

**Case Study**  
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Workplace Equality Fund Evaluation

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## Scottish Government Workplace Equality Fund

In 2018, Impact Funding Partners (IFP) was contracted by two key policy units within Scottish Government, the Fair Work and Skills Division and the Equality and Human Rights Division, to establish a new programme of work.

The Workplace Equality Fund (WEF) aims to reduce employment inequalities, discrimination and barriers within the private sector so that everyone in Scotland has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. IFP worked in close partnership with the two policy units to design, promote and manage three rounds of funded activity. This involved engagement with businesses, industry bodies and third sector organisations with expertise in working with the priority participant groups.

In 2021, Scottish Government went out to tender for a consultancy to evaluate the impact of the WEF and to undertake a scoping exercise to design a future programme which takes lessons from the findings. IFP was appointed to complete this piece of work.

This was a challenging commission as the timescale was incredibly tight to get the level of engagement we wanted from all stakeholders (two months from inception to completion). IFP took a collaborative approach, working with associates DS Solutions and Electrify Marketing and Communications to deliver a high quality evaluation which met all milestones and delivered the final report on time.

IFP undertook a design-led process starting with the aim of the commissioner (Scottish Government) and working back to agree a plan with our staff team and associates. Regular communication was maintained with the commissioner on at least a weekly basis throughout the process. Due to the timescales for this commission all elements had to start simultaneously:

- DS Solutions undertook a review of the evidence gathered by IFP during the funding period to ensure external quality assurance and impartiality;
- IFP/ DS Solutions worked together to engage users in the evaluation of the WEF and to produce the draft and final reports;
- Electrify worked alongside us from the inception meeting with SG to ensure our messaging and presentation was correct and of a publishable standard.

We employed a range of methods for user engagement in the evaluation and scoping to ensure the widest reach and remove barriers to participation:

- A survey was designed and issued to the businesses who had benefitted from workplace equality initiatives;
- Interviews were held with business project leads;
- Interviews were held with individual employees from the participant groups (women, minority ethnic people, disabled people; older workers, people who experience gender based violence and workers who are experiencing social isolation and/or loneliness;

- Focus groups were held with third sector organisations who had partnered with businesses, using their expertise to make improvements for the above priority groups;
- A focus group was held with Scottish Government officials from across 10 policy units with a strategic interest in the WEF.

The [final report](#) delivers insight into the achievements, challenges and learning from the three years of the WEF. It contains a SWOT analysis alongside detailed recommendations to inform future programme design. These include longer timeframes, increased co-production, reviewing target sectors and ensuring that the priority participant groups are not too wide, diluting understanding and impact.

A new WEF programme has been announced. This will act on the recommendations of our report and importantly we are aware that the short-term nature of the programme is one of the key messages taken on board. The programme will now run over three years.

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