

Call for Mandatory Gender Impact Assessments to Deliver Real Equality

June 2025

Soroptimists of Great Britain and Ireland say it's time to move from box-ticking to measurable change as it calls on the Government to adopt a robust, compulsory gender-first approach to equality on its annual Day of Action (July 12).

SIGBI, which has consultative status at the UN, has timed its Annual Day of Action to coincide with the UN's International Day of Hope as it aims to embed Gender Impact Assessments as a statutory requirement.

A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) is a policy tool used to evaluate how proposed laws, policies, or programmes will affect individuals differently based on gender, but SIGBI says current approaches aren't working as they are not currently mandatory.

"We're pushing for a big change in how the UK Government looks at equality," explained Ruth Healey, President of SIGBI, which has consultative status at the United Nations.

SIGBI's Annual Day of Action provides the charity's members an opportunity to engage with their local communities and make a tangible difference for women and girls.

"Despite the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), gender equality progress remains slow, patchy, and symbolic. It's time to move from box-ticking to measurable change," Ruth continued.

"Think about climate change impact assessments and their success in making decision-making uniform across sectors and regions, helping to standardise how risks are evaluated, prioritised, and addressed in policy and planning.

"Legal reform is needed to embed GIAs as a statutory requirement in any local, devolved, and national Government decisions.

"SIGBI is calling on the Government to include GIAs in public spending decisions and to pilot mandatory GIAs across all major departments."

Every day, usually through unconscious considerations, businesses and governments make decisions which adversely affect women and girls, says SIGBI.

For example, in the workplace policies may not consider the gender pay gap, or parental leave needs; in healthcare, policies often overlook gender-specific health concerns, research disparities, and reproductive rights.

"We want the government to take a more structured, gender-first approach. Women make up 50% of the population and are being let down at every turn," added Ruth Healey.

"From the justice system to education, policy must start with gender to address any disadvantages. A shift in perspective would improve outcomes in justice, security, education, and beyond.

"We have the laws. We need the will. It's time for gender equality to move from aspiration to implementation. Mandating GIAs will get us there."

Members from SIGBI's 200-plus UK and Ireland clubs will advance its Gender Impact Assessment

campaign throughout July. Women will lobby MPs, MSPs, local councillors and leaders within public sector organisations.

In addition, SIGBI's advocacy team has drafted a white paper which it submitted last week to Women's Minister, Bridget Phillipson, in response to the government's request for information on Gender Impact.

SIGBI advocates for the rights of women and girls through education, empowerment, and enabling environments. With over 100 years of action, the charity stands for lasting change.

For more information, or to get involved, with SIGBI's GIA campaign, visit: <https://sigbi.org/what-we-do/our-work/equality/>

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