



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modernising Employment

MEETING MINUTES: WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE
28^h February 2024

Chair's welcome by Dame Maria Miller MP: No more passion in life than women in employment, leading the International Women's Day debate in Parliament tomorrow. Been advocating increased free childcare since starting as an MP, Govt is taking steps towards this. NDAs are also a passion of mine.

Present: Rt Hon. Dame Maria Miller MP, (Chair), Rt Hon. Caroline Nokes MP, Emma Hardy MP, Andrew Henderson (Secretariat), Keith Rosser & George Warrington, Better Hiring Institute; (see list at end)

Speakers:

- 1) Keith Rosser, Better Hiring Institute – my mother was a CEO in the 80s which was rare indeed. Never truly understood the fight that she went through, many transferable skills in this role. Father was the only man at the school gates. Not sure things have changed much as a father at the school gate now. Is it right that girls at school have less of a chance of success?

KR summed up the work of the BHI.

- 2) Prof Valerie Stead, University of Lancaster

Sharing data to show how women are disadvantaged. Presentation based on Genders Matters project at Lancaster that brings together a range of information from various sources to show the scope of gender equality challenges for the UK workplace. Shows key challenges Slide 9.

Slide 10 inequalities in the labour market with little change over the years (ONS employment rates) figures.

Slide 11: shows how women are more likely than men to be in insecure work by 2.3 times. Risen since 2022 (Work Foundation analysis of ONS data).

Slide 12: 14.3% gender pay gap. 7.7% amongst full time employers. Why we see a larger gap is because more women work part time for lower pay. (ASHE data)

Slide 13: gets worse with age! Gap for younger workers equates to £4000 less in the annual pay packet. Gives an indication of how this will increase over time. Pressing need to understand and address inequalities. (Work Foundation analysis of ASHE data; Young Women's Trust analysis)

Slide 14: some progress in Board positions, Fawcett Society reported that over 5000 positions of power in society, less than a third are women.

Slide 15: less than 10% of CEOs in FTSE 100 are women, and no women of colour. At this rate needs 4 more decades to reach gender parity. (Fawcett Society)

Slide 16: women face additional hurdles in progressing to leadership. Research at Lancaster (TARGETED-MPI project) shows a combination of fewer women at the right level and with the right expertise and experience means fewer able to seek promotion to professorial roles. Other



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modernising Employment

MEETING MINUTES: WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE
28^h February 2024

research by Fawcett Society and Runnymede Trust shows 27 % of white women and 40% of women of colour from a survey of 3,000 women reported being passed over for promotion in spite of good reports.

Slide 17: women carry out more unpaid work than men in the UK. Graph is based on ONS figures and shows rise in childcare demands for women during Covid-19 pandemic.

Slide 18: being a mother increases your chances of being in an insecure job. (Work Foundation analysis of OS data) Following Covid fewer women returned to work. (European Institute for Gender Equality).

Slide 19: these inbuilt unfair practices have an impact on women even when they have retired due to fewer savings. A woman needs to work an extra 19 years to have the same pension pot as men. (NOW: Pension)

Slide 20: women are held back and unable to realise their talents and pay the cost with reduced wages and pension pots. Covid 19 has de-stabilised progress in closing gender gaps and created a risk of widening challenges. An increased negative effect for women of colour. Need to keep gender equality at the heart of the business and policy agenda.

3) Elysia McCaffrey, CEO, Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority

Slide 21: started working life in Liverpool's India Building as a junior clerk. In awe of the office, low expectations and no sense of entitlement. Worked for the Civil Service and proud to be a small cog in the Home Office machine. Promoted quite quickly.

Slide 22: joined the Fast Stream. Undue attention from one of the IT consultants and this needed to be reported. Assumed the Government would take this seriously. Explained that she was feeling uncomfortable to head of department, just wanted to be left alone. Response was that Elysia had made him uncomfortable and that presenting the information and evidence to him was not good. At 25 years old, after reporting it, learnt the lesson that her discomfort was less important than the inappropriate actions of others. Took courage to report that and kept her head down. Work persona became diplomatic. Need to look clearly at the balance of power in the workplace. The workplace is hard to deal with: micro aggressions, discrimination, parental penalties and unwritten rules. As an example, not allowed to make others feel uncomfortable.

Does not buy the speaking or shouting up approach. As a young, junior staff member standing up can compromise safety. The responsibility should have been on those who had power and influence. Not a male or female thing.

Slide 23: have studied the power dynamic and has created a safe workplace mentally. 5th CEO in four years, first woman and younger than many in the organisation. Not expected to last long at the GLAA. Was very homogenous at the start but has driven EDI. Has focussed ruthlessly on a safe working culture. This has transformed performance and we are doing better. My success has come from learned behaviour. If I were more bullish would things be different? Not sure that



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modernising Employment

MEETING MINUTES: WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE
28^h February 2024

the respect she gets is the same as a man. As a leader you are faced with doing what is right or what is easy.

Call to arms: how should we use the power that we have in the workplace? Recognise micro aggressions, create psychological safety and zero tolerance for abuse. What would I tell my younger self? I do not know. I would tell leaders that to make the best workplace possible we need to be ruthless in driving the right culture.

4) Gosia Banach, Child Poverty Action Group.

Slide 26: Your work your way project.

Help parents get good jobs Majority of YWYW participants were mothers and all faced significant barriers to work.

Help parents access welfare rights and benefits

Understanding the financial implications of moving for paid work

Budget for those preparing to move into work e.g. laptops, training, childcare etc.

Evaluated by Sheffield Hallam University.

Positive outcomes: large proportion of mothers supported by YWYW moved into paid work: 54%, 49% sustained employment for 6 or more months, 76% accessed work-focused training.

Slide 27: Barriers to overcome

YWYW identified some structural, persistent barriers to work such as childcare, lack of job opportunities suitable for parents with childcare responsibilities and low incentives from working for couples on universal credit.

Lack of childcare was the most important. This also includes lack of holiday cover and lack of wrap around childcare i.e. before and after-school clubs or not understanding what free childcare and support with costs of childcare is available.

Many part-time jobs were unclear about hours to be worked. Some jobs could be designed as childcare friendly but were not. Many mothers wanted to work but could not find flexible roles.

Low income families found that the increase in the income vs universal credit reduction by the taper rate when second earner in a couple starts paid work made it financially pointless.

Barriers that were easier to overcome with YWYW support were barriers around confidence, skills and training gaps, financial barriers and transport.

Transport – paid for driving lessons where no public transport. Also paid for travel fees to access job opportunities, interviews, training etc.



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modernising Employment

MEETING MINUTES: WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE
28^h February 2024

Slide 28: women have to do more unpaid care when in couples. Aims for work options chosen are the most family friendly. Also reflected in the job outcomes.

Slide 29: Motherhood penalty: quite a few clients experienced discrimination when applying for work. One was told that the job opportunity was not suitable for a mum with young children as she was likely to take time off from work due to childcare, and the employer wouldn't allow it. Mothers told the survey that they felt that they were seen as less committed in the workplace due to childcare responsibilities. Some had to leave jobs because the pressure of childcare was too great. Felt that they were burdens to colleagues and employers.

Slide 30: YWYW case studies

One respondent could not find childcare and was told to quit. Going on night shift was the response but had to look after children during the day. This led to health problems.

Second example: employer appeared supportive but reality was different. this mother was effectively forced out of work.

If there is scope for part-time or home working, employers should state this. Hours should be stated clearly.

5) Zelda Perkins, Can't buy my silence

NDA's are an unseen barrier to women.

What Elysia said really resonated with us all. The Weinstein debacle was an example, his behaviour was not unusual though. I learnt a frightening lesson about speaking up, it was not just the workplace but society in general that wanted to silence me. Women are five times more likely to sign an NDA than men. Women are more likely to be harassed.

I presumed that the right thing would happen when I spoke up. Thinks that people believe that it does not happen anymore. I was not allowed to speak to friends or family about Weinstein. If any friends were found to be speaking about the case, it would have a negative effect on me. For agreements like this to exist, there must be a system to support it. From some of the data which we have gathered, we have found some shocking results. 95% of women who sign NDAs report catastrophic mental health consequences. These agreements are still commonplace. NDAs are still use to intimidate and silence women, with threats of the clauses being passed onto relatives after the signatories death.

NDAs are used in pregnancy discrimination cases. 90% of women felt that it was there only option. 1 in 61 women were asked by their boss to have a termination. This is a major workplace cultural issue. Only a quarter of mothers can afford to take full maternity leave. It is understandable therefore how a woman can be pushed into a position to sign an NDA. 31% of workers (across genders) would choose not to raise a complaint in anticipation of being silenced. Unless it has happened to you it is hard to appreciate. Many do not want to be labelled



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modernising Employment

MEETING MINUTES: WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE
28^h February 2024

as a difficult worker. You are pushed into taking a settlement which silences you. This perpetuates the toxic environment. Problems are pushed underground and not dealt with.

There has been a radical shift about sexual misconduct at work. Women put up with a lot because they are in fear of their jobs. It is horrifying that women have to curb ambition and / or behaviour in the workplace. Women will put up with anything to keep a job and this approach is exploited. It is not just in the glitzy Hollywood world. This is rooted in the abuse of power, whether your manager at MacDonaldis or whoever holds the purse strings to your salary.

Need to have a working environment that encourages/allows women to be ambitious and to work in a feminine way i.e. kind and polite without fear of being exploited or silenced .

Questions and comments.

MM drew our attention to Horizon and the use of NDAs by the Post Office. NDAs will come up when that enquiry reports in the Summer.

Elizabeth Mistry, Protect: run a helpline and find that many employees do not know if their employers have a whistleblower policy. A simple, clear policy would help, made clear on induction. What about the daughterhood penalty? People who look after an elderly relative.

Sophie Lucas - Pregnant and screwed: would the panel discuss how we can stop the future use of NDAs

International context of pension gaps, is there any area in which the UK under or overperforms?

What challenges to women face in politics compared to the private sector?

EM – just updated our whistleblowing policy. It is about culture and leadership and not needing the policies in the first place. Every workplace should have a whistleblower policy On NDAs it is all about the right leadership.

KR – we are committed to adding in our output from today that all employers should have a whistleblowing policy.

ZP – 18 states in the US have legislation around the use of NDAs and sexual harassment. It was felt that taking away NDAs would make it harder to settle claims. In fact data shows that settlement times are quicker. Also banning pre-dispute NDAs in the US. Confidentiality clauses tend to be built into contracts, not signed as an NDA but effectively is one. University pre-registration has now cut out the use of NDAs in cases of bullying and sexual harassment. Universities were one of the worst user of NDAs.

NDAs hide the gender pay gap. They hide why people leave companies. We need regulatory change to keep the integrity of law. To have a legal agreement that hides harm is not right.

VS – in terms of other countries, these are global issues. The trend for all countries is that women are disadvantaged at work. Catalyst measures these issues as does the WEF. We know



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modernising Employment

MEETING MINUTES: WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE
28^h February 2024

from the WEF that they look at the number of years that it would take for women's economic participation to equal that of men's, it is over 100 years!

Our children will not see equality in our lifetimes, even though we know that things have become better since our mothers' day.

Rt Hon. Caroline Nokes MP – today we have heard more about security measures being put in place for female MPs. We take more abuse if we are disabled, of colour or LGBT. Theo Clarke and Siobhan Bailey were subject to abuse on social media for taking maternity leave. There are more provisions for female MPs to have maternity leave etc than 3 or 20 years ago.

I talk about the security measures as we have to tell people what the challenges are, the good and the bad. The flip side is that it is the best job in the world.

Katy Philips founder of Endo buddies, a newly registered charity who support women with endometriosis, and co-founder of Chronically Employed, who support people with chronic illnesses to find remote and flexible jobs. Speaking as a woman with chronic illnesses. I felt unsupported in previous roles, told at 39 to take retirement for ill health. Now works successfully from home as a VA. We face many challenges with chronic illnesses. We are calling for more awareness of women's health issues, would like unconscious bias training, flexible working arrangements, clear advertising of jobs, awareness and education of chronic health conditions (with a strong focus on menstrual health) and person-centred wellbeing at work plans.

Claire Reindorp, Young Women's Trust, highlighting the fact that inequalities start young is great. In a week where the Chartered Institute of Prof Development has found that a large number of employers are not bothering to collect data that would improve standards, what does the committee think?

Anna, Mental Health project. Work with women with severe health conditions. Told that we should just give up work although in early 30s. As a mother your comments completely resonate with me. Was told that not there for her staff because off work for illness. Women are more susceptible to chronic illnesses, wants policies at work to support people.

Tim Mitchell, Get Safe Online, draw our attention to a webinar on the 8th March at 2.30 p.m. to celebrate women in cyber security. This will be chaired by Baroness Morgan. Constantly hear about barriers being the attitudes of men and the lack of role models which is a vicious cycle.

Janet de Haviland, I have been lucky to have had great jobs but have suffered as Elysia mentioned. Many of the charities and support groups do a wonderful job but it is not publicised to employers. There is nothing for small businesses to help them to transition and help them to behave appropriately. Not focussed on what we have been discussing. We need to look differently at business and how it tries to understand these issues. We cannot police it so education is key. We should be changing the mentality. No point in talking about something that people cannot receive.



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modernising Employment

MEETING MINUTES: WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE
28^h February 2024

MM – 2018 Enforcement of the gender pay regulations, is it time to revisit?

EM – there was a lot of activity and reporting at the time, it was the second biggest news story after the Royal Wedding. It was talked about but is now old news, lost public consciousness. It was suspended during the pandemic.

MM – balancing chronic illness and work, any thoughts on what more could be done?

GB – 40 to 45% of our mothers had conditions and a large proportion were able to find a suitable job. We had the funding to help them get the skills and find suitable jobs, including self-employment. Time and investment are key to making a difference.

MM – Janet's point was really good.

KR – We are working with the FSB on this. Alongside the work which we are doing there is a need to bring together resources for employers and corral HR bodies to join us.

Bella Ikpasaja - in all of what we have discussed the running thread is misogyny.

Intersectionality: no overarching department to look at these areas, very siloed.

Michelle Russell: can we keep talking about this in public. Lost my job after whistleblowing three weeks ago.

Conclusion: MM – fantastic conversation.

Present:

Amy Mellor, Christy Houghton, George Warrington, Keith Rosser, Amy David, Anna Conway, Kiran Herkanaidu, Lucy French - Reed

Asavari Moon

C Jonan

Claire Reindorp – Young Women's Trust

Deedee Doke- Recruiter

E Francois – Whitby Wood

Elysia Mccaffrey - GLA

G Banach - CPAG

Harriet Lynas, Nicola Reid, Sadie Banyard – Virgin mediao2

Janet De-Haviland – Pendragon Consultancy

Lauren Edwards - Jobs aware



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modernising Employment

MEETING MINUTES: WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE
28^h February 2024

Lesa Shaw

Mari Miura

Milos Zjagusztyń

Natalie McClean – Partners&

Nikki Patel – Dunn Humby

Nisha Das – Thrive future

Olivia Jane Taylor

Teresa Boughey - Jungle consultancy

Prof V Stead - Lancaster University

Victoria Bryant - Arla Foods

Helen Tomlinson – Adecco Group

Rebecca Vilday - Choreograph

Tia Cheang

Zelda Perkins

Sophie Lucas - Pregnant then screwed

Tim Mitchell - Get Safe Online

Yeshim Harris

Alexandra Braby – Managers UK

Irina Bormotova Groundwork

Jo Marek

Joseph Williams - Getaclu

Louise Hutcheon – Blue arrow

Michele Howe – Digital Cabinet-office

Sophie Azam – Ignitequals UK

Anne Barnett - Paragon Bank

Catherine Smith - Capita

Emma Shepherd- Let's talk disability



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modernising Employment

MEETING MINUTES: WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE
28^h February 2024

Hannah Lee – Zurich UK

Helen Norris

Katy Philips - Endo buddies

Jamie Shackell - Croner

Katie Rountree - KPMG

Katie Stewart

Marina Wheeler

Misti Melville – Buro Happold

Olivia Marie

Rosie Baberl - South Bank University

Alicia Hawksworth, Amy Spence - Glencore

Catherine Kirkland - Arla Foods

Charlotte Woodward - KPMG

Gillian Fairfield - DBS

J Zhou - global-talent

Karen Hughes - Impellam

Kelly Vannelson – Serco AP-

Lorna Marah

Heena Valambhia - Discover

Xian Mayes – Advantage Travel Partnership

Erin Simmons - Matchtech

Jane Mitchell – Gattaca plc

Pallavi Chauhan - TfL

Taner Mustafa

Bella Ikpasaja

Michelle Russell