

## The Importance of Stakeholder Engagement

**Hi Gillian & James, thanks for speaking with us today. You contacted us to share your story about inclusive supply of PPE - can you tell us the issue your organisation faced and how it came to light?**

*Hi Sarah, no problem. Following the issue of our 2018 Gender Pay Gap (GPG) report, a gender working group was set up to work with the business and the employees to improve opportunities for women within the business. One of the areas we hear about as an issue a lot is PPE, not just within the Oil and Gas industry, but in other industries too. The women who were in our working group, who had been offshore previously, also recalled issues with PPE, so we decided to start there – it would be an easy win!*

**What were the steps involved from the point of recognising the issue, to bringing about a resolution?**

*We have a small number of employees, and we found having 1:1 discussion was more effective than a survey. From these discussions it became clear that ill-fitting PPE wasn't actually an issue!*

**You're kidding, that's really great! I personally have had so many problems with my own PPE in the past, and as it's an issue with so many, how did this problem become resolved then?**

*I know, we were quite (pleasantly!) surprised too! There previously had been an issue, particularly with boot sizes & overalls, however the point of contact for PPE always ensured there was a range of stock available, with any issues quickly addressed by the PoC. For example, one of our female employees, who goes to site regularly, is petite, and so really struggles to get boots that fit. There are now always a pair of boots available for her at site.*

**So that really was a quick win! I'm curious, were there any other nuggets you identified from the offshore conversations?**

*Yes! When we started the conversations, it was very much "PPE is not an issue, this is..." One example being the lack of female toilets on one of our very old assets. It was a gender-neutral toilet, but as you can imagine, that's not really ideal, and it was something we were just unaware of. It was something people just put up with, women going back to their rooms to use the facilities, which isn't ideal for a variety of reasons! We don't allow men and women to share a room on a split shift, but you were still possibly waking up your room mate if you needed to go to the bathroom. It was unacceptable.*

*So, once we knew about this issue, it was fixed. There are now separate male-female toilets in communal areas.*

**How was the solution received by the stakeholders?**

*It was well received. The toilet had essentially become the male toilet, and when the issue was pointed out it was a light bulb moment, and there was no issue. People don't intentionally want there to be an issue, but speaking up is so important, as is having the right person on the listening side.*

**So, what other areas are you now working on?**

*The group has two areas of interest and we have actions for each of these.*

*The first focus area is within Recruitment & Retention, where we are focused on the development of people in to supervisory roles, and conscious & unconscious bias. We recently had a change to how we conduct promotions – where candidates now need to apply. Previously, there would be succession in place, which is fine, but wasn't official and also meant you could lose some great opportunities. It was a driver from the top of our business to ask people to apply & interview for the roles, and already it's been successful as we now have someone who was external in a technical authority role.*

*We are coaching and we are aware that this is a big culture change, so we need to be patient and take people on the journey with us.*

*The second focus area is culture change, particularly around flexible working.*

*Most jobs can be done flexibly these days, but the paperwork in place doesn't have those prompts, so we're in the process of changing that, as well as coaching our middle management and supervisory function of what is possible. This was a particular area of concern with return workers, for example post parental leave, with returners looking to go part time. We know this isn't just our issue, but we do want to address it.*

*Following each working group meeting, the middle management and supervisory team receive the communications of what was discussed and what the actions are, so they are engaged but it's a work in progress within the culture of the organisation.*

**One last question before you go, what advice would you give to others if they also wanted to make a change similar to this?**

*Just pick something and start - it gets you on the path. In our case PPE wasn't an issue, but it opened the door to the conversation and showed our team that we do want things to improve.*

*Have the right people in the working groups, it needs to be about a wider issue rather than personal grievances, and if you do have a knowledge gap, go seek out the right person to help.*

*Look at your bad practices – they are extremely powerful! At the recent OGUK D&I Breakfast, this was mentioned and it was our light bulb moment! Later that very afternoon we had an example. When you take good practice to management, it's well received but that's it, it's a nice thing; you bring them an example of bad practice the reaction is completely different, and there's an instant driver to change. People don't often know of issues unless they personally experience it, so it needs to be highlighted to get a solution driven through.*

**Thank you for speaking with us today, Gillian & James!**