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# WOMEN & WORK COMMISSION



## Shaping a Fairer Future

A review of the recommendations of the  
Women and Work Commission three years on

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Front cover art by Heather Donovan who is an artist in the United States

# WOMEN & WORK

## COMMISSION

### Shaping a Fairer Future

A review of the recommendations of the  
Women and Work Commission three years on

Presented to the Prime Minister  
by Baroness Prosser of Battersea, July 2009



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# Foreword

## by Baroness Prosser of Battersea, Chair of the Women and Work Commission



When the Prime Minister asked me to set up the Women and Work Commission in 2004 to look at the causes of the gender pay and opportunities gap, we found

that it was a many faceted and multi-dimensional issue. The pay gap is affected by issues such as outdated work practices; expectations and stereotypes that are ingrained in us from a young age; differences in working patterns because of women's role as 'carer'; and a lack of quality part-time work, among other things.

Since the Equal Pay Act was introduced nearly 40 years ago, we have seen monumental changes in women's position in the workplace and, alongside this, a greater understanding of the need to balance work and family life. The number of women in employment has seen a marked growth over the past four decades. In 1971 the employment rate for women was 56 per cent,<sup>1</sup> compared with 69.6 per cent for the three months to March 2009.<sup>2</sup> We also have one of the highest employment rates for women in Europe.

However, despite this progress:

- Women are still paid, on average, 22.6 per cent less per hour than men.<sup>3</sup> Although this has fallen from 27.5 per cent over the last 10 years we are noticing that progress is stalling, and the number has even risen slightly since 2007, when it was 21.9 per cent. This is also the case for the full-time gender pay gap, which stood at 12.5 per cent in 2007 but is now 12.8 per cent. Pay gaps are even greater for part-time workers (39.9 per cent). This is important, as 41 per cent of women work part time compared with just 12 per cent of men, and women make up more than three-quarters of the part-time workforce.<sup>4</sup>
- Too many women work below their skill levels.
- Occupational segregation is still the norm. There are still 22 companies in the FTSE 100 that have all-male boards.<sup>5</sup>

So, not only do we need to see more action being taken to kick start the slow movement of the gender pay gap, but also to ensure that we do not let the economic downturn reverse the positive progress that has been made. Women are at risk of being less financially resilient to periods of unemployment because of their lower earnings and often lower

<sup>1</sup> See [www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=2145](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=2145)

<sup>2</sup> See [www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/lmsuk0509.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/lmsuk0509.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> As measured using the overall median gender pay gap, which is women's median hourly pay (excluding overtime) as a percentage of men's median hourly pay (excluding overtime).

<sup>4</sup> See [www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/lmsuk0509.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/lmsuk0509.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Sealy R, Singh V and Vinnecombe OBE S (2008) *The Female FTSE Report 2008: A decade of delay*, Cranfield University School of Management.

savings. There are also concerns that women are increasingly likely to be discriminated against because of costs associated with maternity leave.<sup>6</sup> Research carried out prior to the economic downturn estimated that 30,000 women lose their jobs each year because they are pregnant.<sup>7</sup>

The current economic climate creates new imperatives for employers to work more effectively and efficiently, and new challenges for the UK economy. In order for businesses to succeed in this environment it will be more important than ever to use everyone's skills, and to invest for the long term in our employees so that we can recruit and retain the best staff. Our original report highlighted that removing the barriers to women working in occupations traditionally done by men, and increasing women's participation in the labour market, could be worth between £15 billion and £23 billion.

This is why Harriet Harman, Minister for Women and Equality, asked the Women and Work Commission to reconvene three years on. Following our original 40 recommendations, our major challenge is to consider where progress has been made, where we feel opportunities were missed and where further resources and effort need to be focused. In reviewing our original

recommendations we have taken evidence from a wide range of stakeholders, including the Young Women's Christian Association, the London Development Agency, Women Like Us, Skillfast-UK and Government departments.

Overall, we have found that reasonable progress has been made in supporting women to access skills and training to help them to up-skill and re-skill. Progress has also been made in the public sector (particularly the introduction of the Gender Equality Duty in April 2007). The foundations and policies are in place in these areas, and we make recommendations as to where further action should be taken. We were, however, disappointed by the lack of action taken by Government to break down stereotypes in the education system (particularly for children below 14 years of age). There was also a lack of Government action to support families to balance work and family life. The Government must set out its direction on this.

This report is a new call for action, and lays down new challenges to those who are responsible and who are in the position to influence this agenda.



**Margaret Prosser**

<sup>6</sup> Working Families has reported being inundated with calls from employees who are having problems because they are pregnant, on maternity leave or returning from maternity leave and having requests for flexible working turned down.

<sup>7</sup> Equal Opportunities Commission (2005) *Greater Expectations: Final Report of EOC investigation into discrimination against new and expectant mothers in the workplace.*

# Executive summary

Three years after the Women and Work Commission first reported on the causes of the gender pay gap and what action was needed to tackle it, Harriet Harman, Minister for Women and Equality, asked the Commission to reconvene to assess progress made and to review our original recommendations.

This report sets out our conclusions. We note that while progress has been made in some important areas, much more can and should be done to unlock women's talent. If this is done, the UK economy could benefit by up to

£23 billion. This is even more important given the difficult economic circumstances now facing us. Action must be taken now, across many areas, to narrow the gender pay gap and utilise the skills, talents and abilities of women. Our updated recommendations seek to provide a clear blueprint for this, and this report acts as a new call for action.

We have looked at four key areas, and have assessed the Government's progress since our original report as follows:

Key area	RAG rating <sup>8</sup>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Education and culture</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(i) Under 14 years of age</li><li>(ii) 14–19 years of age</li></ul></li><li>● <b>Access to continued learning and development</b></li><li>● <b>Balancing work and family life</b></li><li>● <b>The public sector</b></li></ul>	<p><b>Red</b></p> <p><b>Amber</b></p> <p><b>Amber</b></p> <p><b>Red</b></p> <p><b>Amber</b></p>

## Education and culture

Progress here is critical if we are to break down stereotypes and tackle occupational segregation. We are pleased that some steps have been taken, particularly for the 14–19 age group, such as via the apprenticeship programme. Overall, however, we feel that the Department for Children, Schools and Families

(DCSF) needs to make breaking down gender stereotypes for those below the age of 14 a much higher priority. DCSF must ensure that gender equality issues are considered as a matter of course across all their initiatives and policies. This is important if we are ever to tackle gender stereotyping in the education system.

<sup>8</sup> Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating indicates the extent to which progress has been made across each theme. Red: critical – significant progress is yet to be made; Amber: adequate – progress has been made but there is more to be done; Green: achieved – substantial progress has been made.

**We therefore recommend that DCSF produces a national strategy for tackling gender inequality in the education system (with a particular focus on children aged 14 and under) by March 2010.**

### Access to continued learning and development

We think that a lot of progress has been made to support women in accessing skills and training. In particular, we welcomed the £40 million package to support women's skills and the high percentage of women taking up Adult Apprenticeships. However, we recognise that the statutory framework is changing and we feel that further steps need to be taken – particularly at a time when we are looking to rebuild the economy. We need to ensure that we have the workers with the right skills – particularly in potentially new growth sectors.

**We therefore recommend that by March 2010 DCSF and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) set out clear roles and accountabilities for gender equality objectives for the new Skills Funding Agency (SFA), and that they and Local Authorities do the same for the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA). We expect both bodies to report on progress by March 2012.**

### Balancing work and family life

Good progress has been made in key areas like childcare and the right to request flexible working. Overall, however, we are disappointed that more progress has not been made in the private sector, especially in opening up opportunities for quality part-time and flexible work. We believe that Government

leadership is critical to this, and we would like to see Government championing this issue.

**We therefore call on the Government Equalities Office (GEO) to take the lead on developing a work programme to promote quality part-time and flexible working, working collaboratively with BIS, by March 2010.**

### The public sector

Good progress has been made in many parts of the public sector, and we welcome the measures in the Equality Bill to strengthen and streamline the legislative framework. We believe that the new outcome-focused Public Sector Equality Duty provides a real opportunity to embed gender considerations throughout the policy and delivery process. It is crucial, however, that the Duty is properly implemented. This applies not only to the internal practices of these public sector bodies, but also to the services they supply.

**All Government departments, Inspectorates, Local Authorities and Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) should set out how they intend to monitor the impact of their policies on women, involve women and their representative groups directly and report on the results on an annual basis. This must be included in a review of their gender equality scheme to ensure that gender equality issues are mainstreamed throughout.**

We believe that this package, and the more detailed recommendations set out in the body of this report, will transform for the better the world of work for women, benefiting individuals, society and the economy.

# Chapter 1

## Education and culture

### Summary

**Issue:** Occupational segregation starts at an early age. Often without even thinking about it young girls can choose to role play at being ‘teachers’, for example, while boys might choose ‘builders’. This segregation is ingrained in our culture and has significant implications for the career choices that young men and women make and, in the longer term, for their future earnings. Challenging these outdated ideas about ‘jobs for the girls’ is key to breaking down gender segregation in the workplace and changing our culture for future generations.

**Progress:** We do feel that DCSF has made some headway in trying to break down gender stereotyping, particularly for the 14–19 age group, through careers advice and guidance and also via the apprenticeship programme. However, efforts have been small scale and sporadic – particularly for those children under the age of 14. We feel that more effort needs to be made with this age group. We are concerned that gender equality issues are not yet a key consideration across all DCSF policies, and as a result progress is not being made fast enough.

In a number of areas it is not at all clear how DCSF will take action on any lessons learnt from initiatives they run which are linked to gender equality. It is also unclear what targets they set themselves for reducing gender stereotyping in the education system. Overall, we would like to see DCSF showing greater consistency in assessing, monitoring and taking action on gender equality issues and having a better idea of what they would like to achieve and by when.

Making real progress in addressing gender stereotyping in the education system will, in the long term, help to reduce occupational segregation and will help to reduce the gender pay gap.

This chapter focuses on the education system up to the age of 19 rather than adult education, which is looked at in Chapter 2.

## Breaking down stereotypes across the education system

### 2006 recommendation:

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. It should include:

- a curriculum for vocational skills that provides a joined-up framework for practical learning;
- 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;
- the promotion of Young Apprenticeships to 14–16 year olds in occupations not traditionally taken up by their gender;
- employer visits to schools and ‘taster’ days for primary school pupils;
- work experience placements for pupils pre-14 in an occupation not traditionally taken up by their gender;

- careers education co-ordinators in schools to organise the provision of group visits, ‘taster days’ and work experience.

**Progress:** The Department for Education and Skills accepted this recommendation and agreed that their gender equality scheme would lay the basis for our proposed ‘World of Work’ Programme. We were pleased with this but felt that the Department could have gone further in championing change. We believe that they should be setting an example by going further than they are entitled to do on a statutory basis.

We would like to see DCSF produce an overall strategy which sets out its aims and objectives in regards to gender stereotyping in the education system. In addition, it must show how their current work streams and policies contribute to this agenda and also give a clearer vision of their objectives in the longer term: helping young women to get a clearer picture of what the ‘world of work’ is like and, as a consequence of the choices they make at an early age, how they can expect their careers to progress. This document should also specifically set out exactly how each strand of work is monitored, how successful it has been to date and what the enforcement mechanisms are.

### 2009 recommendation:

- 1. We expect DCSF to produce a national strategy for tackling gender inequality in the education system (with a particular focus on children aged 14 and under) by March 2010. This should set out targets and goals for tackling stereotypes in careers advice and guidance; increasing take-up of vocational skills; training; improving employment outcomes for girls; and proposals for opening up more work experience placements for girls in non-traditional sectors.**

### On specific points

#### 2006 recommendation:

- A curriculum for vocational skills that provides a joined-up framework for practical learning.

**Progress:** We are encouraged to hear that the programme of new Diplomas will be subject to vigorous evaluation and monitoring for the first few years following their introduction. This evaluation will focus on issues that include gender, and consortia wanting to offer the Diplomas will have to provide evidence to DCSF that their information, advice and guidance (IAG) has been assessed against the quality standards for young people's information, advice and guidance. These standards state that 'information, advice and guidance services [should] promote equality of opportunity, celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes' and, as part of this, ensure that 'stereotypes and limited career aspirations are challenged, for example through the use

of positive action activities, taster sessions, the use of appropriate role models and work placements'.

DCSF has made good progress in this area in setting out the standards that they expect consortia to adhere to. However, we have not yet seen any evidence that the consortia are actually meeting these quality standards. It is therefore unclear whether they are actually achieving what they were set out to achieve, what the reporting mechanisms are for this or what the overall goals are.

### 2009 recommendation:

- 2. DCSF must ensure that the quality standards are inspected and sanctions issued for those consortia that do not meet standard five for equality and diversity. This specifically states that 'information, advice and guidance services [should] promote equality of opportunity, celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes'.**

#### 2006 recommendation:

- 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.

### 2009 recommendation:

- 3. We would like to see clarification of what students can expect in terms of entitlements to study for vocational qualifications being part of the proposed national strategy**

**for tackling gender inequality in the education system, as referred to in Recommendation 1.**

Vocational qualifications

**2006 recommendation:**

- The promotion of Young Apprenticeships to 14–16 year olds in occupations not traditionally taken up by their gender.

**Progress:** We are particularly encouraged by the work being done by the Government to open up more places for applied learning via the new Diplomas and also the Young apprenticeship programme. The recent announcement that businesses across the country will share £11 million to create nearly 3,000 new apprenticeship places is welcomed. We are also glad to see that there is a programme of taster sessions in atypical apprenticeships. DCSF does, however, need to be more proactive in promoting non-traditional apprenticeships to girls on the basis that there remains a pay gap in apprenticeships, which can in part be put down to occupational segregation (this is discussed further in Chapter 2). Despite the fact that the Government has announced an increase in the minimum rate of weekly pay for apprentices from £80 to £95, the Commission has heard evidence that this still does not provide a sufficient level of income for many young women, particularly those who have chosen to do an apprenticeship which is traditionally female and may therefore result in them working in a low-paid sector.

**2009 recommendation:**

- 4. We are pleased that the Government has accepted the recommendation of the Low Pay Commission for a minimum wage for apprentices. The Government must implement this as quickly and effectively as possible.**

We are also pleased that literature associated with apprenticeships uses carefully considered images and wording, particularly in those areas often thought of as traditionally gender specific. However, more information is needed in the promotional literature on the benefits of undertaking a non-traditional apprenticeship, including pay and career progression opportunities.

**2009 recommendation:**

- 5. As the National Apprenticeship Service has responsibility for the national delivery of targets and co-ordination of the funding for apprenticeship places, we would recommend that as part of their remit they be set a target to ensure that all pupils have access to advice on apprenticeships which challenges gender stereotypes. The Service must also provide more tailored advice to those choosing non-traditional apprenticeships around how they go about breaking into the jobs market once their apprenticeship is over.**

### 2006 recommendations:

- Employer visits to schools and 'taster' days for primary school pupils.
- Work experience placements for pupils pre-14 in an occupation not traditionally taken up by their gender.
- Careers education co-ordinators in schools to organise the provision of group visits, 'taster days' and work experience.

**Progress:** Overall, we were disappointed by the response to the above three recommendations, which were based around the principle that pre-14 pupils should be able to access placements/'tasters' in occupations which are non-traditional.

We know that DCSF has a policy in relation to primary schools that they should all have a relationship with business and that they have many good examples of work-related learning at primary schools. We do not, however, believe that this tackles what we originally proposed in these recommendations. We are pleased that there have been efforts made to ensure that schools have relationships with various industries. However, we have not seen evidence that, as part of this, extra efforts are being made to ensure that this relationship does not just reinforce stereotypes, or whether schools are being monitored to see whether they are engaging with both traditionally female and male sectors and emphasising the fact that girls and boys have access to careers in both.

In regards to work experience we feel that good progress has been made by DCSF through the development of its national standards for work experience. These state that schools, colleges and Education Business Partnership Organisations (EBPOs) should ensure that equal opportunities are promoted and gender stereotyping is challenged. We also look forward to seeing the results of the Gender Agenda research project this July, which we hope will act as useful guidance for schools on how to break down myths around gender.

However, even if young girls are provided with the information on a wide range of work experience available to them, and even if they are interested in a non-traditional route, they often might not follow this up as they may not feel confident enough to enter a male-dominated environment on their own.

### 2009 recommendation:

- 6. DCSF to work with the Institute for Education Business Excellence (IEBE) and the EBPOs to establish a 'buddying' programme of work experience placements for girls in non-traditional areas, where girls can 'pair up' and undertake work experience together. DCSF must also roll this 'buddying' programme out for Young apprenticeships and Diplomas. As part of this programme girls and young women should also have access to 'mentors' so that they can talk directly to women who have, or continue to be, successful in that line of work.**

**2009 recommendation:**

- 7. As part of the national strategy for tackling gender inequality in the education system, DCSF should set out how it will ensure that, in working with businesses, all primary schools have clear targets for engaging with both traditionally male and female sectors, and that they are proactive in ensuring that gender stereotypes are challenged in this process.**

**2009 recommendation:**

- 8. DCSF should commit to ensuring that all pupils have an opportunity to undertake two work experience placements – one in a non-traditional role.**

**2009 recommendation:**

- 9. BIS and the National Apprenticeship Service must ensure that the pilots to address under-representation in apprenticeships and other initiatives to tackle gender segregation and stereotyping (which confine women to low-paid apprenticeships) are implemented effectively.**

**2009 recommendation:**

- 10. DCSF should establish a formal programme of 'taster days'/work experience for non-traditional routes for Young Apprenticeships and Diplomas.**

**2009 recommendation:**

- 11. We expect DCSF and BIS to make better use of the existing good practice in tackling occupational segregation in apprenticeship schemes by producing and widely disseminating a 'good practice guide'. They must also ensure that all promotional literature makes reference to the benefits of non-traditional apprenticeships.**

### Careers advice and guidance

**2006 recommendation:**

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. National standards should confirm that it:

- challenges gender stereotypes;
- gives young people a real understanding of the pay, rewards and challenges of occupations, particularly those not traditionally taken up by their gender.

**Progress:** The Government accepted this recommendation, and although we understand that the quality standards for young people's IAG do stipulate that 'stereotypes and limited career aspirations are challenged, for example through the use of positive action activities, taster sessions, the use of appropriate role models and work placements', we are disappointed that DCSF has not been more proactive in actually 'challenging' gender stereotypes.

We understand that Ofsted will be reporting on its thematic review of careers education/ IAG for young people this autumn and we welcome this. However, the Commission is not clear what the enforcement mechanisms are for the delivery of non-stereotypical careers advice, and how the quality standards for young people's IAG is being monitored.

We also feel that more can be done to ensure that the person giving careers advice has been trained on challenging gender stereotyping, and this advice needs to be consistent across all educational settings. We understand that Connexions Personal Advisers do receive some training in this area, but the extent to which this is monitored and whether they actually feel that the training helps them to deliver non-stereotyped advice is unknown.

Careers advisers should also hold a high standing in the school and be able to influence how a particular setting goes about delivering its career advice. Often the people delivering careers advice are the teachers themselves, who in some cases have not received any

specific training or who have limited time to devote to this alongside the work which they already do.

In reviewing our recommendations we also heard first hand that young girls can often feel uncomfortable speaking openly to careers advisers and that opportunities for children to talk to other role models would be hugely beneficial.

#### **2009 recommendation:**

**12. DCSF should establish a programme of best practice for delivering careers advice in a non-gender stereotypical way. This should be promoted with the aim of bringing practice on the part of all education providers and providers of careers advice up to the standard of the best.**

#### **2009 recommendation:**

**13. DCSF and BIS should ensure that every school and further education setting has a qualified careers adviser, and these advisers should undertake Continued Professional Development (CPD) that is specifically focused on challenging gender and socio-economic stereotyping.**

## Guidance for teachers and childcare workers

### **2006 recommendation:**

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 stereotypes of what girls and boys can do.

**Progress:** The Government accepted this recommendation, although we believe that there is much more to be done. We were pleased to learn about the progress being made via the Centre for Excellence in Children's Services and also that all childcare providers had a responsibility, under the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for children 0 to 5 (which came into effect on 1 September 2008) to ensure positive attitudes to diversity. This includes the provision of positive images that challenge children's thinking and help them to embrace differences in gender.

All teacher trainees also have to demonstrate an awareness of equality, including gender, in order to comply with sections of the Secretary of State's statutory standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Trainees who fail to do this cannot be recommended by training providers for QTS.

Despite these areas of progress we do feel that this is an example of where systemic change regarding gender equality could make a significant impact but that DCSF is not approaching it in this way. For instance, we are aware that the Centre for Excellence does not contain a specific focus on gender equality issues despite the fact that they have been set up to disseminate best practice, among other things.

### **2009 recommendation:**

**14. We want to restate our original recommendation, which is that DCSF must prepare and disseminate 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 stereotypes of what girls and boys can do. This document should also include a series of best practice examples, which should be accessible via the Centre for Excellence's website. As part of this, the Department should also set out clear advice on how this national guidance is to be used, how they will monitor its take-up and what action they will take if the guidance is not adhered to.**

## Inspection and monitoring

### 2009 recommendation:

- 15. DCSF should set out a detailed commitment (for example in the next update of its gender equality scheme) to ensuring that all IAG proactively challenges gender stereotypes and that girls and boys are given advice on the full range of career options and understand the career progression and opportunities available for each occupation, including pay levels. More can be done to ensure that the Equality Duty promotes diversity and equality in education.**

# Chapter 2

## Access to continued learning and development

### Summary

**Issue:** As a result of taking time out of the labour market to care for others, women often lack the confidence to return to work altogether or perhaps believe that their skills are so out of date that they opt to take a job that is below their skills level. We believe that women, particularly those re-entering the labour market, should have access to relevant skills, training and careers advice not only so they can update the skills they already have but also to allow them to re-train in new areas, opening up new opportunities to them. Making progress in this area is clearly a win-win situation for women, for their families and for the economy. This is especially true at a time when we are looking to rebuild the economy and will need to ensure that we have the workers with the right skills – particularly in potentially new growth sectors.

Lifelong learning is particularly important if we are to support women in developing their career paths and progressing into higher-paid jobs. This is particularly true for male dominated sectors, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), where we are still experiencing skills shortages. We were, for example, concerned to learn that the proportion of women in science, engineering and technology (SET) employment is not expected to reach even 50 per cent this century (women currently represent only 18.5 per cent of SET employees).<sup>9</sup>

**Progress:** During discussions with commissioners, industry experts and practitioners it was clear that the Government is already doing a lot of good work to help women to re-train and gain new skills. We are encouraged by the work being done to up-skill women, particularly via Adult Apprenticeships, Train to Gain and the Women and Work Sector Pathways Initiative. Also, the resources committed to such organisations as the UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (UKRC), which has worked with more than 700 companies and helped around 1,700 women in their careers in SET, are invaluable.

We are now looking for further expansion of these programmes – particularly to help women who have received training and gained employment at entry level but who want to train again to make progress in their career. We also believe that gaps remain in supporting women who have been out of the labour market for some years and who perhaps need additional support to get training to make their first steps back into the labour market. Overall, we believe that the Government must get the statutory framework right if we are to ensure progress in this area.

<sup>9</sup> UKRC (2009) *Tomorrow's Women, Tomorrow's World*, Research Briefing No. 11, UKRC.  
See [www.ukrc4setwomen.org/html/research-and-statistics/statistics/statistics-archive/june-2009/](http://www.ukrc4setwomen.org/html/research-and-statistics/statistics/statistics-archive/june-2009/)

## Getting the statutory framework right

### 2006 recommendation:

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.

- 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.
- Train to Gain, through the network of skills brokers, should be particularly focused on employers and sectors employing the greatest numbers of low-skilled women, particularly those from ethnic minorities.
- 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.
- 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.

- Further pilots for Adult Apprenticeships or Train to Gain in areas of skills shortage should be introduced and focused on women returners.

**Progress:** We are pleased that the Government took our call for a package of measures to support women in raising their skills levels so seriously. The £40 million package announced as a result of this was welcomed. There have been many successes, particularly in the Women and Work Sector Pathways Initiative, and we were particularly encouraged by work which is already being done by the 12 Sector Skills Councils involved so far, which cover areas such as construction, textiles, automotive and utility skills. Large numbers of women have benefited from the support of this initiative and have either got into or had support to progress in sectors and occupations where they are under-represented and where specific skills shortages and gaps exist.

We want to encourage BIS to continue to support these programmes and all stakeholders involved. We understand that the Government is planning to dissolve the Learning and Skills Council by 2010 as set out in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ACSL) Bill, and replace it with the Skills Funding Agency and the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA).

**2009 recommendation:**

**16. By March 2010 DCSF and BIS must set out clear roles and accountabilities for gender equality objectives for the new Skills Funding Agency, and they and Local Authorities must do the same for the Young People's Learning Agency. We expect both bodies to report on progress by March 2012.**

**2009 recommendation:**

**17. Both DCSF and BIS need to set out clearly how they will ensure that those on the margins and outside the labour market, i.e. those who are least likely to 'demand' support, are targeted. They should set out the specific mechanisms and actions they will take to meet the needs of these people. This must be included in both departments' gender equality schemes.**

## Women and Work Sector Pathways

Last year's announcement of a further £5 million per year allocated to the UK Commission for Employment and Skills to deliver phase 2 of the Women and Work Sector Pathways Initiative, and the continuation of nine projects into 2009/10 alongside a further four, demonstrates the Government's commitment to this agenda. We hope that this does aid the expected 5,000 women per year. Since 2006 the programme has already helped set out new recruitment and career pathways for almost 12,000 women by nine Sector Skills Councils.

However, from evidence given to the Commission, it is clear that there are still opportunities to be harnessed by this programme. At present women can only access

the programme once. Although this is hugely beneficial, we are concerned that women who then have further ambitions to get on in their careers cannot access the programme for 'second chance' training. Although women are gaining a qualification, we need to ensure that we do not risk perpetuating the gender pay gap by not supporting them to go further and risk them remaining in lower-skilled, lower-paid jobs. We understand that employers themselves are partly responsible for seeing the benefits of this programme and continuing it, but we believe that Government also has a role to play here.

**2009 recommendation:**

**18. BIS must encourage the use of the Women and Work Sector Pathways Initiative for re-training, and should monitor and publish the proportion of women benefiting from this for the first and second time and any subsequent uses.**

## Sector Skills Councils

Sector Skills Councils play a key role in adult training and we recognise the very good work which has taken place across the country by some Sector Skills Councils to train adults in areas where there are skills gaps. They have in many cases provided support in identifying and opening up recruitment routes for women in areas where they are under-represented.

As highlighted in both our original report and more recently in the National Skills Forum report, *Closing the gender skills gap* (February 2009), the re-licensing process of Sector Skills Councils is a huge opportunity to ensure that each Sector Skills Council fully considers gender issues – particularly identifying where there is gender segregation.

We recognise that every Sector Skills Council is required to consider diversity issues as part of the development of their Sector Skills Agreement; however, we feel that more could be done to ensure that, in practice, action is being taken on this, and not just where it is considered a 'major' issue. Equality must be an explicit part of the re-licensing process.

**2009 recommendation:**

**19. We recommend that BIS develops a more co-ordinated, standard approach to gender segregation that all Sector Skills Councils will have to adhere to, regardless of whether it is a 'major' issue or not. This should form part of every Sector Skills Agreement, with each Sector Skills Council setting out specific actions to tackle segregation. BIS also needs to establish a robust process for measuring and monitoring the extent to which Sector Skills Councils are considering gender segregation issues, and the impact of actions they take.**

**2009 recommendation:**

**20. We would expect BIS to develop a good practice guide that pulls together all the action points from those Sector Skills Councils that have been exemplary in this area.**

### Train to Gain

Train to Gain continues to provide an excellent service to both women and men who are able to access training through their current employer via Train to Gain funding.

Since its launch in 2006 nearly 1 million learners have started training via Train to

Gain, with over 27,000 employers engaging with Train to Gain brokerage services. Almost twice as many adults (187,300) achieved a qualification in 2007/08 than in the previous year. Overall, Train to Gain has enabled over 970,000 employees to begin learning programmes, and has delivered over 460,000 achievements. This initiative has particularly benefited women: over half those accessing training through this route are female.

We are pleased to learn that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) will now be top priority for Train to Gain funding, including the £350 million increase in funding from 2008/09 to 2010/11, to help them get through the tough economic climate.<sup>10</sup>

It will, however, be important to ensure that this programme continues to engage directly and effectively with women and ensure that, throughout the whole process, gender segregation issues are integral to the negotiation process between Sector Skills Councils and the Learning and Skills Council. We were disappointed to learn about the relatively low numbers of women who went through the Level 3 London pilot. We were advised that this was down to some employers wanting to target all employees, not just women.

**2009 recommendation:**

**21. BIS must be more proactive in monitoring and evaluating the Train to Gain programme, including the successes and failures. It must also provide formal reporting mechanisms that enable lessons to be learnt and must disseminate these across the Level 3 pilot schemes.**

<sup>10</sup> Based on the BIS statistics, there are an estimated 6.75 million women working in SMEs. This is out of a total of around 13.5 million people. See <http://stats.berr.gov.uk/ed/sme/index.htm>

## CASE STUDY: SUCCESS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY THROUGH TRAIN TO GAIN

Deborah Biggs-Askew, Building Site Supervisor, has achieved a managerial position in construction, an industry that is typically male dominated, by using opportunities through the Government's Train To Gain scheme.

Deborah, who works for WWR (UK) Ltd, a roof sheeting and cladding business in Buckinghamshire, worked as an office administrator prior to being given the opportunity to become a site administrator on a new project in Haringey.

Upon discovering that WWR was looking to up-skill and 'grow their own' supervisors, she saw an opportunity to develop her career. Deborah had been introduced to Trade Assessments when she represented WWR at a Train to Gain presentation given by Eastleigh College and Construction Skills in 2007 on behalf of Willmott Dixon, and signed up with them to do a Construction Site Supervisor Level 3 CAA award. She began this award in March 2008, and worked hard over the next six months to achieve the correct competency in all the performance criteria of the programme. Debbie now wishes to progress to a full Level 4 in construction site management.

### Adult Apprenticeships

Adult Apprenticeships are an important route for women to either enter the labour market or change the direction of their career. The Government's commitment to the development and extension of Adult Apprenticeships has been extremely positive. The proposals to take forward pilots to address under-representation in apprenticeships in targeted areas for gender, black and minority ethnic (BME) and disabled apprentices are welcomed, and we look forward to seeing positive results from these. We also look forward to an early sight of the pilot frameworks, particularly in those sectors where women are under-represented. This was an issue that we highlighted in our

original report, so we are pleased to see that BIS has actioned our recommendation to establish further pilots for Adult Apprenticeships in areas of skills shortage.

The Government will be spending over £1 billion on apprenticeships. Of this, at least £367 million has been allocated to adults aged 19 and over. Given that around 60 per cent of those starting an apprenticeship who are over 25 years old are female, we believe that this will go a long way towards helping women to re-enter the labour market.

Despite this increased commitment to access to apprenticeships, we are still seeing many areas reflect the gender divide in the workplace. For instance, 1 per cent of

construction apprentices are women but in the care sector women comprise 97 per cent of apprentices. We believe that this is one of the issues contributing to the gender pay gap for apprenticeships. Research from 2007 shows that average pay varies by gender, with male apprentices receiving £186 and female apprentices £147. We are pleased to see that the Government has agreed to set a minimum wage for apprentices; as stated in Recommendation 4, the Government must implement this as quickly and effectively as possible.

**2009 recommendation:**

**22. BIS must undertake work to establish further whether women have sufficient access to part-time apprenticeships, and whether more needs to be done to promote the development of these opportunities. We would like to see data being collected on the number of people choosing to take part-time apprenticeships and the number of courses available, particularly those which are available outside of core hours.**

**2009 recommendation:**

**23. As part of its gender equality scheme, BIS must ensure that there are effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms in place to be able to identify whether Adult Apprenticeships – and indeed the pilots to address under-representation in apprenticeships – are supporting women, particularly those who have spent time out of the labour market.**

## Flexible training courses

**2006 recommendation:**

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:

- 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.

**Progress:** The Government accepted this recommendation. Given women’s key role as carer, it can be difficult for them to access training courses because of a lack of childcare provided on site, lack of flexibility in the timing of training courses and often a lack of flexibility from employers who can have concerns about paying for a training course for someone who works part time. Lack of flexible training is one of the key barriers women face to entering the labour market and progressing in it. Where women are juggling a part-time job with caring for a family member, often the only route to training is to take courses in the evening or the weekends.

Even where employers offer to pay for additional childcare, there is often no consideration for the fact it may not be possible to arrange childcare at short notice or for just a few days.

We were encouraged to hear that BIS had commissioned Ofsted to do a report which identifies colleges that offer their courses flexibly to meet care and childcare needs, and share examples of best practice in providing access to learners with other continuing responsibilities or commitments. We understand that this report was finalised in April 2008 and we are disappointed that it has

not been published yet. We would urge BIS to make urgent progress on this.

**2009 recommendation:**

**24. We expect BIS to work with Ofsted to publish the report on colleges that provide flexible courses. Following this, BIS needs to take action where this research shows that there are gaps in provision of training courses that are offered on a part-time/flexible basis. We believe that this is something which should be integral to the gender priorities within the BIS single equality scheme.**

## GOOD PRACTICE IN APPRENTICESHIPS

Examples of providers and employers challenging gender stereotypes and under-representation through apprenticeships include the following:

- ConstructionSkills mounted a national advertising campaign (including on television) to promote the construction industry as an attractive and high-tech career choice for women.
- Kwik Fit's recent Ofsted inspection revealed outstanding effectiveness of provision; the company is commended for its commitment to supporting female apprentices in a non-traditional occupation. The proportion of female apprentices increased from 4.5 per cent in 2004 to 8 per cent in 2008.
- British Gas has trebled the number of women starting an apprenticeship in the last two years.

In addition, the fifth annual Learning and Skills Council Apprenticeship Awards were announced in July 2008. Three-quarters of the winners were women, including Rachael Hoyle, an apprentice in the aerospace and engineering industry.

## CASE STUDY: THE UK RESOURCE CENTRE FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

The UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (UKRC) is the Government's lead organisation for improving the participation and position of women in science, engineering and technology (SET) occupations across industry, research, academia, further education and public services, increasing the productivity of the UK and the career aspirations and lifetime earnings of women.

The vision of the UKRC is that by 2030 there will be an environment in UK SET employment, research and policy making where women contribute, participate and share the benefits equally with their male colleagues. To achieve this, the UKRC focuses on two strategic outcomes: organisational and cultural change within SET employers and organisations to create an environment in which women are valued and can succeed; and supporting individual women entering and progressing within SET occupations.

Between April 2008 and April 2009, UKRC services engaged with 600 women, having made contact with 1,400 overall and with 183 achieving positive outcomes. During the 2008–11 funding period, UKRC will engage with 1,200 women, to achieve a minimum of 500 positive outcomes. This target has increased from the original target of 300.

# Chapter 3

## Balancing work and family life

### Summary

**Issue:** Women can regularly face penalties because they take time out of the labour market to care for family members or work part-time or flexibly in order to balance caring with work responsibilities. In fact, research has found that, out of all disadvantaged groups, personal employment penalties were the greatest for lone mothers with a child under 11 and partnered women with children under 11.<sup>11</sup>

We recognise that, given the current economic climate, many businesses, particularly SMEs, are working hard to remain competitive. However, we feel that the current climate is not the right time to cut corners on equality. There are numerous measures, such as flexible working, which can help businesses to cut costs and can help them to retain the best staff for when the economy improves. Research has found that businesses that use flexible working successfully are at a recruitment advantage.<sup>12</sup> This was illustrated by higher levels of employee retention, lower absence rates, better working ethos and morale, and improved employee relations leading to heightened productivity. Flexibility in work reduced the stress levels and work loads of employees and this had a direct positive effect on the quality of work produced by the employees.

At any point in an economic cycle, it is important that there is good common sense management of flexible working practices, and this applies even more so during an economic downturn; we just need to make sure that the current climate is not used as an excuse for unjustifiable lack of flexibility for either gender.

**Progress:** Government has made some progress in beginning to tackle these disparities. We believe that extensions in the right to request flexible working, increased support for childcare and increases in maternity benefits will go a long way in enabling families to better balance their family and working life. However, a lot more must be done to promote quality part-time and flexible working including the dissemination of best practice. Government lacks any overall departmental champion for this, and we call on the Government Equalities Office (GEO) to work with BIS to drive this forward. Government has not done enough to promote quality part-time work and job sharing and yet we believe they have a key responsibility to do so, particularly in light of their responsibilities under the Gender Equality Duty. Government also needs to develop and disseminate core messages on this issue – we expect this to be strongly resourced because of the links to the economy.

<sup>11</sup> *The Equalities Review: Interim Report for Consultation* (2006). See [www.pfc.org.uk/files/Equalities\\_Review-Interim\\_Report.pdf](http://www.pfc.org.uk/files/Equalities_Review-Interim_Report.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (2005) *Flexible working: impact and implementation*.

## Promoting quality part-time and flexible work

### 2006 recommendation:

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; and
- other initiatives to spread best practice and achieve culture change.

**Progress:** We were pleased that the Government accepted our recommendation to establish and run a Quality Part-Time Work Fund. Twelve projects, covering a broad spectrum of sectors and organisations of different sizes, received funding from a pot of £500,000 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’.

The Commission received a report detailing key findings and key achievements of the initiative. One of the key findings which came up a number of times was that middle managers needed to have access to training to ensure that they are able to administer and design part-time and flexible working policies and better manage those who work flexibly. Although the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) already has a number of training packages and information sheets available on its website on this issue, we are not clear how well this is being disseminated. In addition to this, training courses can often be costly, especially for SMEs.

### 2009 recommendation:

**25. GEO must take the lead on developing a work programme, working collaboratively with BIS, to promote quality flexible and part-time working, by March 2010.**

**2009 recommendation:**

**26. GEO must carry out a more thorough review of the individual projects of the Quality Part-Time Work Fund to identify which approaches were successful and the lessons learnt. As part of the wider work programme referred to in Recommendation 25, the Government must set out what action it will take as a result of these lessons and we expect considerable resources to be committed to this. The lack of quality part-time work should be a key focus for Government action in future, given its importance to women, their families and the economy.**

**2006 recommendation:**

Employers should ensure that their managers, at all levels, are regularly and continually trained on diversity and flexibility issues.

**2006 recommendation:**

ACAS and the Northern Ireland Labour Relations Agency should be funded to develop a training package to support flexible working and this package should be delivered free to small firms.

**Progress:** The first of these recommendations was aimed at employers and the second was accepted by the Government on the basis that flexible working is one of the strands of the BIS Guidance Programme which has produced and promoted free-to-use and legally compliant online tools, pro-forma letters and agreement forms. We were, however, disappointed that no further action was taken as a result of our recommendation. Given that the Quality Part-Time Work Fund reinforced that middle managers in particular need to be trained on flexibility issues, we would now like to see Government taking action on this.

**2009 recommendation:**

**27. GEO to work with key stakeholders including the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and ACAS to develop a training package for middle managers on flexible working issues, specifically tailored for small businesses. Government departments should lead by example by ensuring that all middle managers receive this training.**

“Middle managers turn strategies and long-term plans into day-to-day, executable tasks... the way middle managers interpret and communicate these messages has a huge influence on how employees receive them... Middle managers will have an easier time applying diversity and inclusion principles to their responsibilities if standard processes and tools are designed with diversity and inclusion already baked in.”

ORC Diversity Executive (November/December 2008) *Middle Management Roadblock*.

## Child poverty and part-time work

We are also pleased that the Government has recognised that increasing the number of part-time jobs can go a long way in tackling child poverty. Although progress is being made on the Government's target to eradicate child poverty by 2020 many believe that progress is too slow. Increasing the number of part-time jobs will help to give women, particularly mothers, a better chance of returning to the labour market and getting out of poverty. We welcome the work that the Child Poverty Unit is leading through the London Child Poverty Delivery Group to increase maternal employment in London. We hope that all the partners on the London Child Poverty Delivery Group will ensure this work is given the support, attention and resources required to ensure that it has an impact. By working together, and sending out a clear and consistent message, we think that this group could make a considerable difference. We believe that the current low maternal part-time employment rate in London is a major contributor to the capital's high rate of child poverty.

### **2009 recommendation:**

**28. The Child Poverty Unit (and all partners on the London Child Poverty Delivery Group) must ensure that the focus of their work is not just on getting women into low or entry-level, part-time positions. They must also focus on the quality of these part-time jobs to ensure that this does not exacerbate the gender pay gap.**

## Job sharing

Job sharing is not a new concept. The Confederation of British Industry's (CBI's) 2007 Employment Trends Survey found that 55 per cent of employers were offering job-share schemes (up from 38 per cent in 2004).<sup>13</sup>

Alongside part-time working, job sharing is another option that employees can use to better balance work and family life. For the employer it can be hugely beneficial: it can allow for two perspectives on issues; they can get double the skill set and experience; and it can also allow them to retain their experienced staff, thereby saving on training costs. It also allows employers to open up jobs which usually could only be done on a full-time basis to part-time candidates. For the employee, it has all the benefits of part-time working, allowing employees to balance work and family life.

We are pleased that the Civil Service is providing leadership in this area with the development of an online job-share noticeboard helping civil servants to look for a potential job-share partner as well as providing advice and guidance on job sharing for individuals and line managers.

### **2009 recommendation:**

**29. GEO should work with key stakeholders to promote the benefits of job sharing, particularly at a senior level, within both the public sector and the private sector.**

<sup>13</sup> Confederation of British Industry (2008) *Property for Business*.

## Flexible working

### 2006 recommendation:

The right to request flexible working should be extended over time to cover a wider group of employees.

**Progress:** We are pleased that the Government accepted our 2006 recommendation to extend the right to request flexible working further. As a result, employees with disabled children, carers of adults and parents with children aged 16 and under now have the right to request to work flexibly. The recent extension means that around 10.5 million people can now make this request.

Flexible working rights provide us with an opportunity to change the long-hours culture, but it is how it is implemented at an organisational level that will really make the difference. The extension may mean that a lot more people have access to this right, but there are still discrepancies as to how many eligible people actually know they can apply, and also a problem with accepting flexible working as a 'normal' part of an organisation's culture. For instance, evidence shows a large proportion of male employees (42 per cent) with children under 16 are unaware of their right to request flexible working,<sup>14</sup> yet evidence also shows that fathers do actually want to spend more time with their children and share work and family care.<sup>15</sup> It is still often the case that people believe that flexible working will have a negative impact on their career

and that, for a man, working flexibly is not considered the 'male' thing to do (evidence shows that men are nearly twice as likely to have their requests refused than women – 23 per cent versus 13 per cent).<sup>16</sup>

The benefits of flexible working for businesses have been widely reported, but despite this we have found that it does present new challenges for line managers, particularly in how middle managers deal with flexible working requests. We have made recommendations on this in the section on quality part-time work.

### 2009 recommendation:

**30. This report makes no specific recommendations towards the actual right to request. However, we would like to see further efforts being made by BIS to ensure successful implementation of this right. For instance:**

- **establishing whether women are using the right effectively in the current financial downturn;**
- **establishing whether women who work flexibly are being discriminated against;**
- **establishing whether the right to work flexibly is being promoted enough to men and that they are not discriminated against; and**
- **actively doing more to ensure that flexible working is being promoted as being good for business.**

<sup>14</sup> Department for Trade and Industry (2004) *Flexible Working Employee Survey*. See [www.berr.gov.uk/files/file27455.pdf](http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file27455.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission (2009) *Working Better*.

<sup>16</sup> Walsh, I (2008) *Flexible Working Review*, BERR.

## Pro-rata treatment for part-time workers

### 2006 recommendation:

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.

**Progress:** The Government accepted this recommendation, and the then Minister for Women, Meg Munn MP, wrote to over 150 professional bodies in the UK asking for further information as to what pro-rata treatment they provide. There was a disappointing response overall but those who did respond had good practice to share.

### 2009 recommendation:

**31. We would recommend that GEO gathers together in one document the good practice from those professional bodies that provide pro-rata treatment. The Minister for Women must then write to those bodies that have not made available best practice on pro-rata treatment, enclosing a copy of this report and encouraging them to learn lessons from the good practice already taking place.**

## Childcare

### 2006 recommendation:

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.

**Progress:** The Government accepted this recommendation. We have seen encouraging progress on childcare, particularly for those who are most disadvantaged, such as the new duty on Local Authorities to ensure that there is sufficient childcare in their area and the recent announcement that 3,000 Sure Start Children's Centres are now up and running. Also, the guarantee of all three and four year olds to a minimum of 12.5 hours of free early education for 38 weeks per year for up to two years before reaching compulsory school age, is welcomed.

We were also encouraged by the programme set out in *Next Steps for Early Learning and Childcare* in January 2009, in particular the commitment to fund free childcare places for 50,000 workless parents to enable them to access training leading to work.

However, given that we know that a large number of women feel they may have to return to work earlier than expected after giving birth due to economic pressures (research has shown that seven in ten mums feel they must return to work sooner than they planned),<sup>17</sup> plus the fact that the majority of

<sup>17</sup> Avon Mum-Economics Survey (2009)

childcare places offered (80 per cent) are in the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector, we would recommend that Government looks into what more can be done to support parents with children below the age of three to find and afford quality childcare in their area. Government has the opportunity to make a significant difference here. This is perhaps even more crucial now, during the current economic downturn, when families might be experiencing a drop in household income due to redundancy and both parents might need to work. Childcare remains one of the cornerstones to allowing families to have greater choice as to how they balance work and family life.

**2009 recommendation:**

**32. DCSF must set out how it can better support parents with children under three who are being looked after by the PVI sector to afford quality childcare in their area. This must be considered as part of their obligations under the Gender Equality Duty.**

**2009 recommendation:**

**33. DCSF must ensure that there are suitable mechanisms put in place for monitoring the effectiveness of such initiatives as the free childcare line and also the duty which has been placed on Local Authorities.**

**2006 recommendation:**

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.

**Progress:** The Government accepted this recommendation. We are pleased to learn of the progress made regarding qualification levels in the early years workforce via the Early Years Professional Status which aims to help introduce graduate-level leadership to the PVI early years sector. The Government aim that all full daycare settings will have a graduate leading practice by 2015 is welcomed. However, we were disappointed by the lack of action which has been taken specifically to address the 'pay' element of this recommendation.

**2009 recommendation:**

**34. Although we are aware that pay and conditions are matters for individual employers, DCSF must consider further what more can be done to increase the wages of childcare workers, many of whom receive low/minimum wage, while ensuring that childcare costs remain affordable. In particular, DCSF must**

**consider what work needs to be done to drive forward the ‘professionalisation’ of the childcare sector given the fact that the majority of its employees are female and the sector is still struggling to attract men.**

## Women’s enterprise

### **2006 recommendation:**

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.

**Progress:** The Government accepted this recommendation. We are pleased with the huge progress that has been made in this area and with the fact that women are increasingly taking the first steps in starting their own businesses.

Female-only start-ups increased by 9 per cent to more than 90,000 in 2008 compared with 83,000 in 2007 (in comparison with male-only start-ups, which showed a slight increase of less than 1 per cent). So despite the economic downturn, female entrepreneurs are performing better than the national average.<sup>18</sup> This is hugely encouraging, and we would like to applaud these successes and the Government’s continuing commitment to women’s enterprise as set out in the new Enterprise Strategy (March 2008). This includes the £25 million Aspire Fund which targets support for women-led businesses across the UK on a co-investment basis, in order to help strong businesses grow.

However, despite this good progress, women are still the largest under-represented group for taking part in enterprise and running their own business with only 15 per cent of the 4.7 million UK businesses being majority-led by women (that is, where over half of the partners or directors are women). Around 680,000 enterprises in the UK are majority-led by women. Running your own business can have huge benefits to those women who are particularly looking to find a better balance between work and family life.

In light of the fact that the Women’s Enterprise Task Force will shortly be winding up after three successful years, we urge BIS to retain its focus on women’s enterprise and to put in place measures to assist women to go from having the ‘idea’ of setting up a business to putting it into practice.

### **2009 recommendation:**

#### **35. We recommend that BIS should:**

- **do more, via a publicity campaign, to promote the benefits of enterprise to women, particularly the work–life balance element;**
- **set out what processes they will be putting in place to continue the good work started by the Women’s Enterprise Task Force; and**
- **put in place measures to assist women to go from having the ‘idea’ of setting up a business to putting it into practice, i.e. pre-start up advice.**

<sup>18</sup> Barclays (2009). See [www.newsroom.barclays.com/Content/Detail.aspx?ReleaseID=1524&NewsAreaID=2](http://www.newsroom.barclays.com/Content/Detail.aspx?ReleaseID=1524&NewsAreaID=2)

## Workplace practice

### 2006 recommendation:

DTI, through partners such as Opportunity Now, should build a set of exemplar companies willing to pilot projects such as:

- a new offer to schools to give girls work experience, in particular in non-traditional jobs;
- setting up a new women's network in senior or traditionally male jobs within the company;
- actively promoting quality part-time jobs;
- a recruitment round which supports women returners' development needs including confidence building and other support mechanisms;
- developing career pathways for women working in lower-paid jobs;
- providing paid time off, support and facilities to a network of equality reps;
- undertaking an equal pay review.

**Progress:** The Government accepted this recommendation and worked with Opportunity Now to build a set of exemplar companies to pilot projects and promote good practice in areas such as equal pay reviews, working with schools to give girls work experience in non-traditional jobs and developing career pathways for women working in lower-paid jobs.

This process proved to be hugely successful, with 113 employers signing up from both the private and public sectors. We were pleased with the final result – a full report that documented the work of each exemplar and also highlighted the impact it had on both the women and the workplace culture. However, we are disappointed that the Government has not taken this initiative any further.

### 2009 recommendation:

**36. GEO to follow up the Exemplar Employer initiative by establishing an 'exemplar twinning' programme where each 'exemplar' agrees to work with a company that is not part of the exemplar initiative to provide guidance and support them in developing good practice of their own in one of the following areas: equal pay, flexible working, occupational segregation, training and development, or women returners. Once this initiative is up and running, GEO should ensure that key milestones are set and that there are formal reporting mechanisms for when the initiative ends.**

### **2006 recommendation:**

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 cross-Government, 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:

1. promotion of best practice via business links and the business.gov website;
2. £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;
3. 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;
4. support for the development and marketing of equality checks.

**Progress:** The Government accepted the majority of this recommendation. In response to specific points:

### **2006 recommendation:**

Promotion of best practice via Business Link and the business.gov website.

We are pleased with the progress made with the Business Link website and feel that this recommendation has been met.

### **2006 recommendation:**

£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.

This recommendation was only partially accepted as the Government was looking to decrease the amount of public funds that were used to support IiP, and in its place the New Choices Initiative was set up to help SMEs focus on the areas that concern them the most and to measure success in their terms.

**2006 recommendation:**

Supporting employee involvement in workplace equality development via £5 million additional funding for the Union Modernisation Fund (UMF) for capacity building to support training and development for equality representatives in the private and public sectors.

This was partially accepted and, so far, the UMF has provided £1.3 million to support 13 equality reps projects.

**2006 recommendation:**

Support for the development and marketing of equality checks.

The Government accepted this recommendation and GEO worked with key stakeholders to develop a Gender Equality Check Tool and to pilot it. Although we are pleased that the Government has taken action on this recommendation we are disappointed that it has taken so long to roll out. We understand that it is to 'go live' this summer and we would expect GEO to ensure that it is publicised and promoted to maximise take-up.

**2009 recommendation:**

**37. GEO must effectively promote the Gender Equality Check Tool following its launch this summer.**

# Chapter 4

## The public sector

### Summary

**Issue:** The focus of this report and our recommendations have mainly been aimed at Government and other public sector bodies, and at what support can be given to employers and women, on a non-legislative basis, to help tackle the gender pay and opportunity gap. We do, however, recognise that legislation is needed to work alongside those measures to ensure that a step change actually takes place. We have seen the positive impact this has had on the public sector where gender pay gaps are 11.1 per cent in comparison to 20 per cent in the private sector.

If we are to support women during the economic downturn and help them come through stronger in a new economy, the public sector needs to lead the way on issues such as procurement, women on boards and in implementing flexible working policies.

**Progress:** We welcome the provision in the Equality Bill banning secrecy clauses which prevent people discussing their own pay, encouraging greater transparency in company reporting. We also believe that the Gender Equality Duty has played a key role in forcing public sector bodies to directly address equality of opportunity between men and women and we hope that the new Single Equality Duty will continue to do the same. Trade union equality representatives continue to provide essential support and we are pleased that GEO has agreed to fund an extension of the Trades Union Congress's (TUC's) Equality Representatives Project.

This chapter makes recommendations as to where the Government can work with both the private and public sectors, both in a legislative and non-legislative way, to promote best practice and also looks at what more the public sector can do on a local level to provide the link between women looking for work and employers. Crucially, it calls for the proper implementation of the Gender Equality Duty. This applies not only to the internal practices of these public sector bodies but also the services they supply.

## EQUALITY BILL

The Equality Bill contains the following provisions intended to try to narrow the gender pay gap:

- A power to require employers with at least 250 employees in Great Britain to publish information about the differences in pay between their male and female employees. To give voluntary arrangements time to work, the Government would not intend to make regulations under this power before April 2013. The power would then only be used if progress on reporting had not been made by that time.
- A provision banning secrecy clauses which prevent people discussing their own pay.
- Extension of positive action so that employers can take into account, when selecting between two equally qualified candidates, under-representation of disadvantaged groups, for example women and people from ethnic minority communities.
- Provisions restructuring and expanding the public sector equality duties for public bodies. The new general duties will be underpinned by specific duties under secondary legislation which could include a requirement on public bodies to publish figures for their gender pay gap, ethnic minority employment and disability employment gaps, and to tackle discrimination and promote equality through their purchasing functions.

## Gender Equality Duty

### 2006 recommendation:

The new Gender Equality Duty should specifically ensure that action is taken on all causes of the gender pay gap including 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.

**Progress:** The Government partially accepted this recommendation – conducting equal pay reviews is optional, but the other requirements, particularly around considering the need for objectives to tackle all the causes of the gender pay gap and to take action accordingly, and the requirement to take action on the basis of evidence and to consult, are strong.

The Gender Equality Duty is, we believe, one of the biggest levers for change on this agenda. We would have expected that as part of this we would already see all Government departments, RDAs, Local Authorities, inspectorates (including Ofsted), schools and colleges, etc, having clear arrangements and

reporting mechanisms in place which address causes of the gender pay gap. Not only should this apply to their own internal practices and policies but also to the services they supply.

In reviewing our 40 recommendations one of our biggest concerns was that in some areas the Government does not have in place clear arrangements, reporting mechanisms or accountability processes, particularly on gender equality issues. These, however, are already requirements in Government departments' Gender Equality Duty obligations. Although these are legal obligations, implementation is often patchy. Throughout our review we have been disappointed with gaps in how the Government measures, assesses and reports back on various initiatives, best practice and projects. We expect all Government departments and associated bodies to lead by example and think through the implications of gender equality for all of their policies as part of the Gender Equality Duty. We expect the public sector to do gender disaggregation as a matter of course.

We also believe that the EHRC has a critical role to play in helping public bodies to build capacity, to engage women and their representative groups directly, and through targeted and strategic enforcement action.

**2009 recommendation:**

**38. All Government departments, Inspectorates, Local Authorities and RDAs should set out how they intend to monitor the impact of their policies on women, involve women and their representative groups directly, and report on the results on an annual basis. This**

**must be included in a review of their gender equality scheme to ensure that gender equality issues are mainstreamed throughout.**

**2009 recommendation:**

**39. We expect the EHRC to do more to meet their regulatory requirements in promoting the Gender Equality Duty and support Government and Local Authorities to develop best practice as part of their gender equality scheme. The EHRC must take immediate action on this.**

Equality Public Service Agreement (PSA)

**2006 recommendation:**

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.

**Progress:** When we made this recommendation the Government was in the process of developing the PSAs for the next spending period. We have been pleased with how this area of work has progressed, particularly the development of PSA 15, the Equality PSA. Reducing the gender pay gap is included as an indicator alongside tackling discrimination in employment and understanding and addressing unfair treatment by public services. This PSA is a key way in which to embed issues associated with the gender pay gap into Government policy.

**2009 recommendation:**

**40. Although we feel that this recommendation has been met, GEO must make it a priority to ensure that all Government departments fully engage and take action to meet the targets in PSA 15.**

Procurement

**2006 recommendation:**

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.

**Progress:** The Government accepted this recommendation. We are pleased with the progress that has been made in using the public procurement process to ensure that equality issues, including gender pay gaps, are addressed by public sector contractors. The guide *Make Equality Count*<sup>19</sup> made it clear that value for money goes hand in hand with equality issues. And, on the legislative side, we are pleased to see that the Equality Bill includes a provision enabling Government to use the Gender Equality Duty to impose

specific duties on the procurement activities of contracting authorities. The Government's proposals for specific duties relating to public procurement are set out in its public consultation on specific duties.

These measures will go a long way in helping equality considerations to become mainstreamed in the procurement process. Companies are often considered to be better run if they have transparent and fair pay structures.

We do, however, know that there remains some confusion as to how those involved address competing priorities, particularly during the economic downturn when budgets are being cut.

**2009 recommendation:**

**41. We recommend that BIS work together with the Office of Government Commerce, GEO and other key stakeholders to develop a package of best practice and case studies around procurement which can then be disseminated on a local level via the RDA network. Case studies should be made available from both the supplier's and the procurer's perspective on addressing equality issues, including gender, through procurement.**

<sup>19</sup> Office of Government Commerce (2008) *Make Equality Count*.

## The role of local bodies: Regional Development Agencies and Local Authorities

### 2006 recommendation:

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:

- public, private or voluntary sector services which provide confidence building through peer support, experience of work or work shadowing, or training;
- services which address the particular needs of women from local black and minority ethnic communities, homeworkers or other groups, for example disabled women.

**Progress:** This recommendation was aimed at RDAs and national development agencies. In 2006 we highlighted how crucial it was

for action to be taken on a local level and the fact that the RDAs needed to take action. Unfortunately, we have not seen any progress in this area.

During our review we again heard from Women Like Us. The approach they take, linking up with local schools to make contact with mothers, means that they have been able to reach around 40,000 women. Following our initial recommendation that the Women Like Us model be rolled out nationally, they have been able to extend their services across London. We were encouraged by the fact that, despite the current economic climate, they have had an increase in employer enquiries and registrations. It is clear that there remains a huge demand not only from women looking to get back into the jobs market but also for employers who actively want to employ local women with the right skill set, on a flexible basis. This approach can be of particular benefit to SMEs, as it can cut down on large-scale recruitment costs.

We do know that RDAs are already doing a great deal of good work on equality and diversity issues. In particular, we were impressed with the work being done by the London Development Agency (LDA) as lead RDA on equality and diversity. We were, however, disappointed to learn that mechanisms are lacking to ensure that other RDAs have incentives to follow the LDA's lead in this area.

We also feel that, in general, the RDAs remain an under-used resource and have a key role to play not only in working with employers to create more opportunities for women locally, but also in creating a better childcare infrastructure (particularly when sustainability of places is challenging) and creating more opportunities for women to set up their own businesses, for example by creating networks built around sectors or trades where there are strategic opportunities for women to establish their own enterprises. We must see delivery on this issue this time round.

Similarly, we consider there to be scope for the Local Government Association (LGA) to take a lead role in giving direction and encouraging and disseminating best practice to Local Authorities on how best to promote equality in the labour market. This applies to the work which they do with local employers and other partners. Local Authorities have a considerable influence on what happens within an area and they should have a focus on economic issues when delivering national priorities at a local level.

**2009 recommendation:**

**42. We recommend that, as the Government department with oversight of the RDA network, BIS uses the levers available to them, such as the tasking framework, to ensure that there is greater consistency between how each RDA tackles gender equality in the labour market, in particular on the promotion of part-time work.**

**2009 recommendation:**

**43. BIS should work with the RDAs, the LGA, GEO and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to develop a model by which RDAs and Local Authorities act as a link for local services, jobs and training opportunities between the employer and those women looking for work. Best practice in this area should also be disseminated across the RDA and Local Authority network.**

## Summary: Table of 2009 recommendations

What	Who	When
<b>Education and culture</b>		
1. We expect DCSF to produce a national strategy for tackling gender inequality in the education system (with a particular focus on children aged 14 and under) by March 2010. This should set out targets and goals for tackling stereotypes in careers advice and guidance; increasing take-up of vocational skills; training; improving employment outcomes for girls; and proposals for opening up more work experience placements for girls in non-traditional sectors.	DCSF	By March 2010
2. DCSF must ensure that the quality standards are inspected and sanctions issued for those consortia that do not meet standard five for equality and diversity. This specifically states that 'information, advice and guidance services [should] promote equality of opportunity, celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes'.	DCSF	Gender stereotyping to be included in overall Ofsted inspection judgement by the end of the next financial year (2011); DCSF to then monitor this on an annual basis and release findings
3. We would like to see clarification of what students can expect in terms of entitlements to study for vocational qualifications being part of the proposed national strategy for tackling gender inequality in the education system, as referred to in Recommendation 1.	DCSF	See Recommendation 1
4. We are pleased that the Government has accepted the recommendation of the Low Pay Commission for a minimum wage for apprentices. The Government must implement this as quickly and effectively as possible.	BIS	By the end of this financial year (2009/10), BIS must set out clearly when it will be implemented

What	Who	When
<p>5. As the National Apprenticeship Service has responsibility for the national delivery of targets and co-ordination of the funding for apprenticeship places, we would recommend that as part of their remit they be set a target to ensure that all pupils have access to advice on apprenticeships which challenges gender stereotypes. The Service must also provide more tailored advice to those choosing non-traditional apprenticeships around how they go about breaking into the jobs market once their apprenticeship is over.</p>	<p>BIS and DCSF</p>	<p>Target should be set out by the end of the next financial year (March 2011)</p>
<p>6. DCSF to work with the Institute for Education Business Excellence (IEBE) and the EBPOs to establish a 'buddying' programme of work experience placements for girls in non-traditional areas, where girls can 'pair up' and undertake work experience together. DCSF must also roll this 'buddying' programme out for Young Apprenticeships and Diplomas. As part of this programme girls and young women should also have access to 'mentors' so that they can talk directly to women who have, or continue to be, successful in that line of work.</p>	<p>DCSF to lead</p>	<p>By the end of the next financial year (March 2011)</p>
<p>7. As part of the national strategy for tackling gender inequality in the education system, DCSF should set out how it will ensure that, in working with businesses, all primary schools have clear targets for engaging with both traditionally male and female sectors, and that they are proactive in ensuring that gender stereotypes are challenged in this process.</p>	<p>DCSF</p>	<p>See Recommendation 1</p>
<p>8. DCSF should commit to ensuring that all pupils have an opportunity to undertake two work experience placements – one in a non-traditional role.</p>	<p>DCSF</p>	<p>By March 2011</p>
<p>9. BIS and the National Apprenticeship Service must ensure that the pilots to address under-representation in apprenticeships and other initiatives to tackle gender segregation and stereotyping (which confine women to low-paid apprenticeships) are implemented effectively.</p>	<p>BIS</p>	<p>Progress must be made by March 2011</p>

What	Who	When
10. DCSF should establish a formal programme of 'taster days'/work experience for non-traditional routes for Young apprenticeships and Diplomas.	DCSF	By March 2011
11. We expect DCSF and BIS to make better use of the existing good practice in tackling occupational segregation in apprenticeship schemes by producing and widely disseminating a 'good practice guide'. They must also ensure that all promotional literature makes reference to the benefits of non-traditional apprenticeships.	DCSF and BIS	Good practice guidance to be produced and disseminated by March 2011
12. DCSF should establish a programme of best practice for delivering careers advice in a non-gender stereotypical way. This should be promoted with the aim of bringing practice on the part of all education providers and providers of careers advice up to the standard of the best.	DCSF	Programme to be finalised by the end of the next financial year (March 2011)
13. DCSF and BIS should ensure that every school and further education setting has a qualified careers adviser, and these advisers should undertake Continued Professional Development (CPD) that is specifically focused on challenging gender and socio-economic stereotyping.	DCSF and BIS	This is a long-term aim but we expect DCSF and BIS to be able to demonstrate that progress has been made on this by March 2011
14. We want to restate our original recommendation, which is that DCSF must prepare and disseminate 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 stereotypes of what girls and boys can do. This document should also include a series of best practice examples, which should be accessible via the Centre for Excellence's website. As part of this, the Department should also set out clear advice on how this national guidance is to be used, how they will monitor its take-up and what action they will take if the guidance is not adhered to.	DCSF	Guidance to be finalised by March 2010

What	Who	When
<p>15. DCSF should set out a detailed commitment (for example in the next update of its gender equality scheme) to ensuring that all IAG proactively challenges gender stereotypes and that girls and boys are given advice on the full range of career options and understand the career progression and opportunities available for each occupation, including pay levels. More can be done to ensure that the Equality Duty promotes diversity and equality in education.</p>	DCSF	See Recommendation 38
<b>Access to continued learning and development</b>		
<p>16. By March 2010 DCSF and BIS must set out clear roles and accountabilities for gender equality objectives for the new Skills Funding Agency, and they and Local Authorities must do the same for the Young People's Learning Agency. We expect both bodies to report on progress by March 2012.</p>	DCSF and BIS	By March 2010 for objectives setting, and by March 2012 for a report on progress
<p>17. Both DCSF and BIS need to set out clearly how they will ensure that those on the margins and outside the labour market, i.e. those who are least likely to 'demand' support, are targeted. They should set out the specific mechanisms and actions they will take to meet the needs of these people. This must be included in both departments' gender equality schemes.</p>	DCSF and BIS	See Recommendation 38
<p>18. BIS must encourage the use of the Women and Work Sector Pathways Initiative for re-training, and should monitor and publish the proportion of women benefiting from this for the first and second time and any subsequent uses.</p>	BIS	By March 2010

What	Who	When
<p>19. We recommend that BIS develops a more co-ordinated, standard approach to gender segregation that all Sector Skills Councils will have to adhere to, regardless of whether it is a 'major' issue or not. This should form part of every Sector Skills Agreement, with each Sector Skills Council setting out specific actions to tackle segregation. BIS also needs to establish a robust process for measuring and monitoring the extent to which Sector Skills Councils are considering gender segregation issues, and the impact of actions they take.</p>	<p>BIS</p>	<p>By March 2011</p>
<p>20. We would expect BIS to develop a good practice guide that pulls together all the action points from those Sector Skills Councils that have been exemplary in this area.</p>	<p>BIS</p>	<p>By March 2010</p>
<p>21. BIS must be more proactive in monitoring and evaluating the Train to Gain programme, including the successes and failures. It must also provide formal reporting mechanisms that enable lessons to be learnt and must disseminate these across the Level 3 pilot schemes.</p>	<p>BIS</p>	<p>See Recommendation 38</p>
<p>22. BIS must undertake work to establish further whether women have sufficient access to part-time apprenticeships, and whether more needs to be done to promote the development of these opportunities. We would like to see data being collected on the number of people choosing to take part-time apprenticeships and the number of courses available, particularly those which are available outside of core hours.</p>	<p>BIS</p>	<p>By March 2010</p>
<p>23. As part of its gender equality scheme, BIS must ensure that there are effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms in place to be able to identify whether Adult Apprenticeships – and indeed the pilots to address under-representation in apprenticeships – are supporting women, particularly those who have spent time out of the labour market.</p>	<p>BIS</p>	<p>See Recommendation 38</p>

What	Who	When
<p>24. We expect BIS to work with Ofsted to publish the report on colleges that provide flexible courses. Following this, BIS needs to take action where this research shows that there are gaps in provision of training courses that are offered on a part-time/flexible basis. We believe that this is something which should be integral to the gender priorities within the BIS single equality scheme.</p>	BIS	Report to be published (with action points for further work) by March 2010
<b>Balancing work and family life</b>		
<p>25. GEO must take the lead on developing a work programme, working collaboratively with BIS, to promote quality flexible and part-time working, by March 2010.</p>	GEO to lead	By March 2010
<p>26. GEO must carry out a more thorough review of the individual projects of the Quality Part-Time Work Fund to identify which approaches were successful and the lessons learnt. As part of the wider work programme referred to in Recommendation 25, the Government must set out what action it will take as a result of these lessons and we expect considerable resources to be committed to this. The lack of quality part-time work should be a key focus for Government action in future, given its importance to women, their families and the economy.</p>	GEO	Review to be carried out in this financial year (2009/10)
<p>27. GEO to work with key stakeholders including the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and ACAS to develop a training package for middle managers on flexible working issues, specifically tailored for small businesses. Government departments should lead by example by ensuring that all middle managers receive this training.</p>	GEO	Training package to be finalised in this financial year (2009/10), and processes put in place to ensure that all middle managers across Government undertake this course by March 2011

What	Who	When
<p>28. The Child Poverty Unit (and all partners on the London Child Poverty Delivery Group) must ensure that the focus of their work is not just on getting women into low or entry-level, part-time positions. They must also focus on the quality of these part-time jobs to ensure that this does not exacerbate the gender pay gap.</p>	<p>CPU (responsibility of DCSF/DWP/ HM Treasury)</p>	<p>Immediately</p>
<p>29. GEO should work with key stakeholders to promote the benefits of job sharing, particularly at a senior level, within both the public sector and the private sector.</p>	<p>GEO</p>	<p>Significant action (i.e. project proposals) should be taken by March 2010</p>
<p>30. This report makes no specific recommendations towards the actual right to request. However, we would like to see further efforts being made by BIS to ensure successful implementation of this right. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● establishing whether women are using the right effectively in the current financial downturn;</li> <li>● establishing whether women who work flexibly are being discriminated against;</li> <li>● establishing whether the right to work flexibly is being promoted enough to men and that they are not discriminated against; and</li> <li>● actively doing more to ensure that flexible working is being promoted as being good for business.</li> </ul>	<p>BIS</p>	<p>Findings to be disseminated and action points on gaps must be agreed by March 2010</p>
<p>31. We would recommend that GEO gathers together in one document the good practice from those professional bodies that provide pro-rata treatment. The Minister for Women must then write to those bodies that have not made available best practice on pro-rata treatment, enclosing a copy of this report and encouraging them to learn lessons from the good practice already taking place.</p>	<p>GEO</p>	<p>By summer 2009</p>

What	Who	When
32. DCSF must set out how it can better support parents with children under three who are being looked after by the PVI sector to afford quality childcare in their area. This must be considered as part of their obligations under the Gender Equality Duty.	DCSF	Full consideration and a commitment to action to be made by March 2011
33. DCSF must ensure that there are suitable mechanisms put in place for monitoring the effectiveness of such initiatives as the free childcare line and also the duty which has been placed on Local Authorities.	DCSF	See Recommendation 38
34. Although we are aware that pay and conditions are matters for individual employers, DCSF must consider further what more can be done to increase the wages of childcare workers, many of whom receive low/ minimum wage, while ensuring that childcare costs remain affordable. In particular, DCSF must consider what work needs to be done to drive forward the 'professionalisation' of the childcare sector given the fact that the majority of its employees are female and the sector is still struggling to attract men.	DCSF	Full consideration and a commitment to action to be made by March 2011
35. We recommend that BIS should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● do more, via a publicity campaign, to promote the benefits of enterprise to women, particularly the work-life balance element;</li> <li>● set out what processes they will be putting in place to continue the good work started by the Women's Enterprise Task Force; and</li> <li>● put in place measures to assist women to go from having the 'idea' of setting up a business to putting it into practice, i.e. pre-start up advice.</li> </ul>	BIS	By March 2010

What	Who	When
36. GEO to follow up the Exemplar Employer initiative by establishing an 'exemplar twinning' programme where each 'exemplar' agrees to work with a company that is not part of the exemplar initiative to provide guidance and support them in developing good practice of their own in one of the following areas: equal pay, flexible working, occupational segregation, training and development, or women returners. Once this initiative is up and running, GEO should ensure that key milestones are set and that there are formal reporting mechanisms for when the initiative ends.	GEO	Programme to be up and running by the next financial year (2010/11)
37. GEO must effectively promote the Gender Equality Check Tool following its launch this summer.	GEO	By summer 2009
<b>The public sector</b>		
38. All Government departments, Inspectorates, Local Authorities and RDAs should set out how they intend to monitor the impact of their policies on women, involve women and their representative groups directly, and report on the results on an annual basis. This must be included in a review of their gender equality scheme to ensure that gender equality issues are mainstreamed throughout.	All Government departments, Inspectorates, Local Authorities and RDAs	By March 2010
39. We expect the EHRC to do more to meet their regulatory requirements in promoting the Gender Equality Duty and support Government and Local Authorities to develop best practice as part of their gender equality scheme. The EHRC must take immediate action on this.	EHRC	Progress to be made by March 2010
40. GEO must make it a priority to ensure that all Government departments fully engage and take action to meet the targets in PSA 15.	GEO	By March 2010

What	Who	When
<p>41. We recommend that BIS work together with the Office of Government Commerce, GEO and other key stakeholders to develop a package of best practice and case studies around procurement which can then be disseminated on a local level via the RDA network. Case studies should be made available from both the supplier's and the procurer's perspective on addressing equality issues, including gender, through procurement.</p>	<p>BIS</p>	<p>Best practice/case studies to be finalised by March 2010 for dissemination from April 2010</p>
<p>42. We recommend that, as the Government department with oversight of the RDA network, BIS uses the levers available to them, such as the tasking framework, to ensure that there is greater consistency between how each RDA tackles gender equality in the labour market, in particular on the promotion of part-time work.</p>	<p>BIS</p>	<p>By March 2011</p>
<p>43. BIS should work with the RDAs, the LGA, GEO and DWP to develop a model by which RDAs and Local Authorities act as a link for local services, jobs and training opportunities between the employer and those women looking for work. Best practice in this area should also be disseminated across the RDA and Local Authority network.</p>	<p>BIS to lead</p>	<p>By March 2011</p>

## Women and Work Commissioners

Name	Role	Organisation
Baroness Margaret Prosser OBE	Deputy Chair	Equality and Human Rights Commission
Chris Banks CBE	Chair	Learning and Skills Council
Sarah Anderson CBE	Chief Executive	Mayday Group
Kay Carberry CBE	Assistant General Secretary	Trades Union Congress
Naaz Coker	Chair	St George's Healthcare NHS Trust
Debbie Coulter OBE	Former Deputy General Secretary	GMB Trade Union
John Cridland CBE	Deputy Director General	Confederation of British Industry
John Hannett	General Secretary	Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers
Sally Hopson MBE	Customer and People Director	Pets at Home
Stella Manzie CBE	Director General, Finance and Corporate Services	Scottish Government
Andrea Murray	Acting Group Director, Strategy	Equality and Human Rights Commission
Jan Parkinson	Managing Director	Local Government Employers
Dame Dr Ruth Silver CBE	Principal	Lewisham College
Liz Snape MBE	Director of Policy and Public Affairs	Unison

