

HOUSE OF COMMONS
ORAL EVIDENCE
TAKEN BEFORE THE
BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

TUESDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2012

DANNA WALKER, PROFESSOR JANE DACRE AND SHEILA WILD

DIANE JOHNSON, BOLA FATIMILEHIN AND CLARE WALKER

MIKE BUCHANAN, STEVEN MOXON, DR CATHERINE HAKIM AND DR HEATHER
MCGREGOR

Evidence heard in Public

Questions 1 - 85

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Oral Evidence

Taken before the Business, Innovation and Skills Committee

on Tuesday 20 November 2012

Members present:

Mr Adrian Bailey (Chair)
 Katy Clark
 Mike Crockart
 Caroline Dinenage
 Rebecca Harris
 Ann McKechin
 Mr Robin Walker
 Nadhim Zahawi

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Danna Walker**, Chair, Architects for Change, **Professor Jane Dacre**, Royal College of Physicians, and **Sheila Wild**, Consultant, gave evidence.

Q1 Chair: Good morning and welcome to you. Thank you for agreeing to give evidence to the Committee. Just to start with, for voice transcription purposes I would ask you to introduce yourselves, starting with Danna on my left.

Danna Walker: Good morning. My name is Danna Walker and I am the Chair of Architects for Change, which is RIBA's Equality and Diversity committee.

Professor Jane Dacre: Good morning. I am Professor Jane Dacre and I am here representing the Royal College of Physicians.

Sheila Wild: Good morning. I am Sheila Wild; I am now a freelance equalities consultant and equal-pay expert, but for over 30 years I was at both of the statutory equality commissions.

Q2 Chair: Thank you very much. Obviously, some of the questions that we will ask will be put to you collectively, as a team; others may specify certain members of the panel. When asked collective questions, do not feel that all of you have to answer all of the questions if you are repeating what somebody else has said. Obviously, I would not wish to put you off if you feel the need to add to or subtract from what somebody has said, but I am conscious of the time. I recognise that you may well have strong feelings about things, and sometimes that does lead to an element of loquacity.

This is to all of you: do you think the public sector equality duty, section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, could be used more effectively to address inequality in pay in the public sector? Who would like to lead on that?

Sheila Wild: Yes, I think it could. What is needed to make it effective is a very clear message that it is expected to be used. I have heard—particularly from local authorities at the moment—that the message is a bit blurred: it is there but you do not have to take any notice of it. It should be made clear that this is there for a very positive purpose. That is the first thing: the message must match the tool. Secondly, there must be regular monitoring of what is going on. My experience over many years is that nothing focuses the mind better than someone actually checking up on you. It should not be heavy-handed checking up, but it

should look at who is doing it, who is not doing it, what the characteristics are of the organisations who are doing things well and what the characteristics are of those who are doing it less well. It requires clear messages and monitoring.

Q3 Chair: Have either of the other two panellists anything to add to or subtract from that?

Professor Jane Dacre: To echo that, clear messages and monitoring are needed. There is evidence from the public sector, the health service and the university sector, where I work, that monitoring is not necessarily being carried out effectively. For example, I have examples of men-only shortlists for high-powered jobs and that kind of thing. Transparency and monitoring are absolutely crucial.

Danna Walker: I have nothing to add to that.

Q4 Chair: I have a couple of quick supplementary questions on what you have said. It was interesting that you mentioned local authorities, because generally speaking the pay gap is less in local authorities than in the private sector. There is a considerable body of evidence to say that local authorities—in some cases kicking and screaming—have actually had to implement equal pay policies. My second supplementary question is this: who should do the monitoring?

Sheila Wild: With regards to local authorities, yes. One of the reasons why local authorities did do so well is that they were monitored. They were monitoring themselves and they were being monitored by the Equal Opportunities Commission. I do not know whether they are still monitoring themselves; I do know they are no longer being monitored as effectively by the Equality and Human Rights Commission as they were by the Equal Opportunities Commission. However, I am not here to act as an advocate for the former Equal Opportunities Commission.

In terms of the public-sector/private-sector divide on equal pay, there are many reasons why the public sector has a narrower pay gap. Generally, pay dispersion in the public sector is much narrower than it is in the private sector. There are far fewer of the lowest paid jobs and far fewer of the highest paid jobs. That automatically narrows the pay gap. There are also payment systems that—at least in terms of their basic pay—are transparent. You and I and any of us in this room can go and look up what people are paid in terms of their basic pay. Where cases have been taken in the public sector, they have been about opaque payments: bonuses and plus payments and so on.

There is a lot about the public sector that narrows its pay gap. If we add to that the fact that the public sector did set itself certain standards of behaviour arising from the gender equality duty and their general wish to be seen as exemplar employers, it all tends to help narrow the pay gap.

Q5 Chair: Jane, did you wish to comment?

Professor Jane Dacre: I work in the public sector and I echo what Sheila says. Although publicised salaries may need to be equal, the way those salaries filter down to the women in the jobs suggests that they are not equal. There was some research done by the Medical Women's Federation, together with the BMA, approximately a year ago—which I can provide you with if you like—that shows even within the public sector there is still a gender pay gap in the health services.

Q6 Chair: We would welcome any supplementary evidence that you could provide.

Professor Jane Dacre: I will make sure you get that.

Q7 Chair: Do you think this public sector equality duty could be used by the public sector in the private sector through public procurement? We could take it at both a national and a local-authority level. Sheila, you look as if you are bursting to lead on that.

Sheila Wild: I have to give a very mixed answer to that. I think it is perfectly possible to use the public sector equality duty through procurement. It is very difficult to use the public sector equality duty through procurement to close the gender pay gap. Procurement must be as simple as possible for the people using it. It is not really feasible to ask the kind of detailed questions that would elicit what people were doing about their pay gaps. I think there is a lot of use of the public sector equality duty through procurement. You can certainly ask questions about the positioning of women within the organisation that is putting in the tender, but I do not think you can specifically say, “Have you done this, this and this in terms of your pay system or whatever?”

Q8 Chair: I am trying to summarise my interpretation of what you have said. You do not feel that it is possible to be prescriptive, but you could still ask specific questions of those who are tendering. I am not altogether clear: if you cannot do anything about it, what is the point of asking the question?

Sheila Wild: It is because the gender pay gap is just one component of a broader field of gender disadvantage. To close the gender pay gap in terms of pay itself requires, for example, asking, “Have you done an equal pay audit?” The answer could be yes, but that would tell you absolutely nothing about the quality and scope of that audit. It could give you a misleading positive or, indeed, a misleading negative response. Having said that, information about the positioning of women within the organisation is something every organisation has, because gender information has to be collected for national insurance and tax purposes. The position of women in the organisation does have a very big influence on the size of the gender pay gap within that organisation. You can get to the pay gap obliquely. What I am trying to do is keep it simple for the people who are doing the tendering because—certainly if you want to open up procurement to small and medium-sized organisations—you cannot overburden them with questions.

Q9 Ann McKechin: This is to Danna in the first instance. There is a line of thought that in some occupations cultural or corporate behaviour acts as a discouragement to women. I wondered—from your own experience in architecture, construction and engineering—whether you think those sorts of barriers exist at the present time.

Danna Walker: Yes, I would agree with that. There are cultural barriers: women are underrepresented in architecture and construction. Overall, in construction women represent about 13.5% of the industry. Within architecture the figures are a little better. Female architects represent about 20% of that particular sector. The culture within architecture is one of long hours and presenteeism. The ways that people are recruited into the sector—as with many of the professions—is that some positions are advertised and some are not. Networking and submitting CVs, etc, are the methods by which people come into the industry. However, I would say it is not as clear or as structured as some other industries when it comes to understanding how the industry works.

Culturally, there is a lack of agility within the construction sector. By that, I mean opportunities to work in a flexible way. I think that could be changed. The opportunities of something like building information modelling—BIM, which requires people to work in a much more collaborative way and offers remote working—could be very useful in changing the culture. However, the culture is much more about people than technology. The technology to work remotely exists but it has not been taken up by the industry.

Q10 Ann McKechin: One of the problems is encouraging women to come into these professions—or even jobs in the construction sector.

Danna Walker: Absolutely.

Ann McKechin: I suppose if you look and analyse it, you will probably find women doing the secretarial or administrative work, or in human resources, rather than being involved on the technical and engineering side. Would that be a fair comment?

Danna Walker: That would be a fair comment. When we look at the figures right across the industry, the supply chain and the support roles are usually taken into consideration. Looking at the figures just for architecture, they are much more focused on the technical roles. In terms of architectural education at the moment, we are seeing an increase in the number of women participating. For architectural education it is around 40% to 44% in terms of participation. What we do see is a drop-off once education is finished because the culture for many women is a turn-off—as well as the low opportunities in terms of career progression, low pay and pay disparity.

Q11 Ann McKechin: Is there anything that has been done within the industry to tackle that behaviour? Is there any recognition that if 40% of students coming in to architecture, for example, are now women, the profession will have to make a systematic change in the way it operates?

Danna Walker: There are small and innovative projects, but it is not co-ordinated across the country, so you cannot necessarily access some of those projects and interventions across the UK. At the strategic level, coming out of the construction leadership forum that was instigated by the EHRC report, there is something called the Construction Industry Leadership Group for Fairness, Inclusion and Respect, which has the participation of many of the main contractors as well as professional bodies and analyses these questions from a strategic perspective. However, it will take time for those changes to actually come through to the industry.

Q12 Nadhim Zahawi: Before I come on to questions on the stereotyping of jobs, I would go back to your point, Sheila, about the inequality that occurs around bonuses and the more opaque ways of remuneration. Is there a role for greater transparency and almost compelling both the private to public sectors to publish more of their audits so that people can very clearly see their position within an organisation?

Sheila Wild: Yes, there is a need for several things. First of all, there is a need for national statistics to be disaggregated on grounds of gender. I have recently had an exchange of correspondence with the Office for National Statistics about this, because they very recently produced a briefing on bonus payments that was not gender-disaggregated. This means we cannot tell what is happening, and yet their own figures show that this is where the pay gap is at its deepest. The financial services sector is actually a regulated sector, so it is possible to do something. Wherever you have a sector that is regulated, obviously regulation is an option. There is a tendency throughout our culture and economy at the moment towards greater transparency on pay. If we could just remind ourselves to apply a gender lens to this transparency all of the time, we could go quite a long way.

Q13 Nadhim Zahawi: It is a powerful way to do that—nudging people in the right direction.

Sheila Wild: Yes. People ask questions. Why are all the highest earners men? There could be a perfectly legitimate reason for it, but somebody needs to ask the question and you cannot ask the question if you do not have the information.

Professor Jane Dacre: I completely agree. I think transparency goes a long way towards resolving these kinds of issues, because I do not think that people have deliberately created this situation. It has happened because of a series of sociological effects over many years. To hold a mirror up and say, “This is a result of that,” means that people are more likely to do something about it.

Danna Walker: The majority of architects work in the private sector, and the cultural traditions are that when a job is advertised it is usually not advertised with a salary range at all. It says “salary negotiated” or “to be confirmed”. I saw one advert that said “great lifestyle” under the salary section; make of that what you will.

However, what that means is that even at the earliest stage of your architecture career, you are expected to go in and have a salary negotiation. What you do not know is what people within that particular practice or consultancy are already earning, so you can find yourself falling into a situation where there is pay disparity and it is not clear; you actually have to get the job and start speaking to people to understand what the situation is. If there could be more transparency, particularly for the private sector, that would be helpful.

Q14 Nadhim Zahawi: Is that not changing? I remember from during my time before entering this place that there were several dotcom initiatives where people anonymously posted what salaries were paid at Oracle and Microsoft and architectural firms. This grew very rapidly, and people could see, when they were going for a job interview, what the bands were, even though the organisation was a bit reluctant to provide that information. Is there a role for the wisdom of crowds in this?

Danna Walker: Yes, absolutely. I think it has improved because that sort of information is being passed around. I think as a student architect you would have to understand and look for it, but once you are in the profession you understand how it works and it can get better. However, even within the bands that they are suggesting, what we have seen is that typically women are at the lower end of those bands.

Q15 Nadhim Zahawi: You addressed a point to Ann McKechin about the challenges to entry into the architectural and construction worlds. My question to you is on the inequalities of pay and progression once you are in. Why do you think those exist? I understand the entry point, where it is seen as a male profession due to the hours and all of the other stuff you have told us about, but why, once you are in, is there still that lingering gap in pay and progression?

Danna Walker: I think one of the issues is where you start. That initial salary negotiation, depending on how it goes, sets your level. When you have your annual reviews, then you will receive increments based on the base level that you started at, so you may be starting at a lower level than everyone else and it therefore persists.

Q16 Nadhim Zahawi: The problem starts on day one; you are already at a disadvantage and you carry that through your career?

Danna Walker: Exactly.

Q17 Nadhim Zahawi: That is interesting. Other than the obvious step, which is not starting at a disadvantage, is there anything else that could be done to remove some of these inequalities?

Danna Walker: In terms of some of the points that have been raised, greater awareness both on the employers’ and the employees’ part would help particularly. I think people often are unaware of the Act and how it can impact on them; that would certainly help.

Q18 Nadhim Zahawi: I have a quick question for you, Jane. Is there evidence of women moving into different specialisms from men?

Professor Jane Dacre: Yes, definitely. We have a situation in medicine—some of it led by cultural stereotypes—where if, for example, I asked you which parts of the medical profession women would choose to go into, you probably would not say surgery. That is because there is a recognition in the field that those parts of the profession are less comfortable for women to work in. I am not going to speculate as to why, but in medicine there is very clear evidence, which was found when we looked at a report on women in medicine that was published in 2009, that women tend to go into primary care and general practice; men tend to go into the more technological fields like interventional radiology or surgery.

It is interesting to look at why this happens. There are those who say that it is a career choice and there are those who say there are barriers in some areas. Obviously you cannot completely generalise, but if you are heading in a particular career trajectory and you see a barrier in front of you, you might make a choice to go into a field of practice that will be more comfortable for you and where you may have more of a peer group. That may be why, when the study was done, only approximately 8% of surgical consultants were women. I think 42% of partners in primary care were women. There is gender segregation.

Q19 Rebecca Harris: I find medicine quite an interesting field in terms of this debate, because I think I am right in saying that the majority of medical students, now, are female.

Professor Jane Dacre: Yes, 60% of them are.

Rebecca Harris: Whereas 40 years ago that would not have been the case. If we had been having this conversation 40 years ago, medicine would have also been included as one of those careers women do not go into—along with engineering. What has happened? What is different? Why have we managed to make that shift in medicine?

Professor Jane Dacre: It is complicated. Some of it is to do with women doing better at school. Women are achieving the entry requirements for medicine because in chemistry, which is our flagship subject, they are doing extremely well. They are getting in.

I think the requirements for a career in medicine have been more explicitly explained to people who are coming in. The caring and compassionate side of medicine has come to the forefront and that attracts girls. There have also been equality moves. Clever girls used to be nurses; now clever girls become doctors.

I think another influence that is quite interesting—and it will be interesting to see how it pans out—is that fewer clever boys, actually, when we did the study, were going into medicine. If you look at what motivates young men and young women, young women have more of a professional, caring outlook; young men are more focused on finance. The rise of the banking and the dotcom industries attracted some young men out of medicine. Now that this is all changing, it will be very interesting to review and to see whether the percentage of women and men equals out.

At the moment, it is running at about 60:40 in favour of women, but I suspect it may even out a little bit more, so that in the end we will have equality in terms of numbers who qualify. What we do not have is equality in terms of the numbers who reach the top. I am a female clinical academic. Only 15% of clinical academics are women. It is 60% at the bottom, but only 15% in some specialities at the top, at professorial level.

Q20 Mr Walker: Jane, you were awarded the Women of Achievement award in 2012, which is given to women in senior positions who help people in their profession. I was

wondering if you could give us some examples of the cases with which people came to you for help and what you were able to do to help people.

Professor Jane Dacre: I think perhaps the root of the Women of Achievement award was when I was invited by the Royal College of Physicians to chair a research steering group into women in medicine. I became somebody that people would seek out. Because I am in a senior position, I have very explicitly said the things that need to be said in meetings where I am the only women, such as, “Why is this meeting at 7.30 in the morning? How do you expect people to get their children to school and come to it?”

Another thing was to ensure that on appointments committees there was an equality of men and women doing the appointing. I also have set up a mentoring programme for women academics—I have mentored a number of people individually myself—that offers guidance on how to get academic promotion, how to survive in the workplace, but also how to manage having three children and a career. I had to work out on my own how to do that. It is about supporting people, and then providing a network of empowered people who then cascade it out and support each other.

Q21 Mr Walker: What do you think needs to be done to help women who want to become physicians and progress to that academic level? As you say, there does not seem to be a problem attracting people into the profession; it is more a matter of seeing them through.

Professor Jane Dacre: There is a piece of work being led at the moment by Ruth Deech. She did a report for the Chief Medical Officer—I think it was also in 2009—looking at things that might attract women up to senior positions. One of the big issues that keeps coming up is affordable childcare. There should be encouragement and the opportunity of having childcare during working hours and, for doctors, during flexible hours, because we work around the clock. That is a big thing.

One of the issues that keeps coming up and going away, because nobody knows what to do about it, is taxation on childcare: how do you encourage women to come back to work when it is really so expensive and you have to pay out of your taxed income? That is a big question. There is also the issue of mentorship and encouraging both organisations and the people within those organisations to recognise that it is appropriate to promote women to senior positions, recognising that if you are a lone woman amongst a whole team of men, maybe you do not want to go to the pub or play golf in order to do your networking. There are fewer networking opportunities for women.

This piece of work led by Ruth Deech is ongoing and is coming up with recommendations. They have gone back to the organisations that were stakeholders originally and asked, “What are you doing about this? What are you doing about this?” In fact, there is a meeting today—I am not there because I am here—discussing how people are getting on. One example of success in that area is Sally Davies, the Chief Medical Officer, who has said to all academic institutions that they need to have at least an Athena SWAN Silver award. To précis what that is, Athena SWAN is an organisation that supports the promotion of female academics; they provide awards for people when they demonstrate success in that. Sally Davies did this after doing some interviews for senior academic posts across the medical schools in the UK and finding a lamentably low number of women put forward for these senior posts. She has said, “Right, you will not be considered unless you have achieved this Silver award.” Those kinds of interventions are very helpful.

Q22 Mr Walker: Obviously, you mention the different choices of careers for physicians; how much of that do you think is related to the ability to work part-time or to take on more flexible working? Indeed, with surgery as well there is often a challenge with being able to take a career break.

Professor Jane Dacre: It is a mixed picture. In the work that we did, we found some careers in medicine that are not necessarily part-time but can be planned. If you are mainly in outpatient clinics and you can plan what you do, those kinds of careers seem to suit women. Women are also attracted to careers that have more patient contact and consultation, whereas for things like surgery, if somebody ruptures something in the middle of the night you have to drop everything and go, which is more difficult for women. Women tend to choose things that can be planned.

Women are also the majority of people who work part-time in the health service. Interestingly, their part time is two-thirds of full time, so their part time is around 60%. If you look at the careers of men and women, women contribute 60% of the 100% during their careers; men only contribute 80%. Part-time work levels are higher for women, but it is not very part time. It allows them to do the internet shopping or the practical things where there are still societal expectations that women have to do more than men.

Q23 Mr Walker: I have one last question. In the written evidence that we received from the Royal College of Physicians there are a lot of statistics. One that seems slightly surprising is that a higher proportion of men than women said that they had had problems negotiating their contracts. Do you have any explanation for that?

Professor Jane Dacre: I only have an anecdotal explanation, which is that they are the ones that have the confidence to negotiate their contract. Women tend to be a bit more reticent about negotiating their pay.

Q24 Ann McKechin: Is there a cultural thing that if women go into part-time work they are considered, at a later stage in their careers, as being not as serious as those who have been full time throughout?

Professor Jane Dacre: Yes.

Q25 Ann McKechin: Understandably, people have care obligations. It might not just be for young children; people increasingly have to look after their elderly parents. If people take a part-time job, do they realise that has put a stop to them ever at any future date, even 10 years hence, starting to be confident in applying for the top jobs in their particular career projection?

Professor Jane Dacre: Yes, I think that is true. I am not sure it stops you, but you have to be pretty determined to get back on to that ladder. There is certainly a culture, as Danna said, of presenteeism, and there is no doubt that people who have prioritised their family commitments when they have young children are culturally regarded as less serious candidates. I recently examined a PhD where that was one of the main themes coming out of the qualitative research: that women who had worked part-time in order to have children were taken less seriously in the workplace and were more likely, as a result of that, to develop psychological issues about their work-life balance.

Q26 Mr Walker: I have a question for Danna. How has the economic downturn over the last few years affected female employment and pay levels in the architecture profession?

Danna Walker: What we have seen through the Future Trend Survey, which is done by RIBA, the Royal Institute of British Architects, is that in around 2009, when they looked at the numbers of women in practice, women made up about 28% of those in practice. When they returned to do the survey in 2011, that figure dropped to 21%. Although that is a shift of 7% in terms of men, it is actually about a quarter of women that are now not engaged in practice.

Q27 Mr Walker: Does that reflect an overall fall in the number of people in practice or is that something that is falling much more sharply for women than men?

Danna Walker: It has fallen more sharply, but it would be true to say the industry has been very heavily impacted by the recession.

Q28 Mr Walker: What do you think can be done to mitigate that and to recover the position and hopefully start moving beyond the 20s in percentage terms?

Danna Walker: Anecdotally, what seems to be happening—and this happened in the last recession—is more women thinking that they would actually like to start their own practices, not only to address the fact that they might not be able to get work with somebody else, but also to work in a mode of practice that suits them, because you can set your working hours and how you work with the client, which can be difficult to do if someone else is your employer.

Q29 Chair: Can I just clarify something? What you are saying is that the drop may be attributed to female architects deciding to set up their own businesses rather than just disappearing into the unemployed architects' pool?

Danna Walker: What I am saying is that in terms of practice overall—whether you own your own business or not—the drop has been about 25%. People are going from being in work to not being in work. However, one of the things that we are seeing is that female architects are seeking to set up their own practices to deal with that issue.

Q30 Chair: In totality, does that 25% figure reflect the actual drop of practising female architects?

Danna Walker: At this point we would say yes, because most of the architecture community is in SME practices, so that is who RIBA would have surveyed.

Q31 Chair: Where do they go? Do they become unemployed?

Danna Walker: No. Many of them seek other areas of work. The training is incredibly good and there are lots of transferrable skills in terms of design, management and those sorts of things. What we see is that women go off and do other things where career progression and pay are not such large issues—as well as modes of work, such as greater opportunities for part-time working.

Q32 Chair: Why should this behaviour be a characteristic of women rather than men? Certainly, the figures would seem to indicate that more women are disposed towards doing this than men.

Danna Walker: I think this has been for the reasons that we have been discussing. The culture within the industry can present barriers for women in terms of career progression. Added to that, there is the pay disparity, low levels of progression and issues in terms of the availability of work. This can mean that women make the decision to leave the profession much earlier in their careers. We see retention of women as the bigger issue because, like medicine, in terms of participation and education, the numbers are quite high. In architecture, you do a degree first of all, which is part one; there is a postgraduate course, which is part two; there is then professional practice. Over each of those sections, the proportion of women starts to drop, but they fall quite significantly in terms of the numbers of women actually going on to practise.

Q33 Mike Crockart: I have a question for Sheila. We started out with the Equality Act and I want to return to that. I am particularly interested in your statutory role and your views on the Act. We have now had 40 years of equal pay legislation. I want to get your views on how far you think we have come towards the principle of men and women being paid the same for work of equal value. How much has that been achieved in practice?

Sheila Wild: I think we are still quite a long way away from achieving the equal value aspect of equal pay, which is where you have men and women doing different jobs but those jobs being valued equally. In a sense, the recent publicity around certain local authority cases demonstrates that very well. It seems to be quite hard for people to make that change of mindset. Almost everyone in the country would agree that if a man and a woman are doing the same work, they should be paid the same. It is where men and women are doing different work. As both of the two professionals here have illustrated, even within a particular area or profession, men and women are going into different work. Why should we pay them differently when they are doing different jobs? The training and the career progression can be similar, but we do not seem to be able to make that jump.

Many years ago, when I was at the Equal Opportunities Commission, we did commission some attitude surveys towards equal pay in different jobs. If you go out to the public at large it is quite interesting, because we have the beginnings of commonality. Most people would agree that a nurse and a police officer are roughly on a par; we examined those kinds of comparisons. One of the issues is that there are just so many different types of job that it is difficult for us to make the equations. It is incredibly important that we do get to this, because it is often forgotten that the reason equal value was introduced into the legislation was to tackle occupational segregation. The biggest single contributor to the pay gap is occupational segregation: it is men going into some kinds of jobs and women going into other kinds of jobs, and the male-type jobs being paid more. Equal value was intended to redress that imbalance by providing some kind of means of measuring different jobs equally.

Q34 Mike Crockart: Is there not an inherent problem with the use of the word “value”, because it is so subjective? How do we get to a point where everybody agrees what is of equal value in such disparate jobs?

Sheila Wild: People often say to me, “You cannot compare apples and pears.” Actually, you can: they are both fruit. As you said, you have just changed the names. You are quite right: equal value is subjective. In the United States they use the term “equal worth”, and I think that is easier because worth does have a kind of weightiness to it, and you can get little pictures in your head about it.

Q35 Mike Crockart: In practical terms, what do any of the panel think needs to be done to move that forward?

Sheila Wild: I think that we do need a much greater push towards two of the underpinnings of the Act. The Act is actually based upon the concept of evaluating jobs—of job evaluation as a technique. I will not say that every business and organisation in the country ought to introduce job evaluation, but there certainly ought to be some kind of weighing-up of the job sizes within organisations and attaching salaries on that basis, rather than on the basis of stereotypes.

Secondly, there should be a greater push—I think it should be a voluntary push, but a much stronger one—towards equal pay audits. Voluntary does not mean do nothing. I have to say I think that is where we are at the moment: we are in a position where voluntary means you do not have to do it if you do not want to. I think voluntary means that if you can do it, you should do it; if you cannot do it, you should seek help in doing it. We need some strong leadership behind it and a much greater availability of information on how to do it. I have

had to set up a website bringing together all the information on how to get equal pay right. We should not be a position where a private individual has to do that; the information to help people do it should be out there.

Professor Jane Dacre: To add to that, I think that the idea of self-assessment of equal pay is probably practical, feasible and would encourage people to do it—provided there were clear guidelines. I think it perhaps should be followed by transparency. There is a need to be transparent about pay awards and, beyond transparency, to be public about it. As we said before when we were talking about transparency, these situations have arisen by evolution. They need to be sorted out, but they need to be sorted out by raising public awareness of where the difficulties arise. I would suggest that then they would be more likely to be sorted out.

Danna Walker: It is interesting that the conversation earlier mentioned procurement. In construction, public sector clients are 40% of the workload. Using that as a vehicle to ask the question could be incredibly useful. As the Companies Act requires private companies to submit information about that company and their directors, that could be another vehicle to tackle the private sector, in order to get the information and ensure that it is being monitored and picked up.

Q36 Nadhim Zahawi: Sheila, you described the Equality Act as a missed opportunity. I would say to you that the Government did introduce, through regulation, a duty on private employers to undertake equal pay audits. The Government then decided not to introduce such regulation. Do you think such regulation would help to address the weakness in the voluntary system?

Sheila Wild: I think regulation can work in the right kind of context. It could, for example, work in Wales, where the labour force is much smaller. Indeed, one could say it is working in Wales because there is a narrower pay gap in Wales and much greater and more effective monitoring of what is going on. The position in Scotland, which ought to be similar, is not similar; it is much more mixed.

Certainly, looking around the world, regulation works where you have a labour force of not more than about 7 million or 8 million people. When you have the size of labour force we have, 26 million to 27 million, and you have the very mixed economy we have here in terms of the types and sizes of organisations and so on, I think it is very difficult to regulate in a meaningful way. A much more productive route is to go for a strong voluntary approach that includes, as we have all been saying, transparency. Given a choice, I would prefer to regulate for transparency rather than regulating for auditing.

Q37 Nadhim Zahawi: Section 71 of the Equality Act permits equal pay claims to be brought based on hypothetical comparisons where there is no man in the same workplace doing equal work. Do you not think this helps in the case of occupational segregation, or when a man takes over a woman's role, for example when she is promoted or on maternity leave?

Sheila Wild: It is one of those things that in theory ought to help but in practice is so difficult to do, because you are doing it in the context of an equal pay claim, which is such an incredibly difficult thing to do. It is difficult; it is complex; it is also hugely expensive and you could not do that yourself. You would have to get a lawyer to do it. I think that is beyond the reach of most women to do. It will happen and there will be cases around it, but for all practical purposes the law is too complicated to be effective.

Q38 Nadhim Zahawi: Is there any data on how it is working out?

Sheila Wild: I do not know of any, but that is because the monitoring that used to happen is not happening.

Q39 Caroline Dinenage: Sheila, you have said already today that you think voluntary arrangements could work if there was more information in place to help them succeed, but given that they have been in place for a long time and there have been statutory codes of practice in order to help them succeed, what makes you think that they could still be successful?

Sheila Wild: The voluntary approach we have now is much weaker than it was 10 years ago. Ten years ago we had a voluntary approach that comprised very strong messages from Ministers as a group—not just the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, as was the case then, but Ministers as a whole. There were very strong messages from the statutory equality body, a whole range of easily accessible advice and information that had been developed with business—and was, because of leadership from Ministers, therefore being promoted by business—and regular monitoring of what was being done by both the public and the private sectors to pick up those tools and use them. Monitoring was taking place every 18 months or two years, and you could see the progression happening: you could see the public sector moving ahead of the private sector; you could see which bits of the private sector were doing well and which were not taking any notice of it at all. You were building up a snowball or a bandwagon. It was all happening. Year on year, from the monitoring, you could tell that more people were picking up good equal pay practice and you could see that progress was being made. You could also see within the pay gap itself that progress was fairly even.

What we can see now from the pay gap figures is that for those women able to behave approximately as men behave—i.e. they do not have children, they have equivalent education qualifications and they can do the presenteeism—there is virtually no pay gap. Where you have black and minority-ethnic women and older women, it is different. There is a huge pay gap for older women. For older women, particularly those working in the private sector, there is an enormous pay gap. Those differences are not coming out and they are not being explored.

A voluntary approach requires consistency. It is no good saying, “Oh yes, we would like you to do it this year, but we will backpedal next year.” It must be there; we all have to be moving forward on this. We cannot go on waiting another few decades for this to happen.

Q40 Caroline Dinenage: You advocate a voluntary approach but with monitoring?

Sheila Wild: Voluntary does not mean doing nothing; it means that if you can do it, we expect you to be doing it. It is setting expectations and making things as transparent as they possibly can be. People will start to regulate themselves. Business competes. Once you get one business to do really well on equality, they will start to compete with each other.

Q41 Caroline Dinenage: May I ask a supplementary question on that, just briefly? In your written evidence, you suggest that businesses should be given three years to comply. First of all, why have you chosen that figure? Do you think this would be unlawful under EU law, where gender equality needs to be immediate?

Sheila Wild: To answer your last question first, it depends which lawyer you ask. When I was at the Equal Opportunities Commission—and, indeed, the Equality and Human Rights Commission—we did a lot of work on this, and it is feasible.

Why did I choose three years? That figure is derived from the pay practices and the way pay is negotiated within reasonably large organisations. It does take time to negotiate pay; it takes time to set expectations; it takes time to amend a pay system. If you ask

businesses, they will say they want more than three years. The more time you allow, the more likely it is to fall foul of European law. Three years felt like a reasonably practical and effective compromise, but employers are in a very difficult place with this at the moment. If you start to put it right, you are just exposing the fact there are women working for you who are not getting equal pay; those people will want to take cases.

Q42 Mike Crockart: I have a brief question about something you alluded to in a previous answer. You talked earlier about the pay gap and gender equality. As you have said, gender equality is not the full picture of why many women are paid less. Age, ethnicity and disability can also play a large part. Do you have particular evidence around the impact of inequality and pay on black, Asian and minority-ethnic women in particular? Do you think that improving pay for women generally may obscure those continuing differences?

Sheila Wild: Yes, it does obscure those continuing differences. The picture for black and minority-ethnic groups is mixed. It is not inevitable that if you are a BME woman your pay gap is wider. For Chinese and Jewish women, for example, the pay gap is much narrower. However, particularly for Pakistani, Bangladeshi and black Afro-Caribbean women, the labour market disadvantage really expands the pay gap. You cannot tackle that pay gap just through pay measures; you have to redress the more general inequalities that those women are experiencing.

Chair: That concludes our questioning. I am conscious that we packed a lot into a very short time. If you feel that you would like to add to any evidence that you have given today, please feel free to write in with supplementary evidence. Similarly, we may feel that there is a question that we should have asked but did not and may write to you to ask for further information; we would be grateful for your responses. This has been incredibly helpful. Thank you very much.

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Diane Johnson**, ECA, **Bola Fatimilehin**, Head of Diversity, Royal Academy of Engineering, and **Clare Walker**, Royal Aeronautical Society, gave evidence.

Q43 Chair: Good morning and thank you very much for agreeing to speak to the Committee. I am not sure whether you were there when I introduced the previous panel, but I will quickly repeat what I said to them. Some of the questions will be person-specific; others will be general. Do not feel that you all have to answer every question if you feel there is nothing to add to or subtract from what a previous speaker has said. Just before I start with the first question, could you introduce yourself for transcription purposes, starting on my left with Bola?

Bola Fatimilehin: Good morning. My name is Bola Fatimilehin and I work for the Royal Academy of Engineering. At the moment, I currently lead on the Diversity in Engineering Programme, which is funded by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills and aims to increase diversity across the engineering profession.

Clare Walker: Good morning. I am Clare Walker. I am a Companion of the Royal Aeronautical Society; I am an elected member of its council; and I am also the founding chairman of its Women in Aviation and Aerospace Committee.

Diane Johnson: Good morning. My name is Diane Johnson. I am the ex-President of the ECA and was the first woman to hold that position in the 110 years of the Electrical Contractors' Association. I am now their skills ambassador. I am also an electrical

contractor. My family company has been in business since 1946 and has trained over 330 apprentices.

Q44 Chair: Thank you. I will start with the first two questions that I asked the previous panel. This is to all, but do not feel that you all have to expand at length on it: do you think the public sector equality duty, section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, could be used more effectively to address inequality in pay in the public sector?

Bola Fatimilehin: That is not a question that I would particularly like to answer first.

Clare Walker: No, it is not my area of expertise, I am afraid.

Diane Johnson: I am not public sector, either.

Chair: I appreciate that you are all from the private sector.

Bola Fatimilehin: Having heard the previous session, I think the key issues for me were around pay transparency. There are other things around engineering and pay. We have done recent research at the Royal Academy of Engineering. Unlike many other professions, there is a significant growing wage premium attached to engineering. There is occupational segregation in engineering, i.e. there are not many women in engineering. The fact that we do not have many women engineers means that they are effectively being denied the opportunity to earn a higher wage, which is something that has increased over the last 20 years. Transparency and more women doing those jobs that are better paid would help fix the pay gap.

Q45 Chair: I am interested in the private sector perspective, but you may feel more qualified to answer the next question. Do you think a public sector equality duty could be used more effectively in terms of public procurement from the private sector?

Clare Walker: Yes, of course. There are a lot of big defence contracts, for example; therefore, companies should be asked what they are doing about diversity within their businesses. The evidence that we are getting is that there are more big companies that are bringing in heads of diversity. They are encouraging women's networks. They are supporting a lot of what we are doing, for example, so there is evidence there that these companies are taking diversity seriously. What the Royal Aeronautical Society is trying to do is keep pace with those changes.

Diane Johnson: For me it is a bigger question than just women, because for public procurement we need apprenticeships. If we had apprenticeships, it would not matter which gender they were. Basically, there should be equal opportunities for women and for men. At the moment, I would love it if for all public procurement you had to directly employ an apprentice; that would open the gates for women as well. At the moment, that does not happen.

Q46 Chair: That is interesting, because we have just reported along those lines in respect of apprenticeships. Is there anything else that you think could be done, like inserting clauses in specifications for tendering?

Bola Fatimilehin: I think clauses are being inserted into some contracts. For instance, at the moment, as part of our leading Diversity in Engineering Programme, we are working with an industry partner, one of the professional institutions and a consortium of engineering companies to run an apprenticeship programme. That apprenticeship programme has come about as a direct result of a clause in a contract. Through this, we have now set up a level 3 apprenticeship. The problem we still have is getting more young women into the apprenticeship programme. We have some, but we would like more.

Q47 Chair: Do you think the apprenticeship route, the provision for apprenticeships, is one of the most effective ways of addressing this?

Diane Johnson: One of the problems from the electrical sector is that only 1% of our industry is women. It would not matter for me if the Government said tomorrow, “You must do this.” At the moment, we do not have a proper structure for how to excite women. We should start a lot earlier; we should be in schools, explaining what women can actually do. At the moment, there is a knee-jerk reaction.

For a woman, the word apprenticeship does not mean anything anymore. At one time the word apprenticeship meant quality; it meant having a craft skill for life that you could then build on going forward. If you talk to young people now, they say, “What does an apprenticeship mean?” If you are a young lady who wants to go into something that she can build on, our sector does not look that exciting because nobody is advising them on what they can do and how they can get there.

Q48 Chair: Interestingly, some of your observations match some of the recommendations that we have just made in our apprenticeship report.

Bola Fatimilehin: If I could just add to what Diane said, the image of apprenticeships is not good at the moment. It is not attractive. One of the things we have done with the pilot we have run is to call it a professional technician apprenticeship. That tries to bring some of the quality and status to it that it might be missing in the minds of both young people and their parents.

The other point you made that I would like to add to—because it is something we are quite passionate about in the Academy—is the whole issue of schools and the fact that all of this needs to start much earlier. Stereotyping was the subject of the question that we responded to in the consultation; it starts very early on. Somebody was telling me outside that it actually starts when you are pregnant. How far back we go and what we can do to tackle it are serious questions.

If I take the example of physics for a moment, physics is of huge interest to engineering because it is a key subject in terms of determining whether or not you can become an engineer in later life. The Institute of Physics conducted research earlier this year that showed that of all the A-level entrants in 2011, 20% of them were female. That situation has persisted for the last 20 years. It is not biological. It is not because girls cannot do physics; they actually do better than boys. There is a lot around teacher attitude and stereotyping that says that boys do physics. King’s College is doing a longitudinal study of this, and some studies say that some teachers, though not all, will see boys as more naturally able and better at physics. Of course, that sends a message to girls. As a result of all this, we are bottom of EU states when it comes to having female engineers within the workforce. It is not a situation that must continue. Sweden has about 25%; we have 9%.

Q49 Mr Walker: That was very interesting. Diane, perhaps when you are talking about challenging stereotypes, you could talk a little about your Wired for Success initiative?

Diane Johnson: When I became President of the ECA, I used to chair several meetings. There would be me and 60 men or me and 40 men. I thought, “Where are all the women?” I did quite a lot of research, went out to Jobcentres and talked to women. I found that the problem is that when a man loses his job and goes to the Jobcentre, they look at how they can retrain him. What can he do? When a woman loses her job, she goes along and she is offered—with no disrespect to any of these jobs—work in administration, which 9 out of 10 women come out with, or care. As we know, care is not that well paid. If somebody has come out of a well-paid job, they are struggling immediately. I asked about this and they said, “Well, nobody offers us anything.”

I was talking to women. I wanted to bring women off the unemployment list and have a skill. It was my idea, but the ECA hooked up with London & Quadrant Housing Association, who were also looking at how they could enrich their residents' lives—and they have thousands of properties. We decided to find out whether there was an appetite for women who were unemployed to come in and have a word with us. I must admit that on the day I turned up I thought nobody would turn up; we had a lot of women.

It is very humbling when you hear a woman who is 51 say, "I think I am going to die on benefits." Another woman said, giving us the bigger picture, "I have three sons. I want them to know that it pays to work." Another one said, "I am 29. I already feel I am on the scrap-heap." I thought, "This is ridiculous."

Obviously, we only had a certain amount of money, which is all private money, not public. The housing association got together with their contractors. The contractors agreed that they would take the women on. I admit that the women are on benefits, which, to be honest, has been a real problem because they keep being asked to go and look for work, and they are on a training scheme at the moment. The contractors give up their time and we also have EAS, which is a training association, training the women. We are doing this at the moment; what is groundbreaking is that this is in school time. We have childcare facilities. This is something that is not available to them at the moment. When you invite a woman who has been unemployed to come into our sector to try to get training, issue number one is that there is no funding. I am not saying there should be, but there is not. Issue number two is how they are able to turn up on a building site at half past seven in the morning and go home at 5 o'clock while going to college and running a family.

Wired for Success, to be honest, is a blueprint for anything. It does not have to be electrical; it could be anything. What I am trying to do is break the stereotype. We have to do things differently. There is a saying: do what you have always done and you will get what you have always got. If we are bringing women into engineering, especially women who have been made unemployed and we want to retrain them, we have to rethink the whole thing.

Q50 Mr Walker: It sounds like a hugely exciting scheme. Is it one that you think is easily replicable by other industries?

Diane Johnson: It is replicable but the thing is that it costs money. The problem at the moment is that for employers to actually take women on to do this, the level of work is not there. There is no point in me sitting here and saying that it is. If you take somebody on, you want to make sure that you can fulfil the commitment. The people who are actually training these ladies at the moment have said to me, "They turn up on time; they are brilliant at what they do; but I want them to get a job afterwards."

I have not had any problems in the job I have done, going through. I am not a spark, but an electrical contractor. I do not have any barriers with the men at all. The barriers are not there, but at the moment—even if they want to employ a woman—they are struggling to employ the men as well. What I am trying to do is be groundbreaking, but it is about trying to break what we have there already, and that is quite difficult. You have to prove that it works and also have the money to do it. London & Quadrant have a side that is a charity arm; they helped us to do this. Yes, it can be done, but it takes a lot of commitment and people going above and beyond.

Q51 Mr Walker: You mentioned 330 apprenticeships in your area.

Diane Johnson: That is just my company.

Mr Walker: Gosh. How many of those are women?

Diane Johnson: Two. I was actually talking to somebody about this—this is where I go back to the beginning. The problem is we never have any women apply. I am going to

schools now to talk to people and to explain. Also, there is the other side where people say, “Construction is on its knees; why should I send my young girl to come into your industry? Will they be able to get a job?” I have to be able to say, “Yes, they are there, but at the moment it is a problem because of the economy.” If you take a young person on and it is a three or four-year apprenticeship, if you stop that halfway through they will never come back to your sector. They will lose complete hope. There must be a consistency in the work, which is, for me, where we come to public procurement. If you could not have a contract unless you directly—this is not pushing it down the supply chain; that is easily done—employ that apprentice, the company that is getting the contract plus your supply chain, there would be a lot of apprenticeships out there.

Clare Walker: We do need to improve the profile of apprenticeships, do we not? We need to show people that women do this. For example, I do not know whether you saw the supplement in *The Guardian* on women in engineering. In that, you will see a young lady apprentice at Rolls-Royce. She is actually on our committee. She actively chose to become an apprentice rather than go to university. As her preferred route, she wanted to become an engineer; she wanted to physically do the work. That young lady became Rolls-Royce’s first ever global trainee apprentice of the year. That is global, worldwide. If you can draw attention to this and show that women do these types of things, it helps tremendously.

Diane Johnson: Can I briefly reply for a moment? What she said is correct, but Rolls-Royce have branded their apprenticeship. It is on the tin: you know what you are going to get. That is different from saying, “Come and have an apprenticeship in construction.”

Q52 Mr Walker: Following through on that, in terms of the aerospace industry, with the all-party parliamentary apprenticeships group I recently visited BAE Systems at Warton and met a number of their apprentices and graduate engineers as well. What was interesting to me was that there seemed to be a higher proportion of women amongst the graduate engineers than amongst the apprentices. That comes back to the point you are making: there is a prejudice against women taking apprenticeships. Do you think there is more that could be done in terms of careers advice or in terms of industry going into schools to sell the case for women to look at apprenticeships?

Bola Fatimilehin: Yes. I think there are a number of things happening already where industry does go in to schools. For instance, STEMNET have a STEM ambassador programme with thousands of ambassadors nationwide who are linked to industry who go into schools to promote engineering. But there is more that can be done, not just at the schools level through careers advice and information but actually, I think, at societal level.

I think the previous panel talked about increasing diversity amongst architects and surgeons and in medicine generally. The difference between those three and engineering is that they are quite visible. We all go to the doctor; we know what doctors do. We go to hospitals. We see it on TV. There are great programmes that make it all look extremely glamorous. Where is engineering? What are we actually attracting people in to do? I think more needs to be done at societal level to build understanding of what engineering actually is and raise awareness of the fact that it is not all male-dominated, that it is contemporary, that it does deal with societal issues, that it improves our way of life. It is not just about oily machines. I think there is still a lot of that thinking.

Engineering UK carry out biannual research that looks at the public perception of engineering. Even those people who work with engineering in careers advice do not understand fully the range of engineering careers. That is a real block, because children go home after having the advice, go to their parents and say, “I want to be an engineer and I want to do this.” The parents say, “What is that? Be a doctor; we know what that is.” I think there needs to be more awareness-raising.

Chair: You have touched on a few of the issues we are going to raise in a few moments. We do need to move on, because we have time constraints.

Q53 Ann McKechin: We asked the previous panel about issues of corporate or cultural behaviour. One thing that struck me about a recent report on graduates in STEM subjects is that the retention rate in STEM jobs is very poor amongst women compared with their male colleagues. It is about 27% retained against a male figure of 52%. I wondered what your experience has been within your own careers and occupations of the cultural barriers. Diane mentioned childcare for people who are on the construction site. I wondered whether networking and the ways that people get jobs might be a barrier, potentially.

Clare Walker: Yes, networking is extremely important. If you are the only woman on a team, it is very difficult to network. A lot of what we are doing is providing places where women can come and network, make contacts and learn about what is going on in the industry. You are highlighting the end part of the great leaking pipe, which starts right at childhood and goes right the way through the points at which we lose women in engineering, starting with the toys that girls are given to play with.

Ann McKechin: There is Bob the Builder.

Clare Walker: This goes right the way through. You can see the percentage dropping away and dropping away. The big tragedy is when you lose a woman who has made the commitment to do a degree in engineering and who comes out with a first-class or a second-class degree—and the statistics show that women are outperforming men in the degrees that they are gaining. For them to go into industry and you to lose them after all that is very sad.

Q54 Ann McKechin: Is there any reason why you think this is happening? Do you think that culture is beginning to change? Do you think there is an appreciation that there is a real shortage of engineers? You mentioned the fact that they are at a premium at the moment. Is there an appreciation that the industry needs to change the way it operates?

Bola Fatimilehin: We always hope that the business case will motivate industry. Most recently, our President, Sir John Parker, George Osborne and, today, Vince Cable have spoken to the CBI about jobs in growth and the industrial strategy that the UK needs. The business case, therefore, is around the fact that we do not have enough engineers. Over the next few years we will have to find more engineers—otherwise the industrial strategy, which is supposed to strengthen the economy and lift us out of recession, will not be sustainable.

Overall, we are hoping that business will link in to this message and understand that, actually, it is not even just female engineers this relates to. Not enough people are going into engineering overall, but, if we need more engineers, where are they going to come from? Women are a potential pool. It is not as if women are not coming through; we are just not retaining them, and not getting enough into the pipeline at the very beginning. I think paying attention to those points in the pipeline that Clare mentioned is where we need to focus industry. Some companies are very good at focusing internally and doing work on this, such as National Grid.

Q55 Caroline Dinenage: I would disagree with you on that point, because if a child, male or female, wants to go through their GCSEs and then go on to do an engineering degree, they need three sciences. There has been a tendency towards combined science; they are actually making a decision at the age of 13 or 14 that will dictate their career. I wondered what your thoughts were on influencing those kinds of decisions very early on in their academic careers.

Bola Fatimilehin: Some of that is about not making children take those decisions quite so early on and leaving it open. If we look at other European countries and what they are doing, they are not making children make those choices quite so early on. They leave those options open for a bit longer. Regarding 14-year-olds, there is an evident dip in performance where they move away from the academic and a little bit closer to the arts and the more practical subjects, but that comes back up again. If they are making those choices at that stage, it is not very helpful.

The second issue is obviously about the curriculum and giving more opportunity for children to study those subjects. The other issue is to compel schools. I know it sounds a bit strong, but we could compel schools to look at those subjects where there is a gender imbalance. We cannot make pupils do subjects they do not want to do, but teachers are role models. They have a role to play in engaging pupils with subjects, in looking at how they challenge stereotypes and also in making those subjects accessible enjoyable.

Some schools do it very well, so there is some good practice out there. It is a question of compelling every school. It could be through Ofsted; dare I say it? Perhaps a school might not be assessed as outstanding unless it has a plan in place showing how it is actively looking at school subjects and moving towards some balance. I think that is the sort of action that is required.

Diane Johnson: In *Wired for Success*, one thing I looked at with these ladies was that nobody had ever talked to them about coming into engineering ever, and every one of them loved every minute of it. They said they based their career decisions on where they were pushed to go; they were not informed decisions. With *Wired for Success*, I am trying to broaden it out to bring people in that would never have thought of doing it before.

Chair: We are straying into answers to the next question. Do not feel the need to repeat anything, but if there is something you wish to add, please do so. I am conscious that we are tight on time.

Q56 Katy Clark: This is a question on engineering; I will ask Bola and she could come back on it. In the next panel we will be hearing evidence from a witness whose organisation believes that men are more likely to become engineers and women are more likely to become nurses “as a result of gender-typical choices reflecting their gender-typical natures”. Could you respond to that?

Bola Fatimilehin: It is the nature-nurture thing again. I think that is what we are talking about. I would say yes: there probably is some predisposition. If you look at evidence, research and what actually happens, we could say, “Men are supposed to be engineers; women are supposed to be nurses.” However, girls do really well at physics. Are they being encouraged to do physics as much as boys? I doubt it. These patterns have existed for generations. Over time, they have become embedded at so many levels of society that it is actually quite difficult to shift them now. The evidence says that they are socially constructed; they are not biological. Girls can do well at physics; men can be good nurses. I do not see anything that says they cannot. Yet, I am not advocating that we reach 50:50 or anything like that, but I think we need to remove these barriers that mean that, if a girl wants to become an engineer, that is not offered to her in the same way as nursing would be offered. We can see other European countries have more female engineers; why is that?

Clare Walker: I would like to make the point about visits that schools organise to establishments like engineering or aviation businesses. I received an e-mail the other day from our President-elect; she will be the first female President of the Society since it was founded in 1866, so we are going somewhere. She said, “You will be really depressed about this, Clare, but I have been talking to somebody who organises visits for schools and only 5% of those that turn up are female.” That is a problem, because I have heard that either the

teachers are saying to them, “You would not be interested in that, girls; it is engineering,” or the girls themselves are saying, “I would not be interested.” How do they know? As Bola has already pointed out, engineering goes on behind closed doors. Even pilots are locked in their cockpits these days. They are not getting those experiences. It should be possible to introduce something whereby there has to be a 50:50. When that happens—I know people who do this—the girls’ eyes are opened.

Are they pre-disposed towards saying they do not want to be engineers or they do not like it? Or is it that they have never been exposed to it or been excited by the challenges of engineering?

Diane Johnson: To take it out of engineering, my daughter is a county-level rugby player hoping to go for England trials. She is now 19. All the way through, she has been told, “You cannot play rugby; you are a girl. You would not want to do that; you are a girl.” That is absolute rubbish. Unless you introduce females to these things and tell them what they are about, of course they will not go down these routes.

That is what we are guilty of: we tend to put people into boxes. “You are a girl so you must do that.” What I have found is that when you get women engineers, they are very good. Also, when you bring a woman into an area in which there has not been one before, you get a lot more than just the actual academic skill. They bring their mentoring skills. Women are—sorry, gentlemen—very good at multi-tasking, because we have to be. We bring a lot more in. You find that companies that do get women engineers value them highly, especially in our sector.

Q57 Katy Clark: That brings me on to the next bit of my question: what do you think the impact is of having such a low percentage of women, particularly in the engineering profession?

Clare Walker: Lack of role models is one of the problems. The evidence shows that if a woman cannot see other women doing better than her further up an organisation, she is likely to walk away. We need those inspiring role models. That is a lot of what we are trying to do: showcase women who are doing incredible jobs. I wish you had all been with us a couple of weeks ago at our conference. There was a woman talking with great excitement about the fuel system of an Airbus A380, and she had titled her talk “50 Shades of Fuel”. There was another woman talking excitedly about composites and what they were going to do. There was a video of a female captain on an air-sea rescue operation, which had your heart in your mouth. Women do these things. We need to be able to showcase that women are doing this and that they love their jobs.

Bola Fatimilehin: It is the other perspective. We do think differently; we have some different traits and ways of seeing the world. Actually, women have a lot of buying power in terms of households. Women have a huge amount of buying power, so why would we not want to contribute to the environment that we occupy? That is necessary.

Of course, the other thing is about the gender pay gap. This is a real negative impact of having occupational segregation, where one gender is doing the work that generally pays more than the other. It is a huge contributing factor to maintaining the status quo. As the wage premium for engineering is set to grow and carry on growing, we hear from the Fawcett Society that for the first time the gender pay gap might increase again. Are the two things inseparable? Maybe they are not.

Q58 Katy Clark: You have obviously spoken quite a lot already about what could be done to increase the percentage of women in the engineering profession. Is there anything anyone on the panel would want to add to that in terms of concrete steps that could be taken to increase the proportion of women in these professions?

Diane Johnson: One of the things that we have to look at that would put women off going into engineering is what one of the previous speakers said: that to be a woman in these industries you have to be single, unmarried and not have children. I was not. You can do it, but we have to say to women that if they do want to come into engineering and have a family, it is okay to do that. This is an industry that has not had a lot of women in it. If women want to take a career break, have childcare facilities or be pregnant and have time off for it, we have to look at that.

This has never been part of the engineering sector. The thing is that a lot of apprentices are employed by SMEs. It is not the big companies now; it is the SMEs—especially in the electrical sector. If you start talking to SMEs about what I have just talked about, they say, “We cannot do that.” We have to look at the structure. We have to bring it back to how we are going to do this rather than trying to impose it. You cannot impose this on people or companies if there is no structure there to help them; that is not there at the moment.

Clare Walker: We also need to change the workplace structure to be more female friendly. When the Society decided to ask us to look into the whole situation regarding women working in aviation and aerospace, they also looked at themselves and this wonderful building full of big, imposing photographs of male presidents. Now there is actually a women’s corner, where we have photographs of women who have done things in aviation. It is about the message you are sending out to people. Are you a female-friendly environment? Here is another example of a publication that the Society produced: there is a woman on the front cover, and on the report that we produced. It is about showing women that they are welcome and that they are encouraged to be there. The same applies to businesses: if women are visible and are made to feel welcome, you will get more women coming in.

Q59 Caroline Dinenage: I think you are all such fantastic, dynamic ambassadors for your fields. It is fascinating to hear from you all, but I would like particularly to talk to Clare very quickly, because your CV is just fascinating. You qualified as a pilot when you were 50. I will not ask a million questions because the Chairman will kill me, but what I want to know is what made you think you wanted to do it at the age of 50 rather than before? Had something changed that had enabled you to do that?

Clare Walker: Yes, that is quite easy to answer. When I left school in the mid-1960s, I think you could count the number of women flying commercially on two fingers. This was despite the fact, as you know, in World War II 164 women flew for the Air Transport Auxiliary. They flew every single type of aircraft: fighter aircraft, four-engine aircraft and aircraft where they were the sole pilot on board. They flew the brand-new jet engine, which had only just been introduced. All they were told was, “By the way, it goes a little bit faster; you need to be back on the ground in half an hour because you will run out of fuel.” That is all the training they had and they did it.

Fast-forward 20 years and you come to me leaving school. There is simply no way a career in aviation is open to me. British Airways did not take their first female pilot until 1987. The RAF did not take their first operational pilot until 1992—and she was not allowed to fly fast jets. That did not happen until 1994. You are now looking at 30 years after Clare left school. This was never an option.

I finally get my hands on an aeroplane when I am pushing 50. I got my single-engine fixed-wing licence at 50, two years later my helicopter licence and a year after that, my multi-engine rating—and then I went absolutely ballistic for 10 years and blew a very large hole in my children’s inheritance.

Chair: Well done.

Katy Clark: When I was 14, I wanted to be a pilot and my guidance teacher told me, “You would not be strong enough.” I ended up becoming a lawyer, so congratulations.

Clare Walker: Thank you very much.

Chair: Can I thank you for that incredibly illuminating session? Clare, your experience was fascinating. It does pose the question of how, given the role that Amy Johnson and Amelia Earhart played in pioneering aviation, successive generations of women have not somehow built upon the vision that was created by these pioneers. Perhaps you are doing your bit to change that; maybe we can do our bit as well.

Thank you incredibly for the contribution you have made. As I said to the previous panel, if there is anything you feel you would like to add to the evidence you have given—inevitably we are constrained by time—it will be given every bit as much weight as the oral session. Similarly, of course, we may feel on looking at the transcript that there were one or two questions that we did not ask that we should have, and so we will write to you. Thank you very much.

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Mike Buchanan**, Chief Executive, Campaign for Merit in Business, **Steven Moxon**, researcher and author, **Dr Catherine Hakim**, sociologist, and **Dr Heather McGregor**, Director, Taylor Bennett, gave evidence.

Q60 Chair: Good morning and welcome. Thank you for agreeing to speak to us today. I will just repeat what I said to the others. Some of the questions will be to the whole panel, but please do not feel that all of you have to answer all questions. Obviously, if there is something you wish to add to or subtract from what a previous speaker has said, feel free to do so, but we do not really have time for any unnecessary repetition. Perhaps you would like to introduce yourself for voice transcription purposes, starting with you, Dr McGregor.

Dr McGregor: My name is Dr Heather McGregor. I own and run an executive search company in London and I am a founding member of the steering committee of the 30% Club. I have also recently written a careers book for women called *Mrs Money Penny's Careers Advice for Ambitious Women*. Finally, in the interests of full disclosure and following the previous witnesses, I should tell you that I have an A-Level in physics and I qualified as a pilot at 48 years old.

Dr Hakim: I am Dr Catherine Hakim. I am a social scientist. I have been doing research on women, women's employment issues, women in the family and all of the issues related to women for 20 to 30 years. I have published two books that are particularly relevant to this inquiry. One is *Key Issues in Women's Work* and the other one is *Work-Lifestyle Choices in the 21st Century*. Both of them focus on the current situation and address the choices that women make in terms of their preferences and their behaviour and so on in the modern, 21st century workforce. Both of them are entirely based on reviews of the most recent research results. That is what I generally focus on: the current situation—looking forward, rather than looking backward.

Michael Buchanan: I am Mike Buchanan, Chief Executive of the Campaign for Merit in Business and author of *The Glass Ceiling Delusion*.

Steven Moxon: I am Steven Moxon. I am a non-affiliated, completely independent cross-disciplinary researcher into the biological roots of human sociology. I am particularly interested in the sexes. I have only recently started being published, from 2008, in science journals, and I have also published through Imprint Academic a book called *The Woman Racket: the new science explaining how the sexes relate at work, at play and in society*.

Q61 Chair: I will just open with a question to Mike Buchanan to start with. Your organisation states that men are more likely to become engineers and women are more likely to become nurses. Why do you think that?

Michael Buchanan: I think the roots of it are biological. I am very much persuaded by the work of Professor Simon Baron-Cohen at Cambridge University, who published a book called *The Essential Difference* back in 2003. His essential thesis is that most people are gender-typical, and that the male brain is designed for systemising and the female brain for empathising. If that is true—and I think there is a lot of evidence that it is true—then we would expect men to be more interested in physics, mathematics and engineering and we would expect women to be more interested in nursing, medicine and, indeed, psychology.

Q62 Chair: Perhaps we should have Professor Baron-Cohen in front of us. Could you summarise what he said about the male and female brains?

Michael Buchanan: His thesis is basically that evolution has led to the male of the species, if you like, having a brain that is hardwired for systemising, i.e. having an interest in systems, how to improve them and how to change things around, whereas women's focus, for evolutionary and psychological reasons, is more around relationships.

We even find in the business world that women talk a great deal more about interpersonal relationships than men do. Men, if you like, are task-driven, in a sense, and women are far more likely to be people-driven. It is my thesis that as you go towards the top of major organisations, particularly private-sector organisations, being good at systemising gives you a natural advantage over being good at empathising.

Q63 Chair: I am not quite sure how that would relate to why women should not be good engineers or good physicists.

Michael Buchanan: I am not saying they should not be; I am simply saying the number of men who are good mathematicians, physicists and engineers will naturally considerably outnumber the number of women who are.

Q64 Ann McKechin: I wondered if you would accept, Mr Buchanan, that you may be overemphasising a potentially small biological difference over cultural trends. If you look physicists, for example, and you visit countries in the Middle East, you will actually find that a large number of physics graduates are female. In Iran, two-thirds of physicists are female. There are many other cultural barriers to women in those countries, but in that particular area it is not a barrier. I would suggest to you perhaps it is more cultural influences that are the reason why women would tend to move into certain professions or occupations, as opposed to something that is based on scientific, biological factors.

Michael Buchanan: I cannot talk for Iran—forgive me—but my experience over 30 years in the business world was that perhaps 80% to 90% of men and women do act gender-typically. Given the same options in life, they will very often act gender-typically.

Q65 Ann McKechin: What I am trying to ask is: what is the difference between the cultural factors and the scientific factors? You have quoted one piece of evidence to the exclusion of anything else, and you seem to suggest there is a rational, scientific basis for your conclusion. What I am suggesting to you is that perhaps the reason is actually primarily a cultural one, rather than a biological one.

Michael Buchanan: But it could be argued—and I think there is someone on this panel who would argue it rather better than I—that culture results from biology. At the end of the day, the biological side of all of this—I know it is contentious—is not part of our case, at

the Campaign for Merit in Business, as to why increasing gender diversity on boards in particular is a dangerous thing. The core of our argument is that there are five longitudinal studies showing that when you “improve” gender diversity on boards, financial performance declines. There is not a single robust study that says performance improves when you do that.

Q66 Ann McKechin: How many people are members of the Campaign for Merit in Business?

Michael Buchanan: There are probably about 10 people. We have been going about six months.

Q67 Chair: Are these five longitudinal studies published?

Michael Buchanan: Indeed, yes. Four of them are actually in the written submission that we provided. We have since discovered a fifth and I have that with me today. I would be very happy to hand that out to people.

Chair: And no doubt we will look at them.

Q68 Mr Walker: You dismiss the gender pay gap as a statistical artefact; I just wonder if you could expand on what exactly you mean by statistical artefact, and why it should be that rather than many of the other things we have heard about in our evidence?

Michael Buchanan: I think it is very clear, when you actually look at these studies that suggest a sizable gender pay gap, that if you dig down into them you will find there is an awful lot of comparing of different things. One example in a study that I saw some years ago was comparing male and female salespeople, and they actually compared, if you like, sales representatives who work on the road, and who probably do 100,000 miles a year, with shop assistants. They were regarded as comparable. Or they will take a particular job quite apart from that and will not take account of the fact that very often the responsibility and the budgets or the number of staff managed is very often rather more for male managers than for female managers. Issues like that tend to be discounted, but when you actually include them in the mix, the gender pay gap all but disappears.

Q69 Mr Walker: Surely there are issues here, though. Some of the issues that you have already talked about that also have an effect—different choices of careers and people being able to stick for a period of time to a career without a career break—are to do with different genders. Surely you cannot dismiss those as purely statistical artefacts.

Michael Buchanan: No, but you would expect—surely, to my mind—that when somebody takes a number of years, let us say, out of the workplace, it will impact on their career prospects. The majority of these things are actually choices, which Catherine will hopefully talk about.

Q70 Mr Walker: Fundamentally you were suggesting that women have better people skills and men are more systematic in their approach to things. Surely in a lot of large organisations people skills and the management of people are hugely important and valuable skills. Surely, when you are talking about the composition of boards, that is something that you would want to see reflected at board level, to a degree.

Michael Buchanan: Indeed, but, at end of the day, if these people skills translated into the bottom line, as was claimed for a great many years, we would have longitudinal studies that showed that; but we have five studies that show that, despite the theory about people skills and soft skills and all the rest of it, it does not translate into the bottom line. It is quite the opposite; it actually translates into a decline in corporate performance.

Q71 Mr Walker: I wanted to ask Heather a question. Obviously, in the work that you have been doing with the 30% Club, there must be a number of senior directors there who disagree with these longitudinal studies and take a different view. There must be a number of company boards that see value in having a proportion of women. I wonder where they feel they are getting their evidence from.

Dr McGregor: Yes, I think it is very difficult to link any kind of board to financial performance. Any longitudinal study that tries to do that, I think you will find, is quite ambitious and, as we all know, with real-life data there are lots of things that can change. The 30% Club is actually much more concerned about the effectiveness of boards, which does not necessarily mean financial performance. Financial performance will be heavily dependent on the CEO. We believe that more women on boards will deliver more effective boards and, apart from anything else, for many companies lots of their customers are women, for instance. I think it makes a lot of sense that Robert Swannell has a lot of women on the board of Marks & Spencer. That is the kind of thing we would like to see.

Q72 Chair: Have you read these longitudinal studies that Mike Buchanan has talked about? If you have, have you any comment on them?

Dr McGregor: I believe that Mr Buchanan is referring to a study in Norway, but I do not know because he has not said so. The study in Norway, where they have had quotas, Mr Chairman, shows that there has been negative impact on financial performance due to the precipitous nature of the way quotas have been introduced in that country. The 30% Club interest in the Norway experience is very much around the fact that despite quotas we still do not have a sustainable pipeline of women in executive positions. Despite the fact that you have this wonderful headline of 40% of women on boards, you do not have either a pipeline of senior women or women CEOs; in fact, their averages for both of those statistics are lower than a European-wide average.

Q73 Ann McKechin: This is a question to Catherine, Mike and Steve. All of you have theories about the presumption of innate differences between men and women. I just wondered if you could each explain your theories about that presumption. Perhaps I could ask Catherine to start us off?

Dr Hakim: I have been misrepresented in that I do not think the innate differences are of any consequence whatsoever. I think they have mattered in the past. All the latest research shows there are no important differences between male and female abilities. That is the key thing—not whether they are statistically significant, which academics like to boast about because that is as far as they ever get. There are none anymore. There are none in their activities, behaviour, interests and so on, except in three areas that I think everyone now agrees seem to be permanent.

One is that men are more aggressive. This means that they also can be more motivated in activities that they undertake and they can be more violent. That seems to be immutable and universal and permanent. The second is that men are much more interested in sex, so there are sex differences in interest and activity. The third one is spatial intelligence, which does explain very particular occupations: there are more male architects, for example. That seems to be likely to continue, but there are very few particular occupations where the ability to rotate things in three-dimensional space is important. In most occupations it will not be important. I do not think that any innate differences—which are certainly there in terms of the latest results of neuroscience—matter in everyday, ordinary, workplace daily life in any important way. That is the key thing: in any important way.

Society today is man-made; the workforce is man-made; and the kinds of careers that men and women choose are, if you like, man and woman-made. My focus originally was

primarily on women; I then extended the research to men as well. My research is simply looking at the choices that women make and the preferences that they express in the current day, after the equal opportunities revolution gave women real choices in the labour market - and in the educational system, which was the first thing. Before the contraceptive revolution, women's choices were constrained because they could not control when they fell pregnant if they were sexually active. The pill was the key point; it was, in my view, the most important change in history for women because it gave them independent control of their fertility, independent of men, whereas other forms of contraception do not have that independence. After the 1960s with the contraceptive revolution, after the 1970s with the equal opportunities revolution and after a whole pile of other changes in the labour force—such as the creation of jobs for secondary earners, more flexibility, etc, and a variety of other things, all of which were in the handout that I hope has been given to you—I think there was a significant change in the situation that women encountered, and they now have genuine choices to make.

In that context, the choices and the preferences they state in all of the research in all modern liberal industrial societies, not just Britain, are more or less set out in an ideal-type classification in table 2 of the handout, which I hope you have. It shows that roughly 20% of women in all societies are work-centred and careerist in the way men are. Roughly 20% of women are home-centred, family-orientated in the way that very, very few men are. Roughly 60% are in the middle wanting the best of both worlds, a combination of family life, paid employment and success or achievement in the public sphere, whether it is in politics, sport, art, the workplace or whatever. The ones in the middle group are the ones that are always dominant in any survey results because they are the ones who are the most numerous. However, an awful lot of policy is based on the assumption that women would be careerist and work-centred, just like men, if only culture and society allowed them to. The evidence is that they simply are not.

Just one example—which is why I added table 3 at the back of the handout—is that Sweden has had gender equality policies for decades longer than any other country in Europe. They have been more persistent and insistent on them than any other country in Europe. It is not just Sweden—also the Nordic countries in general—but Sweden is usually the main example. Even in Sweden, in the modern age, only a third of women choose to be continuously employed full-time in whatever activity they do. That is within the range that I give in my overall classification. The proportion of women who are careerist and work-centred varies from 10% in countries where the whole culture, policy and everything is totally against women working, but the maximum is never more than around a third of women, even in countries and cultures that are totally in favour of gender equality. There is a limit to the proportion of women who will be interested in ambitious careers.

Of course, the sort of people who will come to this Committee to give evidence, the sort of people who are in academia, and the sort of people who are in top jobs are always going to be taken from that group. That group is much bigger for men, but there are substantial numbers of women as well, though it is a much smaller group as a proportion of all women. You will always hear from these women, who very often completely lose sight, understandably, of the fact there are a lot of other women whose attitudes to jobs and careers are completely different. The home-centred group never has a voice. There is virtually no organisation that gives them a voice; they are never heard.

Q74 Ann McKechin: In the figures for Sweden, 4% are family-centred, compared with about 17% in the UK. Clearly, issues around childcare would suggest that actually a predominant reason for perhaps why people end up staying at home, particularly if you are on a low income, is that there is a very high percentage of people on low incomes in Britain compared with other western countries. In terms of the adaptive section, there are far more

men, younger men now, who actually want to spend more time with their younger children. That is an increasing social phenomenon. I know men—as I am sure everyone around this room does—who want to spend more time with their young children. Actually, if they are also able to get flexibility, more of them are likely to move into the adaptive section. What I would suggest to you is that this is primarily cultural, and if social policies like childcare and improved working flexibility are enacted, those figures will move quite considerably.

Dr Hakim: They are not moving and they have not moved for a long time. These are statistics for the British survey on preferences. This is what they want to do; it is not necessarily what they are doing. There are women who prefer to stay at home full time who are working out of financial necessity. There are women who are working full time who would really prefer to be at home.

Q75 Ann McKechin: Most women are working because they need to work to pay their bills and look after their families. When you start to look at where the average wage is for women and for most families, it is pretty inevitable that this is the conclusion they will come to; that is the predominant reason why people go out to work.

Dr Hakim: The reason everybody works is to earn money; that is the nature of paid employment. It is done for remuneration and not for pure fun. Everybody works for money—men as well. There is no news in that. The point I am making is that if you look at the research evidence on preferences, women have a different pattern of preferences, which is not to say all women want to be housewives and all men want to be high achievers in the workforce. However, there is a different pattern between men and women and you see it even in a country like Belgium, which, again, has had very strong gender equality policies for a very long time. There is a different pattern of preferences. There is also a different pattern of actual employment as well.

Q76 Ann McKechin: There are social trends like more men wanting to take part in childcare and less connection with religious ideologies. There are changes that are also going across that pattern.

Dr Hakim: There are cultural changes that make it more acceptable for men to say they want to spend more time with their family. But what has been consistent for quite a long time now, about 20 to 30 years, is that all surveys that have asked people about their working hours preferences—this of course covers men as well as women—show that the majority of people who work full time say they want to work shorter hours. That has been going on consistently for as long as surveys have been asking that question. What reason they give for wanting to work shorter hours is almost irrelevant. Everybody says they want to work shorter hours - if that is a possibility.

Steven Moxon: I would question the level of analysis here. I think everything Catherine has just said is very accurate; the data is very comprehensive. I might raise Simon Baron-Cohen's theory on the male brain. He is on a different level. My view is that you have to start from the bottom; you have to start from the biology. If you think of culture, culture has evolved to function, to feed back, to fine-tune and reinforce the underlying biology. It is not separate from biology; it is a manifestation of it. In fact, it reveals ever more what some of our mental biology—and even the biology itself—does, in a sense.

If you start from top-down theories, as in most sociology, you start from an ideological premise, and all you are doing is going around in circles in a tautology. You must start from the biology. The basis of the biology is, "Is there a major difference between the sexes?" You are damn right there is. There are various ways of conceptualising it. The one I favour is to talk in terms of a genetic filter function: the fundamental problem in any biological system is how to deal with the accumulation of gene replication error, mutation

through combination. Males compete with other males to sort out the men from the boys, as it were; females, preferentially, sexually select the highest-status males, i.e. the males of a higher rank in the male dominance hierarchy. There is also the self-suppression of fertility and sex drive in lower status males. The whole point of any social system is to stop most males from reproducing either at all or to any great extent.

If you then look at how that translates into human sociality, human social structures and dynamics, we know—this is not disputed in science literature—that from toddler age males form a dominance hierarchy; females do not. Of course you can cut across all of these things and pretend that the sexes are the same, but if you go looking for differences you will find them. Males form dominance hierarchies; females form what has generally been dubbed a personal network. When you get adults in the workplace, a workplace is, if you like, a socially amorphous rendition of the male dominance hierarchy. It necessarily is a hierarchy for obvious reasons that we do not need to go into. Males fit into that very well. Females obviously do not.

However, it gets even worse, if you feel that way, than that, because there is a sex dichotomy as well in ingroup psychology. Male ingroup psychology tends to readily identify with any conceptual group such as your university year group—or, indeed, your workgroup—whereas female ingroup psychology is very much tied to this personal network. It comes, by extension, out from family and friends in a chain and that cuts across the workplace. It is no surprise that women have difficulty in the workplace. Not only do they have difficulty; they do not want to be in it in first place.

There are all sorts of ways that you can come at this. If you then measure any attribute, competence or anything you can measure between the sexes, you tend to get very different normal distribution curves, i.e. if you plot a distribution of all the variance within one sex, the male curve is like this: it is fat both at the top and the bottom. You get the geniuses and the dunces, and it is relatively flat in the middle. The female distribution curve tends to be like this: it disappears into asymptotes very quickly at both the top and bottom tails. Most individuals are clustered around the median. If you look at the top tail, if you look across there, what you have is a fat male tail and the female tail has already disappeared. This is what we are talking about at board level in a commercial corporation or organisation. This is why you do get, as it turns out, that ratio of approximately 10:1 males to females. There is nothing you will ever do to get rid of that. Yes, you can, as Mike has pointed out, always get non-executive women on to boards—and that is probably a good thing, in some ways. However, since the Davies report there have not been any appointments of executive females; they have all been non-executives. The problems emanate from these sex dichotomies.

Presumably, the whole point of having women on a board is to bring some—what would you call it?—womanly qualities. But the women who compete successfully to get on to the board obviously are not typical women. Then there are sexual dynamics. When there are men and women together, the basic interaction is not cross-competition; it is sexual display. Males will display their competitiveness; females will back off from competition. They will actually reduce their competitiveness.

Ann McKechin: Mr Moxon, we are pressed for time. I think we understand the gist of it. Mike, you have already made some comments; do you make to make any additional observations?

Michael Buchanan: No.

Q77 Ann McKechin: I would just ask all the panel, given your various CVs, do you consider the Equality Act and the associated legislation is a waste of government resources or do you think it still has a role to play?

Michael Buchanan: I would say it is a complete waste of resources. I think it is the most extraordinary gravy train. There must be thousands of people riding that gravy train in the UK at the moment, and I think they really could do better things with their lives.

Dr Hakim: I think you have to have a basic floor of employment rights, including equal opportunities rights and all that kind of legislation in all countries. In some cases in Europe it is simply written law that everybody ignores. But even in countries where it is taken seriously and people do try to implement it, like Britain, you will always get cases of backsliding and individual companies or people who will be inclined to ignore the law; therefore you have to have mechanisms to enforce it. I was always in favour of the EOC and similar organisations being there to ensure that there is some kind of compliance. Many European countries do not have such a commission and their laws virtually have no genuine application in reality. Yes, I think it is absolutely essential that you keep it.

Dr McGregor: Though I have a PhD, I am not an academic. I am in the business of putting people into work. That is what I do all day, every day, all year. A small number of those jobs are for the Government in this country and for not-for-profit organisations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ibrahim Foundation and so on. The Equality Act has improved the standard of transparency and the standard of what is required. In fact, we try to apply that throughout all of our work, though I think that is very variable.

Although it is beyond the scope of this Committee, Mr Chairman, I think what is more relevant in my life is what the Equality Act has done for black and minority-ethnic people. In 2008 I set up my own 10-week training programme to help black and minority-ethnic people get their first job. I have personally funded it, with the help of some of our clients, ever since. It is not a Government initiative. We have had over 100 people through that programme, and we have put 75 of them into meaningful jobs in our sector. I think that the Equality Act has really helped.

Dr Hakim: I would like to add to that. I agree with that point. The most important problem of equality in the workforce today is concerned with ethnic minorities, migrants and immigration. I think that is by far the most difficult and important area of policy concern, and I think gender equality has been dealt with. Equal opportunities legislation, sex discrimination legislation and all of that has been successful. It has achieved its purpose; it has achieved a pretty level playing field for women.

The focus on occupational segregation and the pay gap is now, I think, a waste of time and is misleading, which may have been the question you were meaning to ask. This is because the pay gap—in Britain, anyway, and in the United States—has been completely explained. It is explained in terms of the types of occupations people choose, the hours they work, whether they work in the public sector or the private sector, whether they are union members or not, the distance they travel to work. There is a whole pile of factors that most studies never look at. The overall average difference between men and women in both America and Britain has been completely explained. In a lot of European countries it has not been; therefore, the European Commission continues to say it is an issue. But it is not an issue here. It has been explained. It is very small now, anyway.

Q78 Ann McKechin: There was a very significant equal pay case this year involving women in the public service in low-paid jobs. That is a very recent example, but it affects thousands and thousands of women across this country. Has it done its job? Are there no more of these cases around? I think most other people think there are a lot of these cases still to be examined, and it would require transparency to look at them.

Dr Hakim: There are still cases coming forward that have been a long time in the pipeline, where the equal-value criteria and the sex-discrimination criteria are applied. That is why you always have to keep that legislation in place, because it is absolutely fundamental.

However, the current pattern of occupational segregation—which divides into two sorts, vertical and horizontal—is not an issue because, on the basis of preference theory, which is set out in the handout, to a large extent the current pattern of occupational segregation in this country is the result of choice. There is a lot of focus on horizontal occupational segregation: women are nurses and men are engineers and we really ought to change that. However, the really important thing is vertical segregation: why is it men are the top bosses and women are the underdogs? It is the lack of women who proceed up the occupational ladder that is far more important than which particular type of job they have. I think that is a separate issue.

Steven Moxon: Sex equality should be called sex inequality. To take up what you said about equal value, these cases are scandalous. It is an attempt to equate—to put it crudely—part-time dinner ladies with full-time bin men. It is absolutely absurd to say that because you put them on the same pay scale, you should retrospectively say, “Well, they are the same job and should be paid the same.” Without accepting that the sexes are fundamentally different, any attempt at equality legislation will be sex-discriminatory against men. That is actually going on.

It is shown by the most comprehensive study, Riach and Rich (2006). They sent out CVs that were identical apart from the sex of the applicant for real jobs. These were highly male sex-typical jobs such as systems analysts and accountants. It is well known that the main stage of discrimination is at the interview stage, when you actually get an interview. The application with a female name on was four times more likely to get to interview stage. That speaks volumes. These were highly male sex-typical jobs. Catherine can tell you what the pay gap used to be in East Germany, but we would expect the pay gap to be far larger than it is. There must be preferencing of women going on for the pay gap to be at the level it is.

Michael Buchanan: May I add one point on that? There was a report recently that pointed out that approximately 60% of undergraduates and graduates these days—I think in the last two years—have been women. The unemployment rate among new male graduates is 50% higher than that among new female graduates. I suggest there is a sort of gender gap there.

Q79 Ann McKechin: There is a gender gap in unemployment. Female unemployment has risen by 20% over the last two years versus 1% for men.

Michael Buchanan: The latest figures from the ONS show that for every three unemployed women there are four men. That is 1.08 million versus 1.44 million.

Ann McKechin: There has always been that difference.

Chair: I think we can look at the statistics when we compile the report.

Q80 Rebecca Harris: I would just like to go back briefly to what Dr Hakim picked up on regarding differences in the pay gap being explained. You listed a range of reasons for the pay gap, which is explained and done and dusted, including things like working part time and whether someone is a member of a union. Mr Moxon came in and said, “It is absurd to equate a full-time bin man with a part-time dinner lady.” I think that is quite interesting, because I think one of the things that might be going on here is that we have a prejudice against part-time work as not real work. For generations we have said that full-time-plus work is a real job and part-time work is not a real job, and therefore does not command the same salary, regardless of the level of the work. I think there may be some unconscious prejudices, as you both expressed.

What I would like to say is that if we accept that there are differences in choices—this is really to all of you—how can we use those differences to best improve women’s place in the workplace? We need, as an economy, more women to be fulfilling their potential. We have heard that about engineering, but in all other parts of the economy we are having a

difficult time. If we take as given that women make different choices and have different qualities, how can we use that knowledge to actually best improve our economic performance?

Dr Hakim: One very simple way—I have recommended this myself in books and articles I have published already, some time ago—is that the Dutch government introduced a law a long time ago allowing everybody in the workforce to request part-time work for any reason or none. That was the key thing: it was for any reason or none. That destigmatised part-time work, because men could apply without having to give a reason—whether it was because they wanted to look after their children or any other reason.

I am not prejudiced against part-time work at all. I have done many studies of it. It is very important for the female workforce, but it is the case that women are more likely to choose it than men, and that has led to it being stigmatised. The Dutch law was very much aimed at destigmatising it, because up to then it had always been focussed on women working part time because they had young children or elder care or other family responsibilities, and that was their way of destigmatising it. In my book on preference theory I do make recommendations about the kinds of policies that make sense. One of them is for all policies to be gender neutral in the way the Dutch one was. Other policies should try to be even-handed between the three groups of women. There are also three groups amongst men, although the balance is different—simply because that is fairer all round, rather than what you currently have, which is a focus primarily on the middle group of women who want to combine family work and paid employment, or else a total focus on career women.

Dr McGregor: One of the really tough things for women is going into a career break and not knowing how they are going to come out the other side. I think there are lots and lots of women who make a choice to stay at home for a bit or go part time; sometimes they have no choice. After all, it is a great luxury to be able to stay at home, and not everybody has that luxury. I think what happens is that people do not receive appropriate counselling and guidance about a strategy to help them get through that period and out of the other side. In my experience—every day I deal with employers who are looking at CVs; and plenty of these CVs have career breaks in them—I promise you not one employer over the last 12 years I have been in this job has ever said to me, “She went part time for three years; she is clearly not a real person.” That has never happened. I know that is anecdotal; I know we only fill 100 jobs a year. However, I promise you it has never happened on my watch.

The real difference is this: have they stayed current? I give a number of examples of strategies in my book. I had one woman come to me; she had planned a family of two and she had a family of three, which she had not planned for. It really meant that she could not do anything else other than stay at home. I suggested to her that she went and taught part time in her field. She did that and taught 60 or 70 days a year for the next three years. As a result, she stayed completely current on everything in her field, which was very much to do with the stock exchange and accountancy. When she was a candidate again for a job of ours, she was absolutely snapped up. She had come through the early years and out of the other side. I do think it is about staying current. I also cite the example of Anne Spackman, the comment editor of *The Times*, who has a very full-time job now but spent years as a part-time property correspondent deliberately so that she could write about interest rates and housing when she knew it would be very topical, while raising a family. She remained current; she worked 30 hours a week on average in that time. It is about staying current. I do not think people who have worked part time are discriminated against.

Q81 Rebecca Harris: I gathered that you have said in your book, *Mrs Money Penny's Careers Advice for Ambitious Women*, that employers sometimes view women quite differently, knowing that they may well take time off.

Dr McGregor: That is different. We are talking here about people who have gone part time for several years and how people look at them. People do not look at them differently, provided they have remained current. The second thing is how do people look at young women who are a certain age, have just got married or people think might start a family? Yes, I think people do. Whatever happens, I think people do think in their mind, “Am I going to have to replace them?”

I am an employer myself. I employ 22 people; only two of them are men. Just about almost everybody of childbearing age, pretty much, has had a child in my office. It is something I am very used to. When you are hiring people, you think, “How long am I going to have them for before they have a family?” That does not necessarily mean that you make a different decision if they are the best person for the job. What I do say to candidates, though, is that if you think that there might be that prejudice—this is not candidates for jobs we do, particularly, but careers advice I give to everybody—and there are some unanswered questions, because under the law they cannot ask, “Are you planning a family? Have you got adequate childcare?” go in and say it. Go in and say, “I know you cannot ask me this. I have two children. I have full-time help. I am completely committed to my career and I want this job.” They cannot ask you that, so go in and say it.

Steven Moxon: I agree with Heather that it is not about prejudice; I do not agree with Catherine on this one. If you go back to what you said, you were raising the possibility of hidden prejudice in comparing a part-time dinner lady with a full-time bin man. I was not referring so much to part-time versus full-time work, but obviously being a bin man is much more onerous. It is a service with zero status—a negative-status job that men will only take if they are given a pay premium. The big issue is that we are focusing on women; I think we should be focusing more on men. In order to have a life, as it were, you have to somehow display your good genes, gain your status; this does not apply to women at all. The problem of unemployment and underemployment of men should be considered a far more serious problem, because in our PC age with our supposed equality—which it is not; it is inegalitarianism—we do not have that focus.

Q82 Rebecca Harris: I have one other question I wanted to ask, but you moved on to the question I wanted to ask at the end. This is partly to Heather, and Mr Moxon might know the answer. What potential effect do you think the recent Government announcements on improving parental leave for husbands and fathers might have on the attitudes of either employers in the workplace or men and women themselves in terms of the choices they make? These were announced last week by Nick Clegg.

Dr McGregor: Yes, about the equity of childcare. Earlier, I think in the first panel, there was some discussion of the taxation of childcare. It is very true that this has always been a complete barrier to going back to work. When I went back to work after my first child, the nanny earned gross more than I earned net, so I think anything that you can do to take that barrier away would help.

Q83 Rebecca Harris: This is about giving more opportunities and flexible parental leave for fathers specifically—not just mothers.

Dr McGregor: As Catherine said, every policy should be gender neutral. In Scandinavian countries I think you will still find that a large proportion of people who choose to take it are women. I think every policy should be gender neutral. I do not believe there are differences. I think there might be differences in choice, but there are just as many well qualified women to sit on boards as there are men. I think that people get picked for senior jobs based on their ability. I think there are just as many able women as men. I think maybe they are not as visible; I think we need to encourage more women in the pipeline. That is the

very next thing we need to address, but I do believe that all of this can be achieved without legislation.

I also believe that if you look, historically, at really important changes that have taken place on boards, such as the combining of chairman and chief executive roles, which was written up in the Higgs Report, investor influence brought that to an end; it almost does not happen now. That is major change. We can see that kind of change with senior women without legislation.

Dr Hakim: I think the move towards making maternity leave/parental leave gender neutral is absolutely the right way to go. I have always argued for gender-neutral policies because they otherwise stigmatise women. It is because women have had a right to maternity leave that employers have been less willing to hire young women of the age when they might have children.

It is absolutely clear in the research on Sweden that the result of giving women effectively three years potential maternity leave has been that virtually no women are employed in the private sector. Three-quarters of all employed men work in the private sector while two-thirds of all employed women work in the public sector, because it is the public sector that can cope with that and the private sector has real difficulty. They are very reluctant to hire young women in particular. The other effect has been, of course, the creation of a gender pay gap in Sweden that is close to the European Union average and way above the one in Britain. It has simply not had good effects in terms of the way it is working in Sweden, where very long maternity leave has in practice been reserved for the mother, and fathers only get a couple of months even now they have made it obligatory for fathers to take a couple of months, fathers by and large do not use it. It may still be that mothers will be the ones who take and use the leave, but employers will never be able to know and this will destigmatise the whole thing about parental leave. I think that is absolutely the way to go.

Steven Moxon: I do not think that will actually make that much difference, because employers will still expect, rightly and accurately, that only in rare cases will men take extended parental leave; whereas, in the vast majority of cases, it will be the woman who takes the leave. It sounds fine in principle, but it will not actually effect any change.

Chair: We are running out of time. We have a number of questions. Could I ask for brevity in your responses?

Q84 Rebecca Harris: If we accept there are some innate differences, how do we explain the many women who have managed to excel and have gone past those innate differences or the freaks of nature, like me, who go straight back to work after two weeks? How do we explain those difference and what lessons do we have to learn from them? As I said earlier, for those women who do want to get on, what should they learn? We want them to get on; we want women in the workplace if that is where they want to be, because we need it as an economy.

Dr McGregor: I attached a list of the basic things I have noticed over 12 years to the information I sent to the committee. It is all written up in my book. I think the lesson is that women need to learn and be continually developing human capital. It is still the case that three-quarters of all MBA students, for instance, are men, which means that women get to a certain point and do not continue to build human capital. I think we have talked a lot over the last two sets of witnesses about the building of social capital. We heard from Professor Dacre that the building of opportunities to meet other people and build a network were very important. We heard from Clare Walker, my fellow aviator, about the importance of networking. I prefer network, I have to say, as a noun rather than a verb. It is absolutely about building social capital. One without the other, as students of logic know, is necessary

but not sufficient. You need human capital and you need social capital—both of them together.

Also, the whole strategy through the early years is important and, as Katy Clark said, it is not just children that are the issue here. People have sick parents. People also, by the way, have spouses who they have to follow to the other side of the world, which means they have to have a career break. You need a strategy to get through a career break. It does not matter why you have a career break. These are all the things I think we should be pointing to. We need more role models. I think that women who have succeeded have a responsibility to turn around and help the people behind them. As Madeleine Albright said, there is a special place in hell for women who do not help other women.

Steven Moxon: There certainly are good reasons why women can succeed in work. It is fairly well known in research that women tend to be conscientious in comparison with men. That certainly will get you a long way in work. What happens then is work and excelling in it becomes an end in itself. It is like a positive feedback loop. You get spun off your from fundamental fiscal motivation. It becomes an end in itself, and that can propel you a long way up the career hierarchy. As I said, though, the sexual dynamics are against it. The core problem is that men have a direct motivation to gain status whereas women do not. It sounds rather facetious, but you can see an indirect reason why women want to propel themselves up a career hierarchy: to put themselves in the path of high-status men. That sounds rather facetious, but it is difficult to explain why women actually want to climb the career hierarchy.

Q85 Caroline Dinenge: I have so many questions for so many people, but I will ignore you guys and quickly speak to Heather, if that is okay. Otherwise we will be here all day. I wanted to talk to you about your 30% Club and, based on that, what measures you think are needed to ensure that more women are in senior positions within organisations and whether there should be more stringent regulation with things like quotas in order to up the numbers?

Dr McGregor: We started the 30% Club two years ago. It was founded by a steering committee, which was all female, I have to say. The members of the club, of which we have 55, are all chairmen of companies. Very few of them are women. They represent 60 companies between the 55 of them. We started with seven, so I am very pleased that we now have 55. At the time we set it up, of the previous 100 appointments to boards of FTSE 100 companies, 12 had been women. As we sit here today—this statistic changes every day—since March it has been 55% women. I think we have made huge progress in two years.

Of course, the actual number of women on boards on the FTSE has only gone from 12.5% to 17.5%, but the rate of appointment is a key statistic. If we continue at this rate of appointment—I confidently predict that this time next year the rate of appointment will be well over 60%—we will get to 30% by 2015, which is what we want to do. We do believe that this can be achieved without legislation or quotas. I could point you to lots of very effective change, from the Panel on Takeovers and Mergers to the Higgs Report to all sorts of other things, that has happened without legislation.

Actually, we believe that quotas are another form of discrimination. When Rexam appoint Joanna Waterous to their board as a senior independent non-executive director, people will say, if there are quotas, “She is a woman; that is why she got the job.” We do not want that. We want people to look at Joanna Waterous and say, “She is the most amazing woman. She was one of the most senior and effective women at McKinsey; she is on two other FTSE 100 boards. No wonder she has got that job. It is not because she is a woman.” I do not think she was chosen because she is a woman and I do not want people to think it. That is why we think we can get there without legislation: we think it would be a much better way.

Chair: Thank you. That concludes our questioning. I will repeat what I have said to the other panels. If you feel there is anything you would like to add to the contributions you have made today, please feel free to put it forward in written, supplementary evidence and, equally, if we feel there is a question we should have asked but did not, we may well write to you and would be grateful for a reply. Thank you very much. That was very helpful. We will be taking your comments and considerations and incorporating them into our report in due course.