



House of Commons  
Business, Enterprise and  
Regulatory Reform Committee

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**Jobs for the Girls:  
Two Years On**

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**Second Report of Session 2007–08**

*Volume I*

*Report, together with formal minutes*

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## The Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform Committee

The Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department of Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform.

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## Summary

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Despite thirty years of equal pay legislation, the gender pay gap remains, although it is narrowing. It is hard to eliminate, because men and women tend to work in different occupations and traditional female occupations tend to be lower paid and lower valued than men's. But such occupational segregation limits the pool of recruits available to employers, even though harnessing and extending the skills of all is increasingly recognised as vital for the future health of the economy.

In its 2005 report, the Women and Work Commission made 40 recommendations to tackle job segregation and the gender pay gap, many of which were similar to those put forward in our predecessor Committee's report. We wanted to examine what action had been taken to implement those recommendations and to identify any further steps needed.

We were concerned at the lack of a timetable and committed funding in the government's initial response to the Commission's report, but note that the one year on report shows greater progress and there are a number of initiatives in hand. The Secretary of State for Equality is committed to the policy and to coordinating a positive response on gender equality issues within departments. We recommend that all Select Committees should see monitoring progress on gender equality as an important part of their remit, to ensure the Secretary of State's commitment is translated into effective practice.

The causes of occupational segregation start with the assumptions made by families and in schools about the roles appropriate for boys and girls. Despite some positive examples of careers advice and work experience placements, additional funding is required. We urge the Department for Children, Schools and Families to give higher priority to this. Sector Skills Councils and other public bodies should help employers forge stronger local business-education partnerships to help break down barriers.

There are insufficient training opportunities for women in non-traditional occupations and, until recently, little advice available for older women who want to change their work direction or who return after a break. Government pilots have been encouraging, but it is essential that these are evaluated and successful initiatives are rolled out in other sectors and areas. Other initiatives such as the social enterprise Women Like Us also have a part to play. If college courses are too rigidly structured, women can find it hard to participate; we urge the Government to act on the findings of the recently-launched Ofsted review of the flexibility of training by adult education providers, and to provide additional funds if necessary.

The substantial extension in apprenticeships now proposed is very welcome but must not just follow traditional occupational breakdowns. We urge the Government to keep sight of the need to promote greater equality through this form of training and ask that the Commission for Equality and Human Rights and Low Pay Commission examine the gender pay gap among apprentices.

It is important not just to look at occupational segregation but also address the undervaluation of 'traditional' women's jobs. Witnesses pointed out the minimum wage had reduced the pay gap for the lowest paid jobs. We also welcome initiatives to encourage

women into more senior and skilled positions in those sectors dominated by women.

The dearth of quality part-time jobs was identified by witnesses as a waste of the experience and skills of many older women and one of the main reasons for the persistence of the gender pay gap. We urge the Government to increase funding for the Quality Part-Time Work Initiative to the original £5million target.

The Government should consider a gradual extension of the right to request flexible working to the whole workforce to recognise the wider changes in work that can affect any employee.

A number of witnesses suggested that the extension to the private sector of the gender equality duty imposed on the public sector from April 2007 could encourage greater transparency and positive action. It is too still early to judge the success of this duty. But it is clearly the case that the gender pay gap remains worryingly stubborn. It is exacerbated by the fact that women may not push for pay rises and promotion in the way that men do. So we recommend that if the pay gap continues to decline only slowly, the Government should look at further measures such as the extension of the gender equality duty and consider making pay audits mandatory. We welcome the development of a 'light touch' audit which may be easier for employers to use than the traditional equal pay audit in examining their own occupational and pay structures.

Many of our witnesses were placing great hopes on the Discrimination Law Review to strengthen and simplify the existing legislation. The Review has not adequately addressed the failings in legislation demonstrated by the number of current cases outstanding. The Government should look again at the issues of hypothetical comparators, representative actions, time limits and other issues which were not taken up in the Review. We also recommend the Government examine the role played by some 'no win no fee' lawyers in the current public sector equal pay claims.

We look to the Secretary of State for Equality to ensure that best practice on breaking down gender barriers and promoting equality in government departments is extended to all. But we urge caution about the proposed single equality duty if this will limit the flexibility needed to deal with issues affecting different disadvantaged groups.

In our predecessors' recent report on UK manufacturing and public procurement we argued that there was more scope for greater use of public procurement to promote social policies. Public authorities could use the £125 billion a year spent by the public sector in acquiring goods and service as leverage to promote gender equality as well as other social aims. We consider that the advice given by the Office of Government Commerce is too timid and should be reviewed. Indeed, we believe that public bodies are open to challenge for breaching their duty to promote gender equality if they fail to ask their suppliers and contractors to demonstrate active commitment to equality principles in both their staffing practices and their provision of goods and services.

# 1 Introduction

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1. The Women and Work Commission, set up in July 2004, had a very broad remit to examine all the causes of the continuing gender pay gap in the UK (at that time, a gap in mean hourly earnings between men and women of 18% among full-time workers and 40% among those working part-time). Its terms of reference identified the key factors as labour market experience (including entry into employment, occupational segregation, full-time and part-time work experience, progression in the workplace, the tax and benefit system and experience before and after having children), skills and education, and discrimination. It was also expected to examine the measures “necessary to strengthen equal pay legislation, including the case for equal pay reviews to be mandatory.”<sup>1</sup>

2. Our predecessors decided in the autumn of 2004 to undertake an inquiry on the gender pay gap in parallel to the work of the Commission. The previous Committee chose a fairly narrowly defined but significant part of the Commission’s remit, the causes and effects of occupational segregation, including the impact on the gender pay gap and whether occupational segregation acts as a brake on the economy through the failure to increase the number of women entering high-skilled jobs, thus worsening skills shortages. The previous Committee published its Report in the spring of 2005, noting that, because of the imminent general election, it had been unable to treat the issues as comprehensively as it had wished, but expressing the hope that “our successors will return to it in due course, perhaps in the context of the final report from the Women and Work Commission later this year.”<sup>2</sup>

3. Following the election, the Women and Equalities Unit, which had been part of the Department of Trade and Industry while Rt Hon Patricia Hewitt MP was both Secretary of State for that Department and Minister for Women, was transferred to the Department for Communities and Local Government, headed by the then Minister for Women, Rt Hon Ruth Kelly MP. However, our sister Committee, the Communities and Local Government Committee, agreed that for practical reasons we should undertake the follow-up inquiry. As a result, we decided to set up a sub-Committee to take forward this work, though the timetable was delayed because the report of the Women and Work Commission (*Shaping a Fairer Future*) was published only in February 2006, and the Government’s response to it, in the form of an Action Plan, appeared in September 2006.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, the Government had also responded to our predecessors’ Report.<sup>4</sup> The sub-Committee’s terms of reference were to examine:

the extent to which the Women and Work Commission’s recommendations met the concerns of those who gave evidence to the Committee in the last Parliament; and

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<sup>1</sup> The Commission’s terms of reference are printed as Appendix 5 to its report, *Shaping a Fairer Future*, February 2006. Hereafter, the Women and Work Commission’s report as referred to as ‘WWC report’.

<sup>2</sup> Trade and Industry Committee, *Jobs for the Girls: The effect of occupational segregation on the gender pay gap*, Sixteenth Report of Session 2004–05, HC 300, paragraph 3 (hereafter ‘Trade and Industry Committee, Sixteenth Report’)

<sup>3</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government, *Government Action Plan Implementing the Women and Work Commission recommendations* (hereafter ‘Action Plan’)

<sup>4</sup> Published as Trade and Industry Committee, *Jobs for the Girls: Government Response to the Committee’s Sixteenth Report of Session 2004–05*, Sixth Special Report of Session 2005–06, HC 367

what the Government and other public bodies, employers and trade unions were doing to implement those recommendations.

4. The Women and Work Commission made 40 recommendations, many of which were very similar to those made by our predecessors, although in some cases the Commission provided more detail about extra financial support that it considered necessary. An annex to this Report compares the two sets of conclusions, together with the comments from the Government's Action Plan relating to each of the Commission's recommendations. The Commission's final recommendation was that it should be recalled "one year from now, to receive a report into progress on our recommendations and to comment on their effectiveness."<sup>5</sup> The Government's report on progress in implementing the Commission's recommendations (and rather confusingly called *Towards a Fairer Future*) was published in April 2007.<sup>6</sup> These five documents—the Commission's report, our predecessors' Report and the Government's response to that, the Action Plan and the one year on report—formed the starting point of our inquiry. Subsequently, in June 2007, the Discrimination Law Review published its preliminary conclusions on equalities legislation in the form of a consultation paper, *A framework for Fairness: Proposals for a Single Equality Bill for Great Britain*, which also informed our inquiry.<sup>7</sup>

5. The sub-Committee took oral evidence from Baroness Prosser, Chair of the Women and Work Commission; the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC); the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and Trades Union Congress (TUC); and from two Government Ministers, Mr David Lammy MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Skills, Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, and Rt Hon Harriet Harman, QC, MP, Secretary of State for Equality and the current Minister for Women. It received written evidence from these witnesses and a further nine individuals and organisations, including Mr Pat McFadden, MP, Minister for Employment Relations and Postal Affairs, and Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR).<sup>8</sup> It also received copies of other relevant documents: the Eve project of South East Derbyshire College (on tackling occupational segregation within training); and the trade union Unison's submission to the Discrimination Law Review. The sub-Committee also made an informal visit to the main office of the social enterprise 'Women like Us'. We are very grateful to them and to all those who gave evidence to the sub-Committee.

## The current situation

6. In his written evidence to us, Pat McFadden, Minister for Employment Relations and Postal Affairs, referred to a forthcoming BERR study on 'Part-time work and the gender

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<sup>5</sup> WWC report, Executive Summary, pxvi

<sup>6</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government, *Towards a Fairer Future: Implementing the Women and Work Commission Recommendations* (hereafter 'one year on report')

<sup>7</sup> This consultation paper was formally published by the Department for Education and Skills, Department of Trade and Industry, Department for Work and Pensions, Ministry of Justice and Department for Communities and Local Government. It is hereafter referred to as 'Discrimination Law Review'.

<sup>8</sup> The other eight submissions were from ACCA (the Association of Certified Chartered Accountants), Amicus, Asda Stores Ltd, the Fawcett Society (whose *raison d'être* is to promote equality between the sexes), the Office of the Mayor of London, Orange, Pam Walton (a consultant) and the YWCA (a charity working with disadvantaged young women) BERR was formerly the Department of Trade and Industry.

pay gap in British workplaces'.<sup>9</sup> The provisional findings show that occupational segregation accounts for one-quarter of the earnings gap between full-time men and part-time women, while another fifth of the gap is explained by industry segregation. He stated that there was no evidence of a 'part-time pay penalty' additional to the gender pay gap faced by women in full-time jobs. He referred to the right to request flexible working and stated that the impact was being monitored by BERR. The Minister emphasised the importance of the National Minimum Wage, which he suggested had particularly benefited women by eliminating the hourly gender pay gap in the lowest paid jobs. The BERR estimated that two-thirds of the beneficiaries of the National Minimum Wage this year are women.

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<sup>9</sup> Ev 76

## 2 Education and Training

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### Work experience and careers advice

7. Our predecessors found that the causes of occupational segregation started with the assumptions made by families and in schools about the roles appropriate for girls and boys. Careers advice and work experience during the period of compulsory education far from challenging these assumptions, reinforced them: girls were offered work experience and were encouraged to consider jobs only in traditionally female-dominated sectors.<sup>10</sup> The EOC suggested to us that schools thought young people were more conservative than they actually were; but also that schools themselves did not have enough information about wider opportunities, or comparative pay rates, so found it difficult to encourage young people to think in terms of careers over a lifetime rather than just getting a job once they left full-time education.<sup>11</sup> The EOC and the YWCA told us that work experience was especially significant in informing the most disadvantaged young people—who often have limited sources of advice—of the variety of jobs available. Unfortunately, it was frequently these young people who were left to organise their own work experience placements, which meant they were dependent on family members and friends who placed them in stereotypical roles.<sup>12</sup> The EOC suggested that employers should be more active in encouraging people to apply for atypical jobs.<sup>13</sup>

8. The CBI and TUC agreed on the vital importance of improving careers advice and work experience.<sup>14</sup> While the EOC was of the view that there had been some progress in broadening careers advice, the YWCA was less convinced, and the TUC said that in too many schools the responsibility for giving careers advice was just added on to someone's full-time teaching job, and there was too little dedicated funding to develop the service in schools.<sup>15</sup> Baroness Prosser cited careers advice in schools as one of the few areas of the Women and Work Commission's recommendations where extra, rather than redirected, government funding was needed.<sup>16</sup> The YWCA also suggested that there should be national standards for the information, advice and guidance given to young people about careers.<sup>17</sup> ASDA told us that it had developed a short workshop giving guidance and advice to parents on how to help their children choose a career. It was using the workshop with its own staff, but thought other employers might also like to use it.<sup>18</sup>

9. Both the CBI and the TUC cited some good examples of useful work experience placements. However, the CBI pointed out that having work experience trainees working on the shop floor had health and safety implications, and these were often easier for large

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<sup>10</sup> Trade and Industry Committee, Sixteenth Report, paragraphs 7–9 and 12–19

<sup>11</sup> Q 69

<sup>12</sup> Qq 65 and 68 (EOC) and Ev 98

<sup>13</sup> Q 68

<sup>14</sup> Q 86

<sup>15</sup> Q 65 (EOC), Ev 98, Q 91 (TUC)

<sup>16</sup> Q 20

<sup>17</sup> Ev 97

<sup>18</sup> Ev 55

than for small companies to deal with.<sup>19</sup> The CBI cited research undertaken by City and Guilds which showed that one in four employers wanted to make work placements more effective. As well as calling for help with the costs of placements, employers would like a national structure to co-ordinate and support business-education partnerships and to provide better guidance on child protection and health and safety issues.<sup>20</sup> The CBI said that its members were also developing an ‘employability framework’, a standard document showing the types of generic skills being developed by those on work experience placements, which would be helpful to future potential employers in assessing skills and aptitudes.<sup>21</sup> From the point of view of the students, the YWCA argued that all disadvantaged young women should be given two work experience placements, offering a variety of work and non-stereotypical work, at least one of which had to be in a sector that would lead to well-paid employment.<sup>22</sup>

**10. It is not yet clear how successful the attempts to spread best practice in relation to the careers advice and work experience placements arranged by schools have been. It will be some years before any improvements will feed through into the workforce. In the meantime, the Department for Children, Schools and Families must realise the importance of these apparently ‘extra’ duties of careers advice and work experience to achieving the Government’s equality aims and must give more support and funding to the provision of those services in schools.**

**11. Furthermore, employers—especially smaller companies without HR departments—find it difficult to devote the time and resources needed first to set up good work experience placements and secondly to ensure that they have met all the safety requirements. There is clearly a role for Sector Skills Councils, Chambers of Commerce and trade organisations, as well as Learning and Skills Councils, in providing information and helping companies to forge stronger business-education partnerships at a local level.**

## Post-school training

### *Careers advice and skills development for older women*

12. Inadequate though schools-based careers advice may be, at least it exists: until recently, little or no advice was available to older women who wanted to change the direction of their career or were returning to work after a break. The Government’s one year on report emphasised recent developments such as the learndirect telephone and online advice service (open to all adults but prioritising those without a first full Level 2 qualification) and the face-to-face support from local ‘nextstep’ information and advice services. It noted that in January 2006 the then Department for Education and Skills had started a trial extending learndirect services to adults wanting to achieve a Level 3 qualification, which had had such positive results that the trial had been extended to March 2008.<sup>23</sup> The report

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<sup>19</sup> Q 105

<sup>20</sup> Ev 58

<sup>21</sup> Qq 99 and 100 See also Ev 58

<sup>22</sup> Ev 97

<sup>23</sup> One year on report, para 3.5

also discussed skills coaching pilots in five cities, again focused on helping low-skilled women; the London Olympics-related Level 3 training pilot (specifically targeted at women returning to work after a break and those in areas of skill shortages where women are currently under-represented at Level 3—engineering, construction and transport and logistics); and the Women and Work Sector Pathways, under which Sector Skills Councils are developing a variety of projects to train women in the (Level 3 and beyond) skills and provide them with the mentoring and support they need to progress to higher-level jobs in their sectors.<sup>24</sup> The Government has provided an extra £10 million for the skills coaching pilots, £20 million in total for the Olympics-related pilot and £10 million in total, but match-funded by employers, for the Women and Work Sector Pathways. Baroness Prosser, the TUC and the CBI welcomed these measures, especially the Sector Pathways; and the CBI commented that in general its members were pleased with the Train to Gain-style approach, which linked training closely to real job opportunities and which had typically been of benefit to middle aged women working full-time in low-skilled occupations.<sup>25</sup>

**13. While we welcome the initiatives to encourage women who wish to do so to train in non-traditional fields of work, we are pleased that some of the initiatives are focusing on encouraging women to take more senior and responsible positions in traditional sectors, such as the project by Improve (the Sector Skills Council for the food and drink industry) to give NVQ3 training to 300 women workers in food manufacturing to enable them to become supervisors or team leaders; and Asset Skill's programme to teach workers in the cleaning sector management skills.<sup>26</sup> Tackling 'horizontal segregation'—the dominance of managerial and professional jobs by men in sectors where the majority of the employees are women—is as important in opening up opportunities for women as ending 'vertical' or sectoral segregation.**

14. We asked the Minister for Skills about progress with these pilots. He admitted that some had got off to a slower start than he had hoped—for example, to date 740 women were taking part in the London Level 3 pilot, while the aim was for there to be eventually 12,000—though he emphasised the benefits to the participants. He attributed the slow start to the delay in suitable employers coming forward because they were not aware of the new structure and the extra funding available. He also felt that, with the introduction of Train to Gain, there were a lot of almost simultaneous changes to training provision which made it difficult for employers to keep abreast of developments.<sup>27</sup> He listed what was being done by nine Sector Skills Councils under the Pathways project, together with the numbers of women involved.<sup>28</sup> Other advantages of this initiative were, he thought, the range of Sector Skills Councils taking part, the fact that it involved smaller as well as large employers, and the possible gains for those women wishing to return to work whose education between the ages of 16 and 20 had been interrupted by motherhood. The pilots were due to be

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, paras 3.6, 3.3 and 3.4 respectively

<sup>25</sup> Ev 56

<sup>26</sup> One year on report, para 3.4

<sup>27</sup> Q 164

<sup>28</sup> Qq 179–181 and Ev 76

evaluated in 2008–09, and he thought it was too early yet to say whether they represented good value for money.<sup>29</sup>

15. We were concerned about two aspects of the pilots, the first being why some Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) were not involved in them, and the second being whether the initiatives being developed could be sustained once the pilots had ended. The CBI commented that the SSCs varied greatly in standard. According to the CBI, the leaders in the area of tackling job segregation (e-skills, Construction Skills and SEMTA) were generally three of the best Sector Skills Councils. It noted that some companies outside these sectors were also responding imaginatively to the problem, but, without a good quality SSC, it was more difficult to publicise and spread the good practice they were pioneering.<sup>30</sup> The EOC expressed its fears that the initiatives launched as pilots would not be spread because of lack of money. It said this was a common experience with pilot schemes: when the ‘pump-priming’ finance ran out, especially if it ended suddenly rather than being tapered, and especially if the government department running the pilot simultaneously withdrew its support and advice, then those charged with continuing the schemes often found them too expensive and difficult to sustain, in particular if the costs were immediate and the benefits longer term. The EOC lamented: “Until we actually see some of these pilots becoming normal practice and we get away from this model of equality being always some add-on pilot that the enthusiasts do, we will not be satisfied that we have really made the progress we need.” In the EOC’s view, from the outset departments should plan how to sustain projects and spread what had been learned after the pilots finished.<sup>31</sup>

**16. The various pilots launched by the Government are welcome. By definition, it is likely that some will be more successful than others. It would be a wasted opportunity if any good practice learned were left to die with the pilots themselves. We recommend that, before the pilots are evaluated, the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) plans carefully how to ensure the continuance and extension or roll-out of the successful initiatives.**

17. Our predecessors were also concerned about the inflexibility of many traditional training courses from providers such as Colleges of Further Education. They advocated a more imaginative approach to the timing of courses to accommodate those unable to attend full-time, nine-to-five; and they asked for more provision of ‘taster’ placements, so that women could try out non-traditional jobs.<sup>32</sup> The EOC told us that training was still too inflexible, and in particular providers could make greater use of new technology to improve the accessibility of their courses.<sup>33</sup> The Minister did not assure us that training provision was more flexible, but he did say that it was now easier to find out about the full range of courses provided locally and to obtain advice about childcare and other help available. He added that an inquiry being undertaken by Ofsted into practice among adult

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<sup>29</sup> Qq 150–151 and 182–183

<sup>30</sup> Q 117

<sup>31</sup> Qq 65 and 67

<sup>32</sup> Trade and Industry Committee, Sixteenth Report, paragraphs 20–25

<sup>33</sup> Q 74

education providers and the proposed issuance of new best practice guidance, together with the cross-government review of carers, should help.<sup>34</sup>

18. We heard anecdotal evidence that colleges were finding it more difficult to provide small diversity projects as the money they received was specifically linked to achieving the Government's Level 2 targets. The Minister denied that this was a problem, arguing that there were opportunities for 'tasters' in the form of taster apprenticeships, work placements, and programmes in schools such as the 'Computers for Girls' initiative by the e-skills Sector Skills Council. However, he acknowledged that some colleges had called for greater flexibility for them to allocate funding. He said he would consider this, but any change must not interfere with the Government's target that 80% of the population should have Level 2 skills.<sup>35</sup>

**19. Helping with childcare, though welcome, is not the complete solution to the inaccessibility of some training courses to those unable to undertake them full-time in normal working hours. We are concerned that the Ofsted review of the flexibility of training by adult education providers has only recently been launched. We expect its findings as to best practice to be acted upon with more urgency than has been shown in relation to this problem so far.**

**20. We recognise that the Government needs to focus funding if it is to achieve its aim of ensuring that 80% of the population has Level 2 skills. However, it is a cause for regret if colleges are having to abandon useful courses or approaches to address under-representation of women in certain occupations. We recommend that, if colleges produce evidence that they are taking initiatives to deal with gender inequality, then the Minister should consider providing additional funding or at least allow them some discretion in the use of existing funding so that they can develop these initiatives. After all, this would also benefit those young people without Level 2 skills on whom the Government is currently concentrating.**

### **Apprenticeships**

21. The Minister for Skills stated that one of the DIUS's two main objectives from the Women and Work Commission's report was to increase the number of apprenticeships. He reported that £16.7 million was being spent on adult apprenticeships in 2007–08 as part of the programme to increase the number of apprenticeships from 250,000 to 500,000 across England and Wales, and he expected women to be major beneficiaries of the expansion as tackling gender disparities was one of the three stated priorities for adult apprenticeships, the others being ethnicity and disability.<sup>36</sup> We suggested, and the Minister accepted, that adult apprenticeships at the moment were concentrated on those aged between 19 and 25, with only a small number available for those over the age of 25, when women were more likely to have the confidence and ambition to seek training in non-traditional occupations.<sup>37</sup> The Minister said that, over the next three-year Comprehensive

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<sup>34</sup> Q 172

<sup>35</sup> Q 171

<sup>36</sup> Qq 150–151

<sup>37</sup> Qq 152 and 157 A point also made by the CBI: Q 93

Spending Review period, the DIUS wanted the number of apprenticeships for those over 25 years to grow to 10,000 a year, a significant increase. We suggested that even with 10,000 places, given gender segregation, this could still mean very few places being available for women in non-traditional sectors. The Minister denied this—he thought that the example provided by the preparations for the Olympics showed that in the construction industry there was a will to change, and that there were now funds and projects available to help train and recruit women to the sector. He also noted that about half of those who contacted learndirect and needed training placements were women.<sup>38</sup> However, the Minister emphasised that the Government’s main priority, its stated commitment, was to provide training for 16–18 year olds, and that meeting this obligation would absorb much of the money available for the overall apprenticeship expansion programme.<sup>39</sup>

22. One of the criticisms made by our predecessors was that the inflexibility of traditional apprenticeships made it difficult or impossible for people to combine caring responsibilities or existing part-time jobs with such training.<sup>40</sup> The Minister reported that apprenticeships had become much more flexible: it was possible to do a part-time apprenticeship, or train with more than one employer. However, it was taking time for employers to realise that this more flexible framework would attract more female employees.<sup>41</sup> We asked whether this flexibility had had any impact on completion rates. The Minister responded that completion rates were higher in 2006–07 than in 2005–06 and there was no difference between the genders.<sup>42</sup> However, as we anticipated, when the DIUS broke down the overall rates of apprenticeship completions by sector, there were wide variations between sectors, and in general women were slightly (occasionally significantly) less likely to complete apprenticeships in traditionally male-dominated sectors such as construction, engineering, ICT and science and mathematics.<sup>43</sup> The Minister said that the Government was considering setting targets for completion.<sup>44</sup>

23. The YWCA noted that 27% of those who failed to complete apprenticeships did so on the grounds that they were not paid enough. It quoted research showing that female apprentices were paid less than male. Not only were the average wages of apprentices in female-dominated areas like childcare and hairdressing below those in male-dominated areas, but even where the gender balance was more equal, such as in the hospitality sector, male apprentices were paid more than female.<sup>45</sup> While the wages of apprentices reflect those of the sector generally—so it is not surprising that those in female-dominated areas are lower—the finding that, within some sectors, male apprentices are paid more than female ones is more surprising. This may reflect the jobs they are training to do, but **(not least because of the proposed increase in the number of apprenticeships) we believe that the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights should investigate the reasons for**

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<sup>38</sup> Q q 157 and 159–160

<sup>39</sup> Q 154

<sup>40</sup> Trade and Industry Committee, Sixteenth Report, paragraphs 21–25

<sup>41</sup> Q 166

<sup>42</sup> Q 168

<sup>43</sup> Ev 76

<sup>44</sup> Q 170

<sup>45</sup> Ev 98

**the gender pay gap among apprentices, and that the Low Pay Commission should be asked to consider practical ways of rectifying the situation.**

24. Some companies have used comparatively simple methods to attract more female trainees. BT, for example, found that just advertising their apprenticeships as ‘Career Starts’ had encouraged more women to apply. This was because women were more likely than men to consider themselves unsuitable for certain jobs, so changing job titles or descriptions was an easy but effective way to encourage more female applicants.<sup>46</sup>

**25. Simply increasing the number of apprenticeships will not, in itself, help women to better paid jobs if all that happens is they continue to choose traditional types of work. It is disappointing that women are less likely than men to complete apprenticeships in the traditionally male-dominated sectors. In the rush to increase the number of apprenticeships, the Government must not lose sight of the need to promote greater equality through this form of training.**

### **Role of social enterprise**

26. The Women and Work Commission recognised the role that social enterprises could play in developing training for and providing careers advice to women. It commended the work of organisations like ‘Women Like Us’, an enterprise set up initially in North London, but on a model that the Commission thought could be usefully tried elsewhere. We visited the offices of ‘Women Like Us’ to discover what it did. This enterprise provides a number of services, mainly to women returners (they recruit many of their clients at schools and via word of mouth), such as classes to boost the confidence and assess the skills of those who have spent some time out of the workforce; advice about the sort of jobs available; direct training or advice on other training providers; and placements with local employers, often on a part-time or flexible hours basis. They did not have information about jobs in, for example, the cleaning and catering sectors: many of the women they helped already had a skill that was in demand, but conventional approaches to job placement (Job Centres and commercial employment agencies) were unable to match these women’s skills and the times they wished to work to, for example, the need of a small local business for the assistance of an accountant for a few hours each week. At the time of our visit, the enterprise was about to open a second office in London and was considering the potential for offices in five other areas of the country, with initial funding from the Regional Development Agencies. We were told that the enterprise was funded partly through fees from employers for recruitment activities, but mainly by local authority grants aimed at activities such as finding jobs for lone parents. A minority of their women clients paid small fees themselves for coaching or training.

27. The Minister for Skills said that he was aware of ‘Women Like Us’ and saw a role for social enterprise in helping women to overcome some of the barriers to finding training and quality part-time work; but he did not elaborate on this.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Q 107 and Ev 58

<sup>47</sup> Q 176

28. Like the Women and Work Commission, we consider that ‘Women Like Us’ provides an interesting and potentially very useful model for involving social enterprise in giving careers support and guidance to women and placing them in good quality jobs with suitable hours. We support the Commission’s recommendation for pilots in areas round the country and urge further action to promote such pilots, including through discussions with Regional Development Agencies and local authorities.

## Conclusions

29. Since our predecessors reported, there appears to be wider recognition of the fact that there are insufficient training opportunities for women in non-traditional occupations, and measures are being taken to address this and to spread best practice. However, we are concerned that neither the need to tackle occupational segregation in general nor the specific problems faced by older women have been taken fully into account in the Government’s priorities. The EOC emphasised the fact that because the Government’s Skills Strategy focussed on those without basic qualifications, it excluded many women returners from support. Arguing that accessing ways back into work through advice and guidance, updating old skills or retraining in sectors where women have traditionally been under-represented was a major challenge, it alleged that this challenge was yet unmet through mainstream government programmes.<sup>48</sup> We agree. The drive for a large number of training places, focused particularly on the younger and less qualified, threatens to leave older and/or slightly better qualified women behind. This is both unfair and imprudent, given that most of those who will form the UK’s 2020 workforce are already at work and that a significant proportion of these are women. We urge the Government to work with employers and trade unions to make better use of the experience and skills within the existing workforce by ensuring better training and development opportunities for women, whether they work full-time or part-time.

30. While our Report focuses on occupational segregation and ways to break down some of the traditional barriers, we regard it as equally important to encourage a better valuation of work traditionally carried out predominantly by women if there is to be progress in reducing the gender pay gap. In paragraph 13 above, we have welcomed initiatives to encourage women to take on more senior positions in traditional sectors. We note that the Secretary of State acknowledged the need to ensure that the work traditionally done by women, such as in the caring sector, was not undervalued, and that she also emphasised the role of quality part-time work in achieving an improvement to women’s pay, using their skills and experience more fully and raising their status at work.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Ev 84

<sup>49</sup> Qq 199–201

## 3 The workplace: the role of employers and trade unions and the legislative framework

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31. Our predecessors began their inquiry into occupational segregation partly because it raised issues of equality and fairness in the workplace and partly because they believed that any undervaluing and under-use of a significant part of the workforce helped prolong skills shortages, reduced the UK's competitiveness and generally had a negative economic impact.<sup>50</sup> This was also the view of the Government in setting up the Women and Work Commission, and of those of our and our predecessors' witnesses who represent employers and workers. The EOC noted the warm welcome given to the report of the Women and Work Commission by both employers and trade unions, and the evidence of some cross-party support, too. The EOC detected in this greater engagement by interest groups in the issues of equality and the role of women in the economy, which gave promise of broader cultural change.<sup>51</sup>

32. Baroness Prosser stated that if businesses were to thrive and grow, they needed to make more effort to adapt to keep good female staff, not least as this cost less than recruiting and training new staff.<sup>52</sup> This would require not only a hard look at equal pay practices but also a more imaginative approach to issues such as long working hours and flexible working (part-time work, job sharing, annualised hours, flexitime, home-working and other options) and, through training and the nurturing of talent, making good use of their existing employees.

### Equal pay reviews

33. One of the issues considered by our predecessors was whether it was desirable to make equal pay audits mandatory for all employers.<sup>53</sup> They found that the EOC and trade unions supported this idea, and the CBI opposed it. This situation has not changed. The gender equality duty imposed on the public sector as from April 2007 has acted as a spur to public authorities to use equal pay audits or similar surveys.<sup>54</sup> The public sector has a narrower pay gap than the private sector but is facing difficult problems at present with a mass of legal claims over equal pay. The EOC reported to us that the pay gap between men and women in the private sector was nearly ten percentage points larger than for the public sector, and that private sector employers were less likely to undertake equal pay reviews, which, it suggested, were helpful in identifying not only pay discrimination but other causes of the pay gap such as occupational segregation and a lack of flexible working.<sup>55</sup> The TUC argued: "you are never going to identify a gender pay segregation problem or unequal

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<sup>50</sup> Trade and Industry Committee, Sixteenth Report, paragraph 1

<sup>51</sup> Q 58

<sup>52</sup> Qq 33 and 37–38

<sup>53</sup> Trade and Industry Committee, Sixteenth report, paragraphs 51–52

<sup>54</sup> Q 76 (EOC) The public sector duty is discussed further in paragraphs 71–78 below

<sup>55</sup> Ev 85

pay ... until you have open and transparent processes whereby you can examine grading systems, pay structures, promotion opportunities and all the rest of it. We have had years and years and years of employers telling us that it will happen, they will do it, it is good practice and it is not happening enough.”<sup>56</sup>

34. The CBI, on the other hand, appeared to see equal pay audits as revealing only pay discrimination, which it did not consider a significant contributor to the gender pay gap. It attributed the gap first to the subject and the career choices made by girls at school, and then to the disruption to their careers when they had families, and, in some cases, to anomalies caused by merging pay scales after a take over or merger.<sup>57</sup> A major difference between men and women was, it argued, that men did not have career breaks and therefore reached more senior positions than women. In support of this view, it said that in the 22–29 age group the pay gap between men and women was only 2%.<sup>58</sup> Other witnesses disputed this, citing research by the EOC which concluded that the pay gap between graduates who had taken the same degree subject was as much as 15% shortly after graduation.<sup>59</sup> Baroness Prosser agreed the situation was complex, and noted that the pay gap arose partly because women do not, largely speaking, push themselves for pay rises and promotion in the same way that men do.<sup>60</sup>

35. The CBI also considered that more companies were already voluntarily conducting equal pay audits. It said that of large companies (with more than 5,000 staff) 58% had already done an audit, against the target of 45% by 2008, and a further 14% were planning to do so, and concluded that compulsion was unnecessary as the spread of good practice was enough. It reported that half the audits undertaken had revealed no pay gap. Where the audits had revealed problems, the CBI considered that employers had taken appropriate action, such as reviewing the performance management systems, using diversity training or introducing new pay structures. It also argued that small companies neither needed nor could afford equal pay audits, which were very labour-intensive and expensive.<sup>61</sup> The CBI estimated that it would cost a company with 700 staff £14,000 to pay an external consultant to conduct an equal pay audit—money that could be better used training managers on handling diversity and flexibility, for example; the TUC said that it could do the audit for a quarter of that price.<sup>62</sup>

36. The advocates of equal pay reviews did not deny the CBI’s claims that these could be cumbersome and anyway did not provide a panacea for the gender pay gap. Baroness Prosser went so far as to say that the companies most in need of an equal pay audit were not large, unionised companies, where pay systems were fairly transparent, but places like law firms or financial companies, where pay rates were not transparent.<sup>63</sup> She also noted that, while such reviews showed discrimination within a company, they were ineffective in

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<sup>56</sup> Q 132

<sup>57</sup> Q 132

<sup>58</sup> Q 87

<sup>59</sup> Qq 87 (CBI) and 8 (Baroness Prosser) and 92 (TUC)

<sup>60</sup> Q9

<sup>61</sup> Qq 132–133

<sup>62</sup> Qq 133 (CBI) and 134 (TUC)

<sup>63</sup> Qq 34–37

tackling the problem of businesses where the workforce consisted almost entirely of men or almost entirely of women.<sup>64</sup> The EOC wanted employers voluntarily to take the initiative in ensuring that women were neither directly nor indirectly discriminated against in their companies. It suggested that, even without statutory compulsion, employers should check regularly whether a gender pay gap was apparent in their organisation and, if so, what were the causes, and then act to deal with those causes.<sup>65</sup> However, the EOC considered that, if there was pay discrimination within an organisation, by far the best way to tackle it was an equal pay review.<sup>66</sup> The EOC said that, in response to concerns about the burden and expense of a full audit, it had produced a template for a 'light touch' equality check, which would reveal the presence of any of three causes of the pay gap (discrimination, job segregation and lack of flexible working), was proportionate to the size of the business and would enable even large companies to proceed on the basis of samples from groups of workers rather than an examination of every individual, and would result in an action plan to reduce or remove the causes of the pay gap.<sup>67</sup> The Secretary of State for Equality described this equality check as being designed specifically for SMEs and consisting of an outline of the business case for such a check, a short questionnaire that should take no more than 15 minutes to complete, and guidance on what to do if the results of the check indicated that there was a problem. She told us that the Government hoped to pilot this equality check on the BusinessLink website for three months from November 2007 with the help of the CBI and British Chambers of Commerce. If the pilot was successful, the equality check would then be released on that website for general use.<sup>68</sup>

37. Connected with this, the EOC suggested that, instead of making audits compulsory, a more productive approach would be to impose on business, and the third sector, a similar requirement to the public sector equality duty. The thrust of such a duty would be to require employers to inquire into whether there was a pay gap among their workforce (without stipulating the means) and then to take appropriate action to tackle any such gap.<sup>69</sup> The EOC suggested: "Far from adding to the regulatory burden, this would simplify and modernise the law and reduce the risk of tribunal cases."<sup>70</sup> This suggestion was supported by Amicus, the Fawcett Society (though both of these continued also to advocate mandatory equal pay audits as part of a gender equality 'health check'), the Mayor of London and the TUC.<sup>71</sup>

38. The Discrimination Law Review took a slightly different line, suggesting that there might be a case for introducing a "voluntary equality standard scheme which would set out what businesses, as both employers and providers of goods and services, need to do to comply with discrimination law and achieve higher standards of good practice on equality and diversity." The consultation paper issued by the Discrimination Law Review asked

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<sup>64</sup> Q 41

<sup>65</sup> Qq 58 and 72

<sup>66</sup> Q 75

<sup>67</sup> Ev 87

<sup>68</sup> Q 225

<sup>69</sup> Qq 77–78

<sup>70</sup> Ev 85

<sup>71</sup> Ev 88, Ev 90, Ev 54, Q 143 (TUC)

whether this would be beneficial and then set out two options for such a scheme, an independently assessed accredited standard, or a non-accredited good practice and compliance tool.<sup>72</sup>

39. The CBI did not rule out completely the idea of extending the equality duty to the private sector. It commented that it would like to see evidence that the duty was actually working in the public sector before any extension.<sup>73</sup>

40. We asked the Secretary of State for Equality whether pay audits should be made compulsory. While noting that the Government had yet to reach a conclusion on this issue, she replied that transparency was vital, but pay audits were not the only way to achieve that and they did not necessarily address pay gaps. She emphasised that different sized companies needed different approaches, not least to ensure the personal privacy of staff; but she thought at the very least in all but the smallest companies it should be possible to supply figures for the average pay of men and the average pay of women without breaching privacy.<sup>74</sup>

**41. There is a need for increased pay transparency but, as our predecessors noted, the experience of equal pay audits has been mixed.<sup>75</sup> Some of the criticisms of them would be met if an effective ‘light touch’ approach were developed. We were encouraged by the description of the prototype ‘light touch’ check given by the Secretary of State and recommend that the Government, the CBI, the British Chamber of Commerce, Regional Development Agencies and other representative bodies make strenuous efforts to publicise this tool when it is launched generally, so that the use of it swiftly becomes best practice among smaller businesses.**

**42. Another important criticism, that equal pay checks were of doubtful effectiveness in making companies take the issue of occupational segregation more seriously, could also be met if pay differences were regarded as a proxy for inequality more generally and the form of the audit required employers to consider wider questions such as why, for example, most women in their organisation were employed in the lower grade jobs and most of the managers were men.**

**43. However useful equal pay reviews might be at uncovering problems, in themselves they would not ensure that any problems were tackled. We can see the attractions of the public sector gender equality duty in this regard, with its requirements to publish an action plan, report on progress, and take the actions described in the plan in a specified period. The duty also is not prescriptive about the ways to achieve the stated objectives: it leaves decisions on means to the authority implementing the duty. However, it is too early as yet to judge the success of the duty, which came into force only in April. We recommend that the Government evaluate its effectiveness in two years’ time and, if it has been successful, the Government should extend the duty to the private sector. Certainly, if the pay gap continues to decline at such a slow rate, the Government must**

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<sup>72</sup> Para 6.8

<sup>73</sup> Qq 143-144

<sup>74</sup> Qq 227-233

<sup>75</sup> Trade and Industry Committee, Sixteenth Report, paragraph 52

**look at such further measures as the extension of the gender equality duty and consider making pay audits mandatory.**

## Equal pay legislation

44. Most of our witnesses submitted their written evidence to us and gave oral evidence before the results of the Discrimination Law Review became known. With the exception of the CBI, which thought that a major overhaul of the legislation was neither necessary nor appropriate, and which suggested that a lot of ‘fiddly changes’ would be even worse for managers to implement, our witnesses were of the view that the current division of the legislation between the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts was confusing and complicated, and that the provisions relating to pay were unfair and had spurred an unsustainable number of employment tribunal cases. They called for the legislation to be merged into a single equality act.<sup>76</sup> The EOC believed that the current separation of equality legislation into two strands under two Acts of Parliament ran counter to EU law, which treated discrimination in relation to employment in the same way as other forms of discrimination.<sup>77</sup>

45. The EOC said that the problems with the current Equal Pay Act were it was too slow, too cumbersome, too ineffective, it placed the onus on individuals to complain after the event and it did not stop discriminatory pay systems in the first place.<sup>78</sup> The TUC added that by placing the responsibility on individual employees to complain and litigate, it had the invidious effect of potentially wrecking the relationship between employer and employee; and that the process was time-consuming, difficult and attracted ‘no win, no fee’ solicitors to the area. The TUC, like several other witnesses, strongly supported the introduction of a provision allowing ‘representative actions’ (where an organisation such as a trade union or the EOC took action on behalf of a group of complainants).<sup>79</sup> Another frequent request was for it to be possible to use a ‘hypothetical comparator’ in relation to pay. The Discrimination Law Review describes the current situation as follows:

At the moment, the law requires a person bringing a claim under the Equal Pay Act to identify an existing person of the opposite sex who receives, will receive or has received better pay or benefits for doing the same work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. This person is described as an ‘actual comparator’. If hypothetical comparators could be used, a person could bring an equal pay claim where no actual comparators are available. The claimant would need to show that if a person of the opposite sex, paid by the same source, were to do the same work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value, that person would receive better pay or benefits than the claimant does.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Qq 148 (CBI), 40–42 (Baroness Prosser), 145 (TUC), Ev 88, Ev 54, Ev 87

<sup>77</sup> Ev 87

<sup>78</sup> Q 80

<sup>79</sup> Q 145 (TUC), Ev 87, Ev 54, Ev 88, Ev 90

<sup>80</sup> Para 3.26

Our witnesses argued that hypothetical comparators should be allowed, not least because occupational segregation meant that often there were no actual comparators.<sup>81</sup> The EOC gave examples of where it felt hypothetical comparators might be used, one of which was where part-timers, all of whom were women, were excluded from certain benefits such as occupational sick pay or occupational pensions. However, the EOC thought that, where there was an actual comparator, the present principle of and processes for determining equal value should be retained.<sup>82</sup>

46. Other suggestions for provisions to be included in a single equality act were that there should be a clear purpose clause at the beginning setting out the aims and objectives of the legislation, in the light of which the subsequent provisions should be read; that, to combat indirect discrimination, and using the model of the Disability Discrimination Act, there should be a duty to make reasonable adjustments to enable the employment of under-represented groups; that the time limits for bringing claims and the remedies for claimants should be “harmonised up”; and in particular that anyone winning an employment tribunal claim on the grounds of sex discrimination in any respect should have the right to be reinstated by her/his employer to the same job on the same terms and conditions.<sup>83</sup> Both the Fawcett Society and Amicus considered that employers who lost employment tribunal cases should be required to conduct an equal pay audit and take action on the basis of its findings.<sup>84</sup> More generally, the EOC wanted an Act which “has a much stronger focus on institutions taking actions to tackle problems rather than waiting for individuals to complain after something had gone wrong.”<sup>85</sup>

47. The Discrimination Law Review rejected most of these suggestions. It ruled out a hypothetical comparator on the grounds that: “Taking account of the uncertainties that hypothetical comparators would create, and the potential for significant numbers of unsuccessful claims which would still incur litigation and processing costs, we are not persuaded that allowing the use of hypothetical comparators would give any benefit in practice.”<sup>86</sup> It also rejected the idea of representative actions, saying:

a number of stakeholders, including business, have expressed reservations about creating a further mechanism for litigation. ... Although [representative actions] may assist those with legitimate claims, the system can also benefit those with spurious claims, who may not even have felt aggrieved until encouraged to join a representative action. Representative actions on behalf of a group of *unnamed* individuals [our emphasis]<sup>87</sup> are also particularly difficult to quantify, making it hard for an organisation to consider early settlement proposals which would keep legal costs down.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ev 88, Ev 87

<sup>82</sup> *supp ev* Baroness Prosser appears to disagree: she felt that assessing equal value was difficult: Qq 40–41

<sup>83</sup> Q 145 (TUC), Ev 88 and Ev 54

<sup>84</sup> Ev 88 and Ev 54

<sup>85</sup> Q 58

<sup>86</sup> Paragraph 3.29

<sup>87</sup> Which, as the Review indicates, are sometimes known as ‘class’ actions

<sup>88</sup> Para 7.29

(The EOC, among others, made it clear to us that their recommendation was for representative, not for class, actions which would be taken for a group of *named* individuals who were already considering claiming under the Act.<sup>89</sup>) The Review also recommended the retention of the distinction between contractual issues (covering basic pay and benefits and currently falling under the Equal Pay Act) and non-contractual benefits (such as special bonuses, childcare subsidies or employee share options and currently falling under the Sex Discrimination Act). This means that there would continue to be different defences for employers, different remedies and different time limits for bringing claims for the two types of payment.<sup>90</sup>

48. We asked the Secretary of State whether she was content with the conclusions of the Discrimination Law Review. She explained that the Government was still assessing the responses to the Review, and therefore she could not comment on issues such as hypothetical comparators and representative actions. However, she indicated that the responses to the Review had made it clear that the Government could go further than the sort of consolidation measure proposed by the Review, in particular with reference to three issues: equal pay, the use of public procurement to promote equality, and pay transparency. She assured us that the delay in publication of a draft Equality Bill, far from indicating that the Government intended to step back from its commitment to equality, was a result of the Government's willingness to go further than the Review recommended.<sup>91</sup>

**49. Although the Discrimination Law Review suggested that there were disadvantages to the amendments to legislation which have been proposed by our witnesses, the current law is clearly not working well. There has been such a glut of equal pay claims against local authority employers that neither they nor the tribunal system can manage them; and the heavy involvement of 'no win, no fee' lawyers in this area shows the potential for litigation to spread into other public sector areas including those which have conducted pay reviews, such as the NHS 'Agenda for Change' programme, and through the private sector as well. This can also make it difficult to negotiate agreements to incorporate effective equal pay audits and may discourage employers from embarking on pay structure reviews. More fundamentally, given the number of claims, the law does not appear to be effective in preventing discrimination in the first place. The Discrimination Law Review failed to address these problems adequately. We therefore recommend the Government to look again at the possibility of introducing provisions to allow hypothetical comparators and representative actions, and to simplify the law in relation to time limits for bringing cases, remedies and defences for employers. This would not reduce the difficulty of reaching a fair view of issues like 'equal value' in each case, but it would reduce some of the complexity of the law as it currently stands.**

**50. We were particularly concerned that at present there is no obligation on an employer who has lost an equal pay case to ensure that other members of the workforce are being paid appropriately. We recommend that employment tribunals are given the power to order employers to conduct equal pay reviews and act upon the findings.**

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<sup>89</sup> Ev 87

<sup>90</sup> Paragraphs 3.16–3.20

<sup>91</sup> Qq 234 and 210–212

51. **On the immediate problem faced by local authorities, we recommend that the Government should examine the role played by some ‘no win, no fee’ lawyers in stimulating claims which further complicate the situation and are sometimes contrary to the best interests of the claimant.**

## Flexible working and quality part-time jobs

52. Baroness Prosser, the EOC, the TUC and the Secretary of State for Equality all identified the dearth of quality part-time jobs as one of the main reasons for the persistence of the gender pay gap, and a waste of the experience and skills of many older women.<sup>92</sup> The EOC’s investigation into flexible and part-time working suggested that 5.6 million people (80% of the UK’s 7 million part-time workers) were in jobs that did not use their potential: over 3.5 million of them had actually used higher qualifications or skills or had had more management/supervisory responsibilities in previous jobs.<sup>93</sup> The EOC also said that part-time working should not be seen just as an option for mothers of young children: nearly half the increase in part-time work over the past 20 years had been among men. It noted that, with the weakening in the pattern of single careers over 40 years of full-time work, more people wanted to work part-time at different periods of their life, whether as students, or partially-retired, or carers, or as fathers of young children, or to have time to pursue voluntary work or other interests. Moreover, part-time work was often a good way of getting disabled people into the workforce.<sup>94</sup> The Secretary of State for Equality emphasised the importance of ensuring that part-time workers were given access to training and to opportunities for promotion.<sup>95</sup>

53. Several of those who submitted written evidence to us gave examples of good practice in relation to part-time work. ASDA described its part-time female managers project. Analysis of managers had shown that there was a disproportion of men as compared with the workforce overall. The aim was to increase the number of female managers, but this was not straightforward as the perception that managers had to be full-time and worked long hours was a disincentive to women applying. ASDA had therefore created job shares, and had also discovered that some traditionally hard to fill vacancies, such as managers on night shifts, particularly suited women in certain circumstances. ASDA reported that 40% of its managers and of its senior managers were women. ASDA also offered nearly 20 other flexible working options, and it felt this was a significant factor in its record of having the highest rate of staff retention in the retail sector.<sup>96</sup>

54. While welcoming the principle of the Government’s Quality Part Time Work Initiative, the CBI and TUC both lamented the fact that the Government had provided only a tenth of the funding requested by the Women and Work Commission (£500,000 instead of £5 million). They also were concerned that the beneficiaries of the available funding were companies that already had a good record for initiatives in this area; the TUC and CBI argued that, with more notice, and the full £5 million they could have produced a set of

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<sup>92</sup> Q1 (Baroness Prosser) 56 (EOC), 86 (TUC) and 199 (Secretary of State)

<sup>93</sup> *Britain’s Hidden Brain Drain—Final Report, The EOC’s Investigation into flexible and part-time working, 2005*

<sup>94</sup> Ev 82

<sup>95</sup> Q 199

<sup>96</sup> Ev 55

proposals for things like local (rather than company-based) job-share registers, and part-time managers in sectors experiencing difficulties in recruiting or where there were large groups of women who might benefit from such initiatives.<sup>97</sup> **We, too, consider that this initiative has been under-funded, given the importance of quality part-time work in relation to both reducing occupational segregation and tackling the worse, and more obstinately static, gender pay gap which is that in relation to women’s hourly pay for part-time work. We recommend that the Government increase the funding to the initial target of £5 million, and seek the help of the CBI, TUC and similar organisations in proposing initiatives among companies which would otherwise be unaware of or reluctant to try best practice.**

55. Part-time work is only one sort of flexible working. The CBI and TUC have assembled case studies of practical ways in which companies have succeeded in reducing long hours, reforming working practices and achieving flexibility for both employers and employees.<sup>98</sup> Pam Walton, a consultant in this area, suggested ways of spreading good practice in relation to flexible working, such as a database on the internet of jobs already done on a reduced hours or job-share basis, the use of existing local agencies to put highly-qualified potential job-share partners in contact with each other, and encouraging trade unions and trade associations to establish job-matching services.<sup>99</sup> As recommended by the Women and Work Commission, the Government has launched an Exemplar Employer Initiative, working with Opportunity Now to encourage employers to adopt best practice. It has over 100 exemplar employers working with schools, supporting women returners and carers, encouraging women to break into non-traditional subjects (like science, engineering, ICT and construction), and developing women’s management and leadership skills, as well as undertaking other projects to tackle occupational segregation. The Government has been disseminating best practice gleaned from these employers through a best practice conference and guidance published on the internet.<sup>100</sup>

56. The CBI argued that 90% of employers now offered some form of flexible working: flexible time, which encompassed any sort of non-standard hours (flexitime, part-time, term-time, job share, compressed hours, annualised hours); flexible location (homeworking, working on the move, from telecentres, satellite offices); and flexible contracts (outsourcing, agency workers, temporary or fixed-term labour).<sup>101</sup> The Government estimated in April 2007 that 5.4 million employees (3.2 million of whom were women), or about 22% of the total workforce, had some form of flexible working arrangement.<sup>102</sup> The CBI also said that smaller firms were more likely to agree to requests for flexible working than larger ones.<sup>103</sup>

57. Our witnesses disagreed over whether the right of employees to request flexible working should be extended beyond the current eligible groups (parents of children under

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<sup>97</sup> Qq 125–126 (TUC) and 127 (CBI)

<sup>98</sup> Q 96

<sup>99</sup> Ev 96

<sup>100</sup> One year on report, paras 5.9–5.11

<sup>101</sup> Ev 65–66

<sup>102</sup> One year on report, para 5.4

<sup>103</sup> Q 98

the age of six, or of disabled children under the age of 18, and—since April 2007—carers of adults). Amicus, the TUC and the EOC wanted the right to request to be extended to all workers, partly in order to remove the stigma from flexible working (the perception that those who requested it were less committed to their jobs than other employees) and partly because they believed more widespread flexible working would enable employers to plan better. The EOC commented: “Employers have found that so long as flexible working applies only to certain groups, the benefits to the organisation are constrained by the inability to manage the issue in the round.” The TUC thought that greater flexibility could enable employers more easily to meet customer demands for provision of services round the clock. As when it gave evidence to our predecessors, Amicus was of the view that the right to request should be strengthened as well as widened: it wanted employees to be given the right to challenge an employer’s refusal of a request in an employment tribunal.”<sup>104</sup> On the other hand, the CBI, while agreeing that the current right to request had worked fairly well, said that its members were finding it increasingly difficult to accommodate new requests without detriment to their businesses and did not want the right to flexible working extended further in the current Parliament.<sup>105</sup> The Secretary of State for Equality considered that the extension of the right to carers of adults was of particular significance, noting that, with an ageing population in the UK, this right was likely to become increasingly important to employees.<sup>106</sup>

**58. The Government said in April 2007 that it “will continue to consider the case for extending the right to request flexible working to the parents of older children, taking into account the impact of the extension to carers, and working with business.”<sup>107</sup> We agree that the right should be extended in consultation with employers and their representatives; but we believe that while the Government’s thinking appears to be limited to parents and carers, this ignores the wider changes in work which mean that more people will change career, have portmanteau careers or wish to work part time at the beginning or end of their working lives, and it also risks leaving flexible working in a (perceived if not actual) ghetto as ‘ a woman’s problem’ and a sign of a lack of commitment among nearly half the workforce. We recommend the Government consider a gradual extension of the right to request flexible working to the whole workforce.**

**59. In relation to Amicus’s suggestion that employees should be given the right to challenge any refusal by their employer to grant a request for flexible working at an employment tribunal, we share our predecessors’ view that as yet this has not proved necessary as there has been no evidence of widespread refusal by employers to agree to requests. However, the Government should keep the situation under review.**

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<sup>104</sup> Ev 54 Ev 83 Qq 86 and 92 (TUC)

<sup>105</sup> Q 93, Ev 68

<sup>106</sup> Q 241

<sup>107</sup> One year on report, para 5.6 See also Q 73 (EOC)

## Company culture: role models, middle managers and trade unions

### Role models

60. The Government and the Women and Work Commission emphasised the need for role models of successful women to encourage and inspire others to emulate them. One of the Government's initiatives has been to set up a network of 1,000 women entrepreneurs to inspire, advise and support women in setting up their own businesses.<sup>108</sup> The Government is also looking for role models of women on company boards. However, despite the recommendations made in both the Higgs review of corporate governance and the Tyson review of diversity on company boards,<sup>109</sup> progress in achieving greater female representation is slow: the Government reported in April 2007 that the latest FTSE report on the subject had shown that only 10% of FTSE 100 directors were women, and the CBI admitted that recently there had been a stagnation or decline in the number of FTSE 250 directors.<sup>110</sup> However, the CBI argued this was not the whole picture: the proportion of female managers overall had risen from 8% to 30% and far more women were setting up their own companies.<sup>111</sup> The TUC also considered that the picture was mixed. It suggested that one of the reasons for women setting up their own companies was the 'glass ceiling' and the 'clubbish' culture of boards. On the other hand, it noted, some companies were taking seriously the business case for greater diversity in the composition of their boards, because they were either targeting women as customers or were seeking to recruit women as employees.<sup>112</sup>

**61. There are good examples of successful businesswomen who can act as role models. However, progress is patchy and it will take some time before the number of these pioneers increases to the sort of critical mass which makes women top managers and entrepreneurs seem commonplace rather than exceptional in the UK.**

### Middle managers

62. None of the possible legislative changes or attempts to spread best practice will succeed in reducing occupational segregation and the gender pay gap without a fundamental cultural change. Key to such a change is the role of middle managers, who are often the people who make decisions about flexible working, performance rewards and recommendations for promotion, and who set the tone for company culture (whether it is overtly sexist, whether harassment and discrimination are tolerated or rooted out).

63. However, the EOC was concerned that many middle managers had not been trained to cope with issues like requests for flexible working. Its survey of HR professionals in a

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<sup>108</sup> One year on report, para 6.7

<sup>109</sup> Derek Higgs, *Review of the role and effectiveness of non-executive directors*, January 2003; Laura Tyson, *Report on the recruitment and development of non-executive directors*, London Business School, 2003

<sup>110</sup> One year on report, page 55

<sup>111</sup> Qq 128–129

<sup>112</sup> Qq 129–131

variety of organisations had found that only one in eight thought that their organisation gave enough training to managers in this area.<sup>113</sup>

64. Managers in smaller companies, though more confident about dealing with requests for flexible working, were, according to the CBI, more worried about other actions that could be taken, such as identifying groups of women who might want to train for new areas of work or encouraging women to apply for more senior positions. They feared that these could be seen as discrimination in favour of women rather than positive action. The CBI considered that they needed better guidance about what was permissible, and expressed a hope that the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights would make such guidance a priority.<sup>114</sup>

**65. There is clearly a need for more training and advice to be made available to managers to give them the ability and confidence to adopt new ways of working and of nurturing talent in order to enable their employees to use their skills, to their own benefit as well as that of the company. We support the CBI's suggestion that the CEHR should make a priority of issuing guidance on what types of actions would be considered discriminatory and what could be seen as positive action.**

### ***The role of trade unions***

66. As our predecessors pointed out, trade unions themselves do not have an unblemished record in supporting women in the workplace, and the culture of employees needs to change as much as that of employers if women are to receive equal treatment at work. Baroness Prosser expressed a wish that trade unions should be more proactive in discovering why women were 'lagging behind' in pay, why more training was given to some groups of workers than others and whether there was a consistent approach amongst managers to issues such as requests for flexible working. This was the role she envisaged for union equality representatives.<sup>115</sup> The EOC concurred.<sup>116</sup> The TUC considered the role of the union equality representative absolutely essential in working with management to help to bring about broader cultural changes in the workplace. It was therefore very disappointed that the Government had decided to fund the programme of equality reps from the existing Union Modernisation Fund rather than through additional and separate funding, as had been recommended by the Women and Work Commission.<sup>117</sup>

**67. Given the difficulty of bringing about cultural change, which requires the joint efforts of both trade unions and management, and the success of the union learning representatives, we, too, are disappointed that the Government's support for union equality representatives appears lukewarm.**

68. The Minister for Employment Relations and Postal Affairs gave us information about the equality representative projects already being funded and those to which funding were

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<sup>113</sup> Q 58, Ev 82

<sup>114</sup> Q 98

<sup>115</sup> Qq 26 and 28

<sup>116</sup> Q 72

<sup>117</sup> Q 96, Ev 95

awarded in October 2007.<sup>118</sup> Most of them concentrate on fairly basic training for union equality representatives, so it is difficult to predict yet whether they will have the direct impact on the workplace hoped for by Baroness Prosser.

## **General conclusions**

**69. We welcome the examples our witnesses gave of close working and co-operation in spreading good practice between trade unions and employers organisations. We hope that they will continue to be able to build on this now that the immediate flurry of activity after publication of the Women and Work Commission's report has subsided.**

**70. We were told of numerous imaginative and practical initiatives to address gender inequality in the workplace, both within and outside government programmes. However, we are concerned that many of the organisations taking part in government programmes are either companies which have already shown leadership in this area or are in the broader public sector, such as Royal Mail and universities. We hope that best practice will be taken up more widely and recommend the Government, via the Commission for Equality and Human Rights and the department that has the central role in communicating with business, the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, to make spreading best practice in this area a priority. We would like to see the spread of best practice through the economy adopted as one of the actions both the CEHR and BERR pledge themselves to take under the public sector equality duty.**

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<sup>118</sup> Ev 118

## 4 Government as an exemplar

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### Public sector gender equality duty

71. The Equality Act 2006 lays upon all public authorities the statutory duty, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women. In addition to this general equality duty, which came into effect on 6 April 2007, there are also a series of specific duties, which have been deliberately framed to reflect the lessons learned from the earlier race equality duty which, as one of our witnesses suggested, focussed too much on processes and too little on actual effects.<sup>119</sup> These specific duties are:

To prepare and publish a Gender Equality Scheme that shows how the authority will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives.

To consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap.

To gather and use information on how the authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services.

To consult stakeholders and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives.

To assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality.

To implement the actions set out in its scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so.

To report against the scheme every year, and review the scheme at least every three years.

The first Gender Equality Scheme had to be published by 30 April 2007.

The Secretary of State for Equality told us that the Equal Opportunities Commission had reviewed the gender equality schemes of a number of public authorities as they were published. While the EOC held up some (for example, that of the London Development Agency) as examples of best practice, it was not impressed by others.<sup>120</sup> In the meantime, we had decided to write to all the main government departments about their implementation of the public sector gender equality duty. We asked:

What practical measures have you taken to implement the duty in relation to the employees in your department? Have you undertaken an equal pay audit, or another survey to detect any barriers to the full participation of women in your workforce?

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<sup>119</sup> Q 83 (EOC)

<sup>120</sup> Qq 236–237

What have you done to address under-representation of women in specific grades or types of post?

Have you reviewed the policies and administrative procedures of your Department for gender bias? What action have you taken to correct any such bias?

Generally, are there any differences in your approach to implementing the gender equality duty from your approach to implementing the race equality duty?

We also asked about the departments' procurement policies, which we discuss below.<sup>121</sup> We received replies from 12 departments, which we are publishing with this Report.<sup>122</sup>

72. The responses showed some variation in the amount of effort departments were making in implementing the gender equality duty. While all have drawn up Action Plans and are conducting or have already held equal pay audits, some are more experienced than others in taking action on equality issues and so far the spread of best practice appears limited. A number of departments told us that they were addressing gender imbalances in their workforce, particularly at senior levels, through training and development programmes and mentoring.<sup>123</sup> Several were trying to ensure diversity through improved recruitment practices, diversity awareness training for the whole workforce or particular groups (such as those involved in deciding on appointments and promotion), and the establishment of women's networks.<sup>124</sup> Fewer mentioned specific attempts to encourage flexible working, and only the FCO and CLG seemed actively to be seeking out further opportunities for job-sharing, part-time posts and other forms of flexibility. In the case of CLG, the assumption was that all posts were open to flexible working unless there was a business case to the contrary, and the FCO required all hiring managers to consider how all jobs might be done flexibly, and was trying to identify posts at senior management level in UK missions that could be job-shares or part-time. The CLG was managing a job-share register to help increase the availability of part-time posts. The Department for Transport was reviewing the actual uptake and practical use of its flexible working policies. DFID was actively expanding flexible working following a study of barriers to women's career progression in January 2005.

73. Similar variations were apparent as far as 'gender-proofing' the formulation and implementation of external (rather than internal, personnel) policies was concerned. A number of departments mentioned that they had constructed and were beginning to use an Equalities Impact Assessment for new policies; some departments had proceeded to screening existing policies to see whether they raised particular diversity problems. BERR, DEFRA, DFID, the FCO and possibly HMT appear to have made most progress on this.

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<sup>121</sup> Paragraphs 79–85

<sup>122</sup> The 12 respondents—and their acronyms—are as follows: Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR), Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), Ministry of Defence, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Department of Health, Home Office, Department for International Development (DFID), Department for Transport, HM Treasury (HMT), Wales Office, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

<sup>123</sup> BERR, CLG, DEFRA, FCO, Health, Home Office, DFID, HMT, Wales, DWP

<sup>124</sup> BERR, Home, FCO, DWP, Transport, Defence, DWP, Health, DFID

74. We were aware that some interest groups had been disappointed with the rather mechanistic approach of departments to the race equality duty, so we asked whether departments had taken a different approach to implementing the gender equality duty. Most reported that their response was broadly similar, though they noted that the need to produce a Gender Equality Scheme with specific actions to be undertaken within a three-year period did make them concentrate more on the desired outcome rather than just the process.<sup>125</sup> Others noted that they had learned lessons from implementing the earlier race and disability duties, in involving affected groups in drawing up the Department's approach, or in how they publicised the duty and trained people in it.<sup>126</sup>

**75. It appears from our short survey that departments are making progress in implementation of the Gender Equality Duty, and that this is leading to actions to promote equality rather than just the establishment of formal processes. However, it is obvious that the pursuit of gender equality through positive action (rather than merely the avoidance of discrimination) is a new departure for some departments, and they appear to find it easier to adopt appropriate policies for their own employees than to examine the effect of their policies on their clients. There are some fine examples of best practice, which have yet to spread. We look to the Secretary of State for Equality to maintain pressure on all departments to catch up with the best. The three-yearly review of the Schemes provides a good opportunity to do so.**

76. The Discrimination Law Review suggested the merging of the various equality duties into a single equality duty, and requiring public authorities to focus on a limited number of priority areas.<sup>127</sup> This has raised concerns that some of the specific actions now being undertaken, particularly in relation to gender and disability equality, would have to be dropped from action plans to ensure a limited number of priorities across the range of diversity issues. We raised this issue with the Secretary of State for Equality. She said: "There is no point, for the sake of it, putting everything into one single duty if we can keep a clear focus on individual strands and keep those duties". She noted that while some problems were common to various groups who have suffered from discrimination, others were particular to, for example, disabled people, ethnic minorities or women.<sup>128</sup>

**77. It would be regrettable if some of the useful actions undertaken to comply with the public sector Gender Equality Duty were lost as a result of a 'tidying-up' process. There is an argument for introducing a consistent approach to the various equality duties, and the focus of the gender duty on outcomes is the appropriate model. However, this does not mean that there has to be a single equality duty: the barriers faced by different groups vary, as do the solutions which need to be applied. Legislative neatness should not take priority over a flexible approach.**

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<sup>125</sup> CLG, DEFRA, Health, HMT

<sup>126</sup> Transport and DWP

<sup>127</sup> Discrimination Law Review, Chapter 5, especially paragraphs 5.21–5.24, 5.31 and 5.39

<sup>128</sup> Q 239

## Public procurement

78. A number of our witnesses thought that the Government and other public authorities could use the £125 billion a year that the public sector spends on acquiring goods and services as leverage to promote gender equality, as well as other social aims. The Mayor of London suggested that the public sector gender equality duty should contain an “absolute requirement” to ensure equality when procuring services.<sup>129</sup> The Fawcett Society believed that government contracts should be awarded only to organisations with a good record on gender equality.<sup>130</sup> The EOC supported the use of procurement to spread best practice in diversity and equal pay; while the TUC considered that the private sector would eventually have to undertake equal pay audits in order to meet the gender equality requirements of public sector purchasers of their goods or services.<sup>131</sup> The Women and Work Commission held a round table on procurement, and found a sharp division between those recommending a cautious approach for fear of breaching EU internal market rules on public procurement (the Office of Government Commerce, the government body charged with the duty of promoting best practice in the area of public procurement) and those such as the Greater London Authority and the Olympic Delivery Authority already incorporating various requirements into their contracts. Baroness Prosser considered the approach to equalities and training adopted in the GLA’s London Underground contracts exemplary.<sup>132</sup>

79. The CBI and TUC told us that there was only patchy evidence of public authorities outside London including equality provisions within their contracts.<sup>133</sup> The CBI reported disillusionment among its members, who had found that even if they were asked to provide evidence of effective diversity policies when tendering for public contracts, the contract was simply awarded to the lowest bid: “it does nothing for this whole issue of diversity or the commitment to diversity if, having put in your bid, you know it has just gone to the lowest bidder who has not actually made any attempt to address the diversity agenda.”<sup>134</sup> This experience was true of both central and local government purchasers.<sup>135</sup> Despite this, the CBI believed that procurement could be a highly effective tool for encouraging equality, as long as value for money remained the paramount criterion for the award of public contracts, the purchasers made the obligations in respect of equal pay clear enough to be properly understood, and those judging bids remembered that SMEs were unlikely to have specialist HR departments and therefore might find it difficult to demonstrate that they met some equality criteria.<sup>136</sup> Informal contacts that we have had with businesses, including with staff involved in bidding for contracts, have also indicated that some companies are not at all concerned about the possibility of introducing requirements in respect of gender equality into public sector contracts, on the grounds that

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<sup>129</sup> Ev 90

<sup>130</sup> Ev 88

<sup>131</sup> Ev 85 and Q 132 (TUC)

<sup>132</sup> Q 46

<sup>133</sup> Qq 135–142

<sup>134</sup> Q 138

<sup>135</sup> Q 139 See also Ev 73

<sup>136</sup> Ev 72-73

they are meeting best practice in their procedures already and would be happy to demonstrate that, and believe that such requirements are within the law

80. We were not surprised by the divergence in opinion over what was permissible under EU procurement law, as we had already heard evidence to this effect in the course of our inquiry into ‘The future of UK manufacturing: public procurement’, and commented on this matter in our Report.<sup>137</sup> We concluded:

There is clearly scope for greater use of public procurement to promote social policies such as vocational training and the public duty to promote equality. However, there are awkward legal requirements and the best practice guidance just highlights the complexity of the area and the difficulty of complying with the rules. We recommend that the Government look again at its best practice guidance to see if more helpful advice can be given...<sup>138</sup>

81. We included a question about approaches to public procurement in our questionnaire to government departments. Several respondents stated that they were already following or were revising their internal guidelines in line with the OGC’s guidance and best practice across government in meeting the public sector equality duties.<sup>139</sup> In some cases, it was not clear whether the departments were thinking only in terms of whether the services provided under the contracts met equality standards, rather than whether the contractors themselves were obliged to meet them. However, the Home Office explained that the company IPS was undertaking a pilot project for the public sector, among other things, to review the tender terms and conditions to ensure that all ‘delivery partners’ and third party suppliers of goods and services “meet their own standards” in equality and diversity. The FCO stated that all bidders, potential and actual suppliers were asked to provide evidence of their diversity policies. The DWP took a different approach: the most recent New Deal contracts, which came into operation in the summer of 2006, contained clauses that required successful bidders to monitor and report to the DWP on the ethnicity and gender of their employees and on the number of disabled employees.<sup>140</sup>

82. The Secretary of State for Equality was aware of the criticisms that official government advice was too timid in respect of promoting social issues through contractual requirements on suppliers. She noted the work on the role of public procurement being undertaken by the National Employment Panel’s Business Commission on Race Equality in the Workplace, and suggested that this might be relevant to gender equality too. She also told us that she was considering the reasons for the Mayor of London’s success in pioneering the promotion of gender equality clauses in contracts, which—she suggested—might have been helped by the fact that the legislation setting up the office of Mayor gave a clear, specific power to promote equality. The Secretary of State speculated that some public authorities might be deterred from attempting the same by the fear that they would be challenged on the grounds that they had no authority to do so. She stated that the

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<sup>137</sup> Trade and Industry Committee, *The future of UK manufacturing: public procurement*, Thirteenth Report of Session 2006–7, HC 1109, paragraphs 47–51

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, paragraph 51

<sup>139</sup> BERR, Defence, Transport, HMT, DWP

<sup>140</sup> Refs

Government was looking seriously at how to achieve other objectives through procurement policy at the same time as value for money.<sup>141</sup>

**83. We consider that the advice given by the Office of Government Commerce in its guidance, *Social issues in purchasing*, is too timid. There appears to be greater scope for public bodies to require of their suppliers not only simple compliance with anti-discrimination legislation, as recommended now, but also demonstration of active commitment to equality principles in the recruitment, terms and conditions of staff. Indeed, we believe that if they do not, public bodies could be challenged as being in breach of their duty to promote gender equality. We accept that it may be easier for larger than smaller companies and for those supplying services rather than goods, to show how they are promoting gender equality, but procurement guidelines already make such distinctions between what it is reasonable to expect of different types of firm. We urge the OGC to review its guidance accordingly.**

**84. If, for the sake of certainty, the Government concludes it is necessary to introduce a statutory duty to promote equalities through procurement, the proposed Equality Bill appears to be a good opportunity to do so.**

### Leadership and co-ordination

85. When asked to name their priorities for bringing about the sort of long-term cultural change aimed at by the Women and Work Commission, the witnesses from the EOC said their first was strong leadership from the Government and the new CEHR.<sup>142</sup> They stated “although there has been a flurry of activity since the report’s recommendations were made ... we were not convinced that what is going on is sufficiently strategic”, adding that, in addition to a failure to finance initiatives enough, the Government was not giving sufficiently clear and high profile leadership to take the recommendations forward. They argued that there needed to be better co-ordination between and even within government departments, closer working with employers, trade unions and organisations like the EOC; and that the Government had to set a timetable for progress (they suggested that the aim should be that within ten years it was clear that the pay gap was going to be closed in this generation), otherwise a pay gap would persist until 2085.<sup>143</sup>

86. Baroness Prosser was less worried about the level of government commitment to change—or perhaps she had been less optimistic in the first place. She said that she was just pleased that the Government had issued an Action Plan at all and was surprised that as much had been achieved as the Government indicated. She considered that there was no need for significant extra funding, although she did think that some areas (such as careers advice and improving work experience in schools) needed to be funded specifically, but she thought political will was essential.<sup>144</sup> When pressed to give examples of lack of coherence in government, Baroness Prosser said that some parts of the (then) Department of Trade and Industry were very good—by implication, others were not—but she was disappointed

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<sup>141</sup> Qq 213–217

<sup>142</sup> Q 58

<sup>143</sup> Qq 60 and 62–64

<sup>144</sup> Qq 10–12 and 20

that the Department for Communities and Local Government did not do more to build on “the relationship between local government and its delivery, its employment of women, its services to women, and the equality agenda.” She considered that the Department for Work and Pensions was more aware of the needs of women in relation to work, and the (then) Department for Education and Skills was good in relation to training needs.<sup>145</sup>

87. As Amicus succinctly explained, the action that needs to be taken to address the gender pay gap varies from sector to sector: for example, the construction and engineering industries need to attract more women apprentices and have to address problems of training and skills, whereas the financial sector already employs roughly equal numbers of men and women but the women are concentrated in the lower grade jobs because of the long hours culture and discrimination.<sup>146</sup> This means that there is no simple template for addressing the problem and concerted action is required across a wide range of public sector activities.

88. We suggested to the Minister for Skills that the Government’s one year on report showed that it was not lacking in good ideas and initiatives, but there was little sign of co-ordination and strategic thinking. The Minister thought that all the initiatives were consistent in their aims (he assured us, for example, that his Department’s Equality Impact Assessments of all policies were ensuring that gender equality was taken into account in everything it did), and he argued that such a deep-seated problem as the gender pay gap required a many-pronged attack. He also pointed out that the Secretary of State for Equality’s role was to ensure coherence across the system.<sup>147</sup>

89. The Secretary of State for Equality accepted that the Government needed to be more ambitious than in its Action Plan about the pace of change and the amount of commitment if it was to achieve its ambition of bringing about a significant improvement in relation to the gender pay gap and other aspects of the Women and Work Commission’s recommendations.<sup>148</sup> She made it clear that not only did she accept responsibility for co-ordination of government policy across departments but also she was personally very committed to strengthening government policy in this area.<sup>149</sup>

90. In this context, she denied that the new single Equalities Public Service Agreement (PSA)<sup>150</sup> represented a decrease in government enthusiasm for achieving gender equality. Apart from pointing out that departments would still be expected to work towards the existing PSA targets that had not yet been achieved, she argued that the new PSA was more focused than its predecessor and better suited to achieving progress across the range of government departments necessarily involved in addressing a complex issue like gender equality. She also noted that this PSA was not the only one to deal with equality issues:

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<sup>145</sup> Q 19

<sup>146</sup> Ev 54

<sup>147</sup> Q 195

<sup>148</sup> Qq 204–206

<sup>149</sup> Qq 203, 208 and 238

<sup>150</sup> For the new Comprehensive Spending Review period, 2008–2011 The relevant Public Service Agreement, *PSA Delivery Agreement 15: Address the disadvantage that individuals experience because of their gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief*, updated in November 2007, can be found at [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/E/8/pbr\\_csr07\\_psa15.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/E/8/pbr_csr07_psa15.pdf)

individual departments had reflected their particular responsibilities for equality in their own PSAs.<sup>151</sup>

91. In common with a number of our witnesses, we were disappointed that the Government's initial response to the report of the Women and Work Commission—the Action Plan published in September 2006—failed to commit the Government to providing the money necessary to implement the recommendations, lacked any timetable (however aspirational) by which progress could be judged, and generally gave the appearance of only a half-hearted acceptance of the outcome of the Commission. The one year on report showed that a substantial number of initiatives were in hand, some of which pre-dated the Commission's report, and greater progress was being made than one might have feared from the initial response. However, there was still the appearance of a lack of co-ordination and direction: it was not clear whether the then Minister for Women was able, amidst her other tasks, to maintain oversight of this complex and cross-cutting area. We are reassured by the current Secretary of State for Equality's obvious commitment to this policy and infer from her evidence to us that she intends not only to co-ordinate the efforts of her colleagues but also to keep up pressure on them to take into consideration and address gender equality issues in all their policies and procedures, in relation to both their clients and their employees. To ensure that this commitment is translated into effective practice, we recommend that all Select Committees should see monitoring in this area as being an important part of their remit and that the relevant Select Committee should continue to press the Secretary of State for Equality to give regular reports on progress.

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<sup>151</sup> Qq 222–224

## Conclusions and recommendations

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1. It is not yet clear how successful the attempts to spread best practice in relation to the careers advice and work experience placements arranged by schools have been. It will be some years before any improvements will feed through into the workforce. In the meantime, the Department for Children, Schools and Families must realise the importance of these apparently ‘extra’ duties of careers advice and work experience to achieving the Government’s equality aims and must give more support and funding to the provision of those services in schools. (Paragraph 10)
2. Employers—especially smaller companies without HR departments—find it difficult to devote the time and resources needed first to set up good work experience placements and secondly to ensure that they have met all the safety requirements. There is clearly a role for Sector Skills Councils, Chambers of Commerce and trade organisations, as well as Learning and Skills Councils, in providing information and helping companies to forge stronger business-education partnerships at a local level. (Paragraph 11)
3. While we welcome the initiatives to encourage women who wish to do so to train in non-traditional fields of work, we are pleased that some of the initiatives are focusing on encouraging women to take more senior and responsible positions in traditional sectors, such as the project by Improve (the Sector Skills Council for the food and drink industry) to give NVQ3 training to 300 women workers in food manufacturing to enable them to become supervisors or team leaders; and Asset Skill’s programme to teach workers in the cleaning sector management skills. Tackling ‘horizontal segregation’—the dominance of managerial and professional jobs by men in sectors where the majority of the employees are women—is as important in opening up opportunities for women as ending ‘vertical’ or sectoral segregation. (Paragraph 13)
4. The various pilots launched by the Government are welcome. By definition, it is likely that some will be more successful than others. It would be a wasted opportunity if any good practice learned were left to die with the pilots themselves. We recommend that, before the pilots are evaluated, the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) plans carefully how to ensure the continuance and extension or roll-out of the successful initiatives (Paragraph 16)
5. Helping with childcare, though welcome, is not the complete solution to the inaccessibility of some training courses to those unable to undertake them full-time in normal working hours. We are concerned that the Ofsted review of the flexibility of training by adult education providers has only recently been launched. We expect its findings as to best practice to be acted upon with more urgency than has been shown in relation to this problem so far. (Paragraph 19)
6. We recognise that the Government needs to focus funding if it is to achieve its aim of ensuring that 80% of the population has Level 2 skills. However, it is a cause for regret if colleges are having to abandon useful courses or approaches to address under-representation of women in certain occupations. We recommend that, if

colleges produce evidence that they are taking initiatives to deal with gender inequality, then the Minister should consider providing additional funding or at least allow them some discretion in the use of existing funding so that they can develop these initiatives. After all, this would also benefit those young people without Level 2 skills on whom the Government is currently concentrating. (Paragraph 20)

7. We believe that the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights should investigate the reasons for the gender pay gap among apprentices, and that the Low Pay Commission should be asked to consider practical ways of rectifying the situation. (Paragraph 23)
8. Simply increasing the number of apprenticeships will not, in itself, help women to better paid jobs if all that happens is they continue to choose traditional types of work. It is disappointing that women are less likely than men to complete apprenticeships in the traditionally male-dominated sectors. In the rush to increase the number of apprenticeships, the Government must not lose sight of the need to promote greater equality through this form of training. (Paragraph 25)
9. Like the Women and Work Commission, we consider that 'Women Like Us' provides an interesting and potentially very useful model for involving social enterprise in giving careers support and guidance to women and placing them in good quality jobs with suitable hours. We support the Commission's recommendation for pilots in areas round the country and urge further action to promote such pilots, including through discussions with Regional Development Agencies and local authorities. (Paragraph 28)
10. Since our predecessors reported, there appears to be wider recognition of the fact that there are insufficient training opportunities for women in non-traditional occupations, and measures are being taken to address this and to spread best practice. However, we are concerned that neither the need to tackle occupational segregation in general nor the specific problems faced by older women have been taken fully into account in the Government's priorities. The EOC emphasised the fact that because the Government's Skills Strategy focussed on those without basic qualifications, it excluded many women returners from support. Arguing that accessing ways back into work through advice and guidance, updating old skills or retraining in sectors where women have traditionally been under-represented was a major challenge, it alleged that this challenge was yet unmet through mainstream government programmes. We agree. The drive for a large number of training places, focused particularly on the younger and less qualified, threatens to leave older and/or slightly better qualified women behind. This is both unfair and imprudent, given that most of those who will form the UK's 2020 workforce are already at work and that a significant proportion of these are women. We urge the Government to work with employers and trade unions to make better use of the experience and skills within the existing workforce by ensuring better training and development opportunities for women, whether they work full-time or part-time. (Paragraph 29)
11. While our Report focuses on occupational segregation and ways to break down some of the traditional barriers, we regard it as equally important to encourage a better valuation of work traditionally carried out predominantly by women if there is to be

progress in reducing the gender pay gap. In paragraph 13 above, we have welcomed initiatives to encourage women to take on more senior positions in traditional sectors. We note that the Secretary of State acknowledged the need to ensure that the work traditionally done by women, such as in the caring sector, was not undervalued, and that she also emphasised the role of quality part-time work in achieving an improvement to women's pay, using their skills and experience more fully and raising their status at work. (Paragraph 30)

12. There is a need for increased pay transparency but, as our predecessors noted, the experience of equal pay audits has been mixed. Some of the criticisms of them would be met if an effective 'light touch' approach were developed. We were encouraged by the description of the prototype 'light touch' check given by the Secretary of State and recommend that the Government, the CBI, the British Chamber of Commerce, Regional Development Agencies and other representative bodies make strenuous efforts to publicise this tool when it is launched generally, so that the use of it swiftly becomes best practice among smaller businesses. (Paragraph 41)
13. Another important criticism, that equal pay checks were of doubtful effectiveness in making companies take the issue of occupational segregation more seriously, could also be met if pay differences were regarded as a proxy for inequality more generally and the form of the audit required employers to consider wider questions such as why, for example, most women in their organisation were employed in the lower grade jobs and most of the managers were men. (Paragraph 42)
14. However useful equal pay reviews might be at uncovering problems, in themselves they would not ensure that any problems were tackled. We can see the attractions of the public sector gender equality duty in this regard, with its requirements to publish an action plan, report on progress, and take the actions described in the plan in a specified period. The duty also is not prescriptive about the ways to achieve the stated objectives: it leaves decisions on means to the authority implementing the duty. However, it is too early as yet to judge the success of the duty, which came into force only in April. We recommend that the Government evaluate its effectiveness in two years' time and, if it has been successful, the Government should extend the duty to the private sector. Certainly, if the pay gap continues to decline at such a slow rate, the Government must look at such further measures as the extension of the gender equality duty and consider making pay audits mandatory. (Paragraph 43)
15. Although the Discrimination Law Review suggested that there were disadvantages to the amendments to legislation which have been proposed by our witnesses, the current law is clearly not working well. There has been such a glut of equal pay claims against local authority employers that neither they nor the tribunal system can manage them; and the heavy involvement of 'no win, no fee' lawyers in this area shows the potential for litigation to spread into other public sector areas including those which have conducted pay reviews, such as the NHS 'Agenda for Change' programme, and through the private sector as well. This can also make it difficult to negotiate agreements to incorporate effective equal pay audits and may discourage employers from embarking on pay structure reviews. More fundamentally, given the number of claims, the law does not appear to be effective in preventing discrimination in the first place. The Discrimination Law Review failed to address

these problems adequately. We therefore recommend the Government to look again at the possibility of introducing provisions to allow hypothetical comparators and representative actions, and to simplify the law in relation to time limits for bringing cases, remedies and defences for employers. This would not reduce the difficulty of reaching a fair view of issues like 'equal value' in each case, but it would reduce some of the complexity of the law as it currently stands. (Paragraph 49)

16. We were particularly concerned that at present there is no obligation on an employer who has lost an equal pay case to ensure that other members of the workforce are being paid appropriately. We recommend that employment tribunals are given the power to order employers to conduct equal pay reviews and act upon the findings. (Paragraph 50)
17. On the immediate problem faced by local authorities, we recommend that the Government should examine the role played by some 'no win, no fee' lawyers in stimulating claims which further complicate the situation and are sometimes contrary to the best interests of the claimant. (Paragraph 51)
18. We consider that the Quality Part Time Work Initiative has been under-funded, given the importance of quality part-time work in relation to both reducing occupational segregation and tackling the worse, and more obstinately static, gender pay gap which is that in relation to women's hourly pay for part-time work. We recommend that the Government increase the funding to the initial target of £5 million, and seek the help of the CBI, TUC and similar organisations in proposing initiatives among companies which would otherwise be unaware of or reluctant to try best practice. (Paragraph 54)
19. The Government said in April 2007 that it will continue to consider the case for extending the right to request flexible working to the parents of older children, taking into account the impact of the extension to carers, and working with business." We agree that the right should be extended in consultation with employers and their representatives; but we believe that while the Government's thinking appears to be limited to parents and carers, this ignores the wider changes in work which mean that more people will change career, have portmanteau careers or wish to work part time at the beginning or end of their working lives, and it also risks leaving flexible working in a (perceived if not actual) ghetto as 'a woman's problem' and a sign of a lack of commitment among nearly half the workforce. We recommend the Government consider a gradual extension of the right to request flexible working to the whole workforce. (Paragraph 58)
20. In relation to Amicus's suggestion that employees should be given the right to challenge any refusal by their employer to grant a request for flexible working at an employment tribunal, we share our predecessors' view that as yet this has not proved necessary as there has been no evidence of widespread refusal by employers to agree to requests. However, the Government should keep the situation under review. (Paragraph 59)
21. There are good examples of successful businesswomen who can act as role models. However, progress is patchy and it will take some time before the number of these

pioneers increases to the sort of critical mass which makes women top managers and entrepreneurs seem commonplace rather than exceptional in the UK. (Paragraph 61)

22. There is clearly a need for more training and advice to be made available to managers to give them the ability and confidence to adopt new ways of working and of nurturing talent in order to enable their employees to use their skills, to their own benefit as well as that of the company. We support the CBI's suggestion that the CEHR should make a priority of issuing guidance on what types of actions would be considered discriminatory and what could be seen as positive action. (Paragraph 65)
23. Given the difficulty of bringing about cultural change, which requires the joint efforts of both trade unions and management, and the success of the union learning representatives, we, are disappointed that the Government's support for union equality representatives appears lukewarm (Paragraph 67)
24. We welcome the examples our witnesses gave of close working and co-operation in spreading good practice between trade unions and employers organisations. We hope that they will continue to be able to build on this now that the immediate flurry of activity after publication of the Women and Work Commission's report has subsided. (Paragraph 69)
25. We were told of numerous imaginative and practical initiatives to address gender inequality in the workplace, both within and outside government programmes. However, we are concerned that many of the organisations taking part in government programmes are either companies which have already shown leadership in this area or are in the broader public sector, such as Royal Mail and universities. We hope that best practice will be taken up more widely and recommend the Government, via the Commission for Equality and Human Rights and the department that has the central role in communicating with business, the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, to make spreading best practice in this area a priority. We would like to see the spread of best practice through the economy adopted as one of the actions both the CEHR and BERR pledge themselves to take under the public sector equality duty (Paragraph 70)
26. It appears from our short survey that departments are making progress in implementation of the Gender Equality Duty, and that this is leading to actions to promote equality rather than just the establishment of formal processes. However, it is obvious that the pursuit of gender equality through positive action (rather than merely the avoidance of discrimination) is a new departure for some departments, and they appear to find it easier to adopt appropriate policies for their own employees than to examine the effect of their policies on their clients. There are some fine examples of best practice, which have yet to spread. We look to the Secretary of State for Equality to maintain pressure on all departments to catch up with the best. The three-yearly review of the Schemes provides a good opportunity to do so. (Paragraph 76)
27. It would be regrettable if some of the useful actions undertaken to comply with the public sector Gender Equality Duty were lost as a result of a 'tidying-up' process.

There is an argument for introducing a consistent approach to the various equality duties, and the focus of the gender duty on outcomes is the appropriate model. However, this does not mean that there has to be a single equality duty: the barriers faced by different groups vary, as do the solutions which need to be applied. Legislative neatness should not take priority over a flexible approach. (Paragraph 78)

28. We consider that the advice given by the Office of Government Commerce in its guidance, *Social issues in purchasing*, is too timid. There appears to be greater scope for public bodies to require of their suppliers not only simple compliance with anti-discrimination legislation, as recommended now, but also demonstration of active commitment to equality principles in the recruitment, terms and conditions of staff. Indeed, we believe that if they do not, public bodies could be challenged as being in breach of their duty to promote gender equality. We accept that it may be easier for larger than smaller companies and for those supplying services rather than goods, to show how they are promoting gender equality, but procurement guidelines already make such distinctions between what it is reasonable to expect of different types of firm. We urge the OGC to review its guidance accordingly. (Paragraph 84)
29. If, for the sake of certainty, the Government concludes it is necessary to introduce a statutory duty to promote equalities through procurement, the proposed Equality Bill appears to be a good opportunity to do so. (Paragraph 85)
30. In common with a number of our witnesses, we were disappointed that the Government's initial response to the report of the Women and Work Commission—the Action Plan published in September 2006—failed to commit the Government to providing the money necessary to implement the recommendations, lacked any timetable (however aspirational) by which progress could be judged, and generally gave the appearance of only a half-hearted acceptance of the outcome of the Commission. The one year on report showed that a substantial number of initiatives were in hand, some of which pre-dated the Commission's report, and greater progress was being made than one might have feared from the initial response. However, there was still the appearance of a lack of co-ordination and direction: it was not clear whether the then Minister for Women was able, amidst her other tasks, to maintain oversight of this complex and cross-cutting area. We are reassured by the current Secretary of State for Equality's obvious commitment to this policy and infer from her evidence to us that she intends not only to co-ordinate the efforts of her colleagues but also to keep up pressure on them to take into consideration and address gender equality issues in all their policies and procedures, in relation to both their clients and their employees. To ensure that this commitment is translated into effective practice, we recommend that all Select Committees should see monitoring in this area as being an important part of their remit and that the relevant Select Committee should continue to press the Secretary of State for Equality to give regular reports on progress. (Paragraph 92)

# Formal Minutes

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**Tuesday 29 January 2008**

Members present:

Peter Luff, in the Chair

Mr Adrian Bailey  
Roger Berry  
Mr Michael Clapham

Mr Lindsay Hoyle  
Mr Mike Weir  
Mr Anthony Wright

Report from the Sub-Committee (*Jobs for the Girls – Two Years On*), brought up and read.

*Ordered*, That the Report from the Sub-Committee be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 92 read and agreed to.

Annex and Summary agreed to.

*Resolved*, That the Report be the Second Report of the Committee to the House.

*Ordered*, That the Chairman make the Report to the House.

*Ordered*, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Thursday 31 January at 1.15 pm

## Witnesses

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### Wednesday 14 March 2007

Page

**Baroness Prosser**, Chair, Women and Work Commission Ev 1

### Wednesday 25 April 2007

**Ms Sheila Wild**, Director of Employment Policy, and **Ms Amanda Ariss**, Head of Policy and Research, Equal Opportunities Commission Ev 11

### Wednesday 9 May 2007

**Ms Susan Anderson**, Director of Human Resources Policy, **Ms Marion Seguret**, Senior Policy Advisor, Confederation of British Industry, **Ms Sarah Veal**, Head of Equality and Employment Rights, and **Ms Rebecca Gill**, Policy Officer, Trade Union Congress Ev 20

### Tuesday 9 October 2007

**Mr David Lammy MP**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Skills, Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills Ev 35

### Monday 29 October 2007

**Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP**, Minister for Women and Equality, **Ms Janice Shersby**, Director of Government Equalities Office, and **Ms Anne-Marie Field**, Head of Gender Equality Policy of the Government Equalities Office Ev 43

## List of written evidence

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1	ACCA	Ev 52
2	Amicus	Ev 53
3	Asda Stores Ltd	Ev 55
4	CBI	Ev 56, 74
5	Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills	Ev 76
6	Equality and Human Rights Commission	Ev 79
7	Equal Opportunities Commission	Ev 80, 86
8	Fawcett	Ev 88
9	Greater London Authority	Ev 90
10	Orange	Ev 92
11	TUC	Ev 95
12	Pam Walton	Ev 96
13	YWCA, England and Wales	Ev 97
14	Questionnaire from Trade and Industry Committee to Departments of State	Ev 99
15	Reply from BERR	Ev 100
16	Reply from Department for Communities and Local Government	Ev 101
17	Reply from Ministry of Defence	Ev 105
18	Reply from DEFRA	Ev 106
19	Reply from FCO	Ev 107
20	Reply from Department of Health	Ev 108
21	Reply from the Home Office	Ev 110
22	Reply from the Department for International Development	Ev 112
23	Reply from the Department for Transport	Ev 113
24	Reply from HM Treasury	Ev 114
25	Reply from the Welsh Office	Ev 115
26	Reply from the Department for Work and Pensions	Ev 116
27	Memorandum from BERR	Ev 118

## List of unprinted evidence

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The following memorandum has been reported to the House, but to save printing costs they have not been printed and copies have been placed in the House of Commons Library, where they may be inspected by Members. Other copies are in the Parliamentary Archives, and are available to the public for inspection. Requests for inspection should be addressed to The Parliamentary Archives, Houses of Parliament, London SW1A 0PW (tel. 020 7219 3074). Opening hours are from 9.30 am to 5.00 pm on Mondays to Fridays.

Confederation of British Industry

# List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

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## Session 2007–08

First Report	The work of the Committee in 2007	HC 233
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*List of Reports from the Trade and Industry Committee in the previous Session;*

## Session 2006–07

First Report (30.1.07)	Local energy - turning consumers into producers	HC 257
Second Report (28.2.07)	The Work of the Committee in 2005-06	HC 332
Third Report (12.4.07)	Stamp of Approval? Restructuring the Post Office network	HC 276
Fourth Report (29.3.07)	Success and failure in the UK car manufacturing industry	HC 399
Fifth Report (7.5.07)	Better Skills for Manufacturing	HC 493-I
Sixth Report (6.6.07)	Marketing UK plc – UKTI's five-year strategy	HC 557
Seventh Report (13.6.07)	Trade with Brazil and Mercosur	HC 201-I
Eighth Report (9.6.07)	Restructuring the Post Office Network	HC 593
Ninth Report (26.6.07)	Recent developments with Airbus	HC 427-I
Tenth Report (7.8.07)	Strategic Export Controls: 2007 Review	HC 117
Eleventh Report (18.10.07)	Europe moves East: The impact of the 'New' EU Member States on UK business	HC 592
Twelfth Report (24.10.07)	The work of the Office of Fair Trading	HC 591
Thirteenth Report (8.11.07)	The future of UK manufacturing: public procurement	HC 1109

## Annex: Comparison of Recommendations

Trade and Industry Committee's Report: <i>Jobs for the girls: The effect of occupational segregation on the gender pay gap</i>	Women and Work Commission's Report: <i>Shaping a Fairer Future</i>	<i>Towards a Fairer Future</i> : Government's one year-on report on implementing the proposals of the Women and Work Commission
<p>The experience of some members of the Committee supports the EOC's contention that, though it is by no means a universal attitude, a significant number of schools seem to consider finding work experience placements an onerous addition to their core teaching work, and they try to devolve as much of the responsibility to individual pupils as possible. For both students and employers, this is a wasted opportunity. (Para 15)</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>DfES has agreed with the EOC to trial a number of measures in 2007 and evaluate their impact on occupational segregation. One of these measures involves looking at how existing guidance on tackling gender-stereotypical attitudes can be improved in the context of moves towards extended work experience as part of the development of vocational education at 14-19. Revised guidance on work experience will be published in 2007.</p> <p>The UK Resource- Centre (UKRC) on Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) is funded by the Government to work with partners to better promote careers in the sector to girls and women, to retain female workers within the sector, and help qualified women return to the sector after an interruption. The UKRC has introduced the Wider Horizons programme, currently being piloted in South and West Yorkshire, to encourage girls who had picked clerical or administration jobs for their work experience placements to explore alternative careers by placing them in SET and Built Environment companies. Schools in the region have worked with employers who already employ many women in non-traditional roles. The project team are now looking to develop employer-led models. (Para 2.8)</p>

<p>We recognise that providing well structured and informative work placements is a burden on businesses, and that employers are understandably anxious about health and safety issues and other statutory responsibilities towards the young people involved. However, especially in sectors suffering from skills shortages, there is a strong argument from economic self-interest for employers to take seriously the opportunity afforded by work placements to ‘sell’ their industry and their company. The burden is especially acute for small businesses, and here we see a role for Sector Skills Councils and local trade associations to provide advice and support. It might, for example, be possible to co-ordinate a programme of brief ‘taster’ sessions in several companies to share the responsibility more widely. <i>(Para16)</i></p>	<p>[The relevant Government Departments should produce a new strategy, which should include]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_ employer visits to schools and “taster” days for primary school pupils;</li> <li>_ work experience placements for pupils pre-14 in an occupation not traditionally taken up by their gender;</li> <li>_ careers education co-ordinators in schools to organise the provision of group visits, “taster days” and work experience.</li> </ul> <p><i>(Part of Recommendation 1)</i></p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>While the issue of education of 14-19 year olds is a matter for our colleagues on the Education and Skills Committee, not us, we feel it a shame that, so far, although there has been a marked improvement in the educational achievements of girls, which should have led to a greater range of career options for these girls when they leave school, the pattern of occupational choices has not changed as much as one might have expected. We are confident that the DTI and the Learning and Skills Council are giving due attention to this issue, but we have doubts about whether the message has really penetrated down to the level of individual schools, and the local businesses that might benefit from having a wider range of candidates for jobs. We are also uncertain of the extent to which the Department for Education and Skills has ensured that</p>	<p>The Department for Education and Skills and relevant Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland departments should ensure that teacher training emphasises the need to challenge gender stereotypes, both in delivery of careers education and in subject teaching, and that it allows for a work placement for all trainee teachers, including observing workers in non-traditional occupations. <i>(Recommendation 5)</i></p> <p>Schools should consider different methods of teaching to different genders, including single-sex classes or after-school classes, for subjects where girls or boys are underrepresented or under-achieving. A good example of this is Computer Clubs for Girls. <i>(Recommendation 8)</i></p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>the challenging of gender stereotypes is fully incorporated into the curriculum and into the general approach of schools towards fitting their pupils for adult life. <i>(Para 18)</i></p>		
<p>Although there have been improvements in the provision of careers advice and work placements, and in the links between business and schools, the quality still varies too much from place to place. The critical links in the process of spreading best practice would appear to be the local Learning and Skills Councils, local education authorities, Sector Skills Councils, Regional Development Agencies, and local trade associations such as Chambers of Commerce. Until all these bodies are properly engaged in the process, it will be extremely difficult to challenge the general culture of sexual stereotyping of roles, and young people will not be given the information and encouragement necessary to step outside the stereotypes. Half the battle to improve women's pay and opportunities and to tackle skills shortages will already have been lost. <i>(Para 19)</i></p>	<p>The Department for Education and Skills and relevant Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland departments should ensure that all young people have access to careers information, advice and guidance.</p> <p>National standards should confirm that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_ challenges gender stereotypes;</li> <li>_ gives young people a real understanding of the pay, rewards and challenges of occupations, particularly those not traditionally taken up by their gender.</li> </ul> <p><i>(Recommendation 6)</i></p> <p>Careers literature and on-line careers resources that challenge gender stereotypes should be targeted at parents and carers, who should also be invited to attend the employer visits to schools and "taster days".</p> <p><i>(Recommendation 9)</i></p>	<p>DfES is working to develop new Quality Standards for Young People's Information, Advice and Guidance. Included in the standards will be the need for providers to challenge gender-stereotyping and traditional ideas of learning and work. DfES has been working closely with key stakeholders, including the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) during the development of the standards, which will be published in May 2007. The standards will be implemented in April 2008 in line with new delivery arrangements for information, advice and guidance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All careers information produced by DfES and its partners is impartial, up to date and challenges gender-stereotypes, for example by including photographs and case studies of young people in non-traditional roles. The Guide for Parents and Carers supports the "Choices" publications for young people in years 9-11. The guide encourages parents to help their children to keep an open mind and not be influenced by stereotypical images.</li> <li>• 'Challenging Gender Barriers' was published in October 2006 on behalf of DfES by the National Association of Connexions Partnerships, working closely with the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC). The report responds to the EOC's General Formal Investigation into Occupational Segregation (EOC, 2004) and the Women and Work Commission report. It provides a number of case studies of effective practice in challenging gender-stereotyping through delivery of careers information advice and guidance. Through the National Association of Connexions Partnerships, DfES is working with selected Connexions Partnerships to develop lesson plans and a practitioner's toolkit.</li> </ul> <p><i>(Para 2.6)</i></p>

N/A	<p>The Department for Education and Skills and relevant Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland departments publish strategic documents, in reaction to the analysis in this report, which describe a systemic change in the way education is delivered in order to reduce stereotypical choices, improve take-up of vocational skills training, and improve employment outcomes for young women. The document should set out the goals for a national World of Work Programme, meshing with existing initiatives, but providing a new framework for vocational skills and work experience, through primary, secondary and tertiary education.</p> <p>It should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a curriculum for vocational skills that provides a joined-up framework for practical learning;</li> <li>clarification of what students can expect in terms of entitlements to study for vocational qualifications, what the different qualifications and standards mean and how they relate to each other;</li> </ul> <p><i>(Part of Recommendation 1)</i></p>	<p>Improving work-related educational provision: new diplomas DfES will promote diversity in all its communications on Diplomas. Sector Skills Councils will target those groups that are currently under-represented in their sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DfES also plans to establish an online forum, where education providers and advisers will be able to share best practice for promoting diversity. This will be launched in Autumn 2007. <i>(Para 2.11)</i></li> </ul>
N/A	<p>The Department for Education and Skills and relevant Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland departments should work with teacher training providers to improve teachers' practical skills in delivering vocational training.</p> <p><i>(Recommendation 2)</i></p>	N/A
N/A	<p>The Department for Education and Skills and relevant Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland departments should draw up national guidance for teachers and early years childcare workers on how to ensure that the horizons of children in the three to five age group are not limited by</p>	<p>The new Early Years Foundation Stage (which was published in March 2007 and will become statutory in 2008) is built on the core requirement that all practitioners must adopt inclusive practice and promote diversity. It will help to ensure that the horizons of children, from the time they are born until they are five, are not limited by</p>

	<p>stereotypes of what girls and boys can do. (<i>Recommendation 4</i>)</p>	<p>stereotypes of what boys and girls can do.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 10 Year Childcare Strategy (HM Treasury, 2004) aims to increase the diversity of the childcare workforce, particularly by promoting the sector to men. The national childcare recruitment campaign is inclusive and seeks to provide a new national image for the sector – of a skilled, intelligent and competitive workforce where more men, people from ethnic minorities, older people and people with disabilities have the opportunity to make a real difference in the future attainment of children and the lives of their families. The campaign aims to increase the level of diversity within the workforce so that it is more representative of the community which it serves. (<i>Para 2.4</i>)</li> </ul>
N/A	<p>The Department for Education and Skills, and the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills, should consider how applications by single-sex schools for specialist status could be used to challenge gender stereotypes. The first or second specialism could be in a subject not usually associated with the students’ gender, for example, languages for boys’ schools and maths and computing for girls’ schools. Relevant Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland departments should consider this recommendation in the light of their policies. (<i>Recommendation 7</i>)</p>	N/A
<p>While the Modern Apprenticeships programme is a key to alleviating skills shortages in the UK and to providing young people with the means to access higher value and higher paid work, it appears that the structure of the apprenticeships may have been designed too much with the traditional school-leaver recruit in mind. The development of schemes for older people, particularly those with caring responsibilities, is vital to attracting</p>	<p>[The relevant Government Departments should produce a new strategy, which should include] _ the promotion of Young Apprenticeships to 14-16 year olds in occupations not traditionally taken up by their gender (<i>Part of Recommendation 1</i>)</p> <p>The Sector Skills Councils should work with employers on providing and promoting Apprenticeships for women in</p>	<p>The Department for Education and Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is developing a new national strategy on equality and diversity to improve participation and success levels of all under-represented groups in Apprenticeships and have established an action group including employers, the Learning and Skills Council, the TUC and national equality body representatives to take work forward.</li> <li>• is working with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and partners, including sector and equality bodies, to promote and improve equal</li> </ul>

<p>more women into male-dominated sectors; and we therefore welcome the pilots being run for older people. However, we are disappointed that the Modern Apprenticeships programme seems to date to be reinforcing gender segregation among young people. (Para 24)</p>	<p>industries where there are skills shortages. The development of a comprehensive plan to tackle the segregation of jobs, into those mostly done by one gender or the other, should be part of every Sector Skills Agreement. (Recommendation 3)</p>	<p>opportunities in Apprenticeships. The Equal Opportunities Commission's investigation into occupational segregation made recommendations to which the Department has responded by: improving information in this area (including publishing 'Apprenticeship Pay: A Survey of Earnings by Sector', October 2005), broadening choice; and, exploring more flexible Apprenticeship learning opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has asked the Institute for Employment Studies to take forward disseminating best practice on Young Apprenticeships through a programme of work in Spring 2007 to support schools in organising taster days, where students can see what an Apprenticeship would be like before choosing whether to take one up;</li> <li>• is working with the Equal Opportunities Commission and partners to explore funding mechanisms and devise a possible project-based Apprenticeship model, drawing on the Greater London Authority and Construction Industry Training Board regeneration project models;</li> <li>• is working with partners to keep Apprentice pay issues under review, including through the Apprenticeships Ministerial Steering Group. (Para 3.10)</li> </ul>
<p>N/A</p>	<p>A £20 million package to pilot measures designed to enable women to change direction, and progress in their jobs and careers, through raising their skill levels. It should be led by the Department for Education and Skills and relevant Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland departments and the Department for Work and Pensions.</p> <p>Women who are not in work who already have a Level 2 qualification should be entitled to free skills coaching, under the New Deal for Skills, and additional help to gain employment and training in an area of skills shortage.</p> <p>Train to Gain, through the network of skills brokers, should be particularly focused on employers and sectors employing</p>	<p>In January 2006 the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) began trialling an extended learndirect telephone service testing in-depth personal guidance on learning, work and careers, aimed at adults returning from career breaks, seeking to progress in their careers and/or wanting to develop skills for jobs requiring a Level 3 qualification. An initial evaluation of this trial showed positive results in line with the recommendations in the Leitch Review of Skills and the trial is therefore now being extended to March 2008. 55 per cent of callers to this service are women.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both the Leitch Review of Skills and an earlier cross-government Information, Advice and Guidance review identified wider potential for a universal, comprehensive system offering a menu of services on</li> </ul>

	<p>the greatest numbers of low-skilled women, particularly those from ethnic minorities.</p> <p>Women should have access to a high quality careers information, advice and guidance service which tackles gender stereotypes under the New Deal for Skills and Train to Gain, which provides support in work and may include additional training.</p> <p>Free Level 3 training (free for the individual, match-funded by the employer) under Train to Gain should be piloted with employers from the five “c” sectors, particularly those employing part-time workers.</p> <p>Further pilots for Adult Apprenticeships or Train to Gain in areas of skills shortage should be introduced and focused on women returners. <i>(Recommendation 22)</i></p>	<p>learning, work and careers through a variety of media. Work is now in hand to bring together currently separate sources of advice into a labour market-focused, accessible service including a free Skills Health Check. More information on implementation is expected later this year. <i>(Para 3.5)</i></p> <p><i>Skills coaching</i></p> <p>The Skills Coaching trials are now being delivered in 19 Jobcentre Plus (JCP) districts. In Year one of the trials, 2005-6, 43 per cent of customers accessing Skills Coaching were women, compared to 39 per cent of those receiving benefits. Early data shows that in 2006-7, 44 per cent of customers accessing skills coaching were women, compared to 38 per cent of those receiving benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These trials will ensure Skills Coaching covers all parts of the five cities where challenges for low skilled women are particularly acute: London, Birmingham, Manchester, Bradford/Leeds and Leicester. All 19 Skills Coaching pilots will focus on helping low-skilled women.</li> <li>• DfES is currently looking at possible options to ensure effective links with both the Sector Pathways Initiative and the Train to Gain Level 3 pilot in London. A protocol exists between the Learning and Skills Council and Jobcentre Plus to support joint working and there is already evidence of co-operation between Jobcentre Plus and the Train to Gain skills brokers. So both the employer and the new employee can access the skills the employee needs to progress. <i>(Para 3.6)</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Support for higher-level skills</i></p> <p>The £20 million Level 3 Pilot began in London in November 2006, integrated with Train to Gain, the new national employer training programme. The London pilot is specifically targeted at women returners and those with low skills in occupational areas where women are currently under-represented at level 3. This has resulted in contracts with 21 providers from across the region to deliver 7,430 Level 3</p>
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		<p>qualifications over the next two years, with funding provision for a further 4,000 places.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• London's greatest skills needs, which include engineering, construction and transport and logistics, are all priority areas where women are currently under-represented. Funding for the pilot will therefore focus on supporting learners in these sectors and equip women to take up opportunities in relation to delivery of the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games.</li> <li>• The Employers' Guide to Training Providers (EGTP) for the London region has been expanded to include all Level 3 pilot providers. This website (<a href="http://www.employersguidetotrainingproviders.co.uk">www.employersguidetotrainingproviders.co.uk</a>) will allow brokers to search by various categories to find the best-suited provider for the employer.</li> <li>• The pilot will be evaluated within the ongoing Train to Gain evaluation. Any general lessons of good practice will be incorporated within the Train to Gain service as they are discovered. Based on the final recommendations, decisions will be made on extending the pilot to other regions subject to the availability of funding. (<i>Para 3.3</i>)</li> </ul> <p><i>Better career development opportunities</i></p> <p>So far, eight Sector Skills Councils are taking forward the Women and Work Sector Pathways Initiative. They are working with employers to develop a range of projects that will provide women with the skills and confidence and mentoring support they need to succeed in male-dominated occupations, including training for a new career and personal development programmes to help women progress to supervisory, managerial or higher-level technical roles or self-employment. An evaluation report will be published in September 2008.</p> <p>The eight projects cover the following sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Apparel, footwear and textiles;</li> <li>- Construction;</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental and land-based industries;</li> <li>- Food and drink manufacturing and processing;</li> <li>- Logistics;</li> <li>- Retail motor industry;</li> <li>- Science and engineering; and</li> <li>- Cleaning services and facilities management. <i>(Para 3.4)</i></li> </ul>
<p>The example of Foundation Degrees shows that it is possible to construct training to make it accessible to the greatest range of people. We recognise the difficulty in extending this flexibility into employer-based schemes: the sole purpose of FE institutions is to provide training, while employers have to juggle the sometimes conflicting demands of efficiency and immediate productivity against providing for future skills needs via training. However, the development of flexibility should be encouraged, not hindered, by the overall requirements for Modern Apprenticeship schemes. We recommend that the Government review the structure of such apprenticeships to ensure that the maximum possible flexibility is built into them. We commend the suggestion that the Government should reconsider whether the programme of Young Apprenticeships, which is aimed at 14–16 year olds, should be used actively to encourage young people to think about a wider range of job options by offering training in three sectors rather than just one. <i>(Para 25)</i></p>	<p>The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills, HM’s Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales, HM Inspectorate of Education in Scotland and the Northern Ireland Education and Training Inspectorate should report on:</p> <p>whether training providers offer their courses flexibly to meet the needs of those with caring responsibilities, and those combining study with part-time or full-time jobs; and the extent to which childcare support is provided local to, or at, training sites.</p> <p><i>(Recommendation 25)</i></p>	<p>Ofsted inspectors of Further Education Colleges will analyse in particular whether training providers offer their courses flexibly to meet the needs of those with caring responsibilities, and those combining study with part-time or full-time jobs. They will also look at the extent to which childcare support is provided local to, or at, training sites, in relation to institutions inspected in February and March 2007. In 2007-8, new best practice guidance addressing the most important issues thrown up by the analytical work will be produced to enable all institutions to learn from the practice of the best in providing access to learners with other continuing responsibilities or commitments. <i>(Para 3.7)</i></p>
<p>We were told there was a variation in the degree to which local Learning and Skills Councils were using Equality and Diversity Impact Measures to tackle</p>		

<p>gender segregation. We think it would encourage the wider adoption of best practice if the Learning and Skills Council itself set a national indicator to show how seriously it took this issue. <i>(Para 26)</i></p>		
<p>We note the complexity of the requirements for qualifying for and accessing the training schemes under the New Deal umbrella. This in itself may be a deterrent to the unemployed accessing the training that would benefit both them and the UK economy. <i>(Para 31)</i></p>	<p>The Department for Work and Pensions should develop its New Deals aimed at women returners, in particular lone parents, in the light of evidence and ongoing pilots. DWP and devolved services should explore the possibility of offering services to women not currently working where neither they nor their partners are receiving benefits. All work-related activities, work placements and training in New Deal women returner programmes should be offered on a part-time basis. Women returners should have access to confidence-building measures, including peer group support, perhaps delivered through local community groups. Women who have never worked or not worked for a significant period should be offered a voluntary session with a Personal Adviser at Jobcentre Plus to talk through and access information on issues they may encounter on their return to work, for example childcare, commuting, dress. All lone parents should be offered extended assistance from a Personal Adviser to support retention and progression. <i>(Recommendation 14)</i></p> <p>The Department for Work and Pensions should set Jobcentre Plus additional targets to retain and promote women into sustainable jobs, taking account of the specific needs of lone parents, black and minority ethnic women, and disabled women. <i>(Recommendation 15)</i></p>	<p><i>Improving the New Deal</i> From April 2007, DWP will phase in the introduction of six-monthly work-focused interviews (WFIs) for all lone parents with a youngest child aged 0–13 years. The first phase in April 2007 will be for lone parents with a youngest child aged 5–13. The second phase in April 2008 will be for those with a youngest child aged 0–4 (Lone parents with a youngest child aged between 14–16 already have quarterly WFIs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From April 2007, DWP will introduce quarterly WFIs for lone parents who have a youngest child aged 11–13 in the New Deal Plus for Lone Parent Pilot areas.</li> </ul> <p>These pilots currently operate in the following Jobcentre Plus Districts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Bradford;</li> <li>– Dudley and Sandwell;</li> <li>– Leicestershire;</li> <li>– North London;</li> <li>– South East London;</li> <li>– South East Wales; and</li> <li>– Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders. <i>(Para 4.19)</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Tackling child poverty</i> DWP is undertaking a wide-ranging review of the welfare to work strategy, to consider how best to tackle economic inactivity and promote social mobility over the coming decade. David Freud (Chief Executive of the Portland Trust) was asked to review progress on the Welfare to Work programme and make policy recommendations on how the Government can build on its success in using policies such as</p>

the New Deal to continue to reduce inactivity and in-work poverty, and meet the Government's 80 per cent employment aspiration.

The Freud review was published on 5 March 2007 (Freud, 2007) and the Government is giving careful consideration to its recommendations in light of the very important fact that work offers lone parents and their children a sustainable route out of poverty and, as research evidence has shown, can help improve child outcomes.

- DWP, published a refreshed Child Poverty Strategy in March 2007 (DWP 2007) which details changes to their programmes to maximise progress towards their challenging targets. This includes a response to the recommendations of the Harker report. (*Para 4.24*)

#### *Employment retention and advancement*

The DWP Project on Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) is the first of its kind in the UK. The project, being piloted in six Jobcentre Plus districts, is testing the effectiveness of interventions designed to improve retention and advancement for those on the margins of the labour market. ERA is designed to help break the 'low pay, no pay cycle' common among low-wage workers.

There is a clear focus within ERA on the labour market position of women. Two of the three groups of customers eligible for the programme are lone parents who volunteer for New Deal for Lone Parents and lone parents on Working Tax Credit who work between 16 and 29 hours per week.

The initial results, covering individuals' first 12 months in ERA, are encouraging. ERA has increased the receipt of services and training for working customers, increased participants' average earnings and produced some reductions in benefits they are receiving.

- A report looking at outcomes two years after entry to the ERA programme will be available in early 2008. (*Paras 4.20–4.22*)

<p>It is stating the obvious to say that the culture of industries will not be changed quickly. Both employers and trade unions could do more to tackle the overtly sexist elements of workplace culture, simply by making it clear that certain behaviour is unacceptable. We welcome the indications that some companies are now indicating that they are unwilling to do business with firms that have tolerated, let alone tacitly encouraged, harassment and discrimination. (Para 36)</p>	<p>Employers should ensure that their managers, at all levels, are regularly and continually trained on diversity and flexibility issues. (Recommendation 17)</p> <p>Trade unions should train their representatives to promote the benefits of flexible working options and win hearts and minds among management and employees for best practice policies and procedures and monitor the right to request flexible working. (Recommendation 18)</p>	
<p>The problem of the ‘downgrading’ of jobs which have increasingly become the preserve of women is not a new one: it happened to the clerical/secretarial sector almost 100 years ago. Dealing with this problem would require an overturning of the traditional view of caring and service (and largely female) jobs as inherently inferior—less skilled, less valuable, lower paid—to ‘wealth-creating’ financial, technical and manufacturing (and largely male) jobs. This is beyond the scope of our Report, but we note, in passing, the example set by the Government in its re-evaluation of the work done by different occupational groups within the National Health Service in the context of its Agenda for Change programme. We would welcome moves by any other employer to undertake a similarly fundamental review of the value—and rewards—attached to the range of jobs within their business. (Para 37)</p>	<p>The Department for Education and Skills should ensure that its strategy for the early years workforce considers the levels of pay needed to build a better-qualified workforce, which reflects the importance of higher skill levels to the development and welfare of children, while at the same time keeping childcare affordable for working families. (Recommendation 27)</p> <p>The Government should develop a strategy for the social care sector incorporating issues such as pay, quality of care, qualifications of the workforce, and future demand. (Recommendation 28)</p>	<p><i>Career development for those working in social care</i></p> <p>In October 2006 DoH published the Options for Excellence final report, Building the Social Care Workforce of the Future. This report set out a number of future options which will have an impact on this agenda including:</p> <p>Recruitment and Retention: a range of measures to improve the image and public perception of social care will be considered to send out a clear message that the sector is characterised by diversity;</p> <p>New Ways of Working: the report considers a number of new working methods, including the development of new roles, increasing the use of new technology and development for personal assistants; and</p> <p>Leadership and Management – the report considers ways to improve leadership and management, and looks at key processes including human resource (HR) management, workforce planning and workload management systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DoH have already begun to work up an implementation plan for Options for Excellence, which will be developed alongside action on implementing the White Paper Our health, our care, our say (DoH, 2006).</li> </ul> <p>(Para 3.15)</p>

		<p><i>Raising skills levels in the early years workforce</i></p> <p>A Transformation Fund, worth £250 million from 2006 to 2008, has been introduced by DfES and HM Treasury to raise the quality of early years provision without the additional costs of doing so being passed on to parents and carers in the form of increased fees. Almost all the Fund is being put towards the professional development of the early years workforce and in particular towards raising workforce qualification levels in the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) early years sector. The central focus of the Fund is to support recruitment and retention of more graduate level practitioners into PVI full daycare settings, whose involvement has been shown to have the most beneficial impact on the quality of provision and outcomes for children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Children’s Workforce Development Council, involving trade unions and other relevant organisations, produced a report for Department for Education and Skills in October 2006 examining the impact of pay and other rewards on issues of recruitment and retention across the children’s workforce, including those working in early years. Their report is now available at <a href="http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/projects">www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/projects</a>. The Department for Education and Skills will respond to the report’s recommendations in the forthcoming update of its Children’s Workforce Strategy. (Para 3.16)</li> </ul>
<p>It is only comparatively recently that women have regularly reached senior positions in professions in which they have been well established for a long time, such as the law and medicine. It is as yet too early to judge the success of the Government’s Strategy for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology, which was launched in 2003. Changing the culture in areas like SET will clearly require sustained effort, but the process started by Baroness Greenfield’s SET Fair report in 2002 appears to be gathering momentum. (Para 39)</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

There is a long-established view that certain jobs—senior managerial posts, skilled manufacturing jobs, key service industry posts—are unsuited to part-time and flexible working. This view is accepted far too uncritically: there appear to be a number of good examples where it has been perfectly practicable to re-arrange working hours while maintaining—sometimes even improving—productivity and performance. There are already indications that employers are re-thinking their attitudes, not least in light of the success of the recent introduction of the parental right to request flexible working. A number of employers have already extended this and have indicated that they are willing to consider requests from any of their employees. At present, we would not recommend introducing an element of compulsion on employers: the codification of best practice seems more likely to facilitate its widespread adoption than any statutory requirement would. However, we believe it would be useful to monitor the success rate of such requests, and to examine the reasons for refusal to see whether there are any grounds for instituting the sort of mechanism to challenge an employer’s decision that Amicus suggested to us. (Para 48)

DTI should establish a UK-wide Quality Part-Time Work Change Initiative of £5 million to support new initiatives aimed at achieving a culture change, so that more senior jobs – particularly in the skilled occupations and the professions – are more open to part-time and flexible working. This should start from junior management level upwards, and include the roles considered “stepping stones” to senior management. Eligible projects might be:

- identifying senior role models, working part time or job sharing, who will champion the spread of best practice among managers;
- web-based job matching of those wanting to work part time with those offering quality jobs on a part-time or job share basis;
- job share services to put potential job share partners in touch and aimed at high quality occupations;
- specialist consultancy services to embed quality part-time work;
- e-networks for senior and professional women;
- other initiatives to spread best practice and achieve culture change. (Recommendation 11)

DTI and HM Treasury should examine the case for fiscal incentives targeted at small firms to reduce the additional costs of employing part-time or flexible workers, for example, training costs, start-up IT costs. (Recommendation 19)

Acas and the Northern Ireland Labour Relations Agency should be funded to develop a training package to support flexible working and that this package be delivered free to small firms. (Recommendation 20)

*Quality part-time work*

Communities Secretary and Minister for Women, Ruth Kelly announced the fund open to bids on 30 January 2007 and the deadline for bids was 13 March 2007. Employers could apply for match-funded support, for example, to hire specialist advice to re-design higher level jobs in their organisation on a parttime basis. Voluntary groups and flexible working specialists were also able to apply for support for initiatives to facilitate quality part-time work.

- Applicants were asked to demonstrate that their projects had: clear objectives that offer benefits towards addressing the lack of quality part-time work; an innovative approach; top-level commitment from the organisation; and, potential to share best practice.
- The Government is now funding projects from across the private, public and voluntary sectors from the £500,000 fund to increase the number of quality jobs which are available on a part-time or job share basis. These range from redesigning jobs, coaching managers, and setting up a national job share register. (Para 5.8)

*Right to request flexible working*

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is working with partners such as Carers UK, British Chambers of Commerce, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), employment lawyers and tax advisers to increase awareness of the right to request flexible working. DTI has already updated the guidance on flexible working to take into account the extension to the right for carers and is working to maximise the reach of this information to stakeholders.

- The Government will continue to consider the case for extending the right to request flexible working to parents of older children, taking into account the impact of the extension to carers, and working with business. The DTI’s compendium of research (March 2007) on flexible working reviews the evidence on the impact of the right to request flexible working so far. (Para 5.6)

	<p>The right to request flexible working should be extended over time to cover a wider group of employees. <i>(Recommendation 16)</i></p> <p>The Ten Year Childcare Strategy should be delivered with particular consideration of the needs of women who work outside “9 to 5” hours and black and minority ethnic communities. There should be better promotion of the free childcare line. <i>(Recommendation 21)</i></p>	<p><i>Supporting women in returning to work</i> From 2008 Local Authorities will be required to ensure there is sufficient childcare in their areas, paying particular attention to the needs of both lower income families and families with disabled children. <i>(Para 4.5)</i></p> <p><i>Delivering flexible childcare</i> DfES has committed £16.8 million, for a programme to create workplace nurseries. The Workplace Nurseries Capital programme, which will be delivered by Regional Development Agencies and managed by the London Development Agency, aims to help families balance home and work through enabling small and medium-sized businesses to provide childcare places close to the workplace. <i>(Para 4.14)</i></p>
<p>We received evidence that the experience of equal pay audits has been mixed. Some of our witnesses believe they are of doubtful effectiveness as a tool to make companies take the issue of occupational segregation more seriously. They are probably of more use as a way of marking out those companies that employ best practice from others, which—given the likely consequences for recruitment and retention—may concentrate the minds of the less forward-looking companies. We do not wish to denigrate them as a means of facilitating the process of changing the overall culture with respect to equal treatment of the sexes. <i>(Para 52)</i></p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p><i>Gender equality checks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities and Local Government has identified key stakeholders to help develop the gender equality check tool. The Steering Group includes members from a social enterprise, the Small Business Service, the Equal Opportunities Commission, the TUC and private sector. The aim of the tool is to identify any problems and then point the way to further investigation and action. The group will also explore how best to integrate any new tool within the guidance and information already available to employees and employers, for example through <a href="http://direct.gov.uk">direct.gov.uk</a> and <a href="http://businesslink.gov.uk">businesslink.gov.uk</a></li> <li>• The Steering Group intends to have developed the gender equality check by early Summer 2007 with rollout planned for Autumn 2007. <i>(Para 7.11)</i></li> </ul>
<p>Employers are showing increasing awareness of the damage that occupational segregation can do to their</p>	<p>The Department for Education and Skills, DTI, Department for Work and Pensions and relevant Scotland, Wales and</p>	<p><i>Exemplar employer initiative</i> Government now has over 100 exemplar employers drawn from both</p>

businesses. However, although there are some imaginative attempts to tackle the problems that deter women from taking certain jobs, as yet these seem to occur in isolation, and there needs to be more effort to share best practice. We discuss the potential role of the Regional Development Agencies ('RDAs') in this in the next Chapter; but, with a few honourable exceptions, there is also a need for greater effort by Sector Skills Councils and trade associations. We are not asking business to behave altruistically—though some companies will doubtless do so—but we do expect them to behave fairly, and to be aware of the effect on their competitiveness of a failure to act. (Para 55)

Northern Ireland departments should develop programmes, linking with Train to Gain and the Sector Skills Councils, identifying best practice on career development and working with partner employers to create career paths. The programme should consider how best to recruit and retain women into non-traditional jobs; develop career paths for those working part time. (Recommendation 24)

Private sector companies should consider the implications of this report for how they operate in order to make the most difference to the most women. A crossgovernment UK-wide package of measures should support awareness raising and capacity building to enable organisations to adopt solutions most relevant to them, which will have the most impact on women's pay and opportunity, including: promotion of best practice via business links and the business.gov website; £1 million funding for Investors in People (IiP). This should be used to support the adoption of the IiP Standard by small firms focusing on those growing rapidly, and to market to all firms – particularly in the five "c" sectors – the IiP Profile, in order to spread best practice on equality and diversity, fair pay and reward, and training; supporting employee involvement in workplace equality development via £5 million additional funding for the Union Modernisation Fund for capacity building to support training and development for equality reps in the private and public sectors; support for the development and marketing of equality checks. (Recommendation 30)

the public and private sectors. The initiative has shown that there is a huge amount of positive work going on in different sectors across the UK. Here is a small selection: BAE Systems, Guardian Newspapers and Denbighshire County Council are leading the way with projects to tackle occupational segregation; ASDA, BT and West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, are working with schools to tackle equality issues; Champions for Flexibility Scheme The UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) has launched its Champions for Flexibility Scheme (formally the Employer Innovation Fund). This scheme works with SET employers on activities to increase the number of flexible and part-time roles, particularly at senior levels, and will continue throughout 2007. The scheme enables SET employers to bid for financial support of up to £20,000 to fund activities such as analysing and promoting the business benefits of flexible working, investigation of current practices and, crucially, the development of roles to be carried out part-time or flexibly. Omagh College, Women Builders Ltd, Centrica and the University of Southampton are looking to provide support to women who want to break into non-traditional subjects such as IT, construction, engineering and science; Arriva, Ernst and Young, and Camelot are leading the way in supporting women returners and carers; and, Procter and Gamble, English Partnerships and IBM are all working to help women to develop management and leadership skills.

- In January 2007, Communities and Local Government, in conjunction with CBI and Opportunity Now, hosted an event which showcased these exemplar employers. Discussion at the event focused on how Government can work with employers, and in particular, how best to address the lack of quality part-time work and break down occupational segregation.

	<p>DTI, through partners such as Opportunity Now, should build a set of exemplar companies willing to pilot projects such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a new offer to schools to give girls work experience, in particular in non-traditional jobs;</li> <li>setting up a new women's network in senior or traditionally male jobs within the company;</li> <li>actively promoting quality part-time jobs;</li> <li>a recruitment round which supports women returners' development needs including confidence building and other support mechanisms;</li> <li>developing career pathways for women working in lower-paid jobs;</li> <li>providing paid time off, support and facilities to a network of equality reps; undertaking an equal pay review. <i>(Recommendation 31)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities and Local Government will continue to disseminate the lessons learnt and case studies from this initiative and will hold a one day best practice conference in Spring 2007 for employers and others (including consultants, charities, web-service providers) to discuss the impact of the initiatives on workplace practice and the lessons learned.</li> <li>• Communities and Local Government will draw together the initiatives and lessons learned into a best practice document to be published on the internet in Summer 2007. <i>(Para 5.11)</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Women on boards</i></p> <p>The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) is seeking to increase the diversity of Further Education (FE) college governing bodies and, in January 2007, contracted the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) to take forward the recommendation made by Sir Andrew Foster (Foster, 2005) to review the process for the recruitment of college chairs of governors. The CEL work will review, and build on, existing research in this area and identify a number of actions that might improve the diversity of FE governors including improving recruitment and induction schemes, reviewing and exploring methods of engaging a wider range of individuals including women as potential governors. An action plan, to be published in Summer 2007, will take forward recommendations to improve governor diversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Government supported the annual Female FTSE report produced by Cranfield School of Management (Singh and Vinnicombe, 2006) which provides the necessary evidence base to underpin efforts to increase board diversity. <i>(Para 5.12)</i></li> </ul>
<p>Some RDAs are running schemes to provide women returning to work after career breaks with advice on career options, access to training, work placements, and good quality, affordable childcare. We are concerned that they are still at the pilot stage—we would have</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>thought that RDAs would have already finished experimenting in this area and that they would be disseminating and adopting best practice by now. We are also surprised at how tentative the DTI seems to be about the development of these pilot programmes: “If the model proves successful then, potentially, there is scope to explore whether it could be applied more widely” shows less than wholehearted belief that successful programmes will be adopted by RDAs en masse. (Para 56)</p>		
<p>RDAs may have committed themselves to seriously tackling occupational segregation as a major focus of their work in improving the skills of the workforce and boosting productivity in their area; but the comparative silence about what they are doing leads us to conclude that most have yet to take the issue fully on board. Given their key role in ensuring that the needs and wishes of local businesses are taken into account in regional development policies, and their position as local agents for the delivery of much of the Government’s policy with respect to industry and commerce, we would have expected them to be playing a larger part in the attempts to engage the attention of employers on the disadvantages of occupational segregation. (Para 57)</p>	N/A	N/A
<p>We think that there needs to be greater co-ordination between government departments. Since 2002–03 there has been an explicit Public Service Agreement target across Government about delivering achievable</p>	<p>Public sector employers should account to a Ministerial Committee and report to a Cabinet Office Steering Group, with representatives from UK-wide public service employers and trade unions, on how they have put the</p>	<p><i>Equal pay</i> A set of Civil Service Reward Principles were also developed in October 2006 which set a framework within which departments can develop appropriate reward strategies. High level principles in support of equal</p>

<p>improvements in equality for women. We are also aware that the Women and Equality Unit has been given the task of advising other departments on their specific targets for achieving this and of reporting on progress across Government. However, we suspect that other departments have not fully integrated into their policy decisions the need to be conscious of any effects on occupational segregation. We believe, for example, that the DfES has only recently started to consider the issue of segregation in the recruitment of apprentices; the Learning and Skills Council admitted that, although it had held information on training broken down by gender, it had never thought of making use of it before the EOC's investigation into the area; and we are still uncertain of the extent to which the DWP's general training and employment programmes take into account the difficulties faced by women returning to work. It is not clear to us whether the slowness of other departments in addressing the issues is a result of insufficient vigour in the lead Department, the DTI, or a lack of co-operation from the other departments. It appears to us that the Women and Equality Unit still has considerable work to do, and may have neither the authority in relation to other departments nor the resources to do it. <i>(Para 59)</i></p>	<p>recommendations in this report into practice, in particular on the results arising from their establishment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>equal pay reviews;</li> <li>time off and facilities for a network of equality reps;</li> <li>job share registers for high-quality occupations and e-networks for senior and professional women;</li> <li>a network of senior part-time role models to champion quality part-time work;</li> <li>career development pathways for lowpaid part-time workers;</li> <li>continuous training for all line managers on flexible working and diversity issues;</li> <li>a coherent approach to schools' World of Work Programme, offering work experience and taster days and encouraging girls and boys to experience non-traditional occupations. <i>(Recommendation 32)</i></li> </ul> <p>A new Cabinet sub-Committee of Ministers should be formed, chaired by the Minister for Women, to oversee the implementation of our recommendations. <i>(Recommendation 39)</i></p> <p>The Public Sector Pay Committee gateway should call all public services to account for how any proposed new pay systems address all the causes of the gender pay gap which give rise to costs in the longer term. HM Treasury should ask public sector employers to account for their progress on equal pay during the Comprehensive Spending Review. <i>(Recommendation 34)</i></p>	<p>pay set out the need to:</p> <p>eliminate direct and indirect reward discrimination and reduce any unjustified gender pay gaps; operate reward systems that are perceived by staff to be reasonable and transparent; and, evaluate and keep up to date reward systems and structures to ensure that they continue to meet the requirements of legislation. <i>(Para 7.6)</i></p>
<p>The Government has given a strong lead in the field of racial equality through both the adoption of a general</p>	<p>The new Gender Duty should specifically ensure that action is taken on all causes of the gender pay gap including</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>public duty to promote such equality and through procurement policy. We think it would be valuable for the question of gender equality to be treated in the same way. <i>(Para 61)</i></p>	<p>occupational segregation, the impact of family responsibilities and unequal pay. Specified action should include a regular equal pay review and action plan. In seeking solutions to equal pay, public authorities should act in partnership with unions. <i>(Recommendation 33)</i></p>	
<p>While we understand the Minister's concerns, it seems to us that the 1970 Equal Pay Act is reaching the limits of its usefulness. There appears to be a consensus among analysts of the labour market that most of the remaining gender pay gap is attributable to factors other than 'straightforward' discrimination, and it is notable that the rate of decrease in the pay gap has slowed almost to a stop in recent years. Although there are difficulties in dealing with the deep-seated problem of the undervaluing of women's work through legislation, the concepts of "work of equal value" and indirect discrimination are already embedded in statute, and we believe that it should be possible to build on these. We regret that the Government appears to be ruling changes out as 'too difficult' without having undertaken a serious review of the options. <i>(Para 63)</i></p>	<p>Current guidance to the equal pay questionnaire should be altered to make it clear that the Data Protection Act does not prevent the provision of pay information, in order to encourage employers to respond without the need for the employee to apply to a tribunal. <i>(Recommendation 36)</i></p> <p>The Discrimination Law Review should consider more fully the issues of whether or not to extend the hypothetical comparator to equal pay claims, and of generic or representative equal pay claims. <i>(Recommendation 37)</i></p>	<p>The Women and Work Commission recommended that the guidance to the Equal Pay Questionnaire be amended to make clear that the Data Protection Act does not prevent employers from providing pay information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The guidance notes under Part 4 of the Equal Pay Questionnaire were revised in February 2007 to make it clear to employers that the Data Protection Act 1998 is not an automatic bar to the disclosure of information required in the questionnaire. <i>(Para 7.8)</i></li> </ul>
<p>N/A</p>	<p>Government information campaigns should show women in occupations not traditionally taken up by them, and men as parents and carers. The media, in particular drama and advertising, should be encouraged to do likewise. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport should set up two high-level groups, of advertisers and key players in television drama, to encourage non-stereotypical portrayals of women and men at work. <i>(Recommendation 10)</i></p>	<p><i>Avoiding gender stereotyping in the media</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The UK Resource Centre has commissioned two pieces of research into the representations of women scientists and engineers in the media: Cardiff University will look at a range of media representations (TV, radio, newspaper and film) and speak to focus groups of women about the influence of those representations on their career aspirations; and, The Open University will analyse children's and young people's TV and</li> </ul>

		bring groups of children and young people together to discuss the roles women take in those programmes. ( <i>Para 2.15</i> )
N/A	Part-time workers and those on career breaks should receive pro-rata treatment from professional bodies for membership fees, and discounts from training providers for continuous professional development, to support the retention of women in the professions. ( <i>Recommendation 12</i> )	<p><i>Supporting and promoting women in the professions</i></p> <p>Deputy Minister for Women and Equality Meg Munn wrote to over 150 professional bodies in the UK, bringing this recommendation to their attention, and asking them to consider offering these discounts to part-time workers and those on career breaks where they did not already do so.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite a disappointing level of responses overall, organisations who did respond had good practice to share. Some professional bodies do offer such discounts, in particular for those on career breaks or who are low paid, including those working part-time. We also learned of other excellent practice among professional bodies in promoting and retaining women’s skills in the professions.</li> <li>• The Government urges other professional bodies to review their procedures to do more on pro-rata membership fees for lower-earning or part-time workers, and to follow best practice in supporting, developing and retaining women’s skills in the professions. (<i>Para 5.13</i>)</li> </ul>
N/A	A more local approach should be taken to the matching of jobs and skills. Regional Development Agencies and national agencies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should provide grant funding for outreach services aimed at women seeking local jobs or training which match their skills and potential. They should consider in particular the Women Like Us model whereby local social entrepreneurs use community centres, schools, and children’s centres to recruit local women into local jobs and training. This should be piloted in five areas including London, a rural area, and an area with a substantial ethnic minority community. Extensions to the model might include:	<p><i>Building Future Jobs Ecosystem</i></p> <p>The project targets the London Boroughs of Brent, Hackney, Haringey, Newham and Tower Hamlets. It will strive to build capacity in the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), test the innovation of the ‘Ecosystem’, and achieve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engage 3500 minority ethnic individuals from African, Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups and place at least 35 per cent of these engaged into permanent employment;</li> <li>• establish links and secure guaranteed interviews with employers such as KPMG, BT, Pricewaterhouse Coopers and others who have committed to filling vacancies with minority ethnic clients; and,</li> <li>• deliver a ‘career health check’ to those placed into work after six</li> </ul>

	<p>public, private or voluntary sector services which provide confidence building through peer support, experience of work or work shadowing, or training;</p> <p>services which address the particular needs of women from local black and minority ethnic communities, homeworkers or other groups, for example disabled women. <i>(Recommendation 13)</i></p>	<p>months of employment. <i>(Para 4.45)</i></p>
N/A	<p>The Skills Alliance Delivery Group, which has an overview of skills activity including that related to the London 2012 Olympic Games, should ensure that reducing the gender segregation of jobs is part of plans for tackling skills shortages in the relevant sectors, such as construction. <i>(Recommendation 23)</i></p>	<p><i>London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A diversity delivery plan has been drawn up in consultation with stakeholders and sets out the desired equality benefits from the Games. Tackling gender segregation of employment is a key element of this plan. A stakeholder group including representatives of each of the equality strands will scrutinise the implementation of the plan and will be supported by the Government Olympic Executive. <i>(Para 3.12)</i></li> </ul>
N/A	<p>All organisations promoting entrepreneurship to women should promote, as a key benefit, the work-life balance and flexible working possibilities of running your own business. <i>(Recommendation 26)</i></p>	<p><i>Women's enterprise</i></p> <p>The Women's Enterprise Task Force was established in November 2006 to encourage more women across the country to start and run successful businesses. It has a particular role in highlighting good practice and stories of success in women-led enterprises.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working alongside the Women's Enterprise Task Force will be a national network of 1,000 female entrepreneurs. These women will work to help inspire and support women in setting up their own businesses. They will provide practical, female-focused advice and guidance to help build know-how and confidence in the women they meet.</li> <li>• Five Regional Development Agencies are running pilots of innovative approaches to supporting women's enterprise. These pilots will be assessed in mid-2007, with the successful elements informing future business support for women.</li> <li>• The National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship will launch a</li> </ul>

new support programme for women graduates and recent graduates in late 2007, helping the potential entrepreneurs develop business plans and providing support for the first twelve months of setting up a company. (Para 6.3)

*Women's Enterprise Task Force*

The Task Force is working toward a number of high-level priorities based around the following principles:

- Awareness – The new body will ensure that the opportunities for women's enterprise are embedded in the consciousness of would-be female entrepreneurs, Government and key stakeholders.
- Connectivity – The new body will work to build links with Government Departments, the public, private and voluntary sectors, as well as with the enterprise support community.
- Accessibility – The new body will have access to Government officials and Ministers at the highest level, as well as access to the latest statistical and survey data. It will be able to commission work to plug gaps in data collection.
- Sustainability – The new body will lay down a long-term legacy that will lead to both a step-change in attitudes to female entrepreneurship and lead to an increase in start-up rates and growth.
- Speed – The new body will act as a catalyst for change, development and acceleration of the agenda, providing quality and timely advice to those in Government and the regions involved in strategic women's enterprise development.
- Results – The new body will be customer-driven and focused on outcomes, and will set measurable targets and indicators on which its performance can be monitored and assessed. The Task Force will provide expert advice on best practice in policy development, implementation and delivery. (Para 6.6)

		<p><i>Regional Women's Enterprise Unit Pilots</i></p> <p>Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) from five regions are running pilot regional Women's Enterprise Units to trial different approaches to supporting the start-up and growth of female-owned businesses. The purpose is to ensure that high quality, female-friendly business support is available to women from the pre startup stage onwards, to help women run sustainable business with the potential to grow should they wish to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North West: The North West Development Agency (NWDA) is testing approaches for providing advisory and support services through a virtual Women's Enterprise Unit. The work is being taken forward through a Regional Strategic Women's Enterprise Steering Group, and is in the process of appointing five sub-regional Women's Enterprise Advocates to support work across the region.</li> <li>• North East: The One NorthEast pilot is designed to raise awareness of women's enterprise among stakeholders, advisers and women themselves. This will be achieved through a range of activities including the establishment of a Working Group to drive forward the implementation of the Women's Enterprise Strategy; development of a gender-proofing framework; fostering a closer working relationship with Women into the Network (WIN), a local networking organisation for female entrepreneurs; and an awareness programme for women.</li> <li>• Yorkshire and the Humber: The Yorkshire Forward pilot is designed to create a better understanding of women's enterprise in the region through an enhanced evidence base; development of 'Best Practice Guidelines' for supporting women's enterprise to improve the services available to female customers, ensuring that mainstream support is tailored to meet their needs; and making a strong economic case within Yorkshire and the Humber for continued investment in women's enterprise.</li> <li>• East Midlands: The East Midlands Development Agency pilot has four strands: Universal Start Up Offer outreach work to women in</li> </ul>
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		<p>disadvantaged communities; research into the business support needs and expectations of women in minority communities; Regional Road Shows to provide cross-region coverage to engage with women who are thinking of starting a business as well as those already in business and develop a network of providers to share best practice and develop links; and updating the regional directory of business support and making it an online resource including interactive mapping.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West Midlands: The Advantage West Midlands pilot is based on the highly successful 'Women's Business Centre' model which operates in the U.S. It aims to build capacity and ensure that support is delivered to the key growth sector within the market. The main activities include: developing skills for business start-up; basic introduction to enterprise; confidence building and introducing basic concepts such as legislation, finance, mentoring and growth; start-up training for refugee women; training for growth – a six month training package for women looking to start science and engineering businesses; a high growth programme which embeds growth into business plans at the earliest opportunity and overcomes risk aversion; and intensive mentoring using role models from clients' own peer groups who will offer one-to-one support.</li> </ul> <p>An initial evaluation of the pilots and the lessons learnt in developing future business support will be available in Spring 2007. (Paras 6.8-6.9)</p>
N/A	<p>The Low Pay Commission's standing terms of reference should be amended to include a gender impact assessment as part of each report. Targeted enforcement of the national minimum wage should be directed at sectors employing large numbers of women. (Recommendation 29)</p>	N/A

N/A	<p>The Equal Opportunities Commission or Commission for Equality and Human Rights, with support from DTI, the Office of Government Commerce, the Scottish Executive Procurement Directorate and other interested stakeholders, should develop practical, equalities-led procurement advice which actively encourages public sector procuring authorities to promote good practice in diversity and equal pay matters among contractors so that it becomes the norm. Public authorities should ensure that their contractors promote gender equality in line with the public sector Gender Duty, and equal pay in line with current legislation. This intention should be flagged up in contract documents to ensure that it is built into contractors' plans and bids. Government should appoint a ministerial champion of procurement as a means of spreading best practice in diversity and equal pay matters. Private sector companies who engage in substantial procurement should also use procurement to spread best practice. <i>(Recommendation 35)</i></p>	<p><i>Procurement</i></p> <p>The Government's overall approach to procurement policy, as set out in Transforming government procurement (published in January 2007), is to deliver world class public services that are value for money for the taxpayer, based on open and fair competition. The public sector duty on gender equality which comes into force on 6 April 2007 will mean that public bodies will have to assess the relevance of gender equality issues when contracting out any of their public functions. For example, if a public body was providing adult education services, it might wish to ensure that the supplier took account of the fact that women with children are likely to only be able to attend classes in school hours during term time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Code of Practice, accessible on the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) website, will cover guidance on how the gender equality duty will impact on the procurement of goods and services. <i>(Para 7.13)</i></li> </ul>
N/A	<p>The Women and Equality Unit should develop the Gender Equality Public Service Agreement so that the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 target better reflects the themes, ambitions and recommendations of this report. <i>(Recommendation 38)</i></p>	N/A
N/A	N/A	<p><i>Minority ethnic women</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DWP have asked that the business plans of local consortia undertaking projects on economic regeneration and reducing worklessness must consider the impacts on minority ethnic women. <i>(Para 4.30)</i></li> </ul>

		<p><i>Minority ethnic women: working with employers</i></p> <p>Training packages are being developed for employers and employees on how to reduce discrimination against minority ethnic candidates in recruitment and progression. (Para 4.35)</p>
N/A	N/A	<p><i>Equality Representatives</i></p> <p>Capacity building for equality reps is a priority theme in the second round of the Union Modernisation Fund. Discussions have taken place with the TUC to ensure appropriate prominence for the equality representative theme.</p> <p>Workshops for potential applicants (both TUC affiliated and non-affiliated) were held by DTI in early December 2006 and were very positively received.</p> <p>The TUC is actively encouraging unions to submit bids to the UMF and will submit its own bid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applications will close in April 2007 and the winning projects are expected to be announced in September. A number of unions have already signalled their intention to submit equality reps bids. In the meantime, the three current equality representative projects funded under UMF Round One (the National Union of Journalists, Wales TUC and the Transport and General Workers Union) are starting to produce positive outcomes with some months still to run.</li> </ul> <p>Lessons learnt from Rounds One and Two will be included in a broader dissemination programme, including case studies and networking events. As a start to the dissemination programme, DTI held a successful UMF networking event for Round 1 projects and Round 2 applicants in March 2007. This included a presentation on Wales TUC's equality representative project. (Para 7.12)</p>