

Women and Work Commission Report NI response – One Year On

**Gender and Sexual Orientation
Equality Unit
OFMDFM**

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Introduction

A UK independent review to investigate the causes of the gender pay and opportunities gap was commissioned by the Prime Minister in 2004. The Women and Work Commission (WWC) were asked to generate practical measures to close the gap within a generation. They took evidence from a wide range of stakeholders which included women across the UK. They met representatives of women in Belfast June 2005.

Their report to the UK Government '*Shaping a Fairer Future*', published in February 2006, found that the problem was multi faceted and deep rooted around gender stereotyping and occupational segregation. Its forty recommendations cover a diverse range of issues relevant to women in work, education and training. The UK government published an action plan in September 2006 and will report back on progress to the WWC in spring 2007. The majority of the recommendations cover matters which are reserved to Westminster. Some of the recommendations however call for a specific response from the devolved administrations who have agreed to produce their own 'One Year On' reports on the specific areas relating to Northern Irish, Scottish and Welsh devolved policy areas.

This is the initial Northern Ireland response to the recommendations in the Women and Work Commissions report "*Shaping a Fairer Future*". The aim is to show the actions that have been taken across the Northern Ireland Government departments and other sponsored bodies to improve the career options of women today and for girls who are entering the workforce at time when cultural changes are taking place and where ever improving opportunities are envisaged within their working lives.

Gender Pay and Opportunity Gap in Northern Ireland

As the Commission found occupational segregation is a key factor in understanding the gender pay gap and women's position in the labour market. For women and men working in Northern Ireland the pay gap in 2006 is 7% based on the average or mean (and 0.2 % based on the median). If we compare women working part time with men working full time the gap is more profound – 24% based on the average or mean (29 % based on the median) (Source Northern Ireland Annual Survey of Hours and earnings April 2006).

The gap between average earnings of full time women and men has been decreasing slowly since 1998. Recent Government figures show that some 32% of employees in NI are employed in the public sector. This is an increase from the situation a few years ago which suggests that recently the public sector has been growing faster than the private sector. Although figures for the UK as a whole are not directly comparable, it is evident that the public sector takes up a much larger share of employment than in the UK as a whole. This influences the full time pay gap as 53 % of working women are in the public sector and full time working women are more likely to be in the higher paid public sector.

There is a wide range of occupational pay gaps ranging from 3 % in the education sector to 36 % in the financial sector. Most sectoral gender pay gaps are wider than the NI average gender pay gap. Whilst 40 % of full time women work in the three highest paying occupations, 57% of part time working women work in the three lowest paying occupations.

The gender pay gap is a complex issue and overlaps with range of issues including work life balance , flexible working , subject and career choice, promotion and career progression, pay systems and tackling low pay.

Related work In Northern Ireland to date –

(i) Gender Equality Strategy

The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) has just published (December 2006) *The Gender Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2006 -2016*, which sets out a strategic framework for action to promote gender equality for women and men. Key strategic objectives identified in the Gender Equality Strategy include:

- To ensure the economic security of both men and women and address the gender inequalities which lead to poverty and promote social inclusion, particularly acknowledging women's vulnerability to poverty e.g. lone parents, carers, low earners, inadequate pensions;
- To achieve better gender disaggregated data collection analysis and dissemination on all aspects of women's lives, including impact of structures and systems, and to enhance the systematic application of gender based analysis. This will underpin and inform the integration of a gender perspective in the development of all government policies, processes and programmes, systems and structures.
- To achieve equal value for paid work done by women and men, and promote their equitable participation in the paid and unpaid labour force; including the equitable sharing of work and family and caring responsibilities; promoting work-life balance; and encouraging women's entrepreneurship
- To ensure the active and equal participation of women and men at all levels of civil society, economy, peace building and government;
- to ensure women and men, including girls and boys, shall have equal access to education and lifelong learning and opportunities to develop personal ambitions, interests and talents.

Supporting the Strategy will be two action plans, one for women and one for men which are currently being developed. The recommendations of the Women and Work Commission specific to Northern Ireland (See *list at appendix 1*) will be incorporated into the women's action plan. Through this mechanism actions by Northern Ireland departments to meet these recommendations will be monitored and reported to ministers annually.

(ii) Gender Advisory Panel

To enable continued engagement with key stakeholders and representatives of women and men, the Gender Equality Unit in Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister has established a Gender Advisory Panel to advise and assist the Unit and the NI departments in developing action plans for women and men and in monitoring the progress and impact of these actions.

Membership of the Panel includes representatives of women and men, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the Confederation of British Industry and Northern Ireland Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

(iii) Gender Equality Indicators

Accompanying the strategy and its action plans are gender equality indicators that will provide a series of selected benchmarks of the position of women and men in Northern Ireland. These indicators are based on relevant research and were agreed in the formal consultation on the Gender Equality Strategy.

These indicators will be used to measure changes in the longer term in the position of men and women including the gender pay gap, and will assess progress and the overall effectiveness of actions in tackling gender inequalities and promoting gender equality. The baseline year for data will be 2006 where possible.. These indicators will be published later in spring 2007 and will enable the monitoring of progress in the achievement and impact of the Women and Work Commission's recommendations in Northern Ireland

Examples of relevant indicators include:-

key gender equality indicators on employment

Economic activity rates
Distribution of working hours (full-time/part-time)
Average working hours, overtime, etc.
Unemployment rates (ILO)
Industrial distribution of employees by gender, and;

Key gender equality indicators on employment and earnings

Pay gap: full-time hourly; full-time weekly; full-time and part-time hourly; graduate pay gap
Low pay
Gender differences in pay rates across major sectors

Key gender equality indicators on Education

Gender difference of persons of working age without qualifications
Gender difference in academic achievements at GCSE level
Gender difference in relation to intake on Higher Level education programmes across sectors

(iv) Equal Pay Forum and Equal Pay Review Kit

The government has also funded the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland to produce an Equal Pay Review Kit, which includes comprehensive step-by-step guidance on conducting pay reviews; to establish and maintain an Equal Pay Forum for Northern Ireland, and to publish guidance on specific pay issues impacting on the gender pay differential.

Northern Ireland Actions on WWC Recommendations

The table at Appendix 2 summarises actions by Northern Ireland departments on the WWC recommendations referring specifically to Northern Ireland.

Appendix 1

Recommendations from Women and Work Commission Report

| Number | Recommendation |
|--------|--|
| 2 | Improve Vocational Skills Training |
| 5 | Teacher Training challenges gender stereotypes including allowing placement of all trainee teachers to observe workers in non traditional occupations |
| 6 | The DfES and national equivalents to ensure all young people have access to careers information, advice and guidance, with National standards confirming it challenges gender stereotypes and gives young people an accurate idea of the rewards and challenges of different careers |
| 13 | Local job matching by social entrepreneurs: RDAs and national equivalents should provide grant funding for outreach services aimed at women seeking local jobs or training matching their skills and potential. Use “Women like Us” model to fund pilots in five different area including London, a rural area, and a BME community. |
| 14 | <p>DWP should develop its New Deals for women returners, in particular lone parents, and explore the possibility of offering services to women not currently working where neither they or their partners are receiving benefits.</p> <p>Offering all New Deal programmes on a part time basis.</p> <p>Better confidence-building measures for women returners.</p> <p>Voluntary session with personal advisor for women who have never worked or not for a long time</p> <p>Extended support for lone parents</p> |
| 16 | The right to request flexible working to be extended over time to cover a wider group of employees |
| 20 | Acas training package on flexible working free for small firms |
| 22 | £20m training package to pilot measures aimed at helping women in work and women returners to improve their skills |
| 24 | Identifying best practice on career development and working with partner employers to create career pathways |
| 25 | Report on whether training providers provide training flexibly and with childcare onsite |

Appendix 2

| WWC No. | Women and Work Commission Recommendation | NI Department | Identified Action | Timescale/ Targets |
|---------|--|---------------|---|--|
| 2. | To work with teachers training providers to improve teachers' practical skills in delivering vocational training | DEL | Development of National Occupational Standards by LLUK to provide professional development opportunities for all teachers in further education and training system. | Standards and qualifications infrastructure implemented September 2007 |
| 5. | To ensure that teachers training emphasises the need to challenge gender stereotypes, both in delivery of careers education and in subject teaching, and that it allows for a work placement for all trainee teachers, including observing workers in non-traditional occupations. | DEL | Revision of Section 75 policies in FE colleges, to encourage females into employment in the FE Sector and ensure equity with male counterparts | Ongoing monitoring. ANIC submits an Annual Report to the Equality Commission |
| 5. | See above | DEL | Re-constitution of governing bodies of FE colleges, to increase % of female representation in the Business/industry/profession category | Jan 07 |
| 6. | To ensure that all young people have access to careers information, advice and guidance. National standards should confirm that it: | DEL | Careers Advisers (CAs) offer an all-age service with the priority | Consultation on the Strategy |

| WWC No. | Women and Work Commission Recommendation | NI Department | Identified Action | Timescale/ Targets |
|---------|---|---------------|---|---------------------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Challenges gender stereotypes <p>Gives young people a real understanding of the pay, rewards and challenges of occupations, particularly those of occupations, particularly those not traditionally taken up by their gender.</p> | | <p>focus on those aged 14-19, based on the needs of the individual. All CAs are professionally qualified to post-grad level and hold either PG Dip CG parts 1 & 2 or PG Dip in Careers Guidance (QCG) with an NVQ4 in Advice and Guidance. These qualifications highlight the need to challenge gender stereotypes in occupational areas. CAs provide impartial information, advice and guidance which enables women to make informed decisions in relation to education, training and employment</p> | <p>proposed for Autumn 2006</p> |
| 6. | See above | DETI | Invest NI part-sponsorship of WISE to produce a DVD to encourage young women into science, engineering and technology | |
| 6. | See above | DCAL | Women in Sport Leadership Research: Make recommendations to address the gender imbalance in sports leadership roles and to enable the Sports Council for NI to implement | |

| WWC No. | Women and Work Commission Recommendation | NI Department | Identified Action | Timescale/ Targets |
|---------|--|---------------|---|---|
| | | | programmes and interventions to address the current gender imbalance | |
| 6. | See above | DE | <p>Revised curriculum - to better prepare young people for life and work and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility and access to a wider range of gender and applied courses • Learning for life and work a core area of the revised curriculum for better informed decisions in preparation for work • Revised curriculum with be free from gender bias • Meaningful work experience placements | |
| 13 | <p>To have a more local approach should be taken to the matching of jobs and skills. To provide grant funding for women seeking local jobs or training which match their skills and potential.</p> | DEL | The New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) and New Deal for Partners (NDP) programmes provide funding for lone parents and partners of benefit recipients | Ongoing Increased numbers attending FECs |

| WWC No. | Women and Work Commission Recommendation | NI Department | Identified Action | Timescale/ Targets |
|----------------|--|----------------------|---|--|
| 13 | <p>To consider local social entrepreneurs use community centres, schools and children’s centres to recruit local women into local jobs and training. Extensions might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Public, private or voluntary sector services which provide confidence-building through peer support, experience or 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 <p>See above</p> | DEL | <p>to access NVQ courses at FE Colleges and to undertake vocational training courses with local training providers.</p> <p>NDLP/NDP training provision includes opportunities for work experience</p> | <p>and accessing training provision</p> <p>Ongoing</p> |
| 13 | See above | DETI | Invest NI programme to target organisations that provide support to women starting a business to highlight the different approaches required when dealing with female entrepreneurs | |
| 13 | See above | DETI | Invest NI Development programme for established female entrepreneurs to encourage the growth and development of | |

| WWC No. | Women and Work Commission Recommendation | NI Department | Identified Action | Timescale/ Targets |
|----------------|---|----------------------|---|---------------------------|
| | | | women in established businesses. | |
| 13 | See above | DSD | Strengthen and target more effectively through BRO efforts in the community, the private sector and government in addressing the economic, education, social, health and environmental problems facing women in disadvantaged areas of Belfast | |
| 13 | See above | DETI | Invest NI support for action under the Aspire EQUAL Women in Rural Areas and Investment in Self Employment Programme through the establishment of an NI Partnership to target those women in rural communities who find it hard to access training and funding. A key goal is the establishment of a Peer Network to support rural women to start up and run own business | |
| 13 | See above | DETI | Invest NI Breaking into Business Programme: An ICT-focussed promotion programme delivering pilot programmes in rural areas to make women aware of the entrepreneurial opportunities in | |

| WWC No. | Women and Work Commission Recommendation | NI Department | Identified Action | Timescale/ Targets |
|---------|--|---------------|---|--|
| | | | ICT and encourage women to undertake training relating to ICT in business. | |
| 14 | <p>To develop new deals of work and pension aimed at women returners in particular lone parents. To explore the possibility of offering services to women not currently working where neither they nor their partners are receiving benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ All work related activities, work placements and training New Deal women returner programmes should be offered on a part-time basis □ Women returners should have access to confidence-building measures, including peer group support, perhaps delivered through local community groups □ Women who have never worked or not worked for a significant period should be offered a voluntary session with a Personal Advisor at Jobcentre Plus to talk through and access information on issues they may encounter on their return to work, e.g. childcare commuting, dress <p>All lone parents should be offered extended assistance from a Personal Adviser to support</p> | DEL | <p>NDLP/NDP provides local training opportunities for lone parents and partners of benefit recipients. These courses cater for part-time and flexible attendance to facilitate those with caring responsibilities</p> | Pilot Schemes in place by January 2007 |

| WWC No. | Women and Work Commission Recommendation | NI Department | Identified Action | Timescale/ Targets |
|----------------|---|----------------------|---|---------------------------|
| | retention and progress | | | |
| 14 | See above | DEL | New Deal Core Gateway courses provide NDLP/NDP participants with access to modular provision (of up to 2 weeks) to improve confidence and employability | See above |
| 14 | See above | DEL | Provide a bespoke empowerment programme for 2 cohorts of 20 women as a means of developing employment | See above |
| 14 | See above | DEL | Undertake research to identify means to combat attitudes that inhibit women's entry to and progress within partner organisations | See above |
| 14 | See above | DEL | NDLP/NDP offers voluntary access to a New Deal Personal Adviser (NDPA) for all lone parents who are not in work or working less than 16 hours per week and to partners of benefit | See above |

| WWC No. | Women and Work Commission Recommendation | NI Department | Identified Action | Timescale/ Targets |
|----------------|--|----------------------|--|---|
| | | | recipients. These NDPAs offer a full range of advice on all aspects of returning to or taking up work. | |
| 14 | See above | DEL | NDLP and NDP provision offer in-work support to lone parents and partners who start work | See above |
| 14 | See above | DHSSPS | Development of a childcare strategy? | |
| 14 | See above | DHSSPS | Development of a carers' strategy | |
| 16 | The right to flexible working should be extended over time to cover a wider group of employees | DEL | The right to request flexible working is due to be extended to those with caring responsibilities for an adult . DEL will continue to examine the case for extending the right to parents of older children | The right to request flexible working will be extended to those who care for an adult from April 2007 |
| 20 | ACAS and the NI Labour Relations Agency should be funded to develop a training package to support flexible working and that this package be delivered free to small firms | DEL | LRA in NI is already seriously constrained in its efforts to deliver its current responsibilities within its existing budget. It is unlikely that additional funding would be obtained to carry out this specific function. However the LRA does | |

| WWC No. | Women and Work Commission Recommendation | NI Department | Identified Action | Timescale/ Targets |
|---------|---|---------------|--|--------------------|
| | | | run a seminar on flexible working and as part of its advisory role to employers does promote the consideration of flexible working amongst employers as part of its overall promotion of harmonious working relationships in the workforce. Since May 2006 the LRA provides arbitration service to deal with disputes arising from flexible working issues | |
| 22 | <p>A £20 million package to pilot measures designed to enable women to change direction, and progress in their jobs and careers, through raising their skill levels.</p> <p>Women who are not in work who already have a Level 2 qualification should be entitled to free skills coaching, under the New Deal for Skills and additional help to gain employment and training in an area of skill shortage.</p> <p>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</p> | DEL | Devise an awareness programme | Responses to the |

| WWC No. | Women and Work Commission Recommendation | NI Department | Identified Action | Timescale/ Targets |
|----------------|---|----------------------|---|--|
| | <p>Women should have access to a high-quality careers information, advice and guidance services which tackles gender stereotypes under the New Deal for Skills and Train to Gain, which provides support in work and may include additional training</p> <p>Free Level 3 training (free for the individual, match-funded by the employer) under Train to Gain should be piloted with employers from the five 'c' sectors, particularly those employing part-time work</p> <p>Further pilot for Adult Apprenticeships or Train to Gain in areas of skills shortage should be introduced and focused on women returners</p> | | <p>for construction trades' tutors involved in training women</p> <p>Proposals for provision aimed at Upskilling existing members of the workforce is one of the strands of the Training for Success, the Professional and Technical Training Consultation Document</p> | <p>Consultation document produced September 2006</p> |
| 22 | <p>See above</p> <p>(women should have access)</p> | DETI | <p>Invest NI Pre-Enterprise Programme: To encourage more women to consider starting a business</p> | |
| 22 | <p>See above</p> <p>(women should have access)</p> | DCAL | <p>Development of women into high performance coaching and increase the number of women educated to a high level and</p> | |

| WWC No. | Women and Work Commission Recommendation | NI Department | Identified Action | Timescale/ Targets |
|---------|--|---------------|--|--------------------|
| | | | actively coaching at performance level and to use this group as role models for women | |
| 24 | <p>To develop programmes, linking with Train to Gain and the Sector Skills Councils, identifying best practice on career development and working with partner employers to create career paths. To consider how best to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Recruit and retain women into non-traditional jobs | DEL | <p>Develop with trainers a review of training practice and the barriers women experience attempting entry into non-traditional trades</p> <p>Provide an employment taster for 40 women, the results of which will help support the integration of women into non-traditional employment through the adoption of new working practice</p> <p>Provide training for women to enter non-traditional occupations</p> <p>Reducing barriers that prevent women from participating in training or employment, particularly childcare</p> | Ongoing |

| WWC No. | Women and Work Commission Recommendation | NI Department | Identified Action | Timescale/ Targets |
|---------|--|---------------|--|--|
| | Develop career paths for those working part-time | | <p>Providing support for childcare for students attending an FE college within Support Funds and Care to Learn (NI) programmes</p> <p>Review government policies regarding apprenticeship workplace requirements</p> <p>NI Competitiveness and Employment European and Social Fund (ESF) programme (anticipated)</p> <p>NI Competitiveness and Employment European and Social Fund (ESF) programme (possible project)</p> <p>Administration of Training for Work pilot</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Programme period 2007 - 2013</p> <p>Target to be confirmed</p> <p>Programme period 2007-2013</p> <p>Target to be confirmed</p> |

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|----------------|--|----------------------|--|--|
| | | | | |
| 24 | See above | DETI | Invest NI development of a 'Women in the Economy' Action Plan which will include action to increase the number of women entering and remaining in employment in non-traditional sector | |
| 25 | <p>To report on in schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Whether training providers offer their courses flexibility to meet the needs of those with caring responsibilities, and those combining study with part-time or full-time jobs and <p>The extent to which childcare support is provided local to, or at training sites.</p> | DE | School Age Mothers' Programme - Programme to support pregnant and parenting young women to complete compulsory education and to remain in education beyond age 16 if they so wish | |
| 25 | See above | DEL | Include more specific reference to these issues in indicators 2b and 2f in Inspecting Quality: Raising Standards as part of the IQ:RS review. | Revision of IQ:RS will be complete by earlier 2007 |