

MINUTES
Inclusivity and Intersectionality

Women and Work APPG Meeting, Monday 25 March 2019
2:30pm-3:30pm, Committee Room 18, House of Commons

Chair: Tracy Brabin MP, Officer of the Women and Work APPG

Parliamentarians in attendance:

- Helen Whateley MP
- Baroness Garden of Frogna

Women and Work APPG Officer, Tracy Brabin convened the meeting as Chair, welcoming attendees and panellists.

Minutes

The first speaker, **Executive Director of the Equality Trust ,Wanda Wyporska** outlined that, through her work in trade unions, she has witnessed unfair work places and practices. In terms of intersectionality, she said she was personally affected by almost every pay gap. Wanda said that the Equality Trust had analysed the ‘fat cat’ statistics and found that of the FTSE 100 CEOs, the five female CEOs were earning 54% of what their male counterparts were earning and that it was clear that there was still a gender pay gap. She further outlined that the Sunday Times Rich List showed that the richest 1,000 people in the UK have more wealth than 40% of the lowest earning households combined. She noted that, whilst the richest had seen an increase in their wealth, a class, ethnicity and disability pay gap persists.

She highlighted the importance of discussing and recognising class, adding that the middle class are holding valuable opportunities which working class people cannot access. She suggested that this is evidenced through parents buying houses in good school areas to give their children the best opportunities.

Wanda argued that the concept of social mobility needs to be demolished, as it instils the idea that being working class is negative, and a state that one needs to move out of. She stated that the concept does nothing for the people who are left behind and do not transcend classes. She stipulated that socio-economic status has far wider reach than simply education and employment opportunities, as, for example, there is a strong link between socio-economic status and health outcomes.

She stressed the need to look at intersectionality because identities affect opportunities in the labour market; she suggested that people are treated differently because of their characteristics. However, she argued that inclusivity is impossible whilst the UK still has large gaps in wealth. With regard to current debates on Brexit, she stated that people were not blaming politicians for income inequality but blaming migrants in their local community which she said only fuels division.

The Equality Trust is launching a report which calls on men to reveal their wages, as well as companies to publish their pay gap data and, if they are not doing so, to explain why. She called on the government to enact the socio-economic duty, the closest the government has come to protecting class as a characteristic. She further advocated for the use of the UN sustainability goals. She said that, above all, the UN sustainability goals are about recognising that globalisation affects us all and there is a greater need to press the government to deliver on these goals.

Wanda concluded by saying that divides in society are intersectional in themselves and there is a need to address them or we risk seeing a more divided country and, as such, will not achieve gender pay equality.

Stonewall Bi Role Model of the Year and Recruitment Support at the Ministry of Justice, Hafsa Qureshi spoke about how intersectionality affects her personally. She stated that she was a female, bisexual, Muslim, BAME and had a disability. She stated that all these labels affect her in the workplace, making her a minority within a minority, with many barriers working against her and others like her. Whilst there is a need for structural change, she argued that there is also a need to help individuals. She stated that when someone has grown up hearing about all the barriers that they will be faced with in entering the workplace, it can affect self-confidence and how people perceive themselves. She spoke about the benefits of positive action but added that the problem remains that people are told their whole lives about what they cannot achieve, due to their sex, sexuality, religion, race or disability.

She said that she had embraced these labels, but, in doing so, felt as if there was a target on her back. The solution must be greater visibility. If more intersectional people are entering the workplace and are in visible positions, proud of their characteristics, then it will make it easier for other people entering the workforce.

She highlighted her own personal experience working in the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and stated that every year the MoJ collects data on people's characteristics, including disability and sexuality. However, the data shows that people are still not declaring aspects like their sexuality, out of fear that it will negatively impact their progression.

Hafsa suggested that one of the simplest but most effective ways to progress was to encourage people who come from diverse backgrounds. She stated that people need to hear encouragement especially when they have been told their whole lives that something about their identity will hold them back from certain opportunities. She stressed the importance of giving power to their voices and letting the minorities within the minorities do the talking. She said that quite often when it comes to talking about the need for diversity and inclusion, it is not diverse people who are doing the talking. For example, when implementing disability policy, it is often not carried out by people with disabilities and therefore key aspects are overlooked.

Tracy Brabin MP thanked Hafsa for her opening remarks and stated the clear need for greater diversity in politics to reflect the reality of society.

Director of Policy, Recruitment and Employment Confederation, Tom Hadley reported the work of the REC. He said the REC places more than 1 million people into work every year and their aim is to challenge the barriers that exist. He said that there was still a way to go in challenging and changing barriers, but progress has been made and that, whilst employers may not have the solutions, they are starting to ask the right questions. He said that many employers recognise the need for change but do not know how.

In terms of recruitment, whilst there is still strong demand, candidate availability is decreasing month on month, so employers are recognising that they need to be doing something different to bring candidates in. He also indicated that the questions people are asking about employment are changing, as candidates are asking more about the work culture and flexible working practices, which demonstrates the shift in the labour market.

He quoted data from the Equality and Human Rights Commission which shows that 61% of women would take into account a company's gender pay gap when applying for jobs. One of the challenges for the REC is how to accelerate the progress in closing the gender pay gap.

Tom stated that the REC has taken a sector by sector approach and recognises that there are different challenges and barriers in different sectors. He added that there is also a need to change the reality and perceptions of industry which is a big driver for change. He emphasised that if we change how businesses recruit staff, there will be positive changes across the board, in terms of closing pay gaps and creating a more productive work place. He said there was a need to fundamentally change the way in which people are hired, in order to address intersectionality and social mobility. In this regard, the REC has been looking to identify solutions. He outlined one such solution: people with hearing impairments being able to work in call centres using new technology.

However, he also suggested that part of the solution is playing the long-game, and in some sectors, there is little diversity at all at any level. Therefore there is a need to go into schools, including primary schools, to challenge perceptions at a young age. In this regard, he said there was a real appetite for change.

Tracy Brabin MP said that, when it comes to recruitment, careers advice in schools is important, especially getting to children before they have decided that a job is not for them.

Baroness Gardner expanded on the importance of going into schools and especially primary schools to encourage enthusiasm about all different trades. She said it was important to try and encourage more women into construction as currently only 2% of the workforce in this sector are women. She also stated that children from the age of seven years old start to stereotype jobs and it is critical that schools challenge this.

A member of the audience said that the focus should not only be on encouraging girls to enter male dominated fields but also celebrating boys who want to move into more female dominated roles such as caring professions.

Tracy Brabin MP said this was an important point, particularly for wages, as the more men enter traditionally female dominated industries, the more pay issues will be raised and challenged.

Wanda agreed that careers advice in schools has been reduced, often to only a website, and stressed the need for proper careers services as well as creativity. She called for more men to work in primary schools and nurseries. She also reported that there are now more women qualifying as vets than men and that, as a result, pay scales would change.

Tom emphasised the importance of mindsets and encouraging schools. He said that jobs are going to change quickly, therefore there needs to be a change in mindsets and a degree of flexibility. He said members of the REC were attempting different hiring techniques to widen the pool of employees and, whilst not all of the techniques were working, it was positive that experimentation was happening. He said that artificial intelligence has the power to help through identifying characteristics or key words.

Hafsa stated that to help children from working class backgrounds, it is important to reflect on what would have helped you when you were a teenager. She pointed out that representation is a problem but not enough is being done and we need more minorities in leadership positions. It is important to learn from these people to convey back to children helpful careers advice. She said if children cannot see people who look like them, then they might not even know these opportunities exist for them; it is important to promote these people already doing the job and ask them what would have helped them.

Wanda said she had issues with the term unconscious bias, because it can sometimes be used as an excuse for people to say that they are prejudiced. She reiterated Hafsa's point that it is important for children to see people who look like them so they are able to expand their horizons. She said that stereotypes start as early as nurseries, so careers advice needs to be ingrained at an early age.

Sandi Rhys Jones from Women in Property said that they had delivered unconscious bias training in construction and property companies, because it was important for people to recognise what they were doing. She stressed the importance of leaders challenging and pushing boundaries.

Director of Women2Win, Virginia Crosbie highlighted the benefits of mentoring. She said one of the issues with social mobility is that people may feel as if they stop fitting in with their family, while at the same time feel as if they do not belong in their chosen industry. Mentoring can help address these feelings of not belonging and identify a network to help.

Diana Adamczyk from the Association of British Insurers said that research has shown that women 'drop off' because of caring responsibilities, which explains a lack of women in senior positions. She asked how companies can facilitate shared parental leave and flexible working.

Tracy Brabin MP stated that the number of men who take parental leave is still very low and freelance men cannot take any leave. She said the biggest driver for shared parental

responsibilities was through shared parental leave. But working culture is a barrier for many men: they are seen as not ambitious enough if they take shared parental leave.

Carolina Brière from Childcare Levy put forward her idea of the Childcare Levy which could be offered as a joint solution provided by companies and government. She said that it was time that companies offer childcare benefits, as it is clearly an issue that affects everyone.

Nicki Seignot from the Parent Mentor said her organisation works with employers to help working parents help other working parents. She stressed the need to invest in returning talent, as there is a strong economic argument to get men and women back into the workplace.

Jennifer Liston-Smith from My Family Care said her organisation works with the UK's 300 leading employers to combine family and work. She stated that there is a need for flexibility, care solutions, coaching, networks and mentors to help parents and carers in the workforce. She said that research from Plymouth University had shown there were still many stereotypes about parenting. She also said, for flexible working, companies should start adopting reason-neutral applications with no special favour, as a means to normalise it, rather than it just being seen as a 'benefit' for working parents.

Hafsa agreed with this, stating that flexible working benefits everyone. She also said that smarter working allows for a more diverse workforce; it did not just benefit one group. By delving into flexible working, we can start to identify more barriers to work and how we can support them better.

Tracy Brabin MP asked how we can encourage employers not to just have flexible working as a tick box.

Wanda said it was imperative to change recruitment in order to effect this change. She also stressed the need to make more of a connection between the job and the skills people have, rather than just someone's degree. She said that we do not know what jobs will be like in 20 years' time, so changes to recruitment need to begin now.

Tom said that 60% of employers recruit through word of mouth and it is time to change the way we recruit. He stressed that it was important to invest in it to get it right, as it links back to the argument about productivity.

Tracy Brabin MP closed the session and thanked panellists and guests for their contribution.

Non-parliamentarian attendees

Name	Organisation
Jennifer Liston-Smith	My Family Care
Alison Field	University of Sussex
Sarah Whitehead	University of Sussex
Elisabeth Kelan	University of Essex
Ryan Barrett	IPSE

Sarah McConnell	TSSA
Verona Blackford	Action for Children
Lysha Boucher	RSSB
Hilary Compton	V Formation
Diana Adamczyk	ABI
Clare Gray	The Shaw Trust
Harry Curzon	Salvation Army
Michelle Lowe	Shaw Trust
Nina Atwal	Bombardier
Rebecca Lees	House of Commons
Hayley Bennett	Business in the Community
Brandusa Tataru-Marinescu	Kingsley Napley LLP
Stephen Parkinson	Kingsley Napley LLP
Cari Rosen	Gransnet
Kamala Mackinnon	Vodafone
Eliz Arkut	Simmons and Simmons LLP
Gill Thomas	Royal Academy of Engineering
Samantha Louis	CIMA
Harriet Khataba	Her Story Matters
Teresa Boughey	Jungle HR
Jane Moffett	Kangaroo Coaching
Nicki Seignot	The Parent Mentor
Mark Gale	Young Women's Trust
Joy Lancaster	Young Women's Trust
Preeti Kaur	Young Women's Trust
Morgan Sykes	Young Women's Trust
Alexi Ozioro	RSSB
Gorki Duhra	REC
Ornella Nsio	REC
Thalia Ioannidou	REC
Katherine Riggs	Thames Skills Academy
Jean Duprez	TfL & Thames Skills Academy
Dr Subashini Suresh	University of Wolverhampton
Madeleine Field	FDM Group
Jenna Haddad	Sussex University
Pam Iannotti	Winchester University
Rachael Anderson	How Do You Do It
Carolina Brière	Childcare Levy UK
Ben Cook	Southbank Centre
Alice Devlin	GEO
Debbie Petford	BESA
Janet Shelley	BESA
Sandi Rhys Jones	Women in Property

