



Promoting gender equality as you respond to the coronavirus pandemic

COVID-19 has dramatically changed our lives and our workplaces.

It has shown that flexible working conditions can benefit both the employer and employee. The pandemic has also highlighted existing gender inequalities, such as the gender pay gap, the unequal burden of caring work on women, and immediate and long-term effects on women's economic and financial security. While women have been on the frontline of the crisis, they have been under-represented in significant decision-making forums, which can have lasting repercussions.

Workplaces can take active steps to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women as part of their recovery plans.

FACT

More women than men have lost their jobs due to COVID-19.

More time at home places women at higher risk of domestic and family violence.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR WORKPLACE

Have you looked at whether staff in your organisation that were stood down during the crisis were male or female? Are you measuring the ratio of male and female new hires? Are you measuring gender ratios in different work areas and levels of your organisation?

Have you reviewed or updated family violence policies to see if/how they extend to flexible working and working from home arrangements?

FACT

Flexible work arrangements are not a barrier to effective leadership.

Women in Australia do the majority of care work (64.4% for women, 36.1% for men).

Flexible work arrangements can contribute to more sharing of care and domestic work.

The national gender pay gap in Australia is 13.9%.

Men are less likely to request flexible work arrangements and more likely to have such requests refused.

Sexual harassment does not only occur in the office, it can also happen online.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR WORKPLACE

What proportion of your leaders work flexibly? Are both women and men who work flexibly being given promotion opportunities?

Have you compared the number of male and female staff who use flexible work arrangements?

Are flexible work arrangements offered and used equally by men and women? Do your flexible work arrangements include working from home, adjusted work hours and caring responsibilities? Will you continue to offer these arrangements when your workplace resumes full operations?

Are you measuring how cost-saving measures during the crisis impact on women and men? Has your organisation conducted a gender pay audit to understand if women and men are being paid equally?

Have you reviewed whether policies around flexible work equally apply to men and women? Have you analysed how this works in practice? For example, how many men apply for flexible work arrangements and how many are refused?

Has your workplace continued to track sex-based discrimination and harassment? Has the crisis weakened controls to protect staff from harassment? Does your sexual harassment policy extend to flexible working and working from home arrangements?

For more information on how your workplace can prevent violence against women go to **Workplace Equality and Respect**
<https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/>