

National Performance Framework: Inquiry into proposed National Outcomes

Response by Zero Tolerance for the Scottish Government, 28 June 2024

Information about your organisation

Zero Tolerance is Scotland's expert organisation focusing on the primary prevention of men's violence against women and girls (VAWG) by tackling the root cause: gender inequality. Eradicating VAWG is essential to building a successful, inclusive, safe, well, kind and equal Scotland. Weaving gender equality into the everyday fabric of Scottish life is a central component of primary prevention of VAWG, and realising the human rights of women and girls is a key way to make gender equality a reality.

1. What are your views of this updated purpose for the National Performance Framework?

Zero Tolerance welcomes the updated purpose for the National Performance Framework (NPF) to reflect renewed emphasis on wellbeing. Centring wellbeing now and for future generations is welcome to encourage long lasting and sustainable change throughout the NPF.

It is essential that the purpose of the NPF is embedded throughout the National Outcomes. People across Scotland face different challenges to their wellbeing and these challenges often intersect and compound. As we will outline in our response, to

ensure wellbeing improvement for women and girls across Scotland, the new and improved National Outcomes must actively promote gender equality across all areas.

2. In your view, do the proposed National Outcomes match the purpose of the National Performance Framework?

Please explain your answer.

The proposed National Outcomes, while with many welcome changes, do not go far enough to match the purpose of the National Performance Framework. The purpose of the framework is to improve the wellbeing of people across Scotland now and in the future. However, the proposed National Outcomes miss vital opportunities to embed and promote gender equality across the NPF.

There is no National Outcome dedicated to gender equality. This limits the ability of the NPF to improve wellbeing for women and girls in Scotland. Zero Tolerance recognises and welcomes the specific references to gender that have been added to a number of the proposed National Outcomes. However, we believe a National Outcome dedicated to gender equality is needed if wellbeing for women across Scotland is to be improved. A National Outcome allows the Scottish Government to be held to account for its performance in this area. Without a dedicated outcome, it is more likely work to tackle gender inequality will be deprioritised.

A central purpose of the NPF is to embed the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Scotland. Nonetheless, SDG 5: achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls, has not been given an equivalent standalone outcome in the NPF. As

previous evidence has shown that the NPF's alignment with SDG 5 is weak (Long, 2019), detailed alignment is needed between the NPF and SDG 5 (Engender, 2023). A dedicated Outcome to gender equality would be the first step to ensuring this.

Many of the Outcomes covered by the NPF are highly gendered. To ensure the National Outcomes match the purpose of the NPF, gender must be more explicitly integrated across all relevant Outcomes. For example, the "Communities," "Wellbeing Economy and Fair Work," and "Health" Outcomes should include specific language around addressing gender-based barriers, discrimination, and inequalities. "Wellbeing Economy and Fair Work" should place stronger emphasis on achieving gender equality in employment, pay, and progression.

It is encouraging to see that the Children and Young People Outcome focuses on ensuring that all children are safe, loved, respected, and able to realise their potential. However, evidence shows that the best start is a gender equal start (Care Inspectorate and Zero Tolerance, 2018: 5-6). A gender equal start provides children of all genders the opportunity to explore and learn without restriction, allows them to develop a range of fundamental skills (from understanding three-dimensional space to empathy and relationship building), and works to prevent VAWG later. Therefore, a gender-sensitive Outcome is vital.

More could be added to ensure that the 'Children and Young People' Outcome works for girls and helps embed gender equality for children in Scotland. The Outcome should have a sentence added to explicitly acknowledge the need to realise rights for the most marginalised children, including girls, ethnic minority children, LGBT+ children, disabled

children, care experienced children, children growing up in poverty, and those facing multiple of these oppressions. By not naming these groups and merely noting the importance of 'equality,' the message is diluted, and the needs of these children are likely to become lost.

The Education and Lifelong Learning Outcome has been strengthened by new additions. However, despite being highlighted by both Zero Tolerance and the Children's Parliament, the need for a gender equal education is not noted. Scotland needs an education system which challenges gender stereotypes, addresses sexism and harassment in schools, promotes gender-equal play and learning, and ensures the workforce is trained on gender issues. Therefore, this Outcome should explicitly state that 'Education spaces are equally safe for women and girls' to set the expected standard for education in Scotland. This is particularly important given the Scottish Government's recent Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research highlighted misogyny as a key issue (Scottish Government, 2023).

The mainstreaming of gender across the Outcomes will help to ensure the Outcomes match the purpose of the NPF. Centring gender equality is vital for improving Scotland's performance across all areas.

References

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3. What do you think of the changes being proposed?

Zero Tolerances welcomes the use of a thematic gender review to inform changes to the National Outcomes. It is encouraging to note that the gender review highlighted issues to be addressed; including “the importance of intersectional data to understand differing experience of the National Outcomes; the need to better mainstream gender throughout the NPF; the gendered aspects of access to safety and freedom from violence mentioned in the NPF; gendered differences in experiences of housing/homelessness and care” (p. 7).

Expanding the Human Rights Outcome to include ‘Equality’ is a welcome change for improving the wellbeing of all people in Scotland. However, the new definition should be further expanded to ‘We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from

violence and discrimination'. Adding 'free from violence' would help ensure further accountability to eradicating violence against women and girls in Scotland.

Zero Tolerance welcomes the expansion of the Equality and Human Rights Outcome definition to include specific reference to intersectionality, gender equality, and a Scotland free of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Zero Tolerance welcomes the new explicit references to gender across Care, Equality and Human Rights, Health, and Reduce Poverty Outcomes. However, despite recognition in the gender review that better mainstreaming of gender is needed throughout the NPF, the proposed National Outcomes miss vital opportunities to embed gender equality.

A dedicated Gender Equality Outcome is needed if the NPF is to successfully improve wellbeing for women and girls across Scotland. It is welcome that reference to gender equality is included in the Equality and Human Rights Outcome, but this does not go far enough. While the NPF is intended to reflect the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Scotland, SDG 5 (gender equality) is not given a direct equivalent in the NPF. This impedes the ability of the NPF to make substantive progress towards gender equality and contradicts the Scottish Government's equality rhetoric (Engender, 2023).

Zero Tolerance recommends the inclusion of a Gender Equality Outcome, with robust indicators for measuring violence against women and girls (VAWG). Women's rights are human rights, and men's violence is a violation of the right to live in safety and with dignity. As human rights are interdependent, ending VAWG underpins the meaningful

realisation of all other rights for women and girls. Therefore, tracking levels of VAWG would be an invaluable indicator for Scotland's progress on achieving women and girls' human rights.

The proposed Outcomes miss vital opportunities to mainstream gender. Zero Tolerance recognises that the definition of the Communities Outcome now acknowledges 'that different approaches may be needed to enable all groups to feel safe in public spaces' (p. 137). However, this gender-neutral phrasing obscures the reality that feelings of safety in public vary widely by gender. Women and girls are taught to fear public space due to the constant threat of sexual violence. Data from the Equality Evidence Finder (2022) shows that women were less likely than men to feel safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark in 2019/20 (65% compared to 90% of men). It is important that the Communities Outcome reflects this gendered reality. Mainstreaming gender across the National Outcomes would help ensure the Outcomes reflect the lives of women and girls across Scotland.

The Wellbeing Economy and Fair Work Outcome is likewise missing a gender perspective. Women face poorer outcomes across the economy due to institutionalised sexism and gender inequality. Women are the majority of low-paid workers, more likely to be in precarious work in comparison to men, and men's violence constrains women's labour market participation, reducing their financial independence (Close the Gap, 2023). However, this reality is not reflected in the proposed Outcome. Zero Tolerance recommends expanding the definition of the Wellbeing Economy and Fair Work Outcome to include reference to tackling gender inequalities in employment, pay, and

progression. This Outcome could be measured with robust indicators focused on the gender pay gap, occupational segregation, access to flexible work, and support for women-owned businesses, for example.

It is encouraging to see that the Children and Young People Outcome focuses on ensuring that all children are safe, loved, respected, and able to realise their potential. However, evidence shows that the best start is a gender equal start (Care Inspectorate and Zero Tolerance, 2018: 5-6). A gender equal start provides children of all genders the opportunity to explore and learn without restriction, allows them to develop a range of fundamental skills (from understanding three-dimensional space to empathy and relationship building), and works to prevent VAWG later. Therefore, a gender-sensitive outcome is vital.

More could be added to ensure that the Children and Young People Outcome works for girls and helps embed gender equality for children in Scotland. The Outcome should have a sentence added to explicitly acknowledge the need to realise rights for the most marginalised children, including girls, ethnic minority children, LGBT+ children, disabled children, care experienced children, children growing up in poverty, and those facing multiple of these oppressions. By not naming these groups and merely noting the importance of 'equality,' the message is diluted, and the needs of these children are likely to become lost.

The Education and Lifelong Learning Outcome has been strengthened by new additions. However, despite being highlighted by both Zero Tolerance and the Children's

Parliament, the need for a gender equal education is not noted. Scotland needs an education system which challenges gender stereotypes, addresses sexism and harassment in schools, promotes gender-equal play and learning, and ensures the workforce is trained on gender issues. Therefore, this outcome should explicitly state that 'Education spaces are equally safe for women and girls' to set the expected standard for education in Scotland. This is particularly important given the Scottish Government's recent Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research highlighted misogyny as a key issue (Scottish Government, 2023).

References

Care Inspectorate and Zero Tolerance. (2018) Gender equal play in early learning and childcare. Available at: <https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/3466/gender-equal-play-in-early-learning-and-childcare.pdf>

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<https://www.engender.org.uk/content/publications/National-Outcomes-Review---Engender-Call-for-Evidence---Final.pdf>

Scottish Government. (2022) Equality Evidence Finder. Available online: <https://scotland.shinyapps.io/sg-equality-evidence-finder/>

Scottish Government. (2023) Behaviour in Scottish schools: research report 2023.

Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/behaviour-scottish-schools-research-report-2023/>

4. Are there any policy priorities that should be reflected in the proposed National Outcomes but which, you consider, are not?

There is no National Outcome dedicated to gender equality. This limits the ability of the NPF to improve wellbeing for women and girls in Scotland. Gender inequality is still widespread. Gender inequality is both a cause and consequence of men's violence against women and girls (VAWG). It is a violation of human rights, extremely costly to society, and deeply harms a significant number of women and girls (Oliver et al., 2019). There were 14,834 sexual crimes recorded in Scotland in the year ending June 2023 (Scottish Government, 2023). The police recorded 64,807 incidents of domestic abuse in 2021-22. Four in five incidents had a female victim-survivor and a male perpetrator (Scottish Government, 2022).

A dedicated National Outcome would allow the Scottish Government to be held to account for its performance on achieving gender equality. Without a dedicated Outcome, it is more likely work to tackle gender inequality will be deprioritised.

A dedicated Gender Equality Outcome must contain a range of VAWG related indicators. As Zero Tolerance stated in our original consultation response, SDG 5 includes a commitment to 'eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in the public

and private spheres, including trafficking, sexual and other types of exploitation.'

Despite this, the National Outcomes Framework does not include gender specific indicators related to crime and victimisation.

VAWG related indicators are critical for measuring progress towards a Gender Equality Outcome. However, this statistical data must be understood using a gendered lens (Johansson and Haandrikman, 2021). Women's greater fear of crime and victimisation in comparison to men, even though the rates of experiencing crime are similar or lower, is often referred to as the 'fear of crime paradox' (Johansson and Haandrikman, 2021, Vera-Gray and Kelly, 2020: 267). Women's fear of crime is not paradoxical when understood through a gender sensitive lens that considers the broader social context.

References

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Oliver, R., Alexander, B., Roe, S., and Wlasny, M. (2019) The economic and social costs of domestic abuse. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/918897/horr107.pdf

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Vera-Gray, F. and Kelly, L. (2020) Contested Gendered Space: Public Sexual Harassment and Women's Safety Work, *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, 44:4, 265-275.

5. What are your views on the Scottish Government's consultation on the proposed National Outcomes?

Zero Tolerance welcomes that a thematic gender review of the National Performance Framework was carried out as recommended by NACWG. It is now essential that the findings from the gender review, notably the need for intersectional data and gender mainstreaming throughout the NPF, are embedded in National Outcomes and overall NPF.

Zero Tolerance welcomes the inclusion of the gender review's findings into the proposed National Outcomes. All changes acknowledged in point 30 are highly welcome but especially the expanded definition of the Equality and Human Rights Outcome to include the promotion of gender equality and addressing discrimination and violence against women and girls.

Zero Tolerance welcomes the inclusion of children's voices in the Review through The Children's Parliament. It is noteworthy that children involved in this report also highlighted the need for a gender equal experience of education and learning. Article 19 of UNCRC states that children must be listened to and taken seriously. Therefore, our above recommendation that the Education Outcome highlights the need for schools to be equally safe for girls and women is particularly pressing.

6. How do you think the proposed National Outcomes will impact on inequality?

As Zero Tolerance has highlighted in this response, the proposed Outcomes miss vital opportunities to mainstream gender across the board. The Communities Outcome is not well gendered, and the proposed expanded definition does not include reference to gender despite the gendered differences in experiences of safety (Scottish Government, 2022). Given the lack of gender mainstreaming throughout the proposed Outcomes, it is likely that insignificant progress will be made towards equality in these areas. Gender mainstreaming will allow the Outcomes to reflect the wellbeing challenges faced by

women and girls across Scotland and allow the relevant parties to be held to account in addressing them.

Zero Tolerance echoes Engender's (2023) concerns that the current effectiveness of the NPF is undermined by a lack of gendered policy coherence. An integrated, intersectional and gendered approach to equality must be embedded across the National Outcomes if the NPF is to have a substantial impact on inequality. As Engender (2023) note, the National Outcome on Communities has not been well aligned with the Scottish Government's national VAWG strategy, Equally Safe, despite having similar ambitions.

While the proposed National Outcomes mark an improvement on the last NPF, they alone will not be enough to make a significant impact on inequality. The proposed National Outcomes must be backed up by gender-sensitive sex-disaggregated data and robust indicators for gender equality. Only two of the NPF's 81 statistical indicators measure a form of gender inequality (Engender, 2023). Moreover, sex-disaggregated data, while a limited measure of gender equality in itself, is not available for every indicator. If the National Outcomes are to be substantial progress towards equality, they must be informed by gender-sensitive sex-disaggregated data and gendered indicators.

References

Engender. (2023) Engender response to the Scottish Government's Call for Evidence on the National Outcomes. Available at:

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Scottish Government. (2022) Equality Evidence Finder. Available online:

<https://scotland.shinyapps.io/sg-equality-evidence-finder/>

7. Do you think the proposed National Outcomes align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals? Please explain your answer.

A central purpose of the NPF is to embed the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Scotland. Nonetheless, SDG 5: achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls, has not been given an equivalent standalone Outcome in the NPF. As previous evidence has shown that NPF's alignment with SDG 5 is weak (Long, 2019), detailed alignment is needed between the NPF and SDG 5 (Engender, 2023). A dedicated Outcome to Gender Equality would be the first step to ensuring this.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include a specific goal (Goal 5) to 'achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.' This commitment has nine outcomes and fourteen indicators. In addition, gender has been mainstreamed across the other SDGs and each of the other SDGs have gender-specific indicators (UN Statistics Division, 2022). It is critical that the Scottish Government commitment to gender equality is reinforced throughout the framework by ensuring that each of the National Outcomes include gender as a key consideration.

As Zero Tolerance noted in our previous submission, SDG 5 includes a commitment to 'eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking, sexual and other types of exploitation.' Despite this, the

National Outcomes Framework does not currently include gender specific indicators related to crime and victimisation.

References

Engender. (2023) Engender response to the Scottish Government's Call for Evidence on the National Outcomes. Available at:

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UN Statistics Division. (2022) Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2022. Available at: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/gender-snapshot/2022/GenderSnapshot.pdf>

8. To what extent do the proposed National Outcomes support joined-up policy making in Scotland?

Opportunities to mainstream gender have been missed in the proposed National Outcomes. This undermines joined up policy making as opportunities to create and strengthen ties across policy areas have been limited. To rectify this, Zero Tolerance supports the use of a 'twin-track' approach to ensure joined up policy making across gender equality areas. This involves gender mainstreaming throughout the NPF and its

Outcomes and the creation of a dedicated Gender Equality Outcome. A twin-track approach to gender would ensure the NPF more closely reflects the SDGs by employing the same method to centre gender.

The First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls (NACWG) have highlighted how Scottish policy is often undermined by a lack of gendered policy coherence (NACWG, 2019). Indeed, the current NPF is ill-aligned with the Scottish Government's national VAWG strategy, Equally Safe. This can be seen in the proposed Communities Outcome, which is missing a gendered analysis, despite sharing similar goals with Equally Safe (Engender, 2023).

The NPF and its Outcomes should be the cornerstone of how the Scottish Government will achieve equality (Engender, 2023). To ensure this, gender must be mainstreamed across the Outcomes. This will bring the Outcomes more in line with existing gender equality legislation and enable policy coherence.

References

Engender. (2023) Engender response to the Scottish Government's Call for Evidence on the National Outcomes. Available at:

<https://www.engender.org.uk/content/publications/National-Outcomes-Review---Engender-Call-for-Evidence---Final.pdf>

First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls. (2019) 2019 Report and Recommendations. Available at:

<https://www.generationequal.scot/app/uploads/2022/03/2019report.pdf>.

9. What should the implementation plan contain to make sure that the National Outcomes are used in decision-making?

Gender competency training for decision makers across the Scottish Government would allow for more successful implementation of the National Outcomes. For the NPF to achieve its goal, decision makers must understand the realities of gender inequality in Scotland and their role in tackling it. This includes understanding, and effective use of, intersectional analysis, and gender mainstreaming.

Zero Tolerance echoes the NACWG's (2019) call for Scottish Ministers to deliver an annual statement, followed by a debate, on gender policy coherence to the Scottish Parliament. This may provide a means of accountability, helping to ensure that the National Outcomes are first used by Scottish Government decision-makers, and appropriately aligned with existing gender and equalities related policy.

References

First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls. (2019) 2019 Report and Recommendations. Available at:

<https://www.generationequal.scot/app/uploads/2022/03/2019report.pdf>.

For Further Information

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About Us

Zero Tolerance is a Scottish charity working for a Scotland free from all men's violence against women by tackling its root cause: gender inequality.