

Executive Summary

Gender Equality at Work 2015: New Policies for Old Challenges

- 1:** The United Kingdom was an early leader in promoting gender equality at work but, 40 years since the initial legislation, our record on gender equality at work has stalled. The UK now lags behind much of Europe and the rest of the world, with our position steadily worsening over time.
- 2:** If action is not taken to address this, we will continue to waste the talents of our workforce. Providing good jobs for all not only enhances UK's global competitiveness but also promotes a fully engaged, vibrant and successful society.
- 3:** The Government needs to drive through the necessary policy changes to accelerate gender equality at work in order to release women's full potential in the workplace. This will benefit businesses of all sizes and workers across the labour market.
- 4:** This report proposes policy interventions for a step change in the UK's commitment to gender equality at work. These were derived from consultations with Members of Parliament, the Trade Unions, the Confederation of British Industry and national/international expert organizations to identify the key priorities for the new Government elected in 2015.
- 5:** The guiding principle is mainstreaming of gender equality across all policy areas. This is fundamental to support fair opportunities and treatment at work within a framework of legislative reform.
- 6:** The key to success will be targeted, evidence-based strategies that address specific processes of gender inequality at work. These will recognize that race and ethnicity, class and age work together with gender to produce inequalities.
- 7:** Specific legislative reforms should now extend the Equal Pay Act. The Living Wage and rights to flexible and part-time working need to be fully established across the labour market. Parental leave should be brought into line with best practice in the rest of Europe. Gender quotas need to be implemented in strategic areas such as Management Boards, Workers' Councils and Government.
- 8:** Key changes to welfare and social services should be made to support gender equality at work. These will include a thorough review of how caring responsibilities are remunerated; more encouragement of girls into STEM subjects; better support for women returners to the labour market and improved public transport to enable labour market participation.
- 9:** Employers also have a systematic role to play in improving gender equality at work. They should provide political leadership in this issue, demonstrating pride in developing best practice.
- 10:** A strong, active and well-funded data infrastructure and monitoring culture is also essential to bolster and support change through legislation, social protection and organizational processes.

These recommendations are drawn from a range of different views and do not reflect the position of any one individual or organization.

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