INFORMATION
on
Gender Equality

Gender equality in Finnish working life

Women and men participate equally in the Finnish labour market. However, gender-based segregation in working life, i.e. the division of the labour market into men's and women's jobs, professions and tasks is particularly strong in Finland. The gender pay gap in the labour market is a big problem. Women's average pension, too, is smaller than men's.

In Finland, women have a higher level of education than men. In spite of this, women occupy significantly fewer senior management positions than men. Women account for approximately one-third of entrepreneurs. The unemployment rate of women and men is almost at the same level.

Women do part-time and fixed-term work more than men. Part-time work and fixed-term contracts are usually not the employees' own choices. There are public child care services and an extensive family leave system to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life. Mothers still use the majority of family leaves.

CENTRE FOR GENDER EQUALITY INFORMATION (NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE)
The Centre is a national information service that offers up-to-date research-based information on gender equality.
www.thl.fi/gender-equality

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND HEALTH: GENDER EQUALITY UNIT
The Unit prepares and implements the Finnish Government's gender equality policy and develops gender equality legislation.
www.stm.fi/en/gender-equality

Gender pay gap is a significant gender equality issue

Gender-based segregation has an impact on the gender pay gap. Lower wages are often paid for female-dominated jobs. Women's career development is also slower compared to men. Fixed-term employment, long family leaves and the uneven distribution of family responsibilities affect women's opportunities for career and wage advancement.

To promote equal pay the Finnish Government and the central labour market organisations have long been committed to the Equal Pay Programme. The objective of the programme is to narrow the average gender pay gap. It also seeks to ensure that the principle of equal pay is implemented as required by the Act on Equality between Women and Men.

There are many ways to promote equal pay, including:

- pay and agreement policies
- wage systems, workplace gender equality plans and pay surveys
- overcoming gender segregation in employment and education
- reconciling work and family life.

Discrimination in working life prohibited

The Equality Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender, gender identity and gender expression. However, discrimination based on gender still occurs in the labour market. The Ombudsman for Equality is an independent authority whose main duty is to supervise compliance with the Equality Act. People contact the Ombudsman especially when they suspect discrimination in hiring, regarding pay or on the basis of pregnancy or family leave. Discrimination of gender minorities and discrimination based on sexual orientation also occur in working life.

The Finnish Equality Act obliges employers:

- to prevent discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression
- to promote gender equality in working life
- to draw up an equality plan and a pay survey if an employer regularly has a personnel of at least 30 employees.

THE EQUAL PAY PROGRAMME 2016–2019

collates the joint measures of the Finnish Government and the central labour market organisations to promote equal pay.

ACCORDING TO THE EQUALITY ACT THE WORKPLACE GENDER EQUALITY PLAN MUST CONTAIN

- an assessment on the workplace's gender equality situation
- a pay survey
- measures for promoting gender equality
- a review of the results of the previous plan.

THE OMBUDSMAN FOR EQUALITY

The Ombudsman for Equality monitors compliance with the Act on Equality between Women and Men. The Ombudsman instructs and advises in matters pertaining to the Act.

www.tasa-arvo.fi/web/en