Equal Opportunities Committee

4th Report, 2013 (Session 4)

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Equal Opportunities Committee

Remit and membership

Remit:

1. The remit of the Equal Opportunities Committee is to consider and report on matters relating to equal opportunities and upon the observance of equal opportunities within the Parliament.

2. In these Rules, “equal opportunities” includes the prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between persons on grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions such as religious beliefs or political opinions.”

*(Standing Orders of the Scottish Parliament, Rule 6.9)*

Membership:

Christian Allard (from 22 May 2013)
Clare Adamson (until 23 February 2012)
Marco Biagi (from 18 September 2012) (Deputy Convener from 8 November 2012)
Mary Fee (Convener) (from 10 January 2012)
John Finnie
Annabel Goldie (from 16 November 2011 until 16 January 2013)
Alex Johnstone (from 17 January 2013)
John Mason (from 30 October 2012)
Siobhan McMahon
Stuart McMillan (Deputy Convener) (until 18 September 2012)
Dennis Robertson (until 16 May 2013)
Jean Urquhart (from 23 February 2012 until 26 October 2012) (Deputy Convener from 20 September 2012)

Committee Clerking Team:

Clerk
Douglas Thornton

Assistant Clerk
Ailsa Kilpatrick
Equal Opportunities Committee

4th Report 2013 (Session 4)

Women and Work

The Committee reports to the Parliament as follows—

STILL SWIMMING AGAINST THE TIDE

1. Discrimination against women in the workplace should be a thing of the past. The Equal Pay Act was introduced in 1970\(^1\). Section 6 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975\(^2\) makes it unlawful for a woman employee to be discriminated against in terms of—

   - access to opportunities for promotion, transfer or training;
   - access to any other benefits, facilities or services; or
   - refusing or deliberately omitting to afford her that access

2. Since the 1970s, there have been numerous additions to sex discrimination legislation, yet we still heard that mothers, in particular, fall at the mercy of limited flexible working arrangements, zero-hours contracts and restrictive childcare options. There’s also evidence of a lack of quality part-time work.

3. Allison Johnstone, an individual who was moved to write to us at the very outset of our inquiry, outlined some of the challenges faced by women in the Scottish labour market. Her conclusion set the tone for much of the inquiry to come, and is a statement we can fully endorse—

   “I believe that the lack of quality part-time jobs is preventing Scottish women engaging with the world of work and reaching their full potential, as well as contributing to the potential of Scotland as a whole.”\(^3\)

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\(^3\) Allison Johnstone. Written submission.
4. Despite the fact that, on paper, women’s rights to sufficient, skills-matched and flexible employment should be protected, it was with a depressing familiarity that we heard the stories of some of the women who gave evidence.

**Automatic downgrading**

5. Lynn McLachlan, the director for the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) in the Glasgow Region and one of the original founders of the RBS’s Women in Business Ambassador Programme, explained—

“When I fell pregnant, I was automatically downgraded—there was no way that I could continue in that post. To my detriment, I did not fight that decision—I should have.

“I looked after my children and went into two further areas of employment. South Lanarkshire Council, which was one of my employers, was very flexible. It allowed me to go part-time and to do certain things that I wanted to do, but when I asked whether I could have a career break so that I could go to Jordanhill College to train to be a teacher, the response was a categoric no... I needed to earn money and I did so by starting my own business.”

6. Debbie Duncan, who works with teen parents through Fife Gingerbread, spoke of similar experiences—

“When five years ago, I was an area manager for a building society, and after that I was in business with my husband for a couple of years. The marriage ended and I became a lone parent, and things changed drastically... I had planned ahead and thought about what I could do for future employment, and I decided to retrain... We have talked about downgrading—I am now looking at a full-time salary that is half the amount that I would have earned previously. I have had to make that concession because, as a lone parent, it is down to me to look after the house and the children as well as trying to earn an income.

“I have planned to find a job where—I hope—I will not have to pay for childcare during the summer holiday period. I am using a childminder at present, and I am finding that it is fairly tricky to get childcare in a rural situation. There is not a big selection, so extra travelling time is involved. In addition, the before-school and after-school clubs are not open to a four-year-old, so I would have to leave one child at the school club and one at a childminder, which does not make sense either. As a result, I am paying more money to a childminder just now. Those are the decisions that I have had to make as a lone parent, and they have involved downgrading to fit in with my family life.”

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Limited childcare options
7. Dr Caroline Wallace works full-time in two part-time jobs: Senior Science Policy Advisor (Scotland) at the Society of Biology and Athena SWAN Support Officer at the University of Edinburgh. She told us—

“My child gets only two of her allocated five places in the little village that we live in, Lauder, as there are just not enough places. That is an extra burden on us. There are university facilities but, in my experience—and from what I have heard from others—they are very expensive. We need to make those facilities more affordable, and we need them to be open for longer to allow people to be more flexible about how and when they work.”

Blocked from using skills
8. We heard from Jacqueline Hogg, referred to us by the Scottish Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology—

“I have a masters in multimedia technology and I have 16 years’ experience of work on software development. I was made redundant from my previous position and decided to take a few years out... I have been trying to get back into employment for the past two years. I do not want to take a secretarial job, because I do not think that that would be good for me, and I do not think that it would be good for the Scottish economy. I have paid for my masters and I want to use it. I like working with technology and I like being in that area, so my challenge is to find a position there. It is very difficult to do that.”

“CVs that have breaks of as short as 12 to 18 months might get sifted out. I have had a break of almost seven years in any real work since my last professional employment. That puts me at a disadvantage, and I might not get picked up because of that.

“A job description might say that somebody is sought who is currently doing a certain job. That is not going to be me.”

Additional barriers to women from ethnic minorities
9. Tanveer Parnez, Director of National Development at BEMIS, said—

“I work for an ethnic minority organisation and am fortunate in having been supported by my organisation and the board to get where I am today, but a lot of women in Scotland lack that support and training.”

Challenges in meeting the support needs of children
10. Claire Falconer, a volunteer with Fife Gingerbread, took part with Debbie Duncan in the Poverty Alliance’s EPiC (Evidence, Participation, Change) project on surviving lone parenthood and the effects of poverty. She told us her story—

“I studied hard in accountancy and would love full-time work in finance, but I cannot get that work due to the barriers that exist. One of the main barriers—

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which people are not even aware of—is my having had a poor credit rating… I am having to revise my CV and downgrade my skills to what they were previous to my study. I am applying for part-time jobs that are lousy and unsustainable just to make sure that there is an income coming in.

“What people do not take into consideration when they say that I can use a childminder is the fact that my kid has additional support needs and a dairy allergy, and trying to find a childminder who will cater for those things is extremely difficult. There are 27 childminders registered in my local area, but only four of them would take my son because of his illnesses, and I cannot get him in because of the lack of places.

“Everyone has a past, but they need to realise that we are working through that. We are willing to work and we will do the full-time hours like every other person who is on their books, but breaking the barriers and getting through to them is the issue.”

11. Allison Johnstone spoke of family members struggling with childcare needs—

“My niece has autism, and my sister and her partner are involved in a lot of caring. They live in Ayrshire, and my niece goes to an excellent charity in Stirling called the Speur-Ghlan Early Intervention Service. The commitment that is involved from them and the entire family is quite considerable. That is for one child. Without the flexibility of her employer and her partner’s employer, it would be hugely difficult, if not nigh-on impossible, for one or both of them to continue to work.”

The battles of being a lone parent

12. Lynsey Calderwood, a lone parent with three children who works for One Parent Families Scotland, told us—

“My marriage broke up, and I have one child in school and two in private nursery. I have struggled to maintain that while working with one income. I have worked with lone parents to try to support them into work and seen the barriers that they face, which are mostly related to childcare. They come off benefits to try to maintain an income, and go into low-paid jobs with temporary contracts.”

Self-employment as the only option

13. Kassandra Hughes, who is also involved with One Parent Families Scotland, explained—

“I worked in administration before I became a lone parent. I have basically been a lone parent from the start. When I had my daughter, I stopped working for a while. When she went to school I decided to try to get back into work, but I found out how hard that was. I now find that the jobs that are available are not suitable for me due to childcare and stuff like that. I am retraining so that I can get work, but I intend to become self-employed because work with suitable hours is not available to me otherwise.”

Our inquiry

14. We agreed to undertake an inquiry into women and work in September 2011. Building up to the main evidence-taking phase, we—

- held a round-table session during Trade Union Week (February 2012);
- led the Parliament in a debate on women and work (June 2012);
- attended and followed the Scottish Government’s summit on women and employment (September 2012); and,
- focused on gender as part of our scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2013-14 (October/November 2012).

15. We then issued a call for written evidence, which received 57 responses. Oral evidence sessions were held in March, April and May 2013, and we heard from women working across a range of industries, representatives from trade unions and voluntary organisations, and individuals who told us their own story. Many of the women we spoke to, as the previous section shows, had faced, and were still facing, their own fight for equality in the workplace.

16. We based our oral evidence sessions around the three main themes to emerge from the written evidence, which also form the three key areas of this report’s focus: occupational segregation, flexible working and childcare.

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OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION

17. Most written submissions described horizontal occupational segregation, where women and men are concentrated in types of work, education and training, including the modern apprenticeships programme. Some submissions referred to vertical segregation (the ‘glass ceiling’), where women face progression barriers.

Horizontal segregation: some signs of progress

18. Most witnesses said there had been progress, albeit slow, with examples of initiatives to promote construction as a career choice for girls and the benefits to employers of recruiting more women. Commenting that diversity in the workplace had changed “positively”\(^\text{18}\) over the course of her 15 years in the RBS, Lynn McLachlan said—

“The speed of change has been slower than I would have liked as it has only gained significant momentum over the past 5 years. However at a recent RBS Conference I was pleasantly surprised to have to queue in the ladies toilet – this would have been unheard of a few years ago.”\(^\text{19}\)

19. Jacqueline Kerr (CITB-ConstructionSkills) spoke of a desire to change the construction sector’s image. She described CITB-ConstructionSkills’ positive-image work to put more images of young women in its literature, whereas, 20 years ago, literature showed only the typical, white, male recruit.\(^\text{20}\) She explained that CITB-ConstructionSkills’ education team had been running positive-action events in schools promoting construction as a viable career choice for girls. She also described work with the Scottish Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology on a project giving women work experience with employers and the opportunity to showcase themselves.\(^\text{21}\)

20. Darah Zahran (OPITO), however, said that the oil and gas industry had been “slow to realise the potential advantages of trying to be more proactive in attracting females”.\(^\text{22}\) She felt that the issue was becoming “more pressing”, with perception of the industry – as dirty, requiring working offshore and an unattractive prospect for women – a big issue that needed to be overcome. However, she pointed out—

"There is now more understanding and more work is being done to ensure that school pupils understand where technical studies, physics and maths might take them. Once more females are attracted, they need to find ways of retaining them."\(^\text{23}\)

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18 Lynn McLachlan, Written Submission.
19 Lynn McLachlan, Written Submission.
Modern apprenticeships programme

21. Although witnesses agreed that modern apprenticeship schemes were good because of their employed status, problems were described. Emma Ritch (Close the Gap), for example, thought that, with only 1 per cent of construction apprentices being female, entry to the industry was “pretty much closed to girls at the moment, for a variety of reasons”. She described the programme as still having “incredible patterns of segregation”, considering its role as the “access point to some of the non-traditional occupations”.

22. However, Jacqueline Kerr (CITB-ConstructionSkills) emphasised work being undertaken to improve the situation—

“All our teams that go out to speak to employers have been trained in equal opportunities, and they promote apprenticeships in particular as a means whereby employers can recruit more women. Basically, they let the employers know what the benefits are of recruiting more women. We did not do that 10 years ago, but we are doing it now. Things like that make a difference.”

23. According to Darah Zahran (OPITO), for smaller organisations in the supply chain in oil and gas, it was difficult for employers to take on somebody who would be in college for a significant time before becoming productive. Also, for insurance purposes a lot of oil and gas companies would not have people on site until they were 18 or older. She furthermore pointed out that, despite recruitment channels at every level in the industry, even those women recruited do not necessarily stay—

“The attrition rates for the OPITO modern apprenticeship scheme are among the highest in Scotland. There are recruitment channels at every tier of the industry.”

24. Ann Henderson (STUC) raised a point about the focus of modern apprenticeships on young people. She said that the STUC felt that it took some resources away from older people—

“… our feeling was that that would particularly disadvantage women wishing to re-enter the labour market … It is a concern that older women and women at other stages in their lives might need, for example, support with a childcare package built in to a job, so that they can go into construction or one of the STEM occupations later in life.”

[References]

25. Whilst she recognised the reasons for having the focus on young people, she felt that there was also a rationale for taking steps that would “not cost very much” to support older women—

“I understand the focus being shifted to young people, but many of the things that we are talking about do not cost much. We might find that there is a group of women who would be more likely to complete their apprenticeship and stay.”

26. Ann Henderson added that the childcare point also held for young people in modern apprenticeships—

“... people often become parents before the age of 25, so more thought should be given to how to provide support, for example with childcare, for young parents in apprenticeship schemes. Consideration should also be given to how maternity leave is funded and managed during a modern apprenticeship. Those and other such issues have not been given great attention.”

27. Engender called for “equal investment across Modern Apprenticeships”; Jill Wood (Engender) expanded on the rationale—

“... modern apprenticeships are part of a cross-cutting strategy on occupational segregation, along with tools in the educational system, such as careers advice and the multi-stakeholder action plan that Close the Gap recommended.”

**Vertical segregation: progress not following through**

28. Joyce Cullen (The Law Society of Scotland) recognised that, although recent years had seen no difficulty recruiting women to the profession, with a women-to-men ratio of about 60:40 for those studying law, disproportionately few women reached the top of the legal profession—

“We cannot be complacent ... we still need to explain why, although we have a large number of women coming in at the bottom of the profession, as we move up the scale to senior solicitor, to associate and to partner—within private practice—the numbers go down.”

29. Angela Wilson (ACPOS Scottish Women’s Development Forum) highlighted a rapid rise in the number of women joining the police over the last 10 years, with some recruitment currently at almost 50:50, and cited media portrayals as a significant factor. She stressed, though, that there was too great a difference

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between how many women joined and how many reached the very top, with an impact on the quality of service—

“... a lot of women are entering the professions at the lower levels. That should be seen as a success, but there is far too big a difference between the number of women who enter the professions and the number ... who reach the very top ... The bottom line is that it is about giving the best possible service to the public through the private sector, the public sector or whatever. If we are not able to choose the best candidates because we have a reduced pool, clearly we cannot give the best service.”

36

The ACPOS Scottish Women’s Development Forum also suggested that the creation of a single police force could increase progression barriers for women—

“There are under-represented in both Specialist Posts and Promoted ranks, which generally carry more pay with them. Although officers would be transferred across to the new Police Service of Scotland on their current pay, conditions and location, the security of location will cease to exist upon promotion and possibly when accepting a specialist post ... safeguards and restrictions [are] required, as there is a strong likelihood that such a decision would disproportionately affect women, particularly those with caring responsibilities ... this would pose a barrier to women applying for promotion or specialist posts ... [and] many male officers with caring responsibilities would also see this as a barrier. We understand that Regulation, which protects restricts officers work location, will be maintained for serving police officers. However, it is not clear whether this will apply to officers who join the Police Service of Scotland after it has been established. Members therefore had similar concerns in regards to the external and internal recruitment process, should officers be liable to be posted anywhere in Scotland, and specialist posts, should officers have to move in order to gain experience within a specialist role. If there are to be restrictions/safeguards on where a police officer can be posted this must be made clear.”

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The ‘leaky pipeline’

31. Darah Zahran (OPITO) and Professor Lesley Yellowlees (Royal Society of Chemistry and University of Edinburgh) highlighted that 73 per cent of female—compared with 48 per cent of male—graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (“STEM”) don’t pursue careers in relevant fields. Professor Yellowlees said—

“If we consider what is called the leaky pipeline from school right through to senior level in all science—by “science” I mean science, engineering, maths and technology—the graphs all show a steep decline in female representation. That is a real concern.”

37 Scottish Women’s Development Forum, Written Submission.
38 OPITO, Written Submission.
32. She also emphasised the importance of targeting schoolchildren—

“We have spoken about ... getting that message across to them, getting them involved and getting them to see it. We also have to pay great attention to the parents. Unfortunately, they sometimes think that there are girls’ jobs and boys’ jobs, and they have a huge impact on their children. We have a huge sales job to do as far as they are concerned, too.”

33. Darah Zahran explained that a key issue for women in STEM fields was where to go once they had their degrees. Commenting that attrition rates in the oil and gas sector were “good, but not for females,” she made a suggestion as to how the gap between leaving university and going into employment could be bridged, to help retain people in STEM fields—

“Strong internship opportunities help very much. Some employers in the oil and gas industry are proactively trying to get female graduates on board, because females achieve good results on experiential tests and assessments. In vocation-applicable tests, females are top performers. We need closer industry and academic liaison—particularly in the STEM sector—to explore how we can marry academic achievement to vocational requirement and have people completing their academic experience with more practical skills and more realism about how to transfer those skills to the workplace.”

34. She agreed that parents played an important role, which she described as “absolutely critical”, but pointed out that information provided to parents – at parents’ evenings or careers evenings – was “superficial and a bit fragmented” about what studying sciences would lead to. She also highlighted that the attrition rates for the OPITO modern apprenticeship scheme were among the highest. She pointed out that a few employers are deliberately looking at trying to attract the range of talent that is out there to give themselves, the industry and school leavers the widest possible choice while retaining people and attracting them to the industry. To illustrate how hard they were working to overcome preconceptions about what the work involves, she said—

“It is not just about going in a helicopter offshore and, by the way, would you like to fly a helicopter?”

35. Dr Caroline Wallace recommended the Government needed to show leadership in respect to a national strategy for Scotland. Similarly, Jill Wood (Engender) argued that Scottish Government strategy documents “heralded" and
paid “lip service” to the pay gap and occupational segregation as areas in which action was being taken but did not articulate what that action consisted of—

“I would like what is said to be substantiated instead of having just a reference to tackling the pay gap in strategy documents elsewhere. I would like more specifics.”

36. Darah Zahran explained that a lot of the marketing, using female role models where possible, was starting to filter its way through schools, and OPITO’s work with Education Scotland and Skills Development Scotland to try to show the breadth of skills and opportunities onshore and offshore, was beginning to show results.

37. According to Darah Zahran, a woman who had overcome the barriers in a male-dominated environment would have shown a lot of obviously attractive attributes, like drive and ambition. However, she argued the sector started to lose women beyond age 30 because of work-life balance, the culture and male-dominated work patterns.

38. Jacqueline Kerr (CITB–ConstructionSkills) suggested retention rates would improve if degree courses were structured more towards work experience, so when women completed their degree, they would not be surprised by what they found on a building site. She also explained that as construction was transient in nature, it could involve a lot of travelling, which presented problems for women in certain age ranges, who might have domestic responsibilities.

Stereotypes, perceptions and responsibility

Male-dominated fields

39. Witnesses agreed that perception in the workplace was a problem. Ann Henderson (STUC) gave an example involving a young female painter and decorator—

“… she was not going to stop doing the job, which she absolutely loved. Every single day, however, her colleagues – the men in particular – teased her, and it was becoming really wearing.”

40. Jill Wood (Engender) raised the question of whether the onus should be on women to put themselves forward for jobs in traditionally male-dominated sectors, and stressed that women made choices within the existing sexist structures of discrimination, which did not provide them with a real choice.
41. Mary Matheson of the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) suggested society saw women as having caring roles, whether for children or elderly parents, with families deciding who would take the role based solely on salary. For her, there was a feeling that primary education in particular was about the “soft and nurturing end of education” with the “real meat and drink” in secondary, and highlighted the need for more male involvement in primary school education.\(^\text{57}\)

42. Hazel Mathieson (Skills Development Scotland) stated that SDS ring-fenced construction opportunities for girls, but girls did not come forward to present themselves. She suggested that simply trying to identify opportunities and saying that they are for girls would not solve the problem. Instead, she recommended working with partner organisations to do taster sessions with young people at school to show them careers in construction and information technology so that, when they made subject choices, they could see the whole spectrum of careers available to them.\(^\text{58}\)

43. Joyce Cullen (Law Society of Scotland) said that 30 years ago women made up 40 to 60 per cent of her year at university but only a minority entered the profession and it was much harder for a woman to push through and become a partner. She recalled that early in her career, clients often assumed she was her boss’s secretary rather than another lawyer. She emphasised that that would never happen now.\(^\text{59}\)

44. Emma Ritch (Close the Gap) suggested that any woman who ended up working in a non-traditional, male-dominated occupation had “been swimming against the tide for her entire life”\(^\text{60}\), a process that would have had to have started in primary school or, at the latest, by the time secondary-school subjects were chosen. She added that until the Scottish Government announced its Careerwise programme, there had been no concerted push across the public provision in schools to try to encourage girls towards STEM professions.\(^\text{61}\)

45. According to Emma Ritch, more had to be done to build up girls’ resilience in relation to the idea of studying and working in a male-dominated environment. She pointed out that everywhere she goes, someone from the engineering sector says—

“No one understands engineering. It’s not all being covered in oil from head to foot every day. It involves being in an office and using computers quite a lot.”\(^\text{62}\)

**Female-dominated fields**

46. Witnesses also explained that not many men were registered as childminders. According to Maggie Simpson (Scottish Childminding Association), more dual child-minding services were also provided; a lot of men who were partners played an active part. She stressed there was still a lot of suspicion about men


working by themselves in childcare for young children; it was not just a recruitment issue; it was more about how men in childcare were viewed.63 Irene Audain (Scottish Out of School Network) commented that, compared with the rest of the childcare and early learning workforce, there were slightly more men in out-of-school care, with an annual workforce survey stating 8 per cent of the returns were from men.64

47. Carol Fox (Fox and Partners) suggested that valuing the roles that are traditionally undertaken by women, as opposed to pushing women towards traditionally "male" roles, would ensure that a mixed workforce would take up such roles.65 Speaking about the differences in grading levels between a gardener and female home-carers, comparing their working conditions, she said that a manager had replied—

"... these women know that is part and parcel of the job".66

48. She went on to suggest that the attitudes of big employers, such as local authorities, and private employers needed to be challenged.67

**Multiple influences on young people's choices**

**Schools**

49. It was suggested that, as young people had to make their minds up about career choices at a young age, they were being asked to make "irreversible career choices"68 so that, when they left school, their paths were set. Some witnesses felt that schools had an influence — for example, in putting children forward for skills initiatives — but also that teachers' knowledge of the world of work needed to be improved. Darah Zahran (OPITO) agreed that schools were critical—

"They have come a long way in embracing vocational options for pupils, but it is hard for guidance teachers and careers advisers to know everything about every sector. We could address subject choices more appropriately so that where subjects can take people is contextualised—so that they know that STEM subjects do not just take them into medicine, that arts subjects do not just take them into law and that maths does not just take them into accountancy. That would really help."69

50. Jacqueline Kerr (CITB-ConstructionSkills) said that teachers thought that construction was for children who were not academic—

"It is surprising how surprised teachers and guidance teachers are about construction: it is viewed as the last option. It is not understood that a construction apprenticeship involves going to college and lasts for four years and that a lot of learning has to go on."70

51. Witnesses agreed that industry representatives going into schools would have a greater impact than solely a familiar guidance teacher. Joyce Cullen (Law Society of Scotland) spoke of a role for professions and businesses to go into the schools and "open people's eyes".  

Local authorities

52. Witnesses spoke of inconsistency and fragmentation in and across local authorities and schools. Darah Zahran (OPITO) and Hazel Mathieson (Skills Development Scotland) stated that choices were being made dependant on work available in certain regions. Darah Zahran (OPITO) suggested there should be a core collaboration between government, academia and industry to agree on materials that every child and school should get so that, for example, "not just Aberdeen schools … learn about oil and gas, or just Dumfries and Borders schools … learn about textiles".

Parents

53. Witnesses agreed on the importance of parental influence on career choices, with some suggesting parents often reinforced stereotypes. For Angela Wilson (ACPOS Scottish Women’s Development Forum), parents and young people needed to be educated to counter “very old stereotypes”. Professor Lesley Yellowlees (Royal Society of Chemistry and University of Edinburgh) suggested that parents had “a huge impact on their children”. Similarly, Jacqueline Kerr (CITB-ConstructionSkills) said that parents’ influence, although major, was “inadvertent rather than deliberate”, with many parents not seeing construction as a viable career choice for their sons, “never mind their daughters”.

54. Mary Matheson (EIS) said that some children had very limited knowledge of the full range of job opportunities available to them. She suggested that some parents may not have had positive experiences and so did not value education.

Employers

55. Hazel Mathieson (Skills Development Scotland) stressed that work with employers was also needed to ensure that employers used “non-discriminatory recruitment practices”. Lynn McLachlan (Royal Bank of Scotland) described “huge improvements” in terms of eliminating childcare issues and allowing flexible working and working from home at RBS over the last 5 years, but could not say that the success of new initiatives had been highlighted to other big employers.

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The media

56. Media representation was seen as having both positive and negative impacts. Angela Wilson (ACPOS Scottish Women’s Development Forum) highlighted that media portrayal of the police had made a big difference. She suggested people were now starting to see female police officers as role models and their job as “something they could do.” However, Jacqueline Kerr (CITB-ConstructionSkills) pointed to a more damaging side—

“If there is anything about the construction sector in the tabloids in particular, you will see the usual image of a page-3-type girl wearing a hard hat and a pair of shorts.”

57. Darah Zahran (OPITO) suggested the media could be used more constructively to portray more positive role models for both genders. She highlighted the use of female role models in their marketing campaigns, but warned against over-doing it.

Facilities

58. Witnesses described problems with practical issues. Jacqueline Kerr (CITB-ConstructionSkills) spoke of misconceptions around practical issues – that separate toilets for men and women are required, for example, where in reality a single toilet is sufficient so long as it locks. Speaking of training facilities, Darah Zahran (OPITO) gave the example of shared overnight accommodation, which can create difficulties if only one woman needs to be accommodated. She said more bed space could be built at considerable cost, but—

“… there is a chicken-and-egg issue: should the industry build it hoping that they will come or wait until they come and then build it?”

Retraining

59. We heard that there are opportunities to retrain, but barriers were described. Jacqueline Kerr (CITB-ConstructionSkills) explained that, although there were retraining opportunities in construction because a construction apprenticeship can be done at any age, there were fewer funding opportunities available for people seeking to retrain in construction after a career break, than for youth apprentices.

60. Darah Zahran (OPITO) reasoned that it was hard, rather than impossible, to retrain and that the barriers did not, in oil and gas, come from industry. She suggested that the barriers came from domestic and financial pressures, funding availability and finding the right model that allowed people to train and make a career transition whilst having other responsibilities. Hazel Mathieson (Skills
Development Scotland) told us that there is a whole stream of provision to help people move into work. However, she recognised that their funding and contribution rates are skewed towards young people.

**Legislation**

61. Some witnesses suggested legislative changes. For example, Mary Matheson (EIS) argued in favour of legislation to enable employers to take a more flexible approach to getting women back into work after they have taken career breaks or maternity leave. Angela Wilson (ACPOS Scottish Women’s Development Forum) suggested changing selection processes in the interests of greater transparency. However, Joyce Cullen (Law Society of Scotland) felt that practice rather than policy needed to change, with bigger changes needed in attitudes.

**Scottish Government**

62. The Minister for Youth Employment (“the Minister”) recognised that occupational segregation affected society as a whole, requiring societal change. She drew attention to the recently announced initiative, Careerwise Scotland, to run for more than two years with the aim of informing what can be done to encourage more young women to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. However, she added that occupational segregation was a “much wider challenge” than STEM-related issues—

“The challenge is also about valuing the sectors that women are traditionally drawn to, making sure that career opportunities are open to all, enabling young people to understand the nature of the labour market and how to make informed choices, and ensuring that employers recognise the economic and social value of a balanced workforce. That very much requires a cross-Government approach. We have reconvened the cross-directorate occupational segregation working group to consider what action we can take on the recommendations from the women’s employment summit and the Royal Society of Edinburgh report, “Tapping all our Talents”.

63. She acknowledged that, in enterprise, although numbers were rising, women still accounted for only 14 per cent of small and medium enterprise employers and 30 per cent of self-employed people. She described the Women’s Employment Summit of September 2012 as a “catalyst for a series of seminars between October 2012 and April 2013 covering a range of areas … including effective networking and the … role modelling of women in enterprise”, with recommendations for practical actions, drawn from all the seminars, for the Government to pursue.
Engagement in schools
64. Asked how much influence schools could have on young people’s career choices, given the many other factors including their experiences, their families, what their friends have done and what is available where they live, the Minister answered—

“Schools have a massive influence ... I also believe that with changes to the curriculum there are huge opportunities for us to capitalise on. The whole ethos change in curriculum for excellence is about contextualised learning—learning that is relevant to life and work. A lot of the work that I am involved in ... is about better connectivity between all phases of education and the world of work. We have a huge opportunity to better prepare and inform than ever before young people about the world of work. That gives us the context and opportunity to start to challenge stereotypes and to make sure that young women in particular have their eyes opened to the range of opportunities that are available.”

65. She said that schools were important because of the need to engage early with young women in particular—

“The earlier we engage with young people about career choices the better. It is not about corralling them down one route or another. However, if we wait until people have chosen subjects, perhaps that will be a little bit late. There is a lot of work with STEM ambassadors and in primary schools.”

66. She went on, however, to point to a role for parents—

“... they have a huge influence on choices. We know that young people are influenced by their peers, but we need to do a lot of work with parents on young women in STEM-related careers or careers in construction.”

67. The Minister acknowledged the importance of women role models from outwith education having a presence in schools, emphasising also that all careers coaches should be “conversant with the labour market, able to challenge stereotypes and able to give good advice about where jobs are today and will be tomorrow”. She said—

“Women role models are powerful. We fund the Scottish resource centre for women in science, engineering and technology, which is based at Edinburgh Napier University. It has done a lot of work on promoting STEM careers to young women and supporting young women who are pursuing such careers. The centre has also mapped where good practice is and where the gaps are, which will be helpful in taking forward the careerwise initiative. We are funding project workers as part of that initiative. That is about trying to get a consistent level of activity in schools. Particularly in relation to oil and gas and energy, that should not be a phenomenon for schools in the north-east alone.”

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68. She spoke of a “concerted cross-Government effort”, involving the Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland’s Languages, in the context of what happens in schools; the Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport, with responsibility for equality and the Minister for Children and Young People, to address issues from schools and childcare to broader occupational segregation.104

69. Speaking specifically about the energy sector and careers advice on the industry, the Minister referred to the energy skills action group’s work to liaise with industry on refreshing the skills investment plan—

“That is an important example of how, in the context of meeting skills shortages, we have been able to promote the gender issue and women’s opportunity to participate in careers in energy. Another important development is that the renewables route map will be subject to an equality impact assessment and we will publish and monitor the number of entrants into the renewables sector.”105

Vocational education
70. She described the Scottish Government’s engagement with local authorities as building on the “new opportunities of contextualised learning for the curriculum for excellence”, with opportunities in and around the senior phase for more personalised learning, combined with the added value of careers services. She acknowledged, however, that vocational education and, in particular, the modern apprenticeship programme needed to be promoted “more consistently”.106

71. The Minister also pointed to the employability fund, stating that spending decisions in respect of that fund were made locally so that the funding could “respond to local labour markets and skill needs in local communities”.107 Accordingly, she said, where tourism was an issue, it would be reflected in the employability spend in that area—

“Tourism is a key area of economic growth, so there either is or will be a skills investment plan for tourism. We must ensure that the needs of women, whether they are returners or just getting into work, are appropriately reflected in the industry.”108

72. Given apprenticeships’ key role in getting both young women and young men into work and training, it was put to the Minister that they could therefore play a key role in breaking down gender segregation but that women make up only 1 per cent of building apprentices and that the take-up by men of apprenticeships in the childcare and caring sector is very low. She was asked what was being done to use the apprenticeship scheme to break down gender segregation and answered—

“It is important to acknowledge that, overall, there has been a vast improvement in the number of women who participate in the modern apprenticeship programme. Since 2008-09, women’s participation has increased from 27 to 43 per cent. In 2008-09, there were 2,857 female modern apprentices, whereas in the most recent year more than 11,000 women participated in the scheme.”

73. Equally, she said, it was important to acknowledge that when comparing different age groups and different frameworks, there was a “vast difference” between the genders. She cited the two extremes of construction – with women in 1.3 per cent of modern apprenticeships – and childcare – with women in almost 99 per cent of modern apprenticeships. She said that the Scottish Government was keen to address that but cautioned that there was no quick solution. However, she added—

“… Skills Development Scotland is doing an equality action plan. I am not one for pilotitis, but I think that there is a need for a pilot in this area. I am discussing some ideas with SDS, such as which sector the pilot should be in. It will not necessarily be just for young women. At this stage, I am quite attracted to a pilot that would look at childcare issues.”

74. The Minister expressed a desire to get more women into the key areas of economic growth in the Government’s economic strategy and said that there was an action with a view to establishing a pilot, on which she undertook to update us as it progressed.

Rural communities
75. Asked whether education and training for rural industries are delivered near enough to the industries, in the context of young people not returning to rural communities after leaving to go to university, the Minister said—

“The discussions on rural aspects at the women’s employment summit with regard to Dumfries and Inverness referred to the issue of depopulation when young people leave for their education. I suppose that that can be balanced by important rural industries creating provision to meet their skill needs. However, training courses require sufficient numbers of people to participate. The work that Mr Russell and Dr Allan do in their portfolios on more flexible

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learning through the use of information technology provides further opportunities. However, I accept that there will be a need for more hands-on training and experiential learning for agriculture and other rural industries rather than computer-based or classroom learning.115

Conclusion: occupational segregation

76. We note the many examples of good initiatives already being undertaken across sectors – in industry, in education and in government. Problems clearly persist, however, with a general notion of “societal” factors being the cause and few suggestions of how they should be addressed. Specific suggestions included—

- industry representatives should be more present in schools and would have a greater impact than familiar guidance teachers;
- subjects should be better contextualised as pupils go through school, not just when making their choices – STEM subjects do not lead only into medicine, arts subjects only into law and maths only into accountancy;
- practice should be more consistent and less fragmented in and across local authorities and schools;
- pupils’ choices should be guided by the work available but not only in their regions – there should be enhanced collaboration between government, academia and industry so that, for example, “not just Aberdeen schools … learn about oil and gas, or just Dumfries and Borders schools … learn about textiles”116.

77. We welcome the Minister’s acknowledgement of the importance of having women role models from outwith education present in schools and we are encouraged by her comments on the aims of the Careerwise initiative and the funding for project workers that forms part of the initiative. We note also her comments detailing Skills Development Scotland’s equality action plan and look forward to receiving progress reports on both of these initiatives.

78. We remain concerned about occupational segregation in the modern apprenticeship scheme, an issue we raised in our budget report in December 2012. There is a gender imbalance in that women are not making it through levels 3, 4 and 5 of the scheme, an issue on which we seek Scottish Government comment. We believe that, as a minimum, the Government should launch an awareness campaign promoting inclusion throughout the scheme.

79. We also raise a specific issue raised by the ACPOS Scottish Women’s Development Forum, regarding the external and internal recruitment processes of Police Scotland. The concern is that officers joining the service or transferring to specialist posts to gain experience necessary to career advancement could

potentially be liable to be posted anywhere in Scotland, with a disproportionate impact on officers with children and women officers in particular. We seek reassurance from the Scottish Government and Police Scotland that family-friendly policies will be applied throughout deployment decisions.

80. We note that OPITO highlighted issues with facilities, whereby shared overnight accommodation could present an obstacle to the integration of more women into the field. We plan to follow that issue up with industry.
FLEXIBLE WORKING

Varying practice

81. Gavin MacGregor (North Ayrshire Council) explained that the council viewed flexibility as a key priority with, across its workforce, only around 48 per cent of female employees in a full-time contract and around 90 per cent of flexible working requests approved.117 However, he explained that the law was such that, if an employer wanted to avoid granting flexible working, it could challenge and refuse a request on a procedural basis – the question being whether an employer genuinely wanted to encourage and foster flexible working.118 He also highlighted that flexible working was key to engaging the workforce and encouraging high performance, with reductions in sickness absence amongst the “major benefits” of flexible working.119

82. Mary Matheson (EIS) told us that it was not a given that teachers could have flexible working, being set within the school and the local authority deciding whether it was an appropriate arrangement for a particular school.120 Further, she explained, approaches to flexible working in schools tended to store up problems further down the line for those working part-time and seeking later to build up hours, when children were older and more independent—

“… when women return to work, the contracts become permanent and it is far more difficult to break out of them and to expand the time that they can work in schools.”121

83. Eileen Dinning (UNISON) suggested that a better understanding was needed of flexible working, particularly if women were being asked to go into traditionally male-dominated industries, which might lack the empathy and flexibility found in other areas of work.122

84. Lynn McDowall (Royal College of Nursing Scotland) said that flexibility did not necessarily mean part-time work but that problems could occur with trying to fulfil full-time contracts in, for example, areas that had 12.5-hour shifts if an employee needed to work a core shift of 9 to 5. She went on to call for a cultural shift, as flexible working was currently seen as a luxury, rather than the norm. She pointed out that nursing had an ageing workforce, with many vacancies and areas that were not covered adequately, which could benefit from more flexible working patterns, people would be more inclined to come back to work.123

85. Tanveer Parnez (BEMIS) recommended a requirement should be built into funding streams that organisations must consider flexible working hours.124

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86. Dr Caroline Wallace suggested a lot of employers thought part-time working and flexible working were one of the same.\textsuperscript{125} Similarly, Emma Ritch (Close the Gap) stated—

"More than 95 per cent of employers in the public sector and 66 per cent in the private sector have what they think of as a flexible working arrangement, but that has not translated very well into real flexibility for real people."\textsuperscript{126}

87. Angela Wilson (ACPOS Scottish Women’s Development Forum) said that almost 30 per cent of police officers were women, with the vast majority at the lower levels and with shorter service. She thought it “inevitable” that many would go on to have children, requiring a more creative and demand-led approach to flexible working in order to avoid women’s careers stagnating because of finding it difficult to pick up the experience and development opportunities that would allow them to get promoted. Instead, she feared, many would simply leave the organisation to do something else.\textsuperscript{127} Angela Wilson also suggested working with those who want flexible working, who need to understand that it cannot simply be a one-way street. She emphasised—

“Flexible working is not just about saying, “I want to work Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and I don’t want to work after 4 o’clock”. People need to work with the service to say, “This is the time of peak demand, and this is when I can assist the service.”\textsuperscript{128}

88. Angela Wilson recommended educating middle managers on how flexible working has worked successfully. She suggested then putting into practice some of the policy and the legislation that is already in place, showing them ways in which they can get round the problems.\textsuperscript{129}

\textbf{Flexibility and balance}

89. Witnesses told us there needed to be a better a balance between work and home.\textsuperscript{130} Mary Matheson (EIS), for example, explained that, though the primary-school workforce was predominantly female, people did not want to take on head teachers’ work demands, given their caring responsibilities; people were saying—

“I just can’t do that”.\textsuperscript{131}

90. Angela Wilson (ACPOS Scottish Women’s Development Forum) explained that eligibility for promotion in the police service now required a diploma rather than passing an internal exam. That, she said, necessarily extended the period of study required, so that people with caring responsibilities struggled to do it because of work-life balance demands.\textsuperscript{132}

91. Moreover, Angela Wilson pointed to police statistics in Tayside which showed that more women were qualified for promotion than applied. She blamed work-life balance, a perception that a woman had to be 10 times better than her male colleagues and a lack of role models, leading to lower confidence. Lynn McLachlan (RBS) echoed this, stating the challenges of trying to encourage as many women as possible to apply for roles. She explained that, if there is a perception that five skills were needed to be eligible to apply, women who only have three wouldn’t apply, whereas if men only had three skills, they would think they could learn the other two.

92. Angela Wilson also gave the example of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), previously seen as a male bastion. Although there were now more women in CID, she said that they tended to leave after having children, because of the unpredictable nature of the job and being made to feel as though they would not be up to the mark if they had to leave when childcare finished.

93. Eileen Dinning (UNISON) explained if childcare was available right up to the age of 16 and delivered by a skilled and highly qualified workforce, that would free up the large amount of time spent trying to deal with flexible working requests in businesses.

**Homeworking**

94. Witnesses explained that homeworking was a valuable way of offering flexible working, but that this was very technology dependent and that a cultural shift in employer attitudes was needed. Several witnesses pointed to its benefits, for both employers and employees. Lynn McLachlan (RBS), for example, commented that the range of flexible-working options, including compressed hours, could help prevent loss of skills because of women feeling that they had to or should downgrade and/or go part-time.

95. Jill Wood (Engender) suggested that homeworking boosted morale and psychological wellbeing, as well as loyalty to employers. However, Eileen Dinning (UNISON) explained that employers wanted a direct line of control and their attitude to homeworkers was, “Why are they not here?” Emma Ritch (Close the Gap) described the recent, high-profile decision of the newly appointed chief executive of Yahoo to remove completely the option of homeworking as “unhelpful”.

96. Emma Ritch also felt that there were issues with procurement. She told us about a non-departmental public body that was unable to allow staff to work from home because the way in which the organisation had procured its information technology systems meant it was not possible to access technology remotely; if

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the organisation had considered flexible working and homeworking at the outset, a
different system might have been bought. As she put it, whilst people cannot
work and simultaneously care for small children, with homeworking they could
select nursery provision near home and thereby avoid the “difficult challenge” of
taking their children to nursery facilities before going on to arrive at their place of
employment by an inflexible start time. However, Eileen Dinning (UNISON)
stressed that homeworking should not be seen as a substitute for childcare.

97. Gavin MacGregor (North Ayrshire Council) suggested a shift in organisational
culture towards “outcomes and trust working” was needed, and pointed to
managers’ tendency to manage employees’ presence as a means of control. He
explained that senior management role models helped and, although none of the
council’s own senior management team worked part-time, most of them, including
the chief executive, home-worked on various days of the week.

98. Eileen Dinning suggested homeworking should be part of a balanced
programme of flexible working. She pointed out it could offer advantages,
providing health and safety and other factors for women who live in rural areas,
particularly in areas where there have been big cuts in childcare services.

Part-time working

99. Most written submissions referred to the increasing number of women
working part-time, and to the desire for more flexible working patterns in
employment and to the need to promote the benefits of flexible working.

100. Allison Johnstone felt that there were many points at which women’s talents
were being lost in the move towards flexibility and part-time work. She spoke of a
“vicious circle” and “stark choices” facing women when looking for part-time work,
citing findings by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation—

“… only 3% of jobs in the advertised job market were part-time and offered a
salary of more than £20,000 full-time equivalent.”

101. Sarah Jackson (Working Families) called for all public-sector jobs to be
advertised as being suitable for flexible or part-time working, unless the hiring
manager could make a very clear business case for not doing so. She described
research that looked initially at civil-service jobs and found that, although the vast
majority were advertised as full-time posts, direct enquiry would often reveal that
the department was open to a discussion about part-time working or job
sharing. Sarah Jackson also called for a rethink about how roles are recruited
and for organisations to recruit for the number of hours they need — be it 27 or 16
hours – rather than thinking in 40-hour-a-week units.\textsuperscript{148} She favoured employers’ adopting some form of simple, but effective wording in their advertising so that applicants knew they could talk about the hours that would suit them at the point of application. She commended the Scottish Chambers of Commerce’s strapline “Happy to talk flexible working”.\textsuperscript{149}

102. Lynn McDowall (Royal College of Nursing Scotland) stated that part-time workers in the NHS are predominantly women.\textsuperscript{150} She explained that the cultural issues around part-time working are difficult to overcome; it is much easier to employ people on a whole-time basis than on a part-time basis.\textsuperscript{151}

103. Emma Ritch (Close the Gap) highlighted a lack of management confidence in how to go about recruiting part-time workers, how to manage a team of part-time workers, and how to ensure such a team delivers the coverage to clients, customers or the recipients of services in the public sector.\textsuperscript{152}

104. According to Gavin MacGregor (North Ayrshire Council), it was not just about part-time working—

“… it is about having various options, such as term-time working and compressed hours, so that we can find a balance that meets service needs and the work-life balance needs of employees”.\textsuperscript{153}

105. He emphasised the importance of having “a suite of options” and “senior management modelling” and said—

“… if there is a policy that people do not take up or are scared to take up, it is important to implement it.”\textsuperscript{154}

106. Eileen Dinning (UNISON) cautioned against increasing the use of part-time work as a substitute for full-time employment, stressing that, if people were offered the option of part-time work and wanted it, either as a permanent deal or otherwise, it needed to be under the protection of employment rights legislation.\textsuperscript{155}

107. Allison Johnstone explained that the choice was between staying full-time, to maintain skills, or opting for flexibility but working below the level of qualifications and experience. Referring to research suggesting that 35 to 41 per cent of women moving into part-time work downgraded when they moved to a different employer—

“Even if they stay with the same employer, some eight to 18 per cent downgrade when they go part-time. Even women who have a history of

employment with their employer are forced to make a choice between working part-time and maintaining the level of skills and qualifications at which they are able to operate.” 156

Zero-hours contracts

108. Witnesses spoke of the restrictions and pitfalls of zero-hours contracts, and explained that many employers do not effectively use flexible working to manage peaks and troughs in demand in shift-based roles. Giving the STUC perspective on the increasing number of women on zero-hours contracts, Eileen Dinning (UNISON) highlighted serious concerns about the “increasing casualisation of the workforce” and the fact that the “bulk” of that workforce was women. 157 She considered zero-hours contracts to represent a “total lack of commitment” from employers. 158 Supporting her comments with reference to an Office for National Statistics report showing that “more than 200,000 people” were on such contracts, 52 per cent of them being women, 159 she argued—

“… no matter what type of flexible working people do, they should have a proper contract of employment, be paid a living wage and also have the other opportunities that go with that, including progression, promotion and training”. 160

109. Lynn McDowall (Royal College of Nursing Scotland) supported that view—

“In the NHS, we are very much against zero-hours contracts, because they are about cost cutting rather than filling substantive posts. For instance, there is a predictability about accident and emergency departments. We know how many people will come into them, so we do not need people on zero-hours contracts to plug the gaps. There are other alternatives, such as flexible working and the use of bank staff. Zero-hours contracts are a cop-out. I support Eileen Dinning’s comments on that. They are not an option for flexible working.” 161

Legislation

110. Eileen Dinning (UNISON) 162 and Lynn McDowall (Royal College of Nursing Scotland) 163 called for legislation defining a right for flexible working, to make it more difficult for employers to refuse requests for flexible working.

Gender stereotypes

111. We heard that, as with occupational segregation, gender stereotypes are very much at play in terms of flexible working. Darah Zahran (OPITO), for example, saw work-life balance as an issue for working parents, not just working

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mothers, with male parents often getting less flexibility from their employers, contributing to gender imbalance.\textsuperscript{164} She explained that for working parents, life can become a juggling act with perceptions, cultures, employer flexibility, rights, policies and childcare.\textsuperscript{165}

112. Observing that there were “certainly fewer men than women working flexibly”, Joyce Cullen (Law Society of Scotland) felt that changes in attitudes were more necessary than legislative changes.\textsuperscript{166} Emma Ritch (Close the Gap) argued in favour of men being able to take up flexible working arrangements, suggesting that there was a cultural assumption that men could not – or should not – want to work part-time or flexibly.\textsuperscript{167} Lynn McDowall (Royal College of Nursing Scotland) said that she had had to represent men who had asked to work flexibly, predominantly because of childcare issues. In one such situation, involving a couple who both worked in the NHS, with the woman in a more senior role, the man’s manager had been incredulous at the flexible working request, believing that it should have fallen to the woman.\textsuperscript{168} Eileen Dinning (UNISON) felt that a good, modern society should actively encourage men to take up flexible working so that they could make a greater contribution to their children’s lives or the lives of other family members.\textsuperscript{169}

113. We heard from Barnardo’s Scotland that such stereotypes could be particularly cutting—

“Through our services experience we have found that there are specific issues for young women in engaging with our employment services. Young women appear to be more likely to face issues such as peer pressure not to take on employment. For many of the young women we work with, such as care leavers, there can be a general assumption that for them a positive destination on leaving school is to start a family.”\textsuperscript{170}

\textsuperscript{170} Barnardo’s Scotland, Written Submission.
Equal pay

114. According to Emma Ritch (Close the Gap)—

“The part-time pay gap has been stagnant since the introduction of the minimum wage, which was the last thing that had an impact on it. The gap is still sitting at about 34 per cent, which is astounding. That is explained almost entirely by the fact that part-time work for women tends to be in what are, from the perspective of employers and perhaps the wider world, low-paid and low-status occupations.”

115. She added that the full-time pay gap in Scotland had seen a very slight reduction.

116. Eileen Dinning (UNISON) welcomed the Scottish Government’s decision to introduce amended specific public sector duties, in line with which public authorities were now starting to produce equal pay statements. However, she wanted the Scottish Government to amend the legislation to introduce equal pay audits, arguing that a public body could currently have a statement that expressed commitment to equal pay and to working towards achieving it but, without proper equal pay audits, any changes could not be monitored.

Scottish Government

117. Commenting that the Scottish Government could encourage change and lead by example but not force private sector employers to adopt flexible working practices, the Minister highlighted the Government’s sponsoring of the Institute of Directors to introduce to its annual awards ceremony a new award that recognised flexible and family-friendly working practices. She added—

“In particular, it is important that we encourage information sharing and peer mentoring between big business and small and medium-sized enterprises, which often feel unable to offer flexible working opportunities because it will affect the running of the business.”

118. Asked whether leading by example could extend to all public service jobs within the Scottish Government’s purview having to be offered with the possibility of part-time or flexible working unless there was a very sound reason not to, the Minister stated—

“These are matters for public sector employers such as local authorities but, given that employment law is reserved, the scope that the Scottish Government has is limited to leading by example as an employer and using our role and our engagement with the private sector to promote and encourage cultural change. A lot of that is to do with marshalling arguments about how a diverse workforce and flexible working are good for business. If we are underutilising more than half the population while some industries and occupations are able to get by on lower pay, then there is a big argument for change.”

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sectors are facing a skills shortage, there is a role for Government in matching—in helping people into work and helping companies to sort out their skills shortages. In that context, there are opportunities to pursue the agenda.”

119. The idea that, at the point of advertising a public-sector job, the advert should highlight its potential to be fulfilled on a part-time or flexible basis, was raised with the Minister. She agreed that, for many jobs, there was no practical reason why there could not be a job share or flexible or part-time working. Speaking about the public sector equality duty and the Scottish regulations, Eileen Flanagan (Equality Unit, Scottish Government) added—

“…There has been strong movement by authorities and organisations that are covered by the duty to consider their staffing policies. Many organisations have developed an outcome to do with staffing—I think that the Equality and Human Rights Commission will be able to develop work on that as the system beds in.”

120. Eileen Flanagan also spoke about Police Scotland’s equality outcome on staffing and how it would develop the diversity of its workforce—

“That will be replicated and can be measured through the indicators that sit under those outcomes. That will enable the diversity of the staff to be examined. In future years, we will be able to use that as a benchmark and move forward from it.”

Conclusion: flexible working

121. We note that various witnesses and written responses called for legislative changes – such as making it a right to have, rather than request, flexible working patterns. Such changes do not fall within the Scottish Government’s powers. We call on the UK Government to explore these issues and we would welcome a response. However, we note with interest that other approaches were suggested to us—

- that funding streams could incorporate a flexible-working requirement of the organisations receiving the funding;

- that institutional problems – where flexible working is accepted by leaders but not by middle managers – should be addressed by educating middle managers on how flexible working has worked successfully, thereby putting into practice the full potential of existing policy and legislation;

that all public-sector jobs should be advertised as being suitable for flexible or part-time working, unless there was a very clear business case for not doing so, to capitalise on what is thought to be an existing but currently hidden potential for filling posts on a part-time or job-share basis;

- that employers should be encouraged to recruit human resource in units of varied person hours, not just 35- to 40-hour units; and

- that employers also should be encouraged to adopt recruitment language that simply and effectively conveys their openness to consider flexible working, such as the example of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce’s strapline “Happy to talk flexible working”.

122. We note that the Minister appeared to agree that many existing posts could be filled flexibly or by more than one person working part-time, rather than a single person working full-time. We therefore seek a commitment from the Scottish Government to work with both public- and private-sector employers to encourage greater availability of – and promotion of – such posts.

123. Part-time working is not the same as flexible working and we encourage all employers to ensure that flexible working is as readily available as possible.

124. We condemn the growing abuse of zero-hours contracts as a standard working practice; we view the situation where all the ‘flexibility’ rests with the employer, with none for the employee, as unacceptable.
125. In written evidence, high costs and limited availability of childcare were cited by various respondents as a significant barrier to women working. Likewise, across evidence sessions, witnesses highlighted the importance of the availability of both flexible working arrangements and suitable childcare arrangements, rather than one or the other. We also heard of a need to look at maternity returners, older children, after-school care and the additional costs for children with special needs.

Responsibility

126. Witnesses felt that responsibility for childcare was varied. Clare Simpson (Parenting across Scotland)\(^{179}\) and Eileen Dinning (UNISON)\(^{180}\) both felt that the reasons for that were partly societal. Sarah Jackson (Working Families) stressed that employers had a role to play as they expected employees to work atypical hours.\(^{181}\) Clare Simpson (Parenting across Scotland) suggested that a better system of paternity leave could address some of the equality gap that exists.\(^{182}\)

Financial implications

127. Jacqueline Kerr (CITB-ConstructionSkills) explained that, in construction, many employers taking on apprentices were small companies, unable to afford to subsidise childcare for employees.\(^{183}\) She recommended more before- and after-school provision in schools, subsidised for parents on lower incomes.\(^{184}\)

128. Emma Ritch (Close the Gap) drew attention to the longer-term financial impacts on women and their families—

“When families are working out whether a woman should return to work, they often make the kind of calculation that … offset[s] the cost of childcare against the wage that would come into the household. Most people do not forecast their family economy much into the future, of course, but the long-term scarring effect for women of taking time out of the labour market is immense. Even after 15 years, one year of part-time working still shows up as a 10 per cent reduction in their wage compared with that of a man who has taken the same part-time working arrangement, which is usually to develop his human capital by undergoing education or training.”\(^{185}\)


129. Eileen Dinning (UNISON) linked the impact on women’s earnings to the amount of tax levied, suggesting that, if women’s income were not reduced because of time out or a period of part-time working, the resultant increase in tax paid could be put towards funding childcare.\(^ {186}\)

130. Sarah Jackson (Working Families) added her perspective on the tendency of families to compare mothers’ short-term earnings with childcare costs—

“…there is a role for the Government to put out messages that remind couple families in particular that childcare is an investment in their children’s future and that they should think about both their salaries and not just the woman’s salary. Women are forced out of the workplace when they decide that it is not worth while going back to work because the cost of childcare is put against only their wages. It would be very helpful to have strong messages from our political leaders that say, “Childcare is for men and women; it’s an investment in the family’s future.”\(^ {187}\)

131. Ann Henderson (STUC) recommended that childcare should be free at the point of delivery, recommending it should be a statutory function delivered by public bodies.\(^ {188}\)

Welfare reform

132. According to Satwat Rehman (One Parent Families Scotland), lone parents had difficulty finding childcare they could afford to make work pay for them. She explained that Jobcentre Plus advisers did not acknowledge this as a legitimate reason for parents not to take up jobs, which resulted in parents being threatened with sanctions, and some having benefits taken away.\(^ {189}\)

133. Maggie Simpson (Scottish Childminding Association) explained that more people were looking for part-time places, which made it difficult for services to be viable, and that many of those parents were lone parents in receipt of welfare benefits.\(^ {190}\) From a child-minder’s perspective, she stressed the change to 70 per cent of costs being met from UK Government tax credits had meant that more people were defaulting on childcare payments. Consequently, child-minders had to decide whether to take risks with people receiving welfare.\(^ {191}\)

134. Irene Audain (Scottish Out of School Network) felt that the reforms would have “a major impact”. She explained that, because of last year’s 10 per cent tax-credit cut alone, parents were beginning to reduce their hours and that, if that happened to a small rural service serving only two or three families, it would go under.\(^ {192}\)

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Supply and demand

135. Witnesses told us there was a need for childcare outwith normal working hours. For example, industries such as transport and retail depended on people working shifts. Likewise, Dr Caroline Wallace pointed out that working compressed hours was not an option if nurseries operate standard hours.\textsuperscript{193}

136. Satwat Rehman (One Parent Families Scotland) pointed out what she described as a “policy disjoint”. She explained—

“…the demand-side subsidy through parents is a reserved matter and the responsibility for childcare is a devolved matter. In the short term, we need to think about how we could match up those two elements more effectively, align any subsidies or fees and make recommendations for fee levels that would make best use of the existing subsidies.”\textsuperscript{194}

137. Dr Margaret Anne Craig (Clyde Biosciences) argued employers had a responsibility to ensure there was some support mechanism in place to keep women in jobs. She told us that the University of Glasgow had one nursery facility with only 75 places for the whole university, which was also open to people from outside.\textsuperscript{195}

138. Maggie Simpson (Scottish Childminding Association) explained that childminders can be flexible because they provide a service in their own homes, with no restriction in terms of hours. She pointed out people only needed to provide evidence they were providing a good-quality service.\textsuperscript{196} Satwat Rehman (One Parent Families Scotland) told us the childcare service they set up meant people paid only for what they used.\textsuperscript{197}

139. For Claire Telfer (Save the Children), various policy agendas and the outcomes that the Scottish Government’s child poverty strategy, early years framework and economic strategy were trying to achieve, needed to be looked at. She also suggested it would be useful if the Council of Economic Advisers, along with other parts of Government working on the issue, could look at that, too.\textsuperscript{198}

140. Ann Henderson (STUC) said that the STUC’s view was that a “fundamentally different approach” was required that moved away from the current demand-led provision to accepting that childcare should be a “statutory function … delivered by public bodies”.\textsuperscript{199} She said—

“The difficulties with the present arrangements, which are so dependent on the private sector, are that childcare is obviously very expensive and that we cannot effectively pick up on some of the issues that we have been talking about. For instance, when thinking about returning to work, the conversation

in families begins with people saying, “How can we afford a childcare place at £200 a week?” Instead, people should be thinking, “My child is happy and settled in the nursery round the corner, so I can now go and look at the options that are available. I could start studying again and look at how to get myself back into work.”

**Rural areas**

141. Some witnesses suggested a higher percentage of women used childminding in rural areas compared with cities as a more viable economic option. Calling for a requirement for local authorities and community planning partnerships to hold information on the provision of childcare, including out-of-school care provision, Jackie Brock (Children in Scotland) said—

“… without that information, we cannot answer quite a lot of questions about what would work … Scotland has such a diversity of geography, rurality and so on. We need a commitment to looking at solutions that fit Fife as opposed to Glasgow but, without the information that I referred to, how will we cost the solutions and how will we think about what is right for children and families? We are bedevilled by a lack of proper information.”

142. Indicating the probability that a higher percentage of women used childminding and out-of-school services in rural areas compared with cities, Maggie Simpson (Scottish Childminding Association) said—

“Because of the level of demand in rural areas, it is often not viable to have a group service, whereas it is viable for an individual childminder to provide the whole range of services, from nought to whatever age of child the parent wants the service for. It is more a question of viability than of whether a group service could actually operate. It would need to be heavily subsidised.”

143. Irene Audain (Scottish Out of School Care Network) expanded on that point—

“When numbers go down in smaller out-of-school care services, individuals sometimes go off and become childminders, because they already know the children and the families. It can be the other way round—a group of childminders might get together to set up a group service once the numbers go up again. The childcare sector is quite interchangeable; people work across different parts of it.”

144. Drawing on her experience of talking to small rural services, she explained that some childminders had an assistant—

“They have, if you like, a mini group service, with the maximum number of children that they can have. They usually mix the care of younger and older children, so it is a bit like an extended family. We support that as a more economically viable option for providing childcare in rural areas.”

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Kinship care

145. Witnesses told us that many parents chose ‘kinship’ care – provided by grandparents, aunties and close friends – before formal childcare. Although cost was only one factor – amongst others like trust and family relationships – for Claire Telfer (Save the Children), it was not about choice for most parents; they had informal childcare because they could not afford other childcare or because there was a lack of childcare services. Clare Simpson (Parenting across Scotland) pointed out that around 66 per cent of grandparents in Scotland provided childcare; the highest in the UK.

146. Satwat Rehman (One Parent Families Scotland) said that lone parents relied heavily on informal childcare. For example, 46 per cent said they used grandparents or made arrangements with ex-parents. However, she suggested if choices were available, people would see a viable alternative they could afford.

147. According to Maggie Simpson (Scottish Childminding Association), grandparents were struggling to provide childcare but did it because they felt that they had to.

Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill

148. Jackie Brock (Children in Scotland) expressed some reservations about the proposals under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill, in particular the increase of hours from 475 to 600 of free early learning and childcare. However, she said that, overall, members welcomed the First Minister’s significant commitment to childcare—

“Our members have a rather lukewarm view on the 600 hours and the contribution that it will make to that long-term vision … One strong demand is for greater priority for vulnerable children at a younger age. Other suggestions would be to look at the additional needs of children with disabilities, and to have a greater take on the needs of the socio-deprived rather than a universal offer. Other members feel strongly that a universal offer is the only way forward and that it is inappropriate to target. The issue of the increased hours has caused a lot of discussion and concern. Nevertheless, overall, we feel that we should move to that. It will be great to get 15 hours extra a month—it is welcome and it will be high quality. However, it is seen as a small step.”

149. We note that Jackie Brock’s comments echoed witnesses’ comments, mentioned in this report’s introduction, which may also have relevance for the Bill, namely that greater priority should be given to childcare for vulnerable children such as those living in poverty or with disabilities. That would be a first step in the move to universal childcare provision.

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150. Witnesses viewed the Scottish Government’s commitment to investing in childcare was a positive step. However, subsidising the purchase – via UK Government tax credits – rather than the provision of the service was felt to be an inefficient use of funds. As Jackie Brock ( ) put it, that worked “for a very small proportion of parents.” She said—

“…we see that at least £8 billion at UK level is being spent on a combination of subsidies, tax breaks and so on. That works pretty well for parents who can afford childcare, and where the childcare is available, it is of sufficiently good quality and is flexible enough to meet their needs.”

151. Satwat Rehman (One Parent Families Scotland) said that “we welcome the increase in hours and the flexibility. That is a first step, and it is one of many steps that we need to take to get the childcare infrastructure that we have talked about.” She expressed concern that families would end up having to put together their own “patchwork” to get flexibility and to be able to make the most of the increase in hours.

152. Claire Telfer (Save the Children) welcomed the additional hours as “a step towards a more universal system”. She said—

“The hours and the balance in supporting children’s outcomes are positive. The flexibility part is one of the key elements, and it could make the difference to the issue that the committee is considering about women’s work.”

153. She stated that the additional hours, though “incremental at this stage”, would have a “slight impact on costs” for parents of children of the ages in question and that, therefore, they were “certainly a step in the right direction”. Endorsing views that a longer-term approach was needed, she said—

“We have talked about a longer-term approach, which we all endorse. We would like the shift to be a bit more transformational and the state’s role in that to be looked at. For example, the Danish model includes national entitlements for all parents to childcare places. The question is whether we might aspire to that in the longer term. That is one of the elements of that model that have perhaps led to a more sustainable childcare system being put in place.”

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154. Maggie Simpson (Scottish Childminding Association) commented—

“One good outcome of the changes that we have discussed is that, while the current system mostly involves local authority nurseries or private nurseries providing the required number of hours, there is now a move towards looking at using childminding services and matching the outcomes from the current regulatory system to the outcomes that are provided under the education system. Those would appear to be very similar, so why should we not match them up and allow parents more flexibility and choice?”

Statutory rights and barriers

155. Clare Simpson (Parenting across Scotland) suggested the issue should be approached from a child’s rights point of view, rather than from a parental rights stance.

156. Satwat Rehman (One Parent Families Scotland) recommended a kind of statutory framework at national and local level so that, in times of reduced financial investment in services, childcare provision was not the first thing to go. She went on to suggest that the cost and availability of childcare presented a barrier to women going into and sustaining work, quoting one lone parent in Glasgow, Linda, as saying—

“Money factors in right at the end. In my head its ‘got to get 16hrs’” [to meet the Jobcentre Plus requirement] “it’s got to be local, fit around school hours and then I look at the money”.

157. Maggie Simpson (Scottish Childminding Association) stressed if the statutory right started to become limiting and was not available, it would limit the options for some vulnerable families.

Childcare and additional support needs

158. Satwat Rehman (One Parent Families Scotland) recommended a need to recognise that staff training and adaptations might need to be paid for in relation to services for disabled children and childcare for children who had disabilities or additional needs. Costs should be absorbed and not passed on to the family.

159. Maggie Simpson (Scottish Childminding Association) explained there were cases where child-minders looked after children who had additional support needs or disabled children, but the service couldn’t be guaranteed as it depended entirely on whether the child-minders could provide it.
160. Jackie Brock (Children in Scotland) pointed out that the additional help that schools can provide to ensure that children with additional support needs can experience a mainstream education, was also under threat, for example, with regard to classroom assistants, and the ability to afford the increased accessibility that is required for participation in after-school clubs.\(^{226}\)

**Older children**

161. Commenting that school shouldn’t be seen as “a form of childcare”\(^{227}\), Ann Henderson said—

“… school is a place of education. Wraparound care, which should exist during school holidays and before and after school, needs to be built in to allow people to commit to work.”\(^{228}\)

162. Jacqueline Kerr (CITB-ConstructionSkills) agreed—

“For many mothers who want to go back to work, there is a financial issue about being able to pay for childcare from when the child is young. Local authority-provided nursery care does not always tie in with the working hours that employers want people to work. Therefore, there is more than one requirement in relation to childcare.”\(^{229}\)

163. She added—

“Ann Henderson mentioned summer holidays. I have two children—a 13-year-old, whom I still probably would not leave on his own, and a daughter aged nine—and I have to work out my summer in order to juggle childcare. I am fortunate because I have family who can help out, but not every parent has that. In construction, a lot of employers that take on apprentices are small companies that cannot afford to subsidise childcare for employees; they do not have that facility. It requires financial support—perhaps directly to employers to encourage them to consider a diverse workforce. That could be one angle.”\(^{230}\)

**Scottish Government**

*Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill*

164. The Minister highlighted the recent introduction in the Parliament of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill, containing provisions to increase the amount of, and flexibility in, early learning and childcare. She described it as a “significant step” towards achieving the Scottish Government’s ambition to develop a “high-quality universal system of early learning and childcare” that would be “affordable and flexible” and would meet all children, parents and families’ needs.\(^{231}\)

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165. The Minister characterised the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill as an “important and substantial step” in how the infrastructure is dealt with—

“At a practical level … we are starting in the right place by capitalising on a universal service that is currently available to all three and four-year-olds. In extending access to pre-school provision, we are trying to ramp up provision of hours. Between 2007 and next year, we will have achieved a 45 per cent increase in the number of hours, once the 600 hours commitment is introduced. I believe that the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill is the right place to start. I know that there are many places from where we could have started, but I think that for practical reasons it was best for us to start with three and four-year-olds.”

166. She recognised that there had also been a debate about provision for two-year-olds. She emphasised the Scottish Government’s view that the way forward should not compromise on the quality of childcare, so maintaining child ratios was very important. She said—

“Given that our aspiration is for a universal early learning and childcare system—that is what we are aiming for, making steps towards and striving for—it is common sense that we start with a universal approach. I know that there is much debate around that, but I think that a universal approach to childcare and early learning for all children is preferable. I understand the arguments about having a more targeted approach, but I believe that in our work with young children it is important not to have stigmatised services. To build that change in culture and aspiration for society, we want a universal childcare system, so I think that we should start as we mean to go on.”

**Attitudes in society**

167. The Minister said—

“In theory, we all want childcare to be an issue for all parents—we want the care, concerns and issues to apply equally to men and women. Of course—I do not think that this is a controversial statement—the reality in today’s society is that a lack of affordable and accessible childcare will have a far greater impact on women’s participation in the labour market than on men’s. As for how we change perceptions about that, I believe that childcare should be an issue for both men and women and I think that the national parenting strategy will help to carve out a different culture to change attitudes.”

**Council of Economic Advisers**

168. The Minister revealed that the Council of Economic Advisers would consider options for delivering and funding a high-quality universal early learning and childcare system, alongside the associated social and economic impacts and
benefits.\textsuperscript{236} Asked what the Scottish Government’s 10-year vision for transformational change involving a universal childcare system, she said—

“I think that an important development is the involvement of the Council of Economic Advisers; we should not undersell the economic gains or benefits of childcare. Childcare is not just a social issue or a women’s issue. It is an infrastructure issue that is imperative to our economy, and we should see the two things in parallel.”\textsuperscript{237}

169. She emphasised the importance of articulating the economic arguments as well as the benefits of childcare and early learning to children’s cognitive development and to families and women—

“If we look at the employment rate of women from 1992 to 2007, it increased from around 48 to 55 per cent. That brought—in terms of economic output and gross value added—around £8.5 billion to the economy. We must start marshalling some of the economic arguments for childcare.”\textsuperscript{238}

170. On the practicalities, the Minister explained that the Council of Economic Advisers would look closely at international best practice, she said, focusing on eight countries: Scotland, England, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Slovenia, the Netherlands and France—

“We want to emulate the best. We need to look at models of provision—there will be a great debate about that—and how to fund that provision. We need to get into the guts of the model and the funding to establish what the next steps would be.”\textsuperscript{239}

\textit{Older children}

171. The Minister recognised that childcare issues extend beyond young children right through to the early teens, pointing to the role of out-of-school care, breakfast clubs and wraparound care.\textsuperscript{240} She felt, though, that work already underway for three and four-year-olds was the “best place to start to look at having the biggest impact”\textsuperscript{241}

\textit{Rural communities}

172. Recognising the challenges of childcare in rural areas, the Minister said—

“We know that childcare is a massive issue across the country, but the challenges are particularly acute in rural areas; some of those challenges are to do with population mass. There is therefore a need for more individual solutions. There is definitely a need to promote more childminding and out-of-school care. For the more extreme rural areas, there will be issues with access to nursery provision for three and four-year-olds.”\textsuperscript{242}
173. Speaking about some of the specific action points on that stream of work, Susan Bolt (Early Years Policy Delivery Unit, Scottish Government) reiterated the need in rural areas for “more innovative solutions” on childcare, which was why the Scottish Government had allocated funding through the third-sector fund and the strategic funding partnerships to organisations such as the Care and Learning Alliance (“CALA”)—

“As well as delivering more flexible solutions such as staff banks and different types of flexible childcare, CALA supports other organisations that want to develop and helps with social enterprise models. The funding will help CALA to do nationally what it has done successfully in the Highlands and Moray. We also fund the Scottish Childminding Association, which again provides more flexibility in rural areas and can provide community childminding.”^243

174. She also drew our attention to the recommendations of the recent report, Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education^244, in relation to rural areas and learning and childcare—

“A lot of that is about integrating services and having community hubs so that one out-of-school care service might cover three or four primaries. It is about trying to cluster and integrate services to make them more accessible, viable and sustainable. We will be looking at the recommendations of that report.”^245

175. The Minister emphasised that the rural dimension ran through every issue and stream of work—

“We do not want to segregate rural work; we want to embed rural issues into all the work that goes on. There are opportunities with women in enterprise. Supporting the development of social enterprise seems to be one way of helping to overcome some of the challenges.”^246

176. She added—

“Women are underrepresented when it comes to start-ups, self-employment and setting up businesses. It seems to me that in areas that are sparsely populated, reach is an issue as far as services for children are concerned. I do not want to assume that it should always be women who do start-ups in childcare or family service work, even though that might often be the case, but we are trying to get an alignment instead of looking at problems in isolation. We might manage to overcome some of the issues to do with access to childcare and extremely rural areas imaginatively if we get some of the solutions right in promoting women in enterprise.”^247

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Welfare reform: impact

177. Asked about the Scottish Government’s plans to mitigate the impact of welfare reforms on young women, women at work and lone parents, the Minister pointed to the issue of lone parents with a child over five being moved from income support to jobseekers allowance, which she described as “significant”, albeit an issue that would change with universal credit.\textsuperscript{248} Describing the situation as “very complex”\textsuperscript{249}, she said—

“I think that women should have the choice whether to stay at home to look after their child, or whether to work, which would not take away from anything—I am a working mother, so that shows my preference. As an employment minister, I know that we need to increase women’s participation in the labour market, but personally I am always cautious about intervening in decisions for individual parents and families when we do not know their children’s needs; for example, some of their children will be disabled. It is a careful balance. Part of our agenda for increasing the participation of women in the labour force—we need to do that for equality and the sake of our economy, because we are really missing a trick—must be to value women who stay at home, work in the home and work to raise their families.”\textsuperscript{250}

Conclusion: childcare

178. Again we heard calls for legislative change – such as changes to paternity-leave entitlement – which do not come within Scottish Government responsibility. We call on the UK Government to explore the scope for such changes. With regard to the other issues raised—

- We heard that out-dated societal attitudes on gender roles were to blame; we share the Minister’s belief that childcare should be an issue for both men and women and that the national parenting strategy will help to carve out a different culture to change attitudes. We would welcome a report of progress in tackling gender-based parental attitudes through the strategy.

- In particular, we are interested in views submitted to us that parents should view childcare as an investment in their children’s future in terms of both parents’ salaries. We join one of our witnesses’ call for strong messages from our political leaders saying, “Childcare is for men and women; it’s an investment in the family’s future.”\textsuperscript{251}

- We welcome the steps that have already been taken but would like to see a fundamental and wide-ranging change so that childcare is properly considered a part of our infrastructure. We ask the Scottish Government what action it can take towards, and to outline a timetable for, the introduction of a statutory right to childcare, including older children and disabled children.

• We heard many differing accounts of the impact of welfare reforms. We draw the evidence submitted to us to the attention of the Welfare Reform Committee.

• We welcome the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill as an opportunity to begin a process of transforming the childcare situation in Scotland. We note that some witnesses, whilst viewing it as a positive step, argued that funds could be used more efficiently. They favoured subsidising service provision rather than its purchase. We draw that point of view to the attention of the Education and Culture Committee, currently considering the Bill at Stage 1.

• Finally, we note with interest the involvement of the Council of Economic Advisers – a development to be welcomed as it underlines the importance of childcare, as an aspect of the infrastructure, to the economy. We look forward to hearing more about further developments in due course.
179. Our emphasis is naturally on what can be achieved by the Scottish Government. However, we have heard many issues important to progress in this area that are reserved to the UK Government – for example, employment law and the financing of childcare through tax credits. We shall draw our report to the UK Government’s attention.

180. A great many of the submissions to our inquiry showed clear indications of good work and initiatives underway across sectors to improve the multi-faceted problems facing women and work. The people we heard from are clearly deeply committed to their work. However, there remains a huge challenge: how to redress the persisting overall inequality between the genders.

181. The public sector clearly has a leadership role to play—

- all jobs within the Scottish Government’s direct control should be subject to a presumption in favour of being advertised as suitable for flexible working and/or for being filled on a part-time basis;

- further, regarding other public-sector employers, the Scottish Government should take the initiative to secure their agreement to implement that same presumption in their recruitment exercises;

- regarding occupational segregation, schools are clearly an influence at a crucial stage and, although the problem in its entirety could never be resolved solely by schools, we note with interest the view from industry that sector representatives should be brought into schools to enhance careers advice by countering gender stereotypes. We further believe that subject choice at school is absolutely key to addressing gender segregation in the labour market;

- sharing of good practice, whether in the public or the private sector, should be promoted through events, networks and other initiatives; public-sector bodies, such as the enterprise agencies, are well-placed to facilitate this;

- there is an opportunity for the Scottish Government to play such a leadership role when disbursing public funds, for example when entering into contracts via public procurement.

182. We remain especially concerned about occupational segregation in the modern apprenticeship scheme; as a Government-subsidised entry point to industry, it is absolutely vital that gender imbalances in the modern apprenticeship scheme be addressed. We look to the Scottish Government to take active steps on two fronts: (a) positive action on occupational segregation within the scheme and (b) an audit of how funding streams to the scheme support participation by women.
183. We reiterate here our earlier condemnation of the growing abuse of zero-hours contracts as a standard working practice; we view the situation where all the ‘flexibility’ rests with the employer, with none for the employee, as utterly unacceptable.

184. Childcare remains a significant issue affecting women and work. Crucially, it must not be seen as an early-years issue; parents have to contend with childcare issues up to the age of fifteen, not just the age of five. We welcome the Scottish Government’s recognition of childcare as a part of the infrastructure and the steps that it is taking to bring about a fundamental transformation of the childcare situation. The Government has made firm commitments to tackle the issue and we look forward to seeing progress.
ANNEXE A: EXTRACTS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

3rd Meeting, 2011 (Session 4) Tuesday 13 September 2011

Work programme (in private): The Committee considered its work programme and agreed to hold a series of one-off evidence sessions on […] women and employment.

3rd Meeting, 2012 (Session 4) Tuesday 21 February 2012

Women and work: To inform a future inquiry the Committee took evidence, in a round-table discussion, on occupational segregation, flexible working, the recession, public spending cuts and the glass ceiling, from—

- Ann Henderson, Assistant Secretary, STUC;
- Margaret Boyd, GMB and Chair, STUC Women's Committee;
- Pauline Rourke, Communication Workers Union representative, and Elaine Dougall, Regional Equalities Officer, Unite, STUC Women's Committee;
- Kirsty Connell, Vice-Chair, STUC Youth Committee;
- Barbra Farmer, Chair, STUC Disabled Workers Committee;
- Anne-Marie Mackin, Freelance Trainer and Assessor, Play First (Scotland) Ltd;
- Emma Ritch, Project Manager, Close the Gap;
- Linda Somerville, Director, Scottish Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology

23rd Meeting, 2012 (Session 4) Thursday 29 November 2012

Work programme (in private): The Committee considered its work programme and agreed to a) launch a call for written evidence on women and work […].

11th Meeting, 2013 (Session 4) Thursday 28 March 2013

Women and work: The Committee took evidence from—

- Ann Henderson, Assistant Secretary, STUC;
- Jacqueline Kerr, Quality & Standards Officer, CITB-ConstructionSkills;
- Darah Zahran, Policy Affairs Director, OPITO.

12th Meeting, 2013 (Session 4) Thursday 18 April 2013

Women and work: The Committee took evidence from—

- Joyce Cullen, Solicitor & Convenor to the Society's Employment Law Committee, Law Society of Scotland;
- Hazel Mathieson, Head of National Operations, Skills Development Scotland;
- Mary Matheson, Vice-Convener, EIS Equality Committee, The Educational Institute of Scotland;
- Angela Wilson, Chief Superintendent, Police Scotland & Chair, Scottish Women’s Development Forum.
13th Meeting, 2013 (Session 4) Thursday 25 April 2013

Women and work: The Committee took evidence from—

Eileen Dinning, Equalities Officer, UNISON Scotland;
Gavin MacGregor, Head of HR & Organisational Development, North Ayrshire Council;
Lynn McDowall, RCN Officer, Lothian and Borders, RCN Scotland;
Emma Ritch, Project Manager, Close the Gap;

14th Meeting, 2013 (Session 4) Thursday 2 May 2013

Women and work: The Committee took evidence from—

Irene Audain MBE, Chief Executive, Scottish Out of School Care Network;
Jackie Brock, Chief Executive, Children in Scotland;
Dr Margaret Anne Craig, Chief Executive Officer, Clyde Biosciences;
Sarah Jackson OBE, Chief Executive, Working Families (by video conference);
Satwah Rehman, Director, One Parent Families Scotland;
Clare Simpson, Project Manager, Parenting across Scotland;
Maggie Simpson, Chief Executive, Scottish Childminding Association;
Claire Telfer, Head of Policy, Advocacy & Campaigns (Scotland), Save the Children.

15th Meeting, 2013 (Session 4) Thursday 9 May 2013

Women and work: The Committee took evidence from—

Lynsey Calderwood, Marks and Start Project Officer, One Parent Families Scotland;
Patricia Cleghorn, Principal and founder, Orchid;
Debbie Duncan;
Claire Falconer;
Carol Fox, Director and Solicitor, Fox and Partners;
Jacqueline Hogg;
Kassandra Hughes;
Allison Johnstone;
Lynn McLachlan, Director Business Banking Glasgow, Royal Bank of Scotland;
Tanveer Parnez, Director of National Development, BEMIS;
Dr Caroline Wallace, Senior Science Policy Advisor, Society of Biology;
Professor Lesley Yellowlees, Vice-Principal and Head, College of Science & Engineering/President, Royal Society of Chemistry, University of Edinburgh.

16th Meeting, 2013 (Session 4) Thursday 23 May 2013

Women and work: The Committee took evidence from—

Angela Constance, Minister for Youth Employment, and Julie Ann Bilotti,
Employability Policy, Scottish Government;
Susan Bolt, Team Leader, Early Years, and Eileen Flanagan, Policy Manager, Equality Unit, Scottish Government.

**Women and work (in private):** The Committee considered and agreed its approach to a draft report.

*18th Meeting, 2013 (Session 4) Thursday 6 June 2013*

**Women and work (in private):** The Committee considered a draft report. Various changes were agreed to, and the Committee agreed to consider a revised draft, in private, at its next meeting.

*19th Meeting, 2013 (Session 4) Thursday 13 June 2013*

**Women and work (in private):** The Committee considered a revised draft report. Various changes were agreed to, and the report was agreed for publication.
ANNEXE B: ORAL AND ASSOCIATED WRITTEN EVIDENCE – EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

WRITTEN EVIDENCE RECEIVED IN ADVANCE OF ORAL EVIDENCE

Children in Scotland (188KB pdf)
Children in Scotland, further submission (84KB pdf)
CITB-ConstructionSkills in Scotland (94KB pdf)
Patricia Cleghorn (83KB pdf)
Close the Gap (266KB pdf)
Close the Gap, further submission (374KB pdf)
Dr Margaret Anne Craig (111KB pdf)
Educational Institute of Scotland (138KB pdf)
Engender (226KB pdf)
Claire Gardiner (6KB pdf)
Fox and Partners (63KB pdf)
Jacqueline Hogg (8KB pdf)
Allison Johnstone (76KB pdf)
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Lynn McLachlan (72KB pdf)
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One Parent Families Scotland (296KB pdf)
OPITO (487KB pdf)
Parenting across Scotland (149KB pdf)
RCN Scotland (178KB pdf)
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Save the Children (199KB pdf)
Scottish Childminding Association (185KB pdf)
Scottish Enterprise (230KB pdf)
Scottish Out of School Network (411KB pdf)
Scottish Out of School Network, further submission (111KB pdf)
Scottish Women's Development Forum (162KB pdf)
Scottish Women's Development Forum, further submission (335KB pdf)
Skills Development Scotland (119KB pdf)
STUC (245KB pdf)
STUC, further submission (95KB pdf)
UNISON Scotland (119KB pdf)
Dr Caroline Wallace (2,446KB pdf)
Working Families (241KB pdf)
Professor Lesley Yellowlees (66KB pdf)
ORAL EVIDENCE

Equal Opportunities Committee Official Report: 28 March 2013
Ann Henderson, Assistant Secretary, STUC;
Margaret Boyd, GMB and Chair, STUC Women's Committee;
Pauline Rourke, Communication Workers Union representative, and Elaine Dougall, Regional Equalities Officer, Unite, STUC Women's Committee;
Kirsty Connell, Vice-Chair, STUC Youth Committee;
Barbra Farmer, Chair, STUC Disabled Workers Committee;
Anne-Marie Mackin, Freelance Trainer and Assessor, Play First (Scotland) Ltd;
Emma Ritch, Project Manager, Close the Gap;
Linda Somerville, Director, Scottish Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology

Equal Opportunities Committee Official Report: 18 April 2013
Joyce Cullen, Solicitor & Convenor to the Society's Employment Law Committee, Law Society of Scotland;
Hazel Mathieson, Head of National Operations, Skills Development Scotland;
Mary Matheson, Vice-Convener, EIS Equality Committee, The Educational Institute of Scotland;
Angela Wilson, Chief Superintendent, Police Scotland & Chair, Scottish Women’s Development Forum.

Equal Opportunities Committee Official Report: 25 April 2013
Eileen Dinning, Equalities Officer, UNISON Scotland;
Gavin MacGregor, Head of HR & Organisational Development, North Ayrshire Council;
Lynn McDowall, RCN Officer, Lothian and Borders, RCN Scotland;
Emma Ritch, Project Manager, Close the Gap;

Equal Opportunities Committee Official Report: 2 May 2013
Irene Audain MBE, Chief Executive, Scottish Out of School Care Network;
Jackie Brock, Chief Executive, Children in Scotland;
Dr Margaret Anne Craig, Chief Executive Officer, Clyde Biosciences;
Sarah Jackson OBE, Chief Executive, Working Families (by video conference);
Satwat Rehman, Director, One Parent Families Scotland;
Clare Simpson, Project Manager, Parenting across Scotland;
Maggie Simpson, Chief Executive, Scottish Childminding Association;
Claire Telfer, Head of Policy, Advocacy & Campaigns (Scotland), Save the Children.

Equal Opportunities Committee Official Report: 9 May 2013
Lynsey Calderwood, Marks and Start Project Officer, One Parent Families Scotland;
Patricia Cleghorn, Principal and founder, Orchid;
Debbie Duncan;
Claire Falconer;
Carol Fox, Director and Solicitor, Fox and Partners;
Jacqueline Hogg;
Kassandra Hughes;
Allison Johnstone;
Lynn McLachlan, Director Business Banking Glasgow, Royal Bank of Scotland;
Tanveer Parnez, Director of National Development, BEMIS;
Dr Caroline Wallace, Senior Science Policy Advisor, Society of Biology;
Professor Lesley Yellowlees, Vice-Principal and Head, College of Science & Engineering/President, Royal Society of Chemistry, University of Edinburgh.

*Equal Opportunities Committee Official Report: 23 May 2013*
Angela Constance, Minister for Youth Employment, and Julie Ann Bilotti, Employability Policy, Scottish Government;
Susan Bolt, Team Leader, Early Years, and Eileen Flanagan, Policy Manager, Equality Unit, Scottish Government.
ANNEXE C: OTHER WRITTEN EVIDENCE – EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

Aberdeen City Council (129KB pdf)
Aberdeenshire Council (5KB pdf)
Angus Council (23KB pdf)
Barnardo’s Scotland (77KB pdf)
Beeleaf Coaching (2,054 KB pdf)
Clackmannanshire Council (27KB pdf)
Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (273KB pdf)
College Development Network (192KB pdf)
Dundee City Council (86KB pdf)
East Ayrshire Council (103KB pdf)
East Lothian Council (83KB pdf)
East Renfrewshire Council (117KB pdf)
Equality and Human Rights Commission (209KB pdf)
Falkirk Council (114KB pdf)
Fife Council (85KB pdf)
FirstGroup plc (163KB pdf)
FirstGroup plc, further submission (318KB pdf)
Glasgow City Council (97KB pdf)
Highland and Islands Enterprise (111KB pdf)
Inverclyde Council (44KB pdf)
Wladyslaw Mejka (1,618KB pdf)
Wladyslaw Mejka, further submission (1462KB pdf)
Midlothian Council (77KB pdf)
Perth and Kinross Council (85KB pdf)
Professor Maggie Cusack and Professor Fiona Wilson (73KB pdf)
Prospect (108KB pdf)
Renfrewshire Council (133KB pdf)
Susan Rice (121KB pdf)
Scottish Borders Council (81KB pdf)
Scottish Prison Service (343KB pdf)
Scottish Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (142KB pdf)
Scottish Social Services Council (222KB pdf)
Scottish Women’s Convention (231 KB pdf)
The Poverty Alliance (241KB pdf)
The Refugee Women’s Strategy Group (134KB pdf)
Universities Scotland (128KB pdf)
Women in Scotland’s Economy Research Centre Glasgow Caledonian University
Western Isles Council (65KB pdf)
West Lothian Council (164KB pdf)
Women’s Land Reform Group (152KB pdf)
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