

The inequality persists because employers are ignorant of the law, or simply do not care. Without direct intervention this discrimination could remain in place for decades to come.

As well as setting out the need to comply with the law, using a business case argument can encourage employers - particularly private sector employers - to get on board with the audit. Research shows organisations often comply with equality and diversity initiatives when the business case is used.

Unions can highlight the business case benefits of equal pay such as improved employee morale, reduced reputational risk, less chance of expensive legal fees from fighting tribunal cases, or damaged employee relations and decreased likelihood they will be an employer of choice.

Employers are more likely to conduct an equal pay audit if you use non-confrontational language.

> For example, you could call the audit a consultation; this would enable you to broaden the scope of the audit to also look at wider policies that touch on pay, such as recruitment.

The pursuit of equal pay for equal work is a priority for most trade unions and should be a goal for workplace branches drawing on the policy position of the union, and allied advice and guidance on this. Periodic pay negotiations should commit to a focus on equal pay in the form of a full pay audit or equality impact assessment. The data made public by employers should be used as the basis to negotiate for a pay audit and/or equality impact assessment.