

Achieving Equal Pay in the Workplace

Your Guide to Changing Policy and Practice

Recruitment

Bias and inequality can creep into even the most transparent and equal pay systems and lead to unequal pay and the maintaining of the gender pay gap.

The following questions about recruitment processes will help you see if this is the case.

Does the organisation publish salaries when advertising jobs?

This is, for prospective employees, the first step in pay transparency. Not publishing salaries in job adverts is symptomatic of an organisation which would hire a candidate and proceed to pay them as little as they might get away with. In such situations, women tend to lose out.

Does the organisation require applicants for jobs to submit their previous salary on their application form?

Previous salary information may be used to determine a new starting salary. For successful female job applicants, this practice therefore continues the undervaluing and pay inequality of their previous job into their new role. A job advert should therefore have an attached salary value, and previous salary information should not be sought in application forms. In fact, inquiring about previous salaries is banned in some US states, such as New York.

Does the organisation use the practise of ‘managerial discretion’ over starting salaries?

Where managers can negotiate on the starting salary, [research shows](https://ideas.repec.org/p/udt/wpgobi/201804.html) (<https://ideas.repec.org/p/udt/wpgobi/201804.html>) that women are offered lower starting salaries than men on average.

What steps does the organisation take to reduce bias, unconscious or otherwise, during the recruitment process? Does the HR department anonymise applications by removing names, dates of birth or addresses before applications are subjected to selection for interview?

Does the organisation offer posts at pro-rata grades in advertisements?

This signals the employer’s flexibility and commitment to openness in hiring staff whose working pattern will not conform to a full time 8am-5pm ‘norm.’

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How often does the organisation monitor and review its recruitment process for any evidence of bias?

A good employer will regularly review the process for potential bias. Doing this can prevent bias and reduce discrimination.

Does the organisation include a link to the pay structure and pay progression criteria (the way pay rises are awarded) in their induction for new employees?

This helps break the stigma of talking about pay. If people are reluctant to talk openly about pay, women are more likely to lose out.

Does the organisation send out an offer letter confirming the salary for the role and other contractual details? What specific information is included in this letter and when is this letter sent out?

This should happen as soon as possible and employees have a right to receive an offer letter within two months of being verbally offered the job. The absence of a written contract increases vulnerability.