

Family-Friendliness as Part of the Workplace Gender Equality Plan

Objective

To identify the obligations set by [the Act on Equality between Women and Men](#) in Finland and the benefits of gender equality planning, promote gender equality in the workplace, and define family-friendly goals and measures related to reconciling work and family as part of the workplace gender equality plan.

Why?

Based on [the Equality Act in Finland](#), every employer has a duty to promote gender equality in the workplace. An employer has to draw up a statutory gender equality plan if the number of staff in the service of the employer is regularly 30 or more. Nothing prevents smaller workplaces from also preparing a gender equality plan.

A gender equality plan may be a standalone document or included in, for example, the personnel and training plan or the occupational safety and health action plan. In some workplaces, the gender equality plan is combined with the equality plan required under the Non-Discrimination Act in Finland. Family-friendly measures that promote gender equality in the workplace, such as actions and practices that support the reconciliation of work and family, are worth including in the gender equality plan.

The objectives of gender equality planning are to:

- facilitate the reconciliation of work and family for all genders by paying attention to work arrangements
- promote the placement of women and men in different tasks and create equal opportunities for career advancement
- encourage all genders to apply for open positions on an equal basis
- advance gender equality in working conditions, particularly in pay
- act in ways that proactively prevent gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment.

Content and Preparation of the Gender Equality Plan

A gender equality plan must be prepared at least every two years in accordance with the Equality Act in Finland. The gender equality plan is to be drawn up in cooperation with the shop steward, elected representative, occupational safety delegate or other representatives appointed by the employees some workplaces. In some workplaces, a dedicated gender equality working group is responsible for supporting and overseeing the process.

According to the Equality Act in Finland, the gender equality plan must include at minimum:

- an assessment of the gender equality situation in the workplace, including details of the employment of women and men in different jobs, and a pay survey presenting the classifications of jobs performed by women and men, the pay for those jobs and the differences in pay
- the necessary measures planned for introduction or implementation with the purpose of promoting gender equality and achieving equality in pay; and a review of the extent to which measures previously included in it have been implemented and of the results achieved

In addition, the employer's obligation to prevent discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression must be considered when preparing the plan and deciding on its measures.

Employee participation is important. This can be ensured, for example, by including employee representatives in the gender equality working group (or equivalent) that drafts the plan, monitors the progress of measures, and updates the actions.

The plan must be accessible to all employees, and the progress of the measures should be communicated regularly, for example, in staff briefings.

Including Family-Friendliness in the Workplace Gender Equality Plan

Recording goals and measures that promote family-friendliness in the gender equality plan supports the implementation of these practices and enables their systematic monitoring.

Checklist

Check whether your gender equality plan includes the following elements:

- It is clear who is responsible for preparing and updating the workplace gender equality plan – for example, management, HR, or a gender equality working group.
- An assessment of the current level of family-friendliness at the workplace has been carried out. In addition to the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health's Work and Family Reconciliation Tool for the Workplace the assessment may draw on:
 - Strategic goals and values of the organisation
 - Statistical and other data, such as:
 - workplace surveys
 - employee satisfaction or pulse surveys
 - parenting leave usage by gender and by job role/position
 - gender distribution by job title
 - employment types (permanent, fixed-term, part-time, temporary agency workers)
 - age structure and education levels of staff
 - career progression and participation in training
 - sickness absence and other leaves (own illness, child's illness, parenting leave, childcare leave)
 - work arrangements (e.g., amount of shift work) and use of flexibility such as remote or hybrid work
 - turnover rates (resignations for family reasons)
- Based on the current state assessment, short and long-term goals and measures to promote family-friendliness have been defined for the coming years.
- Indicators have been established to assess the progress of family-friendly measures.
- Responsible persons or units have been assigned for all measures.
- A schedule for implementing the measures has been prepared.

- Regular monitoring and evaluation of measures have been ensured, for example, by management and the gender equality working group. An external evaluator may also be used when assessing results or identifying new development needs.
- At the latest when updating the gender equality plan, the impact of the measures has been evaluated.
- Processes are in place to update measures and add new family-friendly development areas to the plan when needed.
 - Suggestions for new or needed practices are collected from staff, for example through employee or equality surveys.
 - The Work and Family Reconciliation Tool for the Workplace and its practical examples (the “method cards”) are used in development work.

If there are many family-friendly measures addressing diverse family situations and forms, they may also be compiled into a more extensive separate family-friendliness plan, which can be attached to the gender equality plan.

Staff Involvement

- Involve employees in the preparation of the gender equality plan, as well as in defining measures related to reconciling work and family.
- Inform staff about family-friendly work–family reconciliation practices, for example, on the organisation’s website, on internal communication channels such as the intranet or information boards, at staff meetings, in job advertisements and interviews, and during onboarding of new employees.
- Regularly assess, e.g., once a year through an employee survey, how well family-friendly practices and work–family reconciliation are functioning in practice.

See the other method cards

- [Practices for Reconciling Work and Family](#)
- [Parenting Leave Practices](#)
- [Practices that consider different family forms and situations](#)
- [Practices for Preventing Pregnancy Discrimination and Parenting Leave Discrimination](#)

Sources and further information

- [Equality planning at workplaces | Ombudsman for Equality](#)
- [Drafting an equality plan | Ombudsman for Equality](#)
- [Act on Equality between Women and Men | 609/1986 | Legislation | Finlex](#)

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