Gender Pay Gap

Law Society of Scotland

Thank you for inviting the Society to give evidence this morning. It was most useful.

We were asked for a number of follow-ups which I am happy to provide:

- Mr Lindhurst MSP asked about the paralegal profession in Scotland. The difficulty with the paralegal profession is largely one of definition. The term simply means someone who works in support of a solicitor in providing legal advice to clients. At its broadest interpretation that could cover pretty much anyone working in law. That said, over the past 30 years or so there has been a professionalization of the paralegal profession and more and more people work with the job title paralegals. It is difficult to know how many people work in that capacity in Scotland. Estimates range as high as 10,000 but my instinct is that the real figure will be significantly lower (somewhere around 5-6k).

Mr Lindhurst noted that the Society had 430 or so paralegals listed in our annual report. This refers to an optional status we offer to paralegals called the Registered Paralegal status. This comprises competencies that paralegals need to meet (and this needs to be signed off by their supervising solicitor), a commitment to undertake CPD, comply with a code of conduct and a complaints regime etc. The gender balance of the RP status is extremely highly female (around 90% female/10% male). Whilst I cannot know what the much wider population of non-registered paralegals is (as we don’t record it!) I have no reason to think it as enormously different from the RP population.

Mr Lindhurst also raised the impact of a lack of men entering the profession and what impact this would have on remuneration. I am afraid that whilst we are cognisant of the issue of a lack of men entering the profession we have not undertaken any research or modelling on likely impact on remuneration. We are promoting Street Law – our educational initiative – across Scotland which we hope inspires young people (from all genders) to consider a career in law. We are also (for the first time this year) running a summer school for talented pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- A number of our publications were referred to. For ease of reference, these can be found here:
  
  - Profile of the Profession: [https://www.lawscot.org.uk/media/226958/profile%20of%20the%20profession%202013.pdf](https://www.lawscot.org.uk/media/226958/profile%20of%20the%20profession%202013.pdf). This is the census Val mentioned on numerous occasions and where we got our sectoral pay gap data from.
Close the Gap

- Parents in the profession: http://www.lawscot.org.uk/members/parents-in-the-profession/

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