# Research specification

**Department/Organisation: Government Equalities Office**

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**Response deadline: 09/01/2019**

## 1. Title

Employee and public attitudes towards the gender pay gap

## 2. Summary

The Government Equalities Office is looking for a research supplier to conduct a survey of the UK’s general public and a series of focus groups in order to gauge their understanding of and sentiment towards the Gender Pay Gap.

In April 2018, employers of 250 or more employees were legally required to report their gender pay gap for the first time. The accompanying campaign was a great success - 94% compliance was achieved by the deadline with 98% awareness of the term gender pay gap among in- scope employers.[[1]](#footnote-1)

To date, communications activity has focussed on employers with a compliance-led message in the first year then broadening out in the second year to encourage employers to publish action plans and take actions to close the gender pay gap. As the regulations become more familiar and annual reporting becomes a business as usual activity, we want to shift the focus of our communications work to encompass employees and the general public. We believe that businesses will be encouraged to take action on gender equality if the gender pay gap is a topic of informed conversation among their employees and a matter of wide-spread public interest.

Initial insight suggests that while employees and the general public have a good awareness of the gender pay gap, their understanding of the detail and what it means is limited. To inform our communications planning and messaging going forward, we need to increase our knowledge of this audience with a robust research exercise comprising a survey and focus groups.

The overarching objectives of this research are:

1. To baseline understanding of and attitudes towards the Gender Pay Gap among employees and the general public via a survey.

2. To test GPG messaging in a focus group setting.

It is anticipated that this will become an annual exercise, mirroring the research we have done with employers so we can begin to understand the impact of our communications over time.

The findings will be used to inform our channel planning and communications messaging and to build communications personas.

## 3. Background to the issue

1. **Outline of the policy context**The Office for National Statistics publishes national gender pay gap figures as part of its Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings each October. The national median gender pay gap is 17.9%, an all-time low, and is our measure for the success of actions to reduce the gender pay gap. Employers of 250 or more employees are required to publish 14 measures of their organisation’s gender pay gap by 4 April (for private and voluntary sector organisations) and 30 March (for public sector organisations) every year.

GPG is our best indicator for women’s economic empowerment. It is a measure which signals broader issues in the workplace and society. It is the difference in average hourly wage between men and women, communicated as a proportion of men’s wages.This is different from unequal pay which is when men and women are paid differently for the same or similar work. Unequal pay has been unlawful for over 40 years and although it can be a cause of the gender pay gap it is not true that all employers have an equal pay issue if they have a gender pay gap. We know from anecdotal evidence and from research among employers that many still confuse the two issues.

The Prime Minister has made clear that the Government plans to eliminate the gender pay gap entirely and gender pay gap reporting is designed to drive action among employers by exposing the barriers to women’s entry into specific roles or professions and progression through individual companies.

There are many different cultural factors at play and often actions to improve women’s career progression “problematise women”, focussing on how they should change. In order to drive more lasting change our focus is on how employers can change their systems and process to remove the ingrained bias and open up opportunities to women, and other disadvantaged groups.

The first year of gender pay gap reporting has attracted a large amount of public and media attention with over 1.6 million visitors viewing the live gender pay gap data as it was reported on the gov.uk website. Several, high profile employers were directly challenged by news outlets (e.g. Channel 4, Financial Times) when they reported figures that were deemed to be inaccurate which led to the employers changing their data. That level of media interest is now driving employers to identify effective actions to reduce their gender pay gaps.

1. **Data, research and useful links**
GPG reporting portal:<https://www.gov.uk/report-gender-pay-gap-data>

GPG campaign page:
<https://genderpaygap.campaign.gov.uk/>

ACAS Guidance on GPG reporting:
<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=5768>

“Think, Act Report” was the voluntary campaign that preceded mandatory gender pay gap reporting: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/think-act-report/think-act-report>

Research Report: Employers’ understanding of the gender pay gap and actions to tackle it

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/658476/Employers__Understanding_of_the_Gender_Pay_Gap.pdf>

Research Report: Presenting gender pay gap figures to the public: an online trial

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/presenting-gender-pay-gap-figures-to-the-public-an-online-trial>

Guidance: Closing the gender pay gap: actions for employers
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closing-the-gender-pay-gap-actions-for-employers>

## 4. Research objectives

The overarching research objective is to baseline understanding of and attitudes towards the Gender Pay Gap among employees and the general public.

Specific objectives of the survey element are:

* To understand the extent to which employees and the general public understand what the Gender Pay Gap is and its impact on their pay
* To learn whether employees and the general public are aware of interventions that might help to close the gap (e.g. Reducing bias in recruitment processes, increased transparency in pay and terms and conditions) )
* To understand what actions employees or members of the public might take as a result of learning their employer’s/a company’s gender pay gap
* To learn what employees and the general public believe companies should be doing to reduce the gap
* To understand where employees and members of the general public currently get their information about the GPG from and the voices they trust on this topic.

With the help of our in-house analysts, we have drafted a set of around 20 questions, including one or two free text responses. These questions are included in Appendix I.

Our intention is to validate learnings from the quant exercise with 2-3 of focus groups. The purpose of these focus groups would be to explore attitudes and understanding of the GPG via responses to visual stimulus material. We would require the successful bidder to create the stimulus material for these focus groups, likely in the form of an ident, one line summary) and a full-page newspaper ad. It is envisaged that the focus groups would take place in London, Birmingham and Sheffield, but we’re open to recommendations on the locations that would best enable us to achieve a wide spread of views. We wish to observe the focus groups so please ensure that rooms with two-way screens and audio/visual recording facilities are factored into your costings.

## 5. Target participant group

The audience should be a representative sample of the UK adult population, aged 18 and over with a history of employment. When the data is analysed, we would like to compare variations in responses by age; gender; location (urban vs. rural and London vs. outside of London); sector (in health/education and retail or not) and highest level of qualification. The sample size should be calculated with this in mind.

We have substantial insight on employer attitudes towards the gender pay gap. We would like to have a comparable attitudinal segmentation for employees and the general public- see below for reference.

**Indicators of engagement levels**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Engagement level | Indicators |
| Actively engaged | Desire to deliver on equality and diversity; positive attitude towards gender pay gap. |
| Passively engaged | Gender pay gap not known within the organisation and not considered prior to first year of reporting; Little or no thought given to closing gender pay gap; Unsure as to whether there will be a gender pay gap. |
| Passively disengaged | Gender pay gap not known within the organisation and not considered prior to first year of reporting; Little or no thought given to closing gender pay gap; Some assume they do not have a gender pay gap; Some feel there is little they can do to close the gap. |
| Actively disengaged | Reject idea of positive action; Negative attitude towards gender pay gap. |

## 6. Suggested approach and analysis

We would ask the supplier to recommend the most suitable approach and analysis in order to achieve the objectives and deliver the below outputs within the specified time and budgetary constraints.

## 7. Outputs

* Survey report
* Stimulus for focus group (ident, one-line summary, press ad)
* Focus group report
* Executive summary
* Presentation of findings at GEO’s London offices

Timings found for outputs can be found in the table below.

## 8. Liaison arrangements

We would like a 1-hour face to face kick-off meeting to feedback on the proposal followed by online weekly status updates whilst the work is in progress.

## 9. Timings

|  |
| --- |
| GPG employee and general public research timeline |
| Tender issued | 18 December |
| Deadline for the submission of clarification questions | 28 December |
| Deadline for response to clarification questions | 4 January |
| Deadline for submission of proposals | 9 January |
| Evaluation of proposals | 10 January |
| Shortlisted agencies notified | 11 January |
| Face-to-face presentation | 17/18 January |
| Evaluation of face to face presentation | 18 January |
| Award contract | 21 January |
| Project inception meeting | 23 January |
| Survey report and presentation of findings  | 6 February |
| Creation of focus groups stimulus/ materials | 8 February |
| Exec report and presentation | 8 March |

## 10. Budget

The total budget available for this project is £27,500 (VAT exclusive) Responses should include a full cost breakdown under the suggested headings:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Service** | **Cost** |
| Survey design and questions  |  |
| Inception and Results Meetings |  |
| Focus group planning and implementation  |  |
| Outputs  |  |
| Expenses |  |
| Other (please specify) |  |
| Total spend: |  |

## 11. Form of proposal

We require a proposal by 9 January. The proposal should include the following:

* A succinct summary
* The suggested approach and methodology with accompanying rationale including:
	+ Number of respondents
	+ Target areas for respondents
	+ A timeline including how long the survey would be in the field for and results delivery
	+ Suggested format of focus groups including locations and facilities
* Your organisation’s experience of similar projects and research capability
* Arrangements for managing this work and quality assuring outputs
* A detailed budget, including a breakdown of time and costs per activity (please see table in section 10. Budget)

## 12. Evaluation criteria

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Weighting | Score 0-100 | Evaluator comments |
| Quality stage 1 written – 60 % |
| Objectives |  |  |  |
| Methodology |  |  |  |
| Implementation |  |  |  |
| Scoring |  |  |  |
| Quality stage 2 F2F presentation – 20% |
| F2F presentation |  |  |  |
| Quality stage 1&2 total – 80% |
| Price - 20% |  |  |  |
| Quality and price total – 100% |

Objectives:

Please indicate you have understood the objectives of this research and summarise how your research will help to achieve them. Suppliers should include any other objectives they believe this project should have.

Methodology:

Please describe your proposed approach to the requirement. Your response must provide a clear rationale for the chosen approach and include the following:

* Detailed description of the research design and how the research design addresses the research objectives and questions specified in the brief.
* Describe how the analysis will be conducted
* Outline what deliverables will come from your proposed methodology
* Detail how you will identify potential methodological challenges and describe how you will address them, and identify any other risks you anticipate in meeting the research objectives.

Implementation:

Please describe how you plan to implement the research within the time frames above and a brief summary of resource allocation, in particular personnel.

Scoring definitions

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Mark | Comment |
| 0 | Failed to provide confidence that the proposal will meet the requirements. An unacceptable response with serious reservations. |
| 25 | A poor response with reservations. The response lacks convincing detail with risk that the proposal will not be successful in meeting all the requirements. |
| 50 | Meets the requirements – the response generally meets the requirements, but lacks sufficient detail to warrant a higher mark. |
| 75 | A good response that meets the requirement with good supporting evidence. Demonstrates good understanding. |
| 100 | An excellent comprehensive response that meets the requirements. Indicates an excellent response with detailed supporting evidence and no weaknesses resulting in a high level of confidence.  |

Applying

To apply please send through a proposal, following the requirements above, to Bethany.vaughan@geo.gov.uk by 9th January 2019.

1. As at January/February 2017. Updated awareness stats due to be published in spring 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)