

BREAK GENDER STEREOTYPES, GIVE TALENT A CHANCE

Review of the national situation for the purpose of
the workshop in
UNITED KINGDOM

2009



Document produced in the framework of the Contract "Raising the awareness of companies about combating gender stereotypes", commissioned by the European Commission to the International Training Centre of the ILO in partnership with EUROCHAMBRES.

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The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

The programme has six general objectives:

- (1) to improve the knowledge and understanding of the situation prevailing in the Member States (and in other participating countries) through the analysis, evaluation and close monitoring of policies;*
- (2) to support the development of statistical tools and methods and common indicators, where appropriate broken down by gender and age group, in the areas covered by the programme;*
- (3) to support and monitor the implementation of Community law, where applicable, and policy objectives in the Member States, and assess their effectiveness and impact;*
- (4) to promote networking, mutual learning, identification and dissemination of good practices and innovative approaches at EU level;*
- (5) to enhance the awareness of the stakeholders and the general public about the EU's policies and objectives pursued under each of the policy sections;*
- (6) to boost the capacity of key EU networks to promote, support and further develop EU policies and objectives, where applicable.*

For further information, see: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_fr.html.

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FOREWORD

Does the European economy manage to make full use of its human capital?

The purpose of this document is to stimulate discussion of the above question from the perspective of gender equality.

This document has been prepared in the framework of “Raising the awareness of companies about combating gender stereotypes”, an EC initiative commissioned by the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, under a contract managed by the International Training Centre of the ILO in partnership with the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry (EUROCHAMBRES).

The initiative, which involves Chambers of Commerce and SME organisations in all EU Countries plus Iceland and Norway¹, aims at helping SMEs discern how overcoming gender stereotypes can have a positive impact on productivity and competitiveness.

The country reviews do not aim to provide an exhaustive picture of gender issues in the labour markets of the countries concerned. They aim rather to enrich with country-specific information the tools which the initiative offers to all those engaged in improving SME competitiveness and productivity. They provide comparable statistical data and qualitative information on the different ways in which women and men enter into, and make progress in employment and occupations in the various countries. They contain information on existing legislative provisions, public and private initiatives and good practice. Suggestions on the impact of gender stereotypes are also provided, to initiate dialogue and action at enterprise level.

The final aim is to offer concrete suggestions on how SMEs in the selected countries can overcome gender stereotypes and tap into the business potential of applying gender equality principles in practice.

¹ In 2008: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain. In 2009: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, United Kingdom

1. STATISTICS

Table 1: Statistical data

Demography and Employment	UNITED KINGDOM			EU27		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
1. Total population 2007 (figure in '000)	29,818	30,998	60,816	241,652	253,437	495,090
(Figure in %)	49.0	61.0	100.0	48.8	51.2	100.0
2. Life expectancy at birth 2005 (%)	76.9	81.1		75.4	81.5	:
3. Fertility rates 2005 (%)	1.80			1.51		
4. Employment rate 2007 (%)	77.3	65.5	71.3	72.5	58.3	65.4
5. Unemployment Rate 2007 (%)	5.5	4.9	5.2	6.5	7.8	7.1
6. Activity rate 2007 (%)	81.9	68.9	75.3	77.6	63.3	70.5
7. Youth unemployment rate 2007 (%)	16.0	12.7	14.4	15.2	15.8	15.5
8. Long term unemployment rate 2007 (%)	1.6	0.9	1.3	5.6	6.6	6.0
9. Part-time work 2006 (%)	8.0	38.1	22.9	4.4	25.8	14.4
10. Employees 2007q04 ('000)	13,022	12,379	25,401	97,869	86,205	184,074
11. Self-employment 2007q04 ('000)	2,136	846	2,983	15,543	7,423	22,966
12. Entrepreneurs 2007q04 ('000)	654	195	849	7,587	2,375	9,963
13. Average hourly pay 2002 (in €)	20.01	13.95	17.64	13.79 ^c	10.40 ^c	12.56 ^c
14. Gender Pay gap in unadjusted form 2006 ^g	21			15		
14.bis Gender Pay gap in unadjusted form 2007	21.1			17.4		
15. Participation in decision-making 2007						
National Parliaments (%)	80	20	100	76	24	100
President in largest publicly quoted companies (%)	98	2	100	97	3	100
Member of highest decision-making body in largest publicly quoted companies (%)	88	12	100	90	10	100
GEM Value 2007	0.783			:		
GEM Rank 2007	14			:		
16. Graduations of women and men in tertiary education 2004						
ISCED 5 (%)	41.9	58.1	100	40.8 ^c	59.2 ^c	100 ^c
(Ratio Women/Men)	1.4			1.4 ^c		
ISCED 6 (%)	56.9	43.1	100	56.8 ^c	43.2 ^c	100 ^c
(Ratio Women/Men)	0.8			0.8 ^c		
17. Single-headed households, 2005 (%)	16	21		14 ^c	14 ^c	
18. Children in childcare aged 0-2 years, 1-29hrs/30+hrs 2006 (%)	28/5			14/12		
19. Children in childcare aged 3 to mandatory school ages, 1-29hrs/30+hrs 2006 (%)	65/24			44/40		

NOTES: a - 2004, b - 2005, c - EU25, e - Estimation, g – The Pay Gap is the difference between men's and women's average gross hourly earnings as a percentage of men's average gross hourly earnings (for paid employees), p - Provisional, : - No data

Sources:

1: Eurostat Database

2, 3: Eurostat News Release, "A statistical illustration of the situation of women and men in the EU27", 32/2007, March 2007 and UNDP, Human Development Report 2007/08, Table 1

4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 European Commission, *Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines including indicators for additional employment analysis, 2008 compendium*

10, 11, 12: Eurostat Database

13: Eurostat, «Salaires bruts en Europe, Principaux résultats de l'enquête sur la structure des salaires 2002», *Statistiques en bref, population et conditions sociales*, 12/2005, Communautés européennes, 2005

14 : European Commission, *Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines including indicators for additional employment analysis, 2008 compendium*

14 bis: European Commission, *Report on equality between women and men 2009*

15: European Commission, DG EMPL, Database on women and men in decision-making and the Human Development Report 2007/2008 (for the GEM rank and value)

16, 17: European Commission, *The life of women and men in Europe – A statistical portrait*, Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2008

18, 19 (EU27 data): *staff working document accompanying the Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Implementation of the Barcelona objectives concerning childcare facilities for pre-school-age children* (COM (2008) 598).

2. SITUATION AND STEREOTYPES

2.1. WOMEN IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Women in the UK have enjoyed a long history of legislation designed to counter discrimination in access to work and support equal pay for work of equal value. British women play a large and active role in the labour market and in terms of comparisons with the EU as whole, British women generally have better access to education, training and employment.

Women's unemployment and long-term unemployment rates are lower than for their male counterparts. However 38.1% of employed women are engaged in part-time work as compared to 8% of men. This may point to a significant level of under-employment as distinct from unemployment.

There are several areas where, despite the initiatives and legislation, women still do not advance at the same rate as men and their average pay is less than three-quarters of that of men in the labour market (€13.95/hour compared to the male average of €20.10). Accordingly, the gender pay gap remains high; 21.1 in 2007, almost the same as before. The horizontal segregation of labour is partly responsible; British women tend to be located in the health, education and retail sectors which are generally worse-paid than employees of other sectors. In terms of vertical segregation it is clear that women in the UK are still significantly under-represented in senior and key decision-making positions and at Board level.

One of the current features of women's position in the labour market in the UK is the emerging evidence of reversal or interruption of progress. The annual index of women in positions of authority² indicates that, of the 25 categories, there are fewer women holding top positions in 12 categories, no change in five categories and of the remaining eight categories the changes are often one percentage point or less.

Compared with 2005 today there are fewer women in top positions such as at Westminster³ and in the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly; there are also fewer senior female police officers or women judges, and fewer women in top positions in the health service and local authorities (see Table 1 on statistical data).

PriceWaterhouseCoopers⁴ survey of the impact of the recession on women's corporate careers warns that the pipeline of female leadership for UK businesses could be seriously reduced; 60% of women surveyed believe that the adverse economic climate will reinforce the glass ceiling and over three-quarters say that they see redundancy as an opportunity to exit corporate life.

Where UK women lag behind other European counterparts is in entrepreneurship and self-employment. British women make up just over one-third of the total of self-employed British people (846,000 compared to 2,136,000 men) and less than one-third of British entrepreneurs (195,000 compared to 654,000 men)

² Adapted from: Equality and Human Rights Commission UK, *Sex and Power 2008 Report*, September 2008, available in pdf format on the website <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>

³ Ibid

⁴ PricewaterhouseCoopers 2009 global survey Women's recession, available on the website <http://www.ukmediacentre.pwc.com/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=3162&NewsAreaID=2>

2.2. OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION

In terms of horizontal segregation women are primarily concentrated in three occupational areas, health and social work (20.9 %), education (14.3%) and retailing (13.8%). Two of these sectors (retailing and hospitality) are the worst hit by job losses as a result of the current economic climate and indeed, in terms of the top seven sectors listed in Table 3, it is expected that in the UK's current economic and political climate there will be shrinkage in employment and in economic activity in all these sectors. However there has been a marked growth of activity and, in particular, of SME registration in the cultural and sporting sectors (listed as number 8 in Table 3), where 3% of British women of working age are actively engaged.

The creative industries (a sub-sector of the cultural and sporting sector) provides opportunities for employment and enterprise ownership for women, but the prevailing barriers have meant that women have not always been in a position to take up those opportunities. The lack of adequate gender-segregated data in relation to SME ownership and management posts has made it difficult to identify the real nature and extent of the exclusion of women.

Of working British women 2.5% are managers of small enterprises compared with 3.5% British men. Both of these figures are less than the EU averages of 2.9% and 4.4% respectively (for a further breakdown see Table 2: concentration of men and women in sectors of activity). For example female entrepreneurial activity increased across the West Midlands (a central region of England) between 2002 and 2007 from 3.3% to 3.9% (above the UK average). Women *established business ownership* is 24% in the West Midlands. This is the lowest of all the UK regions and less than the UK average (35%)⁵.

Identifying areas of potential growth for SMEs may provide a useful entry point in encouraging women to set up their own businesses and respond to the current un-level playing field in terms of business ownership. However the challenge of overcoming stereotypes relating to the nature of their business and stereotypical views of women and their business competence may still impede them from setting up a new company or accessing business finance.

Despite there being significant data on the numbers of businesses and employees and a number of forecasts of future labour, training and qualification needs, there is scant gender-disaggregated data, particularly on new businesses. The relative roles of women and men as business owners, managers and employees are unclear and there is no forum in which interested women and men can meet to discuss the potential obstacles facing under-represented groups and to share and discuss their needs.

⁵ Women's Enterprise Centre of Expertise (WECOE) 2009. Data and information about West Midlands Region are available on the website of the West Midlands Regional Observatory <http://www.wmro.org>. Interesting data concerning the Cultural Economy come from WMRO, *Culture and Prosperity The economic role of Culture in the West Midlands*, 2009, available on the website http://www.wmro.org/resources/res.aspx?p=/CmsResource/resourceFilename/2571/culture-prosperity-summary-reportfinal_LA.pdf.

Table 3: Country Segregation Index⁶

	Gender segregation in occupations	Gender segregation in economic sectors
UK	25.9	18.5
EU27	24.9	17.8

Source: European Commission, *Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines including indicators for additional employment analysis 2008 compendium*, pp. 52-53.

Table 4: Concentration of men and women in sectors of activity (NACE 2 digit)⁷

% of women employed in:	UK	EU25	% of men employed in:	UK	EU25
Health & Social work	20.9	17.2	Construction	13.1	13.0
Education	14.3	11.4	Retail trade	8.2	6.3
Retail trade	13.8	12.5	Business activities	7.4	6.1
Public administration	7.7	7.3	Public administration	6.5	7.2
Business activities	7.5	7.3	Health & Social work	4.8	4.0
Hotels & restaurants	5.1	5.1	Education	4.6	3.8
Financial intermediation	3.0	2.2	Land transport	3.8	4.2
Cultural & sporting activities	3.0	2.1	Hotels & restaurants	3.5	3.4
Other service activities	2.1	2.6	Wholesale trade	3.0	4.1
Wholesale trade	1.8	2.6	Vehicle sale & repair	3.0	3.2
Construction	1.8	1.5	Metal products	2.0	3.1
Manufactured food & beverages	1.0	2.2	Machinery	2.0	2.7
Agriculture	0.7	3.8	Agriculture	1.7	5.2
Private households	0.6	2.3	Manufactured food & beverages	1.7	2.5
Top 6	69.2	60.8	Top 6	44.8	41.9

Note: Persons aged 15 years and over. No distinction is made between private and public sectors. The top six relate to the EU average which may not coincide with the top six in each country. In the adaptation the occupations are ordered by the country importance of the sector in the country, but some important occupations might not appear.

Source: Adapted from "The concentration of women and men in Sectors of Activity", *Statistics in Focus publication (Population and Social Conditions, 53/2007 - NACE 2 digit)*, and for a comparison with EU aggregated data see "European Business: Facts and figures 2008", ISBN 978-92-79-07024-2 available from the Eurostat web page.

Research by Harding and Harding "The State of Women's enterprise in the UK" (2007)⁸ established that women are 50% less likely to set up a business than men. They are also less likely to believe they have the skills to set up a business and less likely to know other people who have set up in business. In 2007 female

⁶ The concentration of men and women in different occupations and economic sectors is measured with an occupational segregation index. Gender segregation in occupations is calculated as the average national share of employment for women and men applied to each occupation; differences are added together to produce the total amount of gender imbalance expressed as a proportion of total employment. Gender segregation in economic sectors is calculated as the average national share of employment for women and men applied to each sector; differences are added together to produce the total amount of gender imbalance expressed as a proportion of total employment.

⁷ NACE is an international classification of economic activities. The digits indicate the level of disaggregation. ISCO is an international classification of occupations: the higher the value the greater the level of disaggregation.

⁸ Harding R & Harding D (2007) *The State of Women's enterprise in the UK*, Prowess, available on the website <http://www.prowess.org.uk/documents/StateofWomensenterpriseintheukfinal.pdf>

entrepreneurship accounted for 3.6% of the UK female working adult population compared to 7.5% of the male equivalent. This figure has remained consistent over the last six years.

Women constitute 27% of those moving from employment to self-employment and the movement into self-employment is greater in traditionally female-dominated sectors such as care, education and community service. In the current economic climate 60% of women surveyed saw this as an opportunity to move out of the corporate sector.

Table 5: Occupational patterns of women’s and men’s employment (ISCO three digits)⁹

% of women employed as:	UK	EU25	% of men employed as:	UK	EU25
Personal care & related workers	11.7	6.6	Production & operations department managers	6.9	2.6
Shop salespersons & demonstrators	9.0	8.0	Motor vehicle drivers	5.3	5.2
Other office clerks	7.8	5.2	Building finishers & related trades workers	4.1	4.0
Domestic & related helpers, cleaners & launderers	6.0	7.6	Building frame & related trades workers	3.9	4.7
Secretaries & keyboard-operating clerks	5.1	3.7	Architects, engineers & related professionals	3.6	3.1
Nursing & midwifery associate professionals	3.6	2.6	Managers of small enterprises	3.6	4.4
Finance & sales associate professionals	3.2	2.9	Finance & sales associate professionals	3.6	3.3
Housekeeping & restaurant services workers	3.0	3.9	Shop salespersons & demonstrators	3.5	2.6
Managers of small enterprises	2.5	2.9	Machinery mechanics & fitters	3.1	3.5
Administrative associate professionals	0.3	4.4	Physical & engineering science technicians	1.6	3.6
Top 6	44.4	35.6	Top 6	30.8	25.5

Note: The top six relate to the EU average which may not coincide with the top six in each country. In the adaptation the occupations are ordered by the country importance of the sector in the country, but some important occupations might not appear.

Source: Adapted from “The concentration of women and men in Sectors of Activity”, *Statistics in Focus, Population and Social Conditions 53/2007*.

The introduction to the 2008 Sex and Power report gives the following explanation: **“The report traditionally estimates the number of years it will take for women to achieve equality in key areas at the present rate of progress. This year’s report indicates it will now take 15 years longer (55 years in total) for women to achieve equal status at senior levels in the judiciary, and women directors in FTSE 100 companies could be waiting eight years longer (73 years in total). If women were to achieve equal representation among Britain’s 31,000 top positions of power, the Commission estimates that over 5,600 ‘missing’ women would rise through the ranks to positions of real influence.”¹⁰**

⁹ ISCO is an international classification of occupations. The digits also indicate the level of disaggregation: the higher the value the greater the level of disaggregation.

¹⁰ Sex and Power Report (2008) Equality and Human Rights commission

Table 6: Distribution of managers by sex in EU Member States – 2001 and 2006 (%)

	Women	Men	Women	Men
	2001		2006	
United Kingdom	31.0	69.0	34.8	65.2
EU27	30.1	69.9	32.6	67.4

Note: EU aggregate for 2001 is the value for EU-25 and not EU-27.

Source: Adapted from the *Report on equality between women and men*, pp.32. (European Commission, 2008. ISCO 12 and 13).

2.3. THE ROLE OF SMES

There are approximately 26 SMEs per 1,000 inhabitants in the United Kingdom, which is below the EU-27 average of almost 40. Consequently SMEs appear to play a slightly less important role in the economy of the United Kingdom than in the EU on average. The share of SMEs in total employment as well as in overall value-added is lower. Nonetheless SMEs in the UK (as elsewhere in Europe) form the backbone of the economy as the number of SMEs in the UK (almost 1,6 million) is – in absolute terms – one of the largest in the EU¹¹.

“Entrepreneurs are the lifeblood of any economy. As change agents, they (???) the means by which the whole economic systems adapt to new technologies, new ways of working and new ways of delivering and producing goods and services. Through the markets they create or change they are the cogs in the engine of economic development. Through the jobs and wealth they create, they are also the cogs in the engine of economic growth”¹²

Some facts and figures:

- ☆ Only 2% of men cite family commitments as a reason for becoming self-employed compared with 21% of women.
- ☆ 80% of women-led businesses are in the service sector, compared with 70% of all other businesses (jointly- or male-led).
- ☆ Women-owned businesses tend to be smaller than male-owned businesses. 89% of all women-owned companies are micro-enterprises (employing less than 10 people) compared to 82% of all male-owned companies.

The UK Government has played an active role in stimulating the level of activity and degree of awareness regarding women’s enterprise¹³ through the Strategic Framework for Women’s Enterprise (2003), the Women’s Enterprise Task force (established in 2006), and through the March 2008 commitment to a £12.5 million co-investment for funding regional women’s business centres to support business women.

Currently there is inadequate data regarding;

- market failures experienced by growth-orientated women owned businesses;
- the growth path of women owned or managed businesses;
- barriers and challenges for women owned businesses compared to men owned businesses;

¹¹ Data available from ONS Inter Departmental Business Register, http://www.detini.gov.uk/cgi-bin/get_builder_page?page=4182&site=4&parent=57&prevpage=4654

¹² Steady as She Grows, National Policy Centre for Women’s Enterprise, Evidence Paper, (2009) Delta Economics, Prowess, available on the website <http://www.prowesspolicycentre.org.uk/library/display/79>

¹³ <http://www.equalities.gov.uk/>

- comparisons of the degrees of innovation in women- and men-owned businesses;
- Sectoral basis of women owned business.

The lack of qualitative and quantitative data impedes government at national and regional levels to understand the contribution and value of SMEs. It also hampers their ability to respond to the particular needs of entrepreneurs and SME owners. According the National Policy Centre For Women's Enterprise Evidence Paper - Steady as She Grows Report: *"...many of the assumptions about women-owned businesses are based on broad, anecdotal stereotypes: that women are under-represented, that they are less confident and that their businesses suffer from systemic failings and intrinsic gender bias which cannot be overcome through policy"*

If women started businesses at the same rate as men there would be 150,000 new businesses each year, creating many new jobs. Global Enterprise Monitor (GEM) UK data concluded that women are half as likely to start businesses as their male counterparts. If only this were not the case it would not only be good for the economy as a whole, but might also have particular benefits for other small companies. In an analysis of over two million companies in 2007, Creditsafe found that companies run by women directors pay their invoices on average 49% more quickly than those with only men in control¹⁴.

2.4 GENDER STEREOTYPES

With increasing numbers of women graduating with degrees it appears that younger women are still being directed to sectors and occupations that are traditionally feminised. Why should this be? It would appear that gender stereotypes underpinning social expectations still exist even if they are not always immediately evident.

Women make up a large part of the active work force and their contribution is critical to the country's economic success. So what are the factors that contribute to the current reported¹⁵ reversal of women's progress in the labour market and in senior decision-making positions? One factor is gender stereotypes and workplace discrimination that establish often subtle and invisible expectations and limits on the roles and responsibilities women and men can play. Even where women form the majority of employees in a sector, the statistics demonstrate they do not hold a majority of decision-making positions. According to the Sex and Power Report 2008 *"Workplaces, political systems and other parts of society – forged in an era of 'stay at home mums' and 'breadwinner dads' have failed to keep pace with the reality of modern women's and men's lives. For women at every level of work, this failure leads to a squandering of talent, the most glaring example of which is the lack of women in positions of power"*.

Sometimes challenging gender stereotypes proves difficult as many companies do not disaggregate their data to help them understand what really happens inside their organisation. As a consequence companies adopt, at best, "gender-blind" policies and do not recognise the obstacles that exist. If the obstacles are not recognised or do not appear to exist, then the company is in no position to challenge the status quo. So when advances are made – by happy coincidence rather than clear intention and planning - complacency can set in and the company have a false sense of achievement. If there is no understanding of how gender stereotypes are manifested, there is a danger that those advances that have been achieved may be as

¹⁴ Report from Creditsafe can be found on their website at www.creditsafeuk.com

¹⁵ Sex and Power report 2008

quickly lost. It would be wrong to say there are no examples of success stories of sustainable development favouring gender equality, but the original journey toward gender equality in the UK will certainly take longer than originally expected, and without clear understanding of how to sustain the gains made there is a danger that progress will ultimately be rolled back.

3. SUCCESS STORIES

Punch Records¹⁶

Punch Records was founded in the Perry Barr area of Birmingham in 1997 by Ammo Talwar. The shop began as a black music record store, and also a place where underground DJs from the West Midlands could demonstrate their mixing and rapping abilities. At this stage the complete workforce of Punch records was male, which was and is not unusual in the music industry.

Ammo recalls the male and competitive environment of the early days of Punch and it was not until the recruitment of a female Assistant Director that Ammo began to appreciate what difference women could bring to the typically male environment of the management of a music business.

Workshops for children were later added as part of Punch's outreach programme and were used by local schools. From there Birmingham City Council became involved and have since used Punch for various events including a road show in Centenary Square during Birmingham's European Capital of Culture 2008 bid.

The transformation of Punch Records began with a quiet internal revolution from an all male workforce to an all female workforce. In 2002 the success of the record shop led its owner, Ammo, to relocate to the Custard Factory complex in Digbeth where the company now runs rhythm, song writing, music production, poetry, lyrics, dance, street art, and photography and percussion lessons for the local community, schools and youth centres. Ammo said "This was not a conscious decision to recruit women, but I can see that what the women managers bring is different, I would not say its better or worse, but it is different and in terms of the business it is what we need. At this stage in the growth of Punch we need to be able to collaborate and listen to a wide range of ideas and perspectives, this makes us stronger".

Ammo Talwar was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Honours list 2008 for his contribution to music and young people in the West Midlands.

The Development Alchemists¹⁷

The Development Alchemists is a Training and Organisation Development Company working out of bases in the UK and Italy. The Development Alchemists was founded in 2001 by Lenni George and is now co-run by Lenni and her partner Nat Clegg. Being a small enterprise The Development Alchemists recognised that retaining talented people is important. *"In 2003 we reviewed some of our approaches to people management. We tried to think what flexibility and family friendly really means."*

The stereotype The Development Alchemists challenged was that working mothers take too much time off to look after children (or for those matter elderly dependants). By analysing the problem they concluded that in fact it is company inflexibility that causes the problem: "One of the things we understand is that

¹⁶ General information about the company available on the website <http://www.punch-records.co.uk>

¹⁷ General information about the company available on the website <http://www.dev-chemist.com>

how you define the problem affects the solutions you identify. So if having a family and family commitments is the problem, clearly the solution is to recruit people that do not have family commitments. The obvious impact of this stereotype is that so many good people will be lost to the company. So in challenging the stereotype we redefined the problem; it does not need time to meet commitments outside of work that is the problem, it is the lack of flexibility within the company.”

The Development Alchemists identified a simple and cost-free solution. Instead of having set hours per week, the Development Alchemists have set hours per month: *“We are a small team so it is easy to communicate when time off is needed. This approach doesn’t just benefit working mums - it benefits working dads too. We found that it works really well people are always prepared to give and take, that’s something about the climate we have created. It also means we have very low turn-over of staff – the edge we have over companies is not high salaries or luxurious offices but a knowledge that we can be truly flexible and this is something all our staff appreciate.”*

It is not always easy to plan and organise in a truly flexible way; Nat Clegg reflected that *“It may not be possible for all jobs to operate in this way and of course making sure that business needs are not jeopardised are important realities, but actually we’ve found that for pretty much all of the jobs we have increased flexibility has brought about loyalty, commitment and a reduced turnover rather than caused us any real problems in delivering our services and meeting our clients needs”*

4. SUPPORT

Below is a summary of the main tools and mechanisms provided to support equality between men and women in the UK labour market.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) protects people from discrimination on grounds of sex and marital status. Exceptions to the Act include genuine occupational requirements. Employers will be able to recruit staff on the basis of a genuine occupational requirement if it can be shown that it is a genuine and determining requirement of the job to be of a particular gender¹⁸.

Equal Pay Act (EPA) 1970 (Amendment) Regulations 2003 - The Equal Pay Act (EPA) 1970 (Amendment) Regulations 2003 introduced two amendments to the EPA. It allowed the six-month time limit for bringing equal pay claims to be extended in cases of concealment or disability. It also allowed for the two-year limit on back pay to be extended to up to six years in cases of concealment and disability. The Regulations came into force on 19 July 2003¹⁹.

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 - Age discrimination in employment and training became unlawful on 1 October 2006. The University’s policy on age equality will be available on the Diversity section of the HR website²⁰.

Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998 - This Act incorporates into domestic law rights laid down under the European Convention of Human Rights. Individuals can bring claims under the HRA against public authorities for breaches of Convention rights. UK courts and tribunals are required to interpret domestic law, as far as possible, in accordance with Convention rights. Previous case law may be overturned if there

¹⁸ http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1975/pdf/ukpga_19750065_en.pdf

¹⁹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1970/pdf/ukpga_19700041_en.pdf

²⁰ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/20061031.htm

is a breach of Convention rights and the relevant law can be re-interpreted in a way which is compatible with Convention rights. Convention rights include a right not to be discriminated against on non-exhaustive grounds, which include that of sex, where another Convention right is engaged²¹.

Equality Act 2006 - The Equality Act has three functions:

- To create a single Commission which will replace the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) and the Disability Rights Commission (DRC). This single Commission will be called the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR).
- To make unlawful (apart from certain exemptions), discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief or sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services; management of premises; education; and exercise of public functions.
- To impose a duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity between men and women and to prohibit sex discrimination in the workplace²².

In 2003 the first Strategic Framework for Women's Enterprise²³ aimed to stimulate activity and awareness of women's enterprise issues. The women's Enterprise Task force was established in 2006, and in 2008 published commitments to a £12.5 million co-investment fund and to development of regional Women's business centres in support of women entrepreneurs and business owners.

The Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform's Enterprise Strategy announced significant changes in order to support women in developing businesses. These included:

- ☆ a high profile media campaign;
- ☆ working with Regional Development Agencies to develop new Women's Business Centres to promote enterprise skills and know-how;
- ☆ provision, through the National Policy Centre for Women's Enterprise, of a "one stop shop" for women's enterprise research and policy thinking;
- ☆ provision of national mentoring and investor-readiness schemes and networks;
- ☆ establishment of the Aspire fund, earmarking up to £12.5m of public funds to be matched with £12.5m of private money to focus on women-owned or women-managed businesses seeking growth finance.

²¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1998/ukpga_19980042_en_1

²² www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/pdf/ukpga_20060003_en.pdf

²³ <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file38358.pdf>

ACRONYMS

UK	United Kingdom
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EU25	The 25 Member Countries of the European Union (from May 2004 to December 2006)
EU27	The 27 Member Countries of the European Union (as from January 2007)
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
NACE	Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSI	National Statistics Institute, Bulgaria
SME(s)	Small and Medium Enterprise(s)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme