

# LONDON GENDER EQUITY ACTION PLAN

2024-2027



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Since 2021, we've been actively engaged in promoting and supporting women in leadership across London Finance. Through various workstreams we've looked to understand the challenges that impact and prevent women from being represented across all grades. We know that 54% of our finance workforce is female and yet only 29% of those in grades 8d and above are female.

A key part of this work has been to listen to our staff. In March 2023 the London Women in Leadership group held two confidential discussions with around 25 women working in NHS Finance across London, with an aim to gain deeper insights into women's experiences and barriers to progression in the workplace. Anonymous, yet invaluable feedback collected during these sessions laid the groundwork for a comprehensive report. The report, upon circulation, gathered commitments to change from regional CFOs, leading to the development of the regional action plan. This strategic plan is built from the feedback we have received and designed to effectively address and overcome challenges, fostering a workplace environment that champions gender equality. Additionally, it emphasises the importance of engaging regional colleagues at all levels, ensuring accountability and active involvement to drive meaningful and lasting change.

In the following pages, we will outline the key pillars of our Gender Equity Action Plan led by the 4 subgroups of the regional Women in Leadership group, detailing the specific initiatives, timelines, and metrics that will guide our progress. As we embark on this transformative journey, we invite the region to actively engage, contribute, and take ownership of our collective responsibility to foster equity across London.



**Laragh Walton**

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Workstream	#	Actions	KPI	Timeframe
<b>1. Picture of Leadership</b>	1.1	Establish a London commitment to set and publicly report on internal targets for gender equity in finance teams [in line with Financial Services Women in Finance Charter <a href="https://publishing.service.gov.uk/women_in_finance_charter.pdf">women in finance charter.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a> ]	Each London org to publish its targets [examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % female staff at 8d and above</li> <li>• % female staff at 8a and above</li> <li>• % of jobs with flexible working</li> <li>• gender pay gap</li> <li>• turnover / retention]</li> </ul>	3-6 months
	1.2	Develop resources to share across London to optimise diverse recruitment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promotion of flexible working by default</li> <li>▪ Stated commitment to equality &amp; diversity</li> <li>▪ Review of JDs against gender decoder</li> <li>▪ Limiting of 'essential' requirements / elimination of 'desirable'</li> <li>▪ Diversity of panels</li> </ul> <a href="#">A guide to inclusive recruitment for employers   CIPD</a>	Share with all CFOs for discussion / cascade in their organisation	6 months
	1.3	Establish a London wide repository of JD/PS/job adverts for Band 8A roles and above, including exemplar JD/PS/adverts	Share with all CFOs for discussion / cascade in their organisation	6 months
	1.4	Produce analysis to compare latest staff census to previous analysis, identifying trends and celebrating any progress made  Highlight the different workforce profile of organisations with a female CFO vs male CFO  Share data/ learning of organisations with good gender balance in senior teams and steps that have been taken to drive a more inclusive team	Publish as case study on ONF website	6 months

Workstream	#	Actions	KPI	Timeframe
	1.5	Publish profiles of female CFOs / NEDs / deputies / finance staff who have moved into other areas / rising stars	1 profile per month published for next 6 months	6 months
	1.6	Identify beacon sites outside the NHS where significant gender improvement has been achieved in Senior Financial Leadership to (a) use in comms and engagement (b) to identify additional opportunity from those who are doing it well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) speak to 2-5 organisations within next 6 months</li> <li>b) To communicate quarterly as part of our C&amp;E</li> <li>c) To identify any additional actions for the plan</li> </ul>	Quarterly
	1.7	Identify key influencing factors in appointment of CFO's and their deputies through polling (Chairs CEO's and CFO's for Deputies) and reflect in workstreams as necessary	Polls undertaken and findings fed back to Women in Leadership programme with suggestions for any next steps	6 months
	1.8	Understand perceptions that discourage staff from aspiring to become CFOs and use the outcomes to produce a 'Day in a life of a CFO' video to sell the role	Publish on ONF website	6 months
	1.9	Ensuring accountability amongst Regional CFOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish all CFO pledges/ commitments made towards promoting gender equity within London Finance</li> <li>• Track progress in fulfilling their commitments</li> </ul>	6 months
<b>2. Flexible Working and Return to Work</b>	2.1	Showcase role-modelling of CFOs and senior team members who have successfully returned to work and embraced flexible working	Create a series of leadership profiles, highlighting their experiences, challenges, and successes.	6 months
	2.2	Ensure proactive measures for shared parental leave and reducing unconscious bias	Showcase examples of where male colleagues have taken shared parental leave through published blogs/ profiles	6 months

Workstream	#	Actions	KPI	Timeframe
	2.3	Ensure those taking parental leave feel supported before, during and after parental leave	Highlight existing resources and opportunities available through One NHS Finance via targeted mailers and system updates.	12 months
			Deliver a 2024 cohort of the Returnship Programme, with minimum of 8 colleagues signed up from across the 5 systems. Regional buddies programme in place for support.	3 months
	2.4	Ensure Managers understand policies that impact their female team members	Set up / promote training on areas affecting female team members, including maternity, menopause etc.	12 months
	2.6	Ensure all finance recruitment ads emphasise and encourage flexible workings to improve equity and encourage more women to return back into the NHS	Carry out engagement piece to understand whether each organisation is aligned to their FD declaration commitment to flexible working	3 months
	2.7	Conduct biannual data gathering	To assess the success and impact of flexible working initiatives	6 months
<b>3. Talent Management</b>	3.1	<p>Help embed the One NHS Finance Talent management strategy across London, to ensure that we have robust and proactive succession planning processes and career development plans in place to support female colleagues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cascade resources within respective organisations and systems</li> <li>▪ All Female 8a staff to have had talent management conversation within 2024 and all staff by 2025. Collate feedback on issues preventing female staff progressing to inform future actions.</li> <li>▪ Promoting secondment opportunities where suitable development roles don't exist within their current team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Aim for 90% TM conversations to have taken place by 2025 with 8a and above staff within 2024.</li> <li>▪ Aim for 50% gender split of secondment posts taken up on the SDN vacancy portal.</li> </ul>	<i>12 months</i>

Workstream	#	Actions	KPI	Timeframe
	3.2	Actively encourage and support mentoring, coaching and sponsorship opportunities across London	All NHS Organisations to have at least their CFO or Deputy CFO signed up as a Sponsor or Mentor.  Highlight existing resources and opportunities to all staff available through One NHS Finance via targeted mailers and system updates.	<i>12 months</i>
	3.3	Explore success in non-NHS sectors for benchmarking and learn from those with better flexibility and gender balance. Avoid the "same approach, same outcome"	Publish 1-2 case studies/webinars showcasing the enhanced efficiency achieved through improved gender balance in the work place.  E.g. Nicola Brookes Interim Professions	<i>6 months</i>
	3.4	Building visibility of potential future female senior colleagues and offering support to develop them successfully.  Work with the picture of leadership group to develop profiles/image/career stories of those below CFO level	Roll out Thrive programme across NEL, ensuring full capacity is reached, through successful comms and system engagement.  With the aim to roll out regionally for 2025.  Wider profiles published	<i>12 months</i>
	3.5	Support staff with interview skills/ training, providing the opportunity for candidates who may lack a support network to observe and understand exemplary practices.	Establish a pilot programme for reverse mentoring interview sessions involving deputy/CFO and monitor the effectiveness of outcomes	<i>12 months</i>
	3.6	Promote training and development opportunities across the region, aiming for gender balanced take up	Aim for a 50% gender-balanced participation from London in all One NHS Finance Development Programmes.  Identify gaps and target systems with less diverse engagement.	<i>12 months</i>
	3.7	Better affiliate with schools and colleges to promote a career in the NHS Finance and open up access to roles	Minimum of 25% of London organisations to participate in annual presentations at local	<i>6 months</i>

Workstream	#	Actions	KPI	Timeframe
			<p>schools/colleges to promote careers in NHS finance, ensuring representation from all 5 systems.</p> <p>Emphasising seniority of women across finance roles to showcase diverse career paths</p>	
<b>4. Male Allies</b>	4.1	<p>Seek confirmation from all London CFOs that listening event report has been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ discussed at their Finance SMT, with view taken on what it means for their organisation; and</li> <li>▪ shared across department by CFO with process for any staff members to report concerns set out</li> </ul>	Confirmation from each London CFO that they have done this	3 months
	4.2	<p>Develop resources to share across London including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 'Dos and Don'ts' to improve the behavioural and cultural issues within organisations</li> <li>▪ Difference between equality &amp; equity</li> <li>▪ Benefits of reverse mentoring</li> <li>▪ Training resources available</li> </ul>	Share with all CFOs for discussion / cascade in their organisation	6 months
	4.3	Establish local male allyship networks/ programmes to promote regional action plan	Ensure full ICS representation on the Pan- London Male Allies working group	3 months
Identify designated male ally for work programme within each organisation across London			6 months	
Set up / promote training to support effectiveness of male ally network			9 months	

Workstream	#	Actions	KPI	Timeframe
	4.4	Create signposting to routes of confidential escalation for female staff members	Draft and disseminate signposting guidance on routes of confidential escalation for female staff members	3 months
	4.5	Publish profiles of male CFOs / deputies who work flexibly and / or who have overseen visible EDI work in their organisation / shared parental leave – building in and highlighting any learning that is applicable across the sector	1 profile per month published for next 6 months	6 months
	4.6	Identify organisations or leadership where there are potential gender equity issues (through data or local awareness)  Senior representatives to hold targeted conversations with finance leaders	Conversation had with all identified organisations	6 months
	4.7	Engage with key CEOs, NEDs (Audit / Finance chairs) and systems CFOs to highlight the gender equity agenda	Present on issue to each group	6 months