



## **UK Government Equalities Office / SWC Partnership Event**

### **The Gender Pay Gap**

**Thursday 8th January 2015**

**Menzies Hotel, Glasgow**

The SWC was asked to organise this event on behalf of the UK Government Equalities Office (GEO).

The GEO is responsible for equality strategy and legislation across Government. These discussions are one of a series being undertaken by the GEO throughout the UK. They will inform the GEO report for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), taking place in New York in March 2015.

CSW is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the advancement of women. The priority theme for 2015 is Beijing +20. The SWC has produced a report for CSW on the position of women in Scotland. It can be found on our website.

**[www.scottishwomensconvention.org](http://www.scottishwomensconvention.org)**

## Introduction

The UK Government Equalities Office (GEO), in partnership with the SWC, held this consultation event with women in Scotland. These discussions were undertaken in preparation for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March 2015. The theme for CSW is Beijing +20 - a review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The event was held on Thursday 8th January at the Menzies Hotel, Glasgow. Women attending were addressed by a variety of speakers who gave presentations on the gender pay gap. This was followed by a question and answer session.

On average women working full-time in Scotland earn £108.30 per week less than men. There are a number of factors which affect this gap in take home pay the GEO wanted to discuss them with Scottish Women.



## Evelyn Fraser

Evelyn is the Development Manager of the Scottish Women's Convention – an organisation funded to consult with women throughout Scotland to ensure that their views are considered by key decision makers.

Evelyn has previously worked as a paralegal, supporting women clients with equal pay claims against employers; a careers advisor, assisting long term unemployed women to enter employment; helpline advisor, assisting individuals with discrimination queries in the workplace; development manager, highlighting the gender pay gap in Scotland.

“The SWC is pleased to be facilitating this event on behalf of the UK Government's Equalities Office (GEO). This is one of a series of events being held throughout the UK and is the only one being held in Scotland. The discussions today will focus on the gender pay gap in Scotland. Feedback will be included in the GEO report for the priority theme of the Commission on the Status of Women, Beijing +20, which will be held in New York in March.

The pay gap is the difference in pay between men and women's wages. In Scotland, the gender pay gap between men and women working full time was 9% in 2014. The pay gap for all employees (i.e. those in full and part time employment) was 17.5%. In some sectors, like finance, the gap can be as large as 40%.

The SWC talks to women about key issues and priorities. Although the gender pay gap, per se, may not always be discussed, key issues which impact on the pay gap are. When women are looking for work, or looking to progress in the workplace, there are other considerations which they take into account as well as their pay.

Childcare is a key priority for women. There is often a lack of local, accessible, affordable childcare which suits the needs of working women. Childcare is often only available between 7.30am and 6pm. While this suits women who work 9am-5pm, many employers require shift work, unsociable hours etc. This means that women have to rely on informal care, most often provided by family and friends. These issues are discussed by most women attending SWC events and are particularly severe in rural areas of Scotland.

Occupational segregation continues to perpetuate the gender pay gap. Women still tend to be clustered in low paid, low skilled jobs, such as cleaning, catering, caring etc. Women feel undervalued but are unable to move on from these jobs due to a lack of training opportunities, childcare support and employer flexibility. Women have also expressed concern at the lack of opportunities for young women in schools to undertake science and IT qualifications.

Underemployment has a massive impact on women. Many undertake part-time work to accommodate family and caring responsibilities, as well as being forced to because of poor public transport links. Low wages paid in part-time roles mean it is common for women to undertake two or three part-time jobs in order to make ends meet. Temporary, seasonal and part-time jobs are often the only work available in rural Scotland, where women are massively underemployed. As well as a lack of childcare services, public transport in these areas is *“expensive and unreliable”*.

I hope this has given you a flavour of some of the issues raised by women at SWC events in relation to the gender pay gap.”



## Helene Reardon-Bond

Helene, a senior civil servant, has been working for HM Government for three decades and has been Head of Policy at the Government Equalities Office since 2009. During this time she has worked closely with Cabinet Ministers and No10, worked in eight departments and led on a number of high profile programs and campaigns, including same sex marriage, violence against women and girls, maternity rights, encouraging diversity in public life and a government enquiry into rape and sexual assault.

She currently leads for the UK on gender equality policy and oversees a range of business facing initiatives designed to help women succeed in the workplace, including women on boards, flexible working, raising girl's aspirations and the Women's Business Council. She is also responsible for the delivery of the Government's women's engagement programme; body confidence campaign and the UK's EU and international commitments on gender and equality including The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Outside of the Civil Service, she is school governor, was vice chair of a community regeneration project, and most importantly she is Jack and Hannah's mum. Helene was awarded an OBE in 2008 for her work in the public and voluntary sector.

"I am delighted to be here today in Glasgow once again. I know that our Minister Jo Swinson, MP for East Dunbartonshire, is really disappointed not to be here today. Unfortunately Parliamentary business has kept her away, however she has provided a personal message for all delegates.

This event is part of a number of roadshows our ministers are holding to listen to women across the UK to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This one is specifically focusing on the gender pay gap (GPG), and we want to hear from you. We want to know your views on progress, challenges and priorities for future action. Let us remind ourselves that 20 years ago national statistics weren't even produced on the gender pay gap. I will be focusing on the national approach to reducing the pay gap and my colleague from the Scottish Government Lesley Irving, who I work closely with, will be able to explain all the work happening in her department to address this in Scotland.

Despite the financial problems after 2008 there are now more women in work in Britain than ever before; more of them working full-time; and the gender pay gap has fallen to its lowest ever level. So we have definitely been making progress, however the pay gap remains too high and is a very significant amount over a lifetime.

The gender pay gap measures the gap between men and women's average salaries and is a vital indicator of equality in the workplace and how we are using the talents and skills of all women. On average, women in Scotland earn 17.5% less than men. That is better than the overall UK figure of 19.1%, but it is still a stark gap.

The UK Government believes that maximising women's economic potential is vital to the UK's future. This means removing the barriers that get in the way of women progressing.

The Women's Business Council, which Government set up in 2012, found that by equalising the labour force participation rates of men and women, the UK could further increase GDP per capita growth by 0.5 percentage points per year, with potential gains of 10% of GDP by 2030. It said that there are 2.4 million women who are not working and want to work, with a further 1.3 million women who want to work more hours.

We all know that better gender balance brings wider benefits not only to women themselves but to organisations, to the economy and to society at large. Our work in the UK has focused on building a strong evidence base around the economic arguments whilst promoting fairness and equality. We want to create a real cultural change through a voluntary approach, not one just based on coercion. A change that allows women, and men, to use their full potential.

Our strategy for increasing women's economic participation is based on a partnership with business and employers around 3 main priorities;

- Getting women to the top through the work of the Lord Davies Review;
- Creating much greater transparency through gender equality reporting in the workplace; the Think, Act, Report scheme; and
- Championing women in the workplace by delivering on the Women's Business Council recommendations.

### **Women on Boards**

Our ministers established the Lord Davies Review and we produced his first report in 2011 which investigated the persistent problem of low numbers of women serving on corporate boards. He recommended a voluntary business led strategy to increase the number of women on the boards of the top 100 listed companies by 25% by 2015. This target now extends to the FTSE 250 companies.

There is strong evidence that the voluntary approach is working. In 2004 9% of FTSE 100 boards were female and this only increased to 12.5% in 2011. So not much progress but since the Review we have moved from to nearly 23% female representation. While some women might not want to serve on a board, this is a real litmus test which demonstrates what is going on in companies to women.

Lord Davies made 10 recommendations (interestingly none of these were for women themselves and were all about the culture and processes!). One of these was to encourage senior business leaders to recognise the talent of women working outside the corporate mainstream, whose talents, skills and experiences are largely untapped and who would have the skills and experience to serve on corporate board.

We have found that there is an ocean of female talent and leadership across all sectors of our society: including the higher education sector, charities sector, across the public sector and we see a wealth of female talent thriving across our civil service. There is no longer any excuse for boards or executive search firms to say there are not enough board ready women out there. They just need to cast their nets wide enough to find this talent.

We also work closely with organisations committed to creating change and building that important pipeline to the board. Companies like the 30% Club who is helping to change the mindset of big business. One key factor that has worked for us is the media - yes I know that sounds funny but its true. They have been with us at every step of the way, tracking progress and celebrating success.

### **Think, Act, Report / Transparency**

Setting targets and increasing transparency are the best ways that we can measure progress and make the necessary changes. Our *Think, Act, Report* initiative (TAR) is helping companies create a fairer workplace for women by driving greater transparency about pay and the numbers of women in senior positions. TAR encourages and supports business to think about gender equality in their organisation, act where required and report data and share best practice with other organisations. We are already seeing a culture change as a result. We have over 270 companies now signed up covering 2.5 million workers.

TAR helps drive action to close the gender pay gap by encouraging firms to actively look at how their female employees are fairing in terms of recruitment, retention, progression and pay; to take action to address any issues and to report on their progress.

### **Women's Business Council**

We are also driving real change through the work of the Women's Business Council (WBC). Their first report was published in June 2013 with a number of recommendations for government and business. These senior business leaders from national and international companies work with Government and employee organisations to support women by:

- supporting the career choices of girls and young women working in partnership with schools;
- helping women climb the career ladder and supporting working parents;
- utilising the skills of women in the third phase of their working life; and
- supporting women to set up their own businesses.

## Government Action

Our work with the private sector is underpinned by new government policies also such as:

- extending the right to request flexible working to everyone;
- introducing shared parental leave to allow families to share their caring responsibilities; and
- tax-free childcare worth up to £2,000 per child which should benefit 2 million families.

In terms of the gender pay gap we have:

- banned secrecy clauses in employment contracts;
- for companies that break the law on gender pay most will be required to undertake an equal pay audit.

We are also going further. In November we announced a further package of measures to help both employers and employees to address the pay gap further. For employers, we will be providing new software to enable them to model the distribution of men and women across their workforces, and to identify and analyse the causes of any pay differences. This will be available in April 2015. And for companies signed-up to TAR we will be providing even more help, with some specialist consultancy support on this issue.

For employees, we worked with 'Everywomen' to publish a short booklet about the pay gap, to help employees find out how their pay compares to that of their peers, as well as the market rate for their role. We will shortly be tendering for more specialist help for employees on this. With our help, Everywoman have published an excellent workbook called '*Negotiating your salary*', to help women specifically with this difficult discussion.

Progress is being made. In the UK there are more women in work than ever before. Our employment rate is currently 68.1%, up over 700, 000 since 2010. There are more women graduates than ever before, including in STEM subjects. We have eliminated the gender pay gap for full time employees under 40 and it continues to narrow for the over 40s. It is now 19.1% for full and part time employees (the lowest since records began). More women are self employed - 1.44 million since 2010. There are also more women on FTSE boards than ever before.

It has been 20 years since Governments pledged to work with financial institutions, trade unions, business, academics and most importantly with civil society to improve the lives of women and girls everywhere, under the terms of the Beijing Platform for Action.

The UK Government strongly believe that supporting women to fulfil their potential is a core business issue. It is important to our economic sustainability and makes a society a fairer place for all. And we want to hear your views which will be used to help shape future policies.

## Lesley Irving

Lesley joined Edinburgh Women's Aid in 1978 as a refuge worker, moving to East Lothian Women's Aid in 1982. In 1992, she moved to Scottish Women's Aid as the Publicity & Education Worker, with responsibility for raising awareness nationally about domestic abuse. Lesley was a founder member of the Scottish Partnership on Domestic Abuse which produced Scotland's first domestic abuse strategy.

From March 2000 - January 2003, Lesley was on secondment to the Crime Prevention Unit of the Scottish Executive, working to progress their work on domestic abuse and violence against women. In January 2003, she took up a permanent post in the Executive as Team Leader in the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Integration Team, and in March 2004, she became Team Leader for the Race, Religion and Refugee Integration Team. In 2009, Lesley became Team Leader for the Gender & LGBT Equality & Violence Against Women Team, taking on responsibility for the RR&RI Team in 2011 and becoming Head of Equality Policy in March 2013.

"I'm here to talk a bit about what the Scottish Government is doing in relation to the gender pay gap. I will also talk about how the Scottish Government, as an employer, is performing. It's important that we act as an exemplar and that we don't just tell other people how they should be acting. We have to lead by example ourselves.

We are tremendously lucky that we have just had Scotland's first female First Minister taking up her position. She has appointed a Cabinet which is 50% women, putting us well ahead of most other places in terms of representation, which is very good news. The First Minister has also made equality, in particular gender equality, front and centre of her programme for work.

There is a pledge contained in the Programme for Government about achieving 50/50 representation of women on boards by 2020. We are hoping to encourage organisations in the private, public and third sector to take up that pledge with us. It is clear that some significant progress has already been made, but not quite enough.

The gender pay gap is slightly better in Scotland than it is in the rest of the UK. That's not something I would attempt to take credit for or be partisan about, because there is still a pay gap in Scotland. So while it's less than the rest of the UK, it's not anything to be proud of. We've not solved the problem and it's not something we've got right in Scotland. I am looking forward to hearing ideas and practical solutions as to how we eradicate the gender pay gap and consign it to history.

We do have slightly better figures in relation to the pay gap and female employment, and female unemployment rates are also slightly lower. Female employment has increased by 56% over the year, which is the highest level since comparative records began in 1992, which is encouraging. The Scottish Government is also taking action in terms of removing barriers and making it easier for women to work.

There's a big increase underway and a bigger one coming in relation to the provision of childcare, which is a big concern for women. We should be careful talking about it solely in relation to women's employment, because both parents have childcare responsibilities, so the move towards potentially sharing leave to look after children is a good step forward. A pledge has also been made by the First Minister that if the SNP form the next administration after the 2016 election, then there will be a further increase to 30 hours per week of childcare which would be a major step forward.

We're also taking account of the importance of gender in budgeting processes. We are the only government in the UK to prepare an equality statement to the budget and have done that now for six years. I wouldn't claim that it's a perfect document or that we've got it 100% right, but we're trying and we're learning as we go. Many organisations helpfully critique what we do which is enormously helpful for learning.

In terms of the wages that people are paid for the work they do, this is also in recognition of the difficulties women face in relation to occupational segregation and they are coalescing in lower paid areas of the economy, we're working hard to embed the living wage into public contracting. Our Public Procurement Bill provides for Scottish Ministers to develop, and they are doing so, statutory guidance for public bodies on how workforce related matters such as pay and recruitment can be considered as part of the tendering process.

The Act also requires public bodies to produce a procurement strategy which should include a policy statement on the living wage to those responsible for the performance of public contracts. I was pondering on the way through here about the Equal Pay Act and how long we've had that and equal pay still hasn't been achieved. I started to work in the year that it came into being and I recall my first wage was three pounds seventeen and sixpence. It's quite something to think the living wage is now more than twice per hour than what I earned for a full week's work. That's some measure of how far we've come in my lifetime in terms of these issues.

We're doubling funding for living wage accreditation to try and encourage more employers to pay the living wage. Scottish Government and public sector pay policy requires the payment of the living wage at £7.85 an hour. We are also about to establish a Fair Work Convention, under the guidance of the new Cabinet Secretary for Fair Work, who will oversee the establishment of this convention. It will develop, promote and sustain a fair employment framework for Scotland, and issues such as those we are discussing today will very much be a part of that.

Also importantly in Scotland we have been tackling occupational segregation for some time. We have been working in partnership with the STUC since the Summit on Women's Employment in 2012, which led to the establishment of a working group on women and work which continues. The Occupational Segregation Working Group, which is made up of internal and external partners, was reinvigorated as part of that process and continues to meet.

We have provided £3.9m funding since 2007 to gender equality projects including funding work such as Close the Gap and Equate Scotland, all of which are doing very good work. We are also at the point of discussing with the UK Government what the Smith Commission's references are for the provision of quotas on public bodies and how that will come into being. The Smith Commission also noted that while equality legislation will remain reserved, there is talk of powers that will include, but not be limited to, the ability to set quotas. There is discussion at the moment about what that might include and Smith Commission will publish their 'draft clauses' on Burns day.

We have a programme of work looking at public bodies and corporate diversity which has three strands to it. One is 'changing the landscape', making it more possible and achievable for women to play a bigger part in public life across the board. The second is looking at public appointments and helping to drive forward the gender balance there – we are doing not too bad at that, but it's an average figure. The third strand is looking at diversity in the civil service. We are doing ok for women's representation until we get to senior civil service level; then we have a bit of ground to make up. However our strategic board, the main body which governs us, is 57% women, the most it's ever been. Our executive team is also 47% women.

In terms of the Government as an employer, we are doing not too badly in terms of the pay gap. Recent research shows that within each pay range there's either no or a very minimal gap in the average salaries between men and women. However, because we have disproportionately more men at senior level and senior people earn more, overall in the service there is a 5% gap. Discussions are taking place with trade unions with a view to examining equality within the pay system on a rolling basis.

I also wanted to refer to the issue of historic equal pay claims, an issue of great interest and one which is regularly raised in Scotland by employment lawyers. I wanted to read something that Marco Biagi recently said in answer to an oral parliamentary question. Mr Biagi is our new Minister for Local Government and Community Empowerment and he was asked about a particular council dragging its feet on settling equal pay claims. He said:

*"I am appalled at the level of reluctance and foot dragging that has been demonstrated which I have observed through the country. It's unfair to women and fighting tooth and nail to avoid paying out stands against all values of fairness."*

This shows that our Ministers take the issue very seriously and are looking for these cases to be resolved as early as possible.

## Angela O'Hagan

Angela is a Research Fellow in the Institute for Society and Social Justice Research at Glasgow Caledonian University where she is also an associate with the Women in Scotland's Economy Research Centre. Angela is Convenor of the Scottish Women's Budget Group and on the Management Committee of the UK Women's Budget Group. From 2007-2013 Angela was a member of the Equality and Human Rights Commission Scotland Committee, and is a member of the Scottish Government's Equality and Budgets Advisory Group. She has been a regular witness to the Scottish Parliament on budget process and other gender equality issues.

"I want to start with a warning, but not an apology – I am going to be critical in some of my comments. I'm very pleased to be here today. I'm sorry the Minister's not here but I think it's really important that the UK Government is listening. They have to listen to women in Scotland and across the UK.

I want to talk about the gender pay gap in the context of women's economic empowerment. I want to talk about that in the context of the compounding effect of pay inequality with all the other pressures on women's income's and women's financial security and financial autonomy.

Arguably, UK Coalition Government policies are not working for women. They are damaging women. The changes in tax and benefit systems and transfers are causing serious harm to women's incomes - lowering incomes and increasing hardship for individuals, households and children. While the outline of policies from the UK Government are positive and very much needed, we have to see them in the wider context of other policies, not least of which are public spending cuts. More of these will come down the line, whatever the hue of UK Government following this year's election.

One of the ways we can characterise the public sector spending cuts is the poor consultation and involvement of women, as well as the absence of gender analysis, in the impact of those financial decisions on women. This often results in the withdrawal of services and jobs where women predominate.

The UK Women's Budget Group Analysis of the UK Government 2014 Budget highlighted the following key areas of concern:

- Tax giveaways for men, paid for by cuts for women.
- Inadequate employment recovery. Women may be in higher numbers in the labour market, but we have to look at the quality and character of those jobs. Many women who are underemployed or in part-time employment, do want to work more hours, the jobs just aren't there.
- Pension flexibility fails to secure women's economic future.
- Childcare support doesn't curb price rises or tackle insufficient provision.
- New housing-related measures do not address the affordable housing crisis.

The combined effect of the withdrawal of public services and re-orientation of tax and benefit regimes is resulting in a return to the 'Male Breadwinner Model'. This has not reflected the economic or social reality of households for several decades now, and is having a significant impact on women's economic autonomy and financial independence.

There are many positive initiatives at both a UK and a Scottish level to highlight and tackle the serious issues that blight the lives of many women. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), violence in all its forms and women on boards are just a few examples. A criticism could be that these are packaged very often as media friendly, fundable programmes which are not central to the Government agenda. They are added on to the margins of policy and spending, and are not stirred into the mainstream of government economic, employment and social policy.

### Focus on pay

We have to see the Office of National Statistics (ONS) data on the gender pay gap in the context of pay more widely. In April 2014 median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees were £518, up 0.1% from £517 in 2013. This is the smallest annual growth since 1997. How much income have households lost in that same period between changes in transfers and taxes and increased living costs?

The UK Government announced another positive measure in November, allocating £2m for training and mentoring to support women improve their position relative to men's. The concern I have with the 'Negotiating Your Salary' booklet is that this approach still makes women both the problem and the solution. Women's unequal pay is a problem for them that they have to raise with their employer. Give that a try when you are on a zero-hours or part-time hours contract. Or when you work for an employer who is on contract to public authorities, whose procurement practices don't extend to ensuring the living wage. Or when you work for an employer whose bonus schemes continue to advantage men and where secrecy clauses, while banned, continue to be daily practices.

In the UK Government report on Beijing +20, and in its new initiative on pay, there is the claim that the pay gap has been eliminated for under 40-year old workers. We need to get underneath those statistics to understand such broad claims. There is a 0.2% difference in favour of women according to the ONS data, but the ONS themselves say that: *"thereafter, there is a relatively large positive gap. This is likely to be connected with the fact that many women have children and take time out of the labour market."*

Sometimes, stating the progress is very helpful but we need to be careful about overstating, because it can have the effect that people will be very critical. Arguably, the inching reduction in the gender pay gap is due to growing awareness of pay inequality, the effect of occupational segregation, government action and investment in initiatives such as Close the Gap, and the potential of instruments such as the Public Sector Equality Duty. The variable quality of implementation of the Duty is a significant problem.

However, tinkering round the edges with voluntary measures, and the absence of either robust sanctions or access to justice for individuals, will likely compound the problems experienced by many women. Powers to instruct employers to conduct equal pay audits are again marginal measures, especially when women's access to the tribunal to challenge breaches of equal pay are cut off due to the introduction of fees for Employment Tribunal (ET) applications. Since the introduction of fees in 2013, there has been a drop of 84% in equal pay applications to the ET.

The UK Government has dismantled the infrastructure to make significant and speedier inroads to the gender pay gap. Most notably through the refusal to support mandatory pay audits; the removal of organisations such as the Women's National Commission (WNC), and the reduction in funding and capacity of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). There is also a lack of political leadership on the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA), with the UK Prime Minister sabotaging the implementation of both by "calling time" on EQIA.

Academic literature confirms that advancing women's equality is more likely to happen when there are robust institutional arrangements in place, effective recourse to justice, a robust and engaged civil society movement challenging and scrutiny of government. Getting the executive of any government to take equality seriously and lock it in as a core political priority is key.

So long as women's equality is seen as 'soft politics' and 'soft policy', further significant advances will not happen. The current reality is one of regression, in legal rights, recognition of women's value and securing women's economic autonomy, and public attitudes to women. These deep-rooted inequalities will not be addressed by measures that can be packaged up for the media and added on to the margins of policy, rather than stirring in the advancement of gender equality as a core political goal.

These are among the actions that have been criticised by the CEDAW Committee, which also recommended that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action be implemented in the UK through CEDAW. So the UN scrutiny process again has highlighted some of the institutional failings of the current UK government, despite the perspective offered in the official report.

### **Action and commitment in next parliament**

- pay audits;
- procurement contracts to include equality clauses;
- commitment to living wage;
- removal of tribunal fees;
- resolve destitution of asylum seeker and refugee women by ensuring "recourse to public funds" is instated;
- halt Universal Credit;
- halt draconian benefit sanctions;
- invest in affordable housing, childcare and social care; and
- value the care economy as a key economic sector.

## Ann Henderson

Ann is an Assistant Secretary at the STUC and her responsibilities include government and parliamentary liaison, and Secretary to the STUC Women's Committee. She is currently a member of the Scottish Government Ministerial Group on Women and Work. Prior to joining the STUC in 2007, Ann worked in the Scottish Parliament as a researcher, and has a background in the railway industry and the women's movement.

For those of you who don't know about the Scottish TUC (STUC), we recognise over 35 trade unions, made up of 650,000 workers and their families. Those unions represent workers in every single different sector and part of Scotland you can think of. I am an Assistant Secretary with the Women's Committee, and also do some of the work with the Scottish Government and Parliament.

In terms of STUC engagement with the Scottish Government, we're pleased with the work we've been doing together arising from the Women's Employment Summit in 2012. We also welcome the establishment of the Fair Work Convention, which was a product of one of the bilateral meetings that the STUC has with the First Minister. They are not specific to the politics of the current Government, as the meetings were established in 2002, however the current Government has been very keen not just to have a talking shop but to actually try and progress and improve conditions in the workplace. We're keeping an eye on what actually changes, as should always be the case, but those discussions have been productive.

The bottom line is that we have not sorted the problem of the pay gap, and women's employment in general. We can all find examples of where things are getting marginally better, and I think things are getting a lot better in some places. At the annual STUC women's conference, you hear women talking really passionately about all kinds of jobs based on their own work experience, be that care work, fire-fighters, learning assistants, working with children with disabilities, working in construction, retail and the health sector, radiographers or physiotherapists. I think that in itself is progress, because women are everywhere. I think it's incorrect to use language that creates the impression we haven't made any movement, because that's not true.

Young people are growing up in a world where they will see and hear women – on the television and radio, in the papers and in politics - talking about every single job there is. The proportions may not be how we would like them to be, but they are there and we need to bear that in mind.

Reference has been made to the living wage, which was discussed at this year's STUC women's conference. That motion referred to the living wage as being absolutely crucial.

I just want to make it clear, if you were working a 38 hour week on the current living wage, your income would be £15,511 per year. That's progress, and it's very good that a lot of companies are looking at the living wage, and that, Local Authorities accept that amount as their minimum, but it's not an awful lot of money. If we get into a situation where a significant number of women are concentrated in sectors where wages are lower, and the promise of the living wage stays at that level, then it won't affect the pay gap at all. We need to have a think about whether jobs are sustainable.

One of the issues that came up at the recent Scottish Business in Parliament conference, via a speaker from the Princes Trust, was that an increasing number of people are paying the living wage, and young people will find that is on offer. However the jobs may be very casual contracts, have no sustainability, maybe only last for six months, which means young people are not actually getting into a stable place in the labour market. This then stops you from participating in a number of other things. We need to have a think about what work do we actually value.

I think we need to look at a lot of the language that we use. Why, for example, do we use the phrase 'time out' when followed up by 'of the labour market'? It's not time out. Nine times out of ten if a woman reduces her hours, either through negotiation or if the decision is forced upon her, she will be pretty busy the rest of the time. Most of us struggle to remember what time out actually means.

Why do we allow ourselves into a situation where part-time work feels as if it's less important than full time work? I remember thinking in the 70's that the three day week had something going for it if it meant you could work and still pay the bills. We've lost all of that discussion and instead we're using the language about it in a different way. Part-time work is defined as less than 30 hours per week, which isn't very part-time at all. When we use the phrase part-time work you might have in your head 12 hours a week when in actual fact it could be someone working 30 hours per week on a very low wage.

It is important that we don't talk women down. Many of us use the phrase 'the 5c's' when talking about low paid, unskilled jobs in catering, cleaning, cashiering, clerical and customer service. If you look at the tragic recent loss of life through C-Diff in hospitals, roles such as cleaning are quite important. We would be the first to raise concerns if our mothers were not well cared for in a care service, where the worker hasn't had adequate training because the budget doesn't allow for hours to go towards training and only allows for a certain amount of time with that patient.

The person who has made the most significant difference in a child's life could be the learning assistant, who made sure that child was able to manage being in a class and be involved with what was happening there. That learning assistant has skills beyond what possibly the teacher or you or I could manage with the child and they're underpaid and not valued.

Do we think the way out of low-paid work for women and tackling the pay gap is to talk about occupational segregation? This usually means getting more women into engineering, and has become a shorthand for the way we speak about measures for getting more women into the jobs that men are doing. Do women speak about occupational segregation? I don't think they use those words if their daughter does want to be a plumber.

Why are we also only talking about changing the jobs of young people? Why are Modern Apprenticeships less available once you're over the age of 24? The focus on youth employment detracts sometimes from the issues facing older women and the value that they can bring to the workplace and to society. Older women often want to stay in work but need a few adjustments. Society is losing a massive collective of experience if we don't value older women.

There's an interesting conversation going on at the moment about a Citizens Income - what that means, and are there ways that a level of state funding should be available to every citizen. That would mean that if for different reasons you've suddenly got to take a break from going into your day job, then there's still funding available that means you can feed yourself and your family. We need to think about doing things differently because things haven't worked and it's time to face up to the fact that we've not sorted it.

Equal pay conversations go back to what we value. I sat in on one of the ongoing equal pay tribunals with North Lanarkshire Council, where an attendant from public toilets in Wishaw was being questioned about her job. In the previous week someone had died through a drug incident in one of the toilets, and the woman was trying to manage the emergency procedures required, as well as carrying out the other functions of her role. On the job evaluation system, hers is described as having no public contact so she was very low on the bandings. The lawyer acting for the Council was describing how bin men, who were on a higher banding, had contact with the public because they were required to ask if they were happy with their bin collections. I don't understand how our society can think that's a reasonable comparison in the value that we attach to jobs. It's tragic to hear of the number of women who die year on year without receiving the wages they should have, because equal pay claims are still outstanding 10-12 years later.

A woman called Cicely Hamilton wrote a book in 1909 about marriage as a trade, where she explains that many women were seen to be marrying because that was their form of living. In disputing that, she says:

*“Society reflects women’s economic subjection and the whole human race pays the price for that state of affairs ... middle class man expects women to be incapable of physical effort, the peasant expects women to be strong enough to do all kinds of domestic and agricultural labour and why she asks disingenuously is women’s work whatever men do not want to do themselves? One wonders why it should be ‘natural’ in women to do so many disagreeable things. Does the average man really believe that she has an instinctive and unquenchable craving for all of the unpleasant and un-remunerative jobs?”*

## Question and Answer Session

*As seen from information freely available on the Internet, the pay gap at professorial level at Russell Group universities is growing and not diminishing, despite continuing efforts of lay members on governing Boards to effect change. The Research Excellence Framework (REF) established by government exacerbates the problem, attracting high-flying research teams by inflated salaries and inflated increments of salary, to the detriment of women academics who are less mobile and whose home-grown talent remains unrecognised. Does the government intend to produce league tables of poorly performing universities to publicise this problem? Would the government, through its Funding Councils, seek to reward substantial reduction in the professorial pay gap, or financially penalise universities who will not change?*

### Helene Reardon-Bond (HRB)

In terms of the gender pay gap at professorial level, the UK Government definitely thinks that transparency is the best way forward. One of the reasons we've been able to really turn the heat up on the women on boards agenda is through a publication called the Female FTSE. This has been published for the last 14 years and outlines the number of women or the lack of women in the FTSE 100.

There is also a really good publication called Women Count which we help to fund, which shows the number of women in all of the universities across the UK. That's an important step in the right direction. We also fund the EHRC, who have just set up a new inquiry into pregnancy discrimination. The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) did a really good report about ten years ago on the levels of discrimination women face as a consequence of being pregnant. The EHRC are opening that up again and looking at it. The gender pay gap might be something they want to do in a similar vein.

### Lesley Irving (LI)

I know that the previous Cabinet Secretary for Education was very interested in gender balance in terms of the governance of universities and colleges and I would imagine that his successor would be equally so.

### Angela O'Hagan

The REF has dominated the minds of many in academia for the last few years. Glasgow Caledonian University recently came up 18 points in the REF. Our social policy had significant impact on that, which included our work on Modern Apprenticeships and gender budgeting. However I'm not very pleased at what's going on by way of practice and I think some of the people who need to be involved with this are the Scottish Funding Council and the Equality Challenge Unit, which is funded by the Scottish Government.

I did a piece of work for them last year on occupational segregation where we deliberately didn't look at academic roles but instead looked at registry, finance and facilities. We found that occupational segregation, sex discrimination and attitudes around thinking about jobs and how they are valued is alive and well, despite the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and the very finessed window dressing of a variety of policies and committees. So long as we have pay negotiations on an individual basis, then this problem will continue and women will continue to bear the brunt of these practices.

### Points from the Floor

*"There wasn't really any mention of minority ethnic (ME) or minority faith (MF) women in any of the presentations, nor particularly women with disabilities. There are real difficulties for these women even accessing the labour market, barriers such as childcare and discrimination which make it harder for women to get into work. To what extent is this being looked into and what policies are being directed that way?"*

*"We are aware of the many various factors, not least age (at both ends of the spectrum), ethnicity and others, such as part-time and zero hour contracts, that can impact on women's pay structures differently from their male counterparts. Supporting and empowering women in achieving change has been very effective through the voluntary sector and innumerable consultations have taken place over the years leading up to where we are now. From your perspective, having listened to us over the years, what key steps do think are required to addressing the current inequality?"*

*"It has been said that women should not be the ones to have to find the solution to women's inequality in pay. Therefore if we're looking for a culture change, we should be engaging men much more pro-actively as is happening in some other countries, e.g. Australia. Can we not make that a much more pro-active strand of Government policy?"*

### HRB

Some women have a 'double whammy' and some have a 'triple whammy' of discrimination. Those women are not represented well in the labour market, and it's so multi-faceted that there's not one simple solution. There's a huge drive in England trying to raise girls aspirations, and the Government have just launched a scheme called 'Your Life', to encourage girls, particularly from different backgrounds, to broaden their horizons. Your Life is also focusing on ensuring that schools, teachers and parents do not stereotype girls or limit their options to, for example, staying at home.

The work of the Women's Business Council (WBC) is very much to encourage employers to take on board the skills of women from different backgrounds and we're really trying to push this. As part of our outreach we held a really positive event in Birmingham recently with Baroness Verma. She came to specifically listen to and work with BME women who are keen to set up in business.

In terms of engaging men more, that is absolutely key. The Lord Davies review, for example, is led by a man challenging other male leaders in terms of gender equality and it's been very successful. We also have a big event coming up in London where we're trying to encourage male leaders to come together. The CEO of Barclays is hosting that event, and a number of other leaders will speak at it. We're trying to get more male leaders to recognise the benefits of, and also be champions of, gender equality. I was talking to one of the speakers the other day who said, 'who wants to be thought of as that man who denied women the vote all those years ago?'. That's how those male leaders need to think about it. With the UN Women push on the 'heforshe' campaign, it's a really good time to be raising this with men.

**L**

In terms of public boards, the focus is on gender but it's about increasing diversity overall. As I keep pointing out, you can do that by having more women, because you will then have ME women, disabled women, LGBT, women of faith. In terms of engaging men, I agree that's absolutely key. Women of course are in the unusual position of being in the majority in society but being discriminated against. It's for everyone to be seeing and speaking out about discrimination against women. In the Scottish Government we're lucky to have both at a political level and an organisational level men who are stalwarts or allies of this work. Our Permanent Secretary is very keen and active in this area, and I think we need to call on all allies that we have.

**Ann Henderson (AH)**

The STUC has representative structures for BME workers, disabled, LGBT and young workers. The Women's Committee is working to ensure there is overlapping dialogue and representation of women in all of those committees. One of the things that came out of the Women's Employment summit was that some women are more disadvantaged than others, so there have to be particular additional measures introduced that are suitable and appropriate to different communities.

In terms of trade union recruitment, slightly more women are joining. The STUC General Council has a majority of female members on it, partly because positive measures were taken in structural terms that mean women have to be voted onto it. The face of trade unionism is different from what many people think, it's quite diverse and that's important. We have a programme of equality reps who make a big difference in the workplace in voicing the concerns of people who maybe don't want to make personal representation.

There is no doubt about the importance of involving men and we have to take the trade union movement to task on that, where things have not worked and voices are not being heard. Often the perception is that it's a white male movement and we have to challenge that. One thing that happens in my office is that when something comes in from, for example, the white ribbon campaign, it comes into my in-tray, when actually it should be in all of the men's trays.

## AO

It's important to be bold. Let's understand gender and gender relations but talk about women and talk about women in all our diversity. We also have to talk about the diverse effects that different policy decisions have on different groups of women. We are not all the same and the binary equalising of 'if we do this for women then we need to do it for men' doesn't work. We have to get to grips with the kind of quotes that Ann was using previously about how we view men and women's roles and talk about equality as being for about our social and economic wellbeing. Don't keep women at the margins. I believe strongly in women only organisations and believe we need a strong feminist voice and feminist analysis, but we also need to be talking to men.

## Points from the Floor

*"With regards to engaging men, while that's important we have to educate them as well. There's an issue of unconscious bias that needs to be explored. I sit on a number of boards and get told by male chairs 'we can't find women with the right skills set', when that's not the case. Has any consideration been made regarding tracking gender representation through Companies House? The only way to do that at the moment is individual research rather than it being centrally available."*

*"What are the governments doing to challenge stereotypes, particularly in the media, to help with girls aspirations? I see page 3 in newspapers and sports pages full of men's sports with very little or no mention of women's sports. This is blatant discrimination and it's no being challenged."*

*"A number of non-executive directors were placed on FTSE 100 Boards to make the figures look better. It would be interesting to actually split those numbers out, to look at the percentage of women who are on the job all the time rather than those who attend a board meeting a few times a year."*

*"One of the challenges for women returning to the labour market is often that they have no income. If you want to attend events etc that will help to get back into work, it can be difficult because sometimes they charge and even finding the funds for the bus fare can be challenging. That's another way we're losing women, who have no choice but to take any job just to get some money."*

*"There are a lot of self employed women in the Highlands, up to twice as many as the Scottish average. A lot of women take up this type of employment because it's the only option available, which means they end up probably working for less than the minimum wage, on a part-time and seasonal basis. A lot of the women, particularly lone parents, struggle to balance childcare, tax credits and work. What can the government do to enable women to work part-time in the way that they need to, and juggle money and childcare provision. They might earn £500 one week and nothing for the next two weeks – how can benefits reflect this?"*

## HRB

With regards to engaging and educating men, we're pressing on an open door in terms of that being part of Government policy. In terms of data, we sponsor Cranfield University to produce the female FTSE and two updates are produced each year which capture the whole of the boards compositions.

The point about challenging stereotypes is important. The UK Government has a fantastic project on body confidence headed up by Jo Swinson. This has been a really successful campaign, and is quite multi-faceted, producing progress reports and working with a range of experts. One of the key areas is challenging the advertising industry, retailers and the media about how women are expected to conform to a stereotypical image. It has enabled a whole range of conversations – for instance the advertising association have worked closely with us, and as a result companies are doing a lot less airbrushing.

Media perceptions and stereotypes are one of the things that young women we've spoken to have said is a big issue for them. We've produced guidance for teachers so if children talk to them about the way they feel they should look, they can then have conversations with boys and girls about not conforming.

Ministers really need evidence and examples so coming out and listening to what's happening is really helpful. Although the WNC has been abolished, Ministers are holding a number of diverse round tables, allowing them to hear first hand examples of what's happening with local issues. There's always a huge gap between legislation, policy and implementation.

A steering group has also been set up to address the lack of women in sport, and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has written to the BBC saying they expect them to up their game on the numbers of women commentating on sporting events. At Wimbledon last year a male BBC presenter made a derogatory comment about one of the female tennis players, so the Minister wrote to the BBC to challenge this.

## LI

We need to educate not just men but women as well on unconscious bias. At present, there are training materials available but they're not great, so we're looking to produce something better that can be made widely available to all sectors - public, private and voluntary.

Addressing and tackling stereotypes is a constant challenge - there are some sporadic successes which then seem to get washed away. The impact of social media and the way the internet is used in general, and the new ways misogyny has found to express itself, have to be recognised and we need to constantly be on our guard about that. There was a debate in the Scottish Parliament about the No More Page 3 campaign, we know there's strong support for that but unfortunately it often comes down to market forces and what people think sells. That is a real challenge.

The point about filling boards with non-executive directors is an obvious example of how sneaky male dominated environments can be. For example, when quotas were brought into force in Norway there were 100 organisations de-listed from the stock exchange so they wouldn't be required to meet the quotas. We will have to be aware of that going forward.

## AH

Self employment for many people conjures up a specific image. However the reality is that self employed jobs are often not the way they can be perceived, and many women work in this way as, for example, hairdressers or childminders. That's not what policy makers think and it's not how they devise policies, so we should explore that discussion a bit more.

It's about recognition of all women and all of our life skills. Some of our trade union representatives are the most articulate people you could deal, however often their skills do not match up with the wording of what public appointments expect and they are put off from applying as a result. The STUC has been in discussion in the past with the Scottish Government about how we better take the really valuable resources that workers have learned through representation and negotiations and translate that into public life.



The Scottish Women's Convention (SWC) is funded to engage with women throughout Scotland in order that their views might influence public policy.

This is achieved in a number of different ways - through roadshow, round table, conference and celebratory events. Following each event a report is compiled and issued to women who attend and relevant policy and decision makers.

The SWC uses the views of women to respond to Scottish and UK Government consultation papers.

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