

Strengthen. Sustain. Succeed.

A MANIFESTO FOR CHANGE FOR
WOMEN'S ENTERPRISE IN SCOTLAND



Women's Enterprise Scotland Election Manifesto March 2021

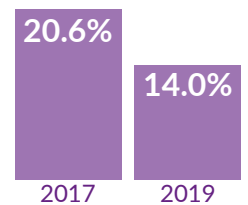
Developing and supporting women's enterprise is proven to be critically important for overall business and economic prosperity. Already, businesses majority-owned by women in Scotland:

contribute **£8.8 bn** to the Scottish economy every year¹

account for over **231,000 jobs...**
13% of the private sector total in Scotland.²

However, years of progress is now at risk of stalling:

the number of women-led employer businesses in Scotland declined from 20.6% in 2017 to 14% in 2019.³



And while women-led businesses⁴ were

50% of new start businesses, this is not translating into a greater stock of women-led businesses.

Only **9** women-led scale-ups exist in Scotland.⁵

MANIFESTO FOR CHANGE

A New Approach

In 2020, COVID-19 exposed vulnerabilities in our economic and social systems and highlighted and sharpened already existing inequalities in our society. Pre-existing barriers for women in business have been heightened by this crisis and recovery planning must include policies which address the needs of women in business.

Rather than build back previous systems which do not meet the needs of women, and undermine economic wellbeing, we call for more transformative actions.

An approach that will build a sustainable and more equal economic system which supports nurturing businesses as part of the renewal of the economy.

New policy solutions which take account of gender.

A diverse group of women must be brought to the table for discussion on business support, to ensure a more inclusive and intersectional approach to policy making.

5 PRIORITIES FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

Challenges faced by women in business are widely documented and a broadly consistent evidence base is immediately available to inform policy development. Initiatives delivered in Scotland by dedicated women's enterprise organisations evidence the benefits of gender-specific, targeted, and resource-backed interventions and offer a catalyst to realise the full economic potential of women's enterprise.

We call on the next Scottish Government to make commitments in five key areas as priority for the support and sustainability of women's enterprise in Scotland.



1

Enable greater access to finance

Women start their businesses with 53% less capital than men.⁶

Access to finance is an important issue for women in business and this was highlighted acutely during the COVID-19 pandemic with financial support programmes exposed as not fit for purpose for all businesses – especially women’s businesses – with many excluded from suitable income protection due to gaps in government schemes.

Funding frameworks have been shown to not work for the majority of women. The situation is much worse for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women in enterprise with only 0.02% of total venture capital invested over the last 10 years going to BME women entrepreneurs. The imbalance in funding disbursement must be monitored and addressed. We call for a specific fund to be established which is dedicated to women-owned businesses to address disparities across all sectors. We also call for more women to be involved in investment decisions.

“When pitching for investment, I have clearly been asked ‘prevention’ questions while my male counterparts thrived on ‘promotion’ questions.”

Vicky Brock
CEO, Vistalworks



Enable a more gender aware business support structure across Scotland

71% of women's businesses in a Scottish survey agreed or strongly agreed that business support services need to be more aware of women's needs.⁷

The Digital Women's Business Centre provides learnings and insights into the provision of gender-specific business support for women in Scotland. Supporting greater local access to gender-specific support through a physical women's business centre model via local hubs reporting to a national centre would boost business recovery, increase start-up, create more resilient local economies, and complement the digital infrastructure already enabled by the Digital Women's Business Centre. We call for investment in a physical National Women's Business Centre which would support the needs of all women and diverse communities across Scotland.

2

“BME women need to be fully included in the decision-making processes to ensure solutions and support systems are not encoded with biases within the design.”

Pheona Matovu
Founder, Radiant & Brighter



3

“The lack of women and girls studying and working in technology amounts to a form of gender ghettoization, one that effectively denies opportunity to almost half of our population and removes much-needed talent from such a vital industry. As a society, we ought to be outright appalled about it, not just shrugging our shoulders. Scotland’s economic and moral opportunity as a country is to take an international leadership position in ending this aberration.”

Mark Logan
Tech Investor

Champion digital inclusion

Only 16% of girls are studying Computing Science at Higher level.⁸

Digital transformation is necessary for business development and it has been shown to be of vital importance during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is unlikely to change. Technology solutions support both new and established business alike and can help support better inclusion in the labour market and in enterprise. Research has long identified the role of technology in facilitating entrepreneurship for people with disabilities and with an employment rate for disabled people in Scotland of 45.6%, (compared with an employment rate of 81.1% for non-disabled people) a better understanding of the way that people with different disabilities experience barriers to entrepreneurship could offer much to policy and practice in enterprise.

A review of the Scottish Technology Ecosystem highlighted a number of interventions to significantly improve the long-term performance of the ecosystem in Scotland. Change is required to reduce the serious gender gap in employment as well as in enterprise. Tackling gender stereotyping in education across all age groups and enlisting role models of women in technology businesses plays a key part in such improvements. We call for the recommendations of this report – especially those targeting gender stereotyping in early years education and beyond – to be implemented alongside funding to improve women’s tech-entrepreneurial focus in Scotland.



Deliver improved data collection

Women entrepreneurs bring in 20% more revenue with 50% less money invested.⁹

The gathering, analysis and publication of gender-disaggregated data is fundamental to address the economic impact of closing the persistent gender gap in enterprise participation. Measuring the outputs of business support provision, including support for businesses owned and led by women, is crucial for sustainable growth. Conducting and publishing comprehensive and worthwhile equality impact assessment of business support provision, including funding streams, is essential for the basis of informed policy-making and practice development. Consistent and regular gender-disaggregated business ownership data has been shown to be lacking, both at UK level and for the devolved nations. We call for improvements to future data provision to help inform best practice, identify opportunity areas, and focus policy responses in order to address the full potential of women-owned and women-led businesses. We also call for an audit of all economic development equality impact assessment to ensure appropriate and consistent practices are being applied.

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“We have an ambition for women-owned businesses and gender-disaggregated data is vital for policy change and economic growth.”

Carolyn Currie
CEO, Women's Enterprise Scotland



5

Advocate for a more gender equal economy

Investing in care would create 2.7 times as many jobs as the same investment in construction.¹⁰

Investment in social infrastructure including the care system must be part of economic renewal. Care is an important enabler in women's economic contribution and overall wellbeing. Gender and life stage are often key determinants in employment choice - the UK has 0.6 million self-employed mothers and a recent Scottish survey found 48% of women started up in business due to care commitments.¹¹ Women's enterprise, like all other areas of the economy, relies on a care system that works for everyone. A focus of the economy should be wellbeing rather than simply measuring GDP. We call for the implementation of the eight steps towards a caring economy, based on gender equality, wellbeing, and sustainability, as stated by the Commission on a Gender Equal Economy.¹²

“Our innovative community-led model, providing essential care and wellbeing services in rural areas, provides economic opportunities for micro-enterprises and self-employed carers, many of whom are women.”

Olivia Robertson
Chair, Perthshire Care & Wellbeing
Community Interest Company





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WOMEN'S
BUSINESS CENTRE
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About us

Established in 2011, Women's Enterprise Scotland (WES) is a research-led not-for-profit Community Interest Company which champions women-led and women-owned businesses. WES advocates the need for gender specific support in enterprise as the way to unlocking women's economic potential, enabling innovation and productivity to thrive.

In 2020, WES launched the first freely accessible digital platform of its kind which supports women as they start and grow their own businesses.

The Women's Business Centre

The digital Women's Business Centre provides expert, needs-based, gender-specific support to help women bring their commercial ideas to life and to flourish as business owners.



- 1 *The Gross Value Added (GVA) of majority women-owned businesses in Scotland is £8,826,142,427. Supporting Women's Enterprise in the UK. The Economic Case. Federation of Small Businesses (2018)*
- 2 *Majority women-owned businesses account for 231,390 jobs. 13.26% as percentage of private sector total. Supporting Women's Enterprise in the UK. The Economic Case. Federation of Small Businesses (2018) www.fsb.org.uk*
- 3 *Small Business Survey Scotland (2019) <https://www.gov.scot/publications/small-business-survey-scotland-2019/>*
- 4 *Business Gateway Annual Report (2018 - 2019) <https://www.bgateway.com/assets/templates/BG-Annual-Review-2018-19.pdf>*
- 5 *<https://onescotland.org/nacwg-news/women-and-enterprise-what-we-already-know/>*
- 6 *The Alison Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship (2019) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-alison-rose-review-of-female-entrepreneurship>*
- 7 *Survey of Women's Businesses in Scotland 2019. Women's Enterprise Scotland (2020) www.wescotland.co.uk*
- 8 *Scottish Technology Ecosystem: Review 2020. Scottish Government (2020) <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-technology-ecosystem-review/>*
- 9 *Untapped Unicorns: scaling up female entrepreneurship. The Entrepreneurs Network and Barclays Bank (2019) <https://labs.uk.barclays/community/untapped-unicorns>*
- 10 *Investing in the Care Economy (2016) UK Women's Budget Group <https://wbg.org.uk/analysis/investing-2-of-gdp-in-care-industries-could-create-1-5-million-jobs/>*
- 11 *Survey of Women's Businesses in Scotland 2019. Women's Enterprise Scotland (2020) www.wescotland.co.uk*
- 12 *Creating a Caring Economy: a call to action. Commission for a Gender Equal Economy (2020) UK Women's Budget Group <https://wbg.org.uk/commission/>*