Inclusivity and Intersectionality

Toolkit and Annual Report 2019

women and work
all party parliamentary group

appg

Contents

The Women and Work APPG is sponsored by

AMERICAN EXPRESS

ABI

centrica

ipse
The Association of
Independent Professionals
and the Self Employed

NatWest

REC

ShawTrust

US
UNIVERSITY
OF SUSSEX

vodafone

YOUNG
WOMEN'S
TRUST

Gillian Keegan MP
Co-Chair

Jess Phillips MP
Co-Chair

Throughout our work, we too often hear women described as a homogenous group, but this could not be further from the truth. This assumption fails to recognise the differences between women themselves and the challenges they face in the workplace. As a group, we recognise that women have many identity intersections. That's why we chose to focus our programme of work in 2019 on intersectionality and inclusivity. We know that women have different experiences of the workplace based on factors including, but not limited to: race, religion, class, disability and sexual orientation. It is only through acknowledging and recognising these different intersections that we will be able to build a truly diverse workplace which supports and empowers all women. As there is already concrete economic evidence for a more inclusive workplace as well as a weighty moral argument, we have sought to move the conversation on from not simply why we should cultivate more inclusive workplaces, but how.

Our meetings have explored a range of intersectionalities and issues facing women in the workplace, from discussing disabilities and how to create accessible workplaces to looking at mental health issues and how women can have hugely different experiences of these issues. We have tackled challenging topics head on, asking difficult questions about what the Government needs to do and what more employers can do to support all women.

We are grateful to all those who have contributed to this report by giving evidence. We have heard from a diverse group of women who have shared with us their unique experiences and given us first-hand insight into best practice on how to tackle these barriers. This diversity has strengthened the Women and Work All-Party Parliamentary Group's work and informed our recommendations. We would like to thank everyone who has been involved in and contributed to our programme of work this year.

We are calling on employers and policy-makers to make greater efforts to recognise the differing identities of women in the workforce and to ensure that diversity and inclusion policies acknowledge how different one woman's experience can be from another's.

We look forward to making further progress on this agenda in 2020.

Introduction

The Women and Work All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) is a cross-party group that provides a Parliamentary forum to examine constructively and debate the role that policy makers can play to deliver gender balance within the economy. It also allows Members of Parliament and interested stakeholders to examine the responsibilities of employers and to explore what more is required from the private, public and third sectors to deliver the Government's ambitions for women and work.

In 2019, the Women and Work APPG's theme was Inclusivity and Intersectionality. Throughout its work over the past four years, the APPG has recognised and highlighted the fact that women are not a homogenous group, and that a focus on gender alone can sometimes be misleading. We have heard evidence from witnesses as to how different aspects of identity such as age, race, disability or income can affect an individual's experience of recruitment and employment.

Throughout its work this year, the APPG sought to shine a spotlight on these areas of intersectionality, exploring how a better understanding of this concept can support a more inclusive workplace. The group held a series of meetings examining best practice and solutions for improving and supporting inclusivity, seeking to understand intersectionality through the lens of employment.

Out of this work, we have produced a toolkit of practical suggestions and strategies for employers to support an inclusive workplace and to put intersectionality into practice. In addition, the APPG has put forward a series of recommendations for Government on policies which support this ambition. This report aims to equip employers with the tools to create more inclusive workplaces which benefit employees at all levels.

Chapter 1

What is inclusivity and intersectionality?

"Intersectionality continues to wield a breadth, depth, complexity, and nuance in our understanding of how work and workplaces are experienced and organized. As a theoretical framework and a practical tool, it makes a unique contribution to advancing understanding and empowering marginalized groups in the context of management, organizations, and beyond."

Dr Doyin Atewologun[1]

To begin its work, the APPG started by exploring the underlying nature of structural discriminations, highlighting that treating these categories as separate ultimately fails to challenge biases, produce gender parity and positive visibility for all. Instead, we must embrace the multiple and intersectional identities that women possess and go further than gender alone.

We heard how intersectionality, as a theory, was coined by the academic Kimberlé Crenshaw. It is the study of how overlapping social identity categories, particularly minorities, relate to systems and structures of power and discrimination, and draws attention to the fact that we cannot understand a single category without appreciation of those around it. By considering power relations within and between social categories, intersectionality requires recognition that some accrue more privileges than others[2]. These intersections extend beyond gender and race to include socio-economic status, class, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex characteristics and so on.

We heard from witnesses of the need to recognise that multiple intersections can mean multiple barriers in the workplace – resulting in people becoming a minority within a minority. As a result, diverse women can feel as if they are affected by every pay gap, and there is an overwhelming demand for greater visibility and transparency to challenge this.

The APPG set out to learn about inclusion policies that take into consideration differing intersectional identities, in a way that makes the workplace safer and more accessible.

From different sources, our group saw how identities affect opportunities in the labour market and that people are treated differently because of their characteristics. Unconscious bias remains an issue in many workplaces resulting in unfair practices. An ICM/ Guardian poll in December 2018 found that people from minority ethnic backgrounds were consistently more likely to have faced negative everyday experiences associated with racism. 43% of those interviewed from a minority ethnic background said in the last five years, they had been overlooked for a work promotion in a way that felt unfair, compared to 18% of white people who reported the same experience[3]. Furthermore, we heard how women are often unwilling to disclose a disability or their sexuality because of fear that it would negatively impact their progression in the workplace. This results in marginalised women feeling that they cannot bring their 'whole selves' to work which in turn hampers their wellbeing at work and, ultimately, their productivity.

These issues are deep rooted and demand structural change. It is clear that if employers and Government do not fully recognise intersectionality, new forms of inequality of marginalisation will occur.

"Divides in society are intersectional in themselves and there is a need to address them or we risk seeing a more divided country, and, as such, we will not achieve gender pay equality."

Wanda Wyporska
Executive Director of the Equality Trust

[1] Atewologun, D. (2018). Intersectionality Theory and Practice. Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Business and Management. Available at: https://oxfordre.com/business/abstract/10.1093/acrefore/9780190224851.001.0001/acrefore-9780190224851-e-48?rskey=RbvjLF&result=2
[2] Phoenix, A. (2018). What is intersectionality? The British Academy, 8 March. Available at: https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/blog/what-is-intersectionality

[3] Levett, C., Booth, R. and Mohdin, A. (2018). Bias in Britain: explore the poll results. [online] The Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/ng-interactive/2018/dec/02/bias-in-britain-explore-the-poll-results

Outreach programmes and skills development

Work experience provides an opportunity for young people to gain valuable insight into the world of work, as well as different industries that they may not have previously considered. However, we know that many industries face issues in recruiting women from a range of backgrounds. Successful outreach programmes can help to improve diversity in the talent pipeline and open up opportunities to people of all backgrounds and experience. However, the APPG heard how there are clear inequalities in accessing work experience and careers advice: BAME young people on average report lower satisfaction than white young people with the careers advice they receive, disabled young people frequently struggle to access work experience and access to placements can often reflect gender stereotypes. Addressing these issues early on is crucial to ensure that access to the workplace is fair.

Work experience

A 2018 report by the British Youth Council's Youth Select Committee acknowledged that whilst work experience can be a helpful lever for improving social mobility and protecting against the risks of unemployment later in life, access to work experience opportunities are unequal[4]. The APPG heard how employers value previous work experience. This is supported by evidence: a 2017 survey from the Department for Education, showed that 65% of employees said previous work experience was a critical or significant factor. Despite the importance that employers place on experience of work, only a minority (30% of those surveyed) had offered work experience to someone who was in education in the previous 12 months[5].

The APPG heard how young people from disadvantaged backgrounds often lack the networks to gain work experience that their more affluent peers may have.

The group heard from two year 10 students at Whitefield School in Barnet, London, about the value of the school's careers service and work experience programme. Assistant Headteacher and Careers Lead, Chris Young said the school had increased contact with businesses, higher education institutions and apprenticeships. As part of this, the school had established a formal partnership with an international bank, availing itself of the bank's corporate social responsibility to develop a range of skills workshops to enhance careers advice for students.

These workshops focussed on essential skills such as how to build your CV, mock interview training, as well as shadowing an employee for the day to gain a sense of what working in finance was like. The students told the group that prior to this experience, neither of them had considered a career in finance, but they now had more interest. They highlighted the value of seeing people from similar backgrounds as themselves working in senior positions within the bank and how this helped to dismantle many of the stereotypes they previously held about this sector.

We know that children from a young age start to stereotype and assign genders to jobs. The Government's commission on gender stereotypes found that children's career aspirations are shaped and restricted by gender stereotyping, rather than ability. For example, in 2017/18, only 22% of A-level physics students were girls and just 9% of those starting STEM apprenticeships were female[6]. We heard evidence from our panellists about the need for more visible and diverse role models in the workplace. This is particularly important for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds or young people with disabilities who may feel limited in their career options because they do not see themselves represented in certain fields.

[4] British Youth Council, Youth Select Committee (2018) Realising the potential of work experience. Available at: https://www.byc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Youth-Select-Committee-Realising-the-Potential-of-Work-Experience.pdf

[5] Shury et al (2017) Employer Perspectives Survey, Department for Education. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/622343/EPS_2016_UK_Report.pdf

[6] Department for Education (2019), Further education and skills: March 2019. Coverage: England

We received evidence from organisations in traditionally male-dominated fields such as construction and shipping that one of the main issues in recruiting women to these fields was the stigma and stereotypes that people often held about these industries. Furthermore, evidence received from Girlguiding shows that many young girls worry about the inequality they may face in their future jobs and careers. Good-quality work experience and careers education can help to dismantle these stereotypes and in doing so provides greater diversity in the pipeline, more women in male-dominated fields, and vice versa.

Evidence from Shaw Trust highlights the importance of outreach programmes as, among 16 to 24 year olds, women make up two thirds of the economically inactive population. For 61% of that population, this is because they are doing the unpaid work that has been allocated to women for centuries – cleaning, cooking and caring[7]. Accessing these groups and widening participation in all sectors is critical for economic productivity.

To ensure that young people, in particular young women, are pursuing careers based on opportunities available in the labour market and not on perceived gender roles, the Government should ensure that they have access to quality career guidance at school. As experts on labour market trends, recruitment professionals are ideally placed to help provide this guidance. Improving careers guidance, with a core element focussed on addressing stereotypes about the kind of careers which are open to different groups of people, will help diversify the workforce, bring in new talent and help tackle recruitment issues that many industries suffer from. There must also be a targeted focus on young people who are often left behind in the job market. Taking a preemptive approach will help break trends of low pay, occupational segregation and underemployment and boost social mobility.

Ongoing skills development

Ongoing skills development in work is also essential to progression and professional growth. We know that women are likely to have more than one career; therefore, learning new skills, as well as refreshing old ones, is a key element of ensuring that women are not left behind in terms of progression.

Skills development is particularly important for the self-employed in order to keep abreast of technological, economic, legal and other issues in their respective occupation fields. However, Labour Force Survey data shows that only 12% of the UK's solo self-employed have received job-related training in the last three months, compared to 16% of employees.[8] Research by IPSE shows that a third of self-employed people undertook formal work-related training in the last 12 months, with women (41%) being more likely than men (32%) to have done so. A key barrier preventing the self-employed from ongoing skills development is the cost of training, both in terms of time and money. Unlike employees, the self-employed have to pay for training themselves and lose money from not being able to work whilst completing the training. Currently, training for existing skills is tax deductible for the self-employed; however, training for new skills is not, meaning it is hard for them to keep abreast of new and changing skills requirements.

Shaw Trust conducted a focus group of low-paid mothers in London who highlighted a key concern being a lack of qualifications and lack of interview skills as a barrier to progressing in work. Whilst work experience is often targeted at those still in education, more needs to be done to ensure that young people not in education, employment or training are able to access skills workshops and work experience. These programmes should have a hands-on focus, looking at the reality of what is expected of employees in the workplace.

Employers should re-consider the importance they place on work experience and acknowledge the difficulty that young people from diverse backgrounds may have in accessing these opportunities. When recruiting, employers should put greater emphasis on skills and behaviours, as well as other experience such as voluntary service and extra-curricular activities.

7 McKay, E (2016) The way we talk about 'economically inactive' women is all wrong, Young Women's Trust. Available at: https://www.youngwomenstrust.org/what_we_do/media_centre/blogs/434_the_way_we_talk_about_economically_inactive_women_is_all_wrong

8 ONS, Labour Force Survey, Q2 2018

Employers should also consider outreach programmes and who they offer internships and work experience to. If possible, it would be helpful to conduct research on the socio-economic backgrounds of the young people who carry out work experience or internships at their organisations, looking at factors such as what type of school they attend and how they found out about the opportunity. This will highlight if there are any issues in ensuring that those from less advantaged backgrounds are able to access good-quality work experience. Too often, work experience is gained through family connections, but employers should consider establishing a formal relationship with a local school or joining an internship programme which would allow a greater diversity of candidates. Employers, particularly those in sectors suffering from skills shortages, must invest in outreach programmes to sell their industry and their company.

Case study
Work It Out coaching
Young Women's Trust

Young Women's Trust's free Work It Out services supports young women to build strong skills and mental health through coaching.

Before Work It Out coaching, Aleesah was unemployed, depressed and felt as if she had no one. She wanted to do something with her life but had no idea where to start. She felt anxious that she would not have a good future and would end up jobless for her entire life. However, Work It Out coaching helped her tackle all of these issues.

Aleesah describes her coach Carole as lovely and supportive. Carole helped her with a lot of helpful exercises to recognise her skills and strengths and discover new coping strategies. She says that since she started Work It Out coaching, she's never felt better about herself and that her coach has helped her to find the positive things in life and inspired her to get a job to help others.

Aleesah originally found out about Young Women's Trust on Instagram and says that signing up to the Work It Out coaching programme was such a quick process – she entered her name, number and email and within just a couple of days, she received a message from her coach. Aleesah and her coach discussed what day and time would be suitable and Aleesah really valued being able to get an appointment in her own time, instead of having to wait and put things on hold for a given appointment.

Case study
Breaking into male dominated fields
Recruitment and Employment Confederation

The construction and rail industry has one of the lowest rates of entry for women. Despite having one of the highest average weekly earnings, second only to finance (ONS Dec 2017), and the lowest rates of unemployment, women make up only 14 per cent of the workforce[9]. To keep up with current demand, the industry will need 36,000 new workers a year[10]. VGC Group, a member of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation, works specifically to help women enter the construction and rail sectors by challenging existing recruitment and marketing methods. The group uses images of women in their marketing materials to challenge the construction industry's macho image and create a positive narrative about women in construction. Having visible female role models in male dominated industries can help attract and retain talented women.

Rather than just wait for female candidates to come to them, the group visits female community-based organisations (and schools) to promote job opportunities to candidates who would have otherwise not considered a career in construction. They have also implemented a behavioural competency framework in their recruitment selection, to ensure that women with limited construction experience (but the right behaviours) are still able to apply for roles.

[9] Powell, A. (8 March 2019) Women and the Economy. House of Commons Library Briefing Paper Number 6838. Available at: https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06838
[10] Construction Skills Network (CSN) report 2019-2023:

Ensuring that everyone is able to access the workplace is an essential component of diversifying the talent pipeline and increasing the UK's economic productivity. As part of the APPG's inquiry into intersectionality and inclusivity, the group looked at how we can increase accessibility, Government schemes such as Disability Confident, and how employers can support reasonable adjustments. Even though disabled people make up the largest minority group globally, including non-visible disabilities, this section of society is often left out of mainstream discourse. In the UK, 19% of working age adults are disabled and there are more than 3.7 million disabled people in work[11]. Yet we know that disabled people are more than twice as likely to be unemployed than non-disabled people and also more likely to be underemployed and in low-paid jobs. As women are more likely to be in lower paid occupations, the challenge for disabled women is even greater, since it is often harder to ask for adjustments in these sectors.

Furthermore, even in work, analysis by the Labour Force Survey shows that the pay gap between disabled and non-disabled people stands at 15%, with the average disabled worker earning £1.50 an hour less than a non-disabled counterpart; this is equivalent to £2,730 a year based on a 35-hour work week[12]. The Government's own research indicates that closing the employment gap and supporting disabled people to stay in work could deliver an economic benefit of £260 million, for example, by boosting the spending power of disabled people.[13]

Overwhelmingly, the APPG heard how so many workplaces remain inaccessible to people with a range of disabilities. Not even being able to enter a workplace because of disability can make a person feel unworthy. For example, if a woman has mobility issues and uses a wheelchair but an office is only accessible by stairs, this can create a sense that she does not belong because the office is not accessible to her needs. By excluding disabled people from the workplace, employers are missing out on valuable employees.

As a means of tackling these barriers, disabled people are increasingly choosing to be self-employed. Research by IPSE shows that the number of self-employed disabled people has risen by 30% in the last five years and accounts for 14% of the UK self-employed workforce. Despite an overall higher percentage of men in self-employment than women, there has been a surge in the number of disabled women choosing this way of work – up 48% in the last five years alone. This rise is significantly higher than the rise in the number of disabled women becoming employees, which increased by 39% in the same period. We received evidence stipulating that disabled people felt self-employment could meet their needs whereas other forms of employment could not. However, self-employment is not without its challenges for disabled people and many struggle with getting started, loneliness and a lack of confidence.

The Group also looked at what can be done to recruit and retain people with neurodiverse conditions, such as autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). This is clearly an issue where more needs to be done, as only 16% of people with autism have a job.

The traditional concept of work suggests that people need to be literate, numerate and able to concentrate for eight hours a day, five days a week. Other traits, such as being able to make or hold eye contact, are seen as successful traits in the workplace. These conceptions of success need to be readdressed if we are to make the workplace as inclusive as possible and is particularly important for those with neurodiverse conditions who might struggle with social skills or interaction. Employers should ensure they are advertising and recruiting for the actual demands of the job, rather than outdated concepts of what the ideal employee looks like. One way that this can be done is through an emphasis on skills-based interviews, as well as re-evaluating job adverts to ensure that they are tailored to the skills required to do the job.

We heard how people with disabilities can often find the traditional concept of work challenging, for example, being expected to work eight hours a day. There needs to be an overall cultural change within workplaces so that the discourse moves away from making workplace adjustments for disabled

[11] Powell, A. (3 January 2020) People with disabilities in employment. House of Commons Library Briefing Paper Number 7540. Available at: http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7540/CBP-7540.pdf

[12] ONS (2018) Disability pay gaps in the UK. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/disabilitypaygapsintheuk/2018

[13] Department of Work and Pensions & Department for Health and Social Care (2017) Improving lives: the future of work, health and disability

people and instead, it becomes the norm to make adjustments which suit a range of people. Flexible working has increasingly become the norm in many workplaces and this is an encouraging step, as flexible working patterns, including job sharing, help accommodate a range of people's needs, from those with disabilities to those with caring responsibilities, as well as those looking to improve their work-life balance.

Research shows that disabled women face intersectional or dual labour market discrimination on the basis of both sex and their disability.[14] Women's employment outcomes fall behind those of men, and evidence suggests that women fall even further behind due to additional employment barriers wrought by employers who are unwilling to make reasonable adjustments for their needs. More support is also needed to enable disabled people to sustain work (114 leave employment for every 100 that join the workforce)[15] and make progress in their careers.

We heard how people with disabilities, particularly non-visible disabilities, are often unwilling to share this information with their employer and are therefore sometimes resistant to asking for reasonable adjustments in the workplace out of fear that it will affect their progression. For example, often neurodiverse people would not say they were 'disabled', as they do not identify with the term, but they may still benefit from reasonable adjustments in the workplace. Our panellists suggested that instead of asking people if they are disabled and require adjustments at work, employers should ask all candidates if they require any adjustments to do the job properly. This blanket approach ensures that all people are able to request adjustments which will help them perform better and does not single out disabled employees in particular.

We received evidence from Enterprise Rent-A-Car who have introduced an Employee Well-being passport; this is designed to document any factors that may affect an employee's performance at work, including cognitive preferences, work styles, faith, disability or long-term conditions. The passport details the reasonable adjustments agreed between the employee and their line manager and helps facilitate conversations with new managers as the employee progresses within their career.

Many adjustments are simple and inexpensive, yet often, there is the perception that making adjustments for those with disabilities is time-consuming, expensive and complicated. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) found evidence that disabled people believed they could have stayed in their jobs if they were offered appropriate support or adaptation, particularly opportunities for flexible working[16].

Examples of reasonable adjustments include, but are not limited to:

- A ramp for wheelchair use
- A special chair owing to back problems or a desk that can move up or down
- Providing a nearby allocated parking space for an employee with mobility issues
- Tailoring an employee's workspace: for example, an employee with ADHD might find it helpful to face a wall to increase focus
- Providing specialised equipment such as an adapted keyboard for someone with arthritis, a large screen for those with visual impairments and an adapted telephone for someone with a hearing impairment
- Amending or adapting interview assessments/tests as necessary
- Allowing part-time, flexible or job sharing options or remote working.

[14] Parker et al (2007) Double Discrimination? Gender and Disability in Access to the Labour Market. The University of York. Available at: https://www.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/pubs/pdf/double.pdf

[15] Wilkes, M (2017) Let's talk – Improving conversations about disability at work. Scope. Available at: https://www.scope.org.uk/scope/media/files/campaigns/lets-talk-report.pdf

[16] Equality and Human Rights Commission (2019) Fair Opportunities for All: A Strategy to reduce pay gaps in Britain. Available at: https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/pay-gaps-strategy-fair-opportunities-for-all.pdf

Case study
Making self-employment work for disabled people
IPSE

Jayne has been self-employed for over two years and runs her own online retail business creating personalised wooden artwork, cards and gifts. Prior to this, she was in employment and, after a few months of working, had to leave due to ill-health. Jayne was diagnosed with a long-term health condition which resulted in three years of unemployment. She tried to go back into employment, and looked for part-time work; however, her experience did not often result in getting to the interview process.

She felt that this was due to her previous unemployment and disclosing her illness to the employer. Following this, Jayne wanted an independent life again, to use her own skills to support herself and have the freedom to do so, through the Prince's Trust Enterprise programme. Jayne attended a four-day course based around the required skills and knowledge to start her own business.

Jayne likes the fact that she is 'in control of everything' in self-employment and can plan everything from her own house when she feels well enough to. However, Jayne would like to be part of a team and dislikes the lonely and isolating side to self-employment. Furthermore, the seasonal work that comes with Jayne's business requires her to budget her spending more rigorously, which she finds challenging. In the future, Jayne would like to remain in self-employment, but would also want the option to go into employment; however, she does not feel that option is available to her due to her health condition.

Case study
Work and Health Programme
Shaw Trust

Shaw Trust delivers the Work and Health Programme – an employment support programme commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions. It is designed to improve employment outcomes for people with health conditions or disabilities and those unemployed for more than two years.

When Tracey started on the Work and Health Programme in August 2019, she was struggling both emotionally and financially. Tracey had been unemployed since 2015; she became ill whilst at her previous job and this added to her anxiety of going back to the workplace.

Tracey was finding her health and financial situation hard; she was also supporting her son, who lives with her. Tracey was referred to the Work and Health Programme and knew that things needed to change. Alongside her anxiety, Tracey has Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Gastro Paresis which causes her problems with her organs, but she manages it with medication.

When Tracey met with George, her Adviser, they discussed various options around confidence building courses, employability and also even counselling to see if this could help. Tracey was introduced to an Inclusive Employment Coordinator who helped to find various opportunities for her.

A referral to the Salvation Army was also made to help with confidence building, but as Tracey's confidence was improving this was not needed. Tracey found that making use of the gym membership offered to her was a great way to boost her physical and mental wellbeing.

Tracey has been pro-active in trying to achieve her goal and is over the moon to start work as a Cardiology Administrator at a hospital in Essex.

George said: *"I am proud to say that Tracey has come a long way in a relatively short time and I wish her all the very best in her endeavours and her new job in 2020. She said from the start that she wanted this year to be a positive one and a new start and I believe that she's achieved it."*

Transparency

The APPG heard evidence on the topic of transparency which included the use of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs), issues around sexual harassment, and why more data is necessary to drive the gender equality agenda. Transparency also extends to work culture and ensuring that information on pay bands, progression and company policies are easily accessible. Greater transparency can only be seen as a positive development: it can help expose and tackle different pay gaps, ensure that women are not left behind in their progression throughout an organisation and are able to make career choices based on company policies which are beneficial to them.

Gender pay gap reporting

Gender pay gap reporting is undoubtedly a welcome move; it has clearly started the conversation about how to resolve the pay gap and place more women in top-earning positions. Yet, transparency measures alone do not drive meaningful change: both employers and the Government need to take practical steps to address these issues. We know that more than 10,000 companies have reported their pay gap and 8 in 10 companies on average pay men more than women. Furthermore, the data shows that only 38% of top earning positions in the UK are occupied by women. The APPG heard how making this data more accessible to the public would allow employees to choose employers with the least structural inequality, as people are becoming more particular about the type of organisation they work for and the organisation's work culture. However, this issue extends beyond companies, with the gender pay gap remaining persistent in self-employment at around 17%; however, other estimates are much higher. There is no regular bulletin of the gender pay gap in self-employment and the existing data collection methods are often flawed as they struggle to account for irregularity of income and unpredictable finances.

More data is needed to pinpoint where the disparities lie. Simply viewing the pay gap through gender alone fails to acknowledge the true scale of the issue. With companies already collecting data on the gender pay gap, extending this to include factors such as ethnicity and disability would provide further information on where the pay gap lies and in turn, where efforts need to be concentrated to resolve it.

Work culture

Transparency and work culture are intrinsically linked. Yet, there is a common misconception amongst senior leaders that people more junior than them will speak up, but sometimes the culture does not allow them to do so. Therefore, senior leaders need to be active in seeking feedback from all staff. A workplace where staff feel they can speak up and all voices are heard will undoubtedly lead to a more inclusive workplace.

The use of non-disclosure agreements

Research suggests that 40% of women and 18% of men have experienced some form of unwanted sexual behaviour in the workplace, ranging from unwelcome jokes or comments of a sexual nature to serious sexual assault.[17] The APPG heard that the use of NDAs is widespread, but their use has come under increased scrutiny, particularly in the wake of the #MeToo movement.

The EHRC has identified three areas of action which could shift the onus onto employers to prevent and resolve harassment effectively: transforming workplace cultures, promoting transparency, and strengthening legal protections. We heard that there remains a place for NDAs in the workplace, but, overall, there needs to be greater clarity about their use to make the workplace safer.

More transparency gives greater power to women to make decisions in their worklife which suit them. Whether this is deciding which job to accept based on its parental leave policy or challenging an organisation's ethnicity pay gap, it is clear that more data is needed to drive change and develop workplaces where everyone has an equal chance, regardless of their personal characteristics.

---

[17] ComRes (2017) Sexual Behaviour Survey for BBC News. 15-24 November 2017

Case study
Empowering workforces through increased transparency
Association of British Insurers

In 2019, the insurance and long-term savings industry became the first industry to take coordinated action to improve transparency for expectant parents. The Association of British Insurers (ABI) and 21 of its members – some of the biggest insurance and long-term savings firms in the UK, published the details of their parental leave pay policy which are clearly explained and highlighted on their public websites.

Parental leave and pay can often be a confusing area for employees with no standardised approach to how companies set out this information or where it can be found. A survey by Mumsnet found that 82% of respondents said they were reluctant to ask potential employers about parental leave policies because they feared it would make them less likely to get the job. But, 84% of those surveyed outlined how important these policies were to them in applying for or considering a job.[18] The transparency is important in allowing men to be working parents and in setting an example for other industries.

Another option to create more accessible workplaces, and reduce the gender seniority gap is for employers to advertise all roles as being open to job sharing. Evidence shows that working part time can cause career stagnation – not all jobs can be done part time, but they can be done as part of a job share partnership. A wide variety of people will benefit from the opportunity to job share – parents, people with caring responsibilities, people with a disability (hidden or known), older people who want to reduce their hours, people who want a portfolio career and those looking for a greater work/life balance. For this reason, the insurance industry will also be the first to create a job share portal which will address gender imbalance by mitigating which parent undertakes the majority of childcare responsibilities, prevent women's careers from being affected by becoming mothers and bring part-time work to more senior roles.

---

[18] Mumsnet (2019) Parental Leave Survey. Available at: https://www.mumsnet.com/pdf/mumsnet-survey-on-parental-leave.pdf

Case study
Supporting families
Vodafone

Vodafone announced in October 2019 that all Vodafone employees worldwide will be offered 16 weeks of fully paid parental leave following the introduction of a new global policy designed to support families by giving every parent the opportunity to have more time with children new to their family. Any employee whose partner is having a baby, adopts a child or becomes a parent through surrogacy will have the flexibility to take up to 16 weeks paid leave at any time during the first 18 months. Vodafone employees will also be able to phase their return from parental leave by working the equivalent of a 30-hour week at full pay for a further six months.

By the end of March 2021, Vodafone's parental leave will be available to all non-birthing parents – regardless of their gender, sexual orientation or length of service – across Vodafone's 24 markets and operations in Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the US. The new global parental leave policy further underlines Vodafone's strong commitment to diversity and gender equality and will make a significant difference to thousands of Vodafone employees, particularly in countries where there is little or no legal requirement to give equal support for both parents.

In March 2015, Vodafone pioneered a global maternity policy, offering women across Vodafone's markets and operations a minimum of 16 weeks fully paid maternity leave and a 30-hour week at full pay for the first six months after their return to work. Vodafone launched the ReConnect programme in 2017 to attract talented women who have left the workplace for several years – often to raise a family – who want to return to work but are struggling to make the professional connections needed or refresh the skills required.

Affinity networks

Affinity networks are employee-led groups in the workplace based around a common characteristic. They are focused on creating a more diverse and inclusive environment and the APPG heard from panellists on the variety of forms that these groups can take, including women's leadership groups, BAME groups, LGBTQ+ groups and disability groups. We heard extensive anecdotal evidence of the benefits of these groups in improving recruitment and retention of under-represented groups by offering them opportunities for mentoring and support. These groups not only provide a forum to share experiences, but also raise awareness within organisations of under-represented sectors. Furthermore, affinity networks have the power to hold institutions to account in a cooperative and collaborative manner, allowing the network to feed into wider company policy and processes. We heard how these opportunities are particularly important in a work environment where an employee may be in the minority.

For an affinity network to be successful, there must be senior buy-in, such as a senior executive sponsoring the group or joining a group meeting, but also senior management role modelling some of the ideas that come from these networks. At the same time, we heard how the most authentic affinity networks are built from the grassroots up. The APPG heard examples of how affinity networks worked together to effect maximum change and, with the opportunity to meet with human resources and senior management, were able to change company policy. Where possible, organisations should aim to give these groups their own budgets or provide opportunities to bid for funding to plan events which can benefit the whole organisation.

Affinity networks take on a variety of forms and organisations should be flexible as to how a group operates. For example, we heard evidence of how it can be challenging to organise a parents or carers network because the often competing demands of working whilst caring for somebody else can make finding a time which works for everyone difficult. These factors need to be taken into account when establishing a group and in this case, an online virtual network may be a solution. In order to make the workplace more inclusive, employers should be mindful about the processes and formats involved in setting up affinity groups. They should be led by individual employees rather than a top-down approach to ensure that they achieve their purpose of supporting the specific group.

Employers should encourage and help the development of affinity networks, and where these groups do not exist, companies should try to establish them. We received evidence on how affinity networks can be particularly helpful for women entering a workplace when they have a different cultural and social background to the vast majority of colleagues.

Concerns were raised about how to set up such groups in smaller organisations and we heard that where there is an appetite and a need for such groups, the number of members should not matter. Instead, if there is senior buy-in and the suggestions of the group are taken seriously, then even the smallest of affinity networks will have a positive effect.

Often, these affinity networks are concentrated in companies offering well-paid and stable employment, but our panellists stipulated the importance of these groups for people in insecure work too. Such groups provide forums for middle managers and senior leadership to understand the lived experience of individuals at all levels of their organisation.

Affinity networks can be agents for change in improving recruitment and retaining diverse talent. They also ensure that there are visible role models within the organisation and this can provide opportunities for mentoring.

"Parent and carers networks support inclusivity by offering a sense of belonging and connectedness."

Working Families

Case study
LGBT+ Staff Network
University of Sussex

Alison is Vice Chair of the University of Sussex's LGBT+ Staff Network, a grassroots group, which aims to help develop a positive environment for all staff and PhD students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex or asexual. This is one of four affinity groups currently available for staff, but other groups are under consideration, such as a carers' network. Alison emphasised how important it was that affinity networks are open to all staff, including administrative and support staff. These groups provide a platform to allow staff to feed into wider university strategy, ensuring that the University is an inclusive place for all its employees.

Alison told the APPG about the wider impact that the LGBT+ Staff Network has had in working with the local council and its networks, as well as the wider education network. This provided a way to give back to the local community, but also to work to improve the wellbeing of LGBT+ staff working in academia. The University of Sussex also has a university-wide mentoring programme for staff members which was launched in 2018. Staff taking part can include information which may be helpful during the matching process. They can express a preference for a particular mentee, for example an LGBT member of staff or staff with a particular gender. The University is considering ways in which they can support those with intersecting identities through this mentorship scheme.

The University of Sussex's staff networks play an important role in achieving the goals outlined in their equality, diversity and inclusion strategy, Inclusive Sussex. This wider strategy extends to 2025 and includes targets around halving the gender pay gap and ensuring that all strategy was underpinned with equality and diversity as a core focus. The University has also joined Stonewall's Diversity Champion Programme and their aim is to become one of Stonewall's Top 100 Employers by 2025.

Case study
Millennial Network
American Express

Gemma joined the Millennial Network at American Express and started on the committee, organising events such as pub quizzes and the annual 'Embracing the Side Hustle' event. She is now Co-Chair of the Millennial Network Sussex.

Her work involves her connecting with colleagues across the business and her network membership has helped to elevate this. Belonging to the Millennial Network has made her more confident, helped her focus on her presentation skills, provided opportunities to meet senior leaders, and given her mentor opportunities as well as careers advice.

She recommends network membership for anyone looking for progression or to improve their network and to enrich their career more generally.

Network membership has allowed Gemma to become involved in activities outside her day to day role, such as volunteering and organising. In addition, she says she has met wonderful people across American Express and made some amazing new friendships.

"I feel those not in a network are missing out and would urge everyone to join one – you really won't regret it."

Allyship is often discussed within the LGBTQ+ community but everyone has the ability to be an ally, as privilege is intersectional. In this way, white women can be allies to BAME women, men can be allies to women, cisgender women can be allies to members of the trans and gender non-confirming communities, able-bodied people can be allies to those with differing abilities and so on. This meeting focussed on how organisations can embed a culture of allyship.

Creating the culture

We heard how a culture of allyship needs to be embedded in the company for change to take place. American Express is working to embed such a culture through inclusive leadership training, running internal programmes to recognise and celebrate allies, and through the creation of a confidential ethics hotline. They have also established a Diversity Council to champion its allyship work. We see again that senior buy-in and role modelling is essential to creating a culture where all employees feel they can bring their full selves to work. Organisations must ensure that they have visible intersectional role models so that others will feel comfortable. In addition, companies should ensure that there are procedures in place to deal with behaviour which excludes people in the workplace. This includes ensuring that there are strict protocols for calling out sexism, racism and homophobia at all levels.

Allies can also help increase the visibility of talented individuals from underrepresented groups to make the wider organisation aware of their talents. One example of this is how REC member INvolve celebrates the achievements of individuals from underrepresented communities in business through their three "Role Models Lists": EMpower (Ethnic Minority role models list), OUTstanding (LGBT+ list), and HERoes (women's list).

Shared parental leave

The APPG heard how a key way that men can be better allies to women in the workplace is through the increased take-up of shared parental leave. We received evidence which showed that 53% of employees at UK businesses believe male colleagues do not take shared parental leave to which they are entitled when they become a father, due to fears about the adverse impact on their personal

finances. However, a survey conducted amongst 5,400 professionals by UK recruiter Hays revealed that 78% of respondents said shared parental leave would be a factor in improving gender diversity in the workplace[19]. We often talk about the 'motherhood penalty' and how women feel that they do not progress as quickly as their male peers owing to having children. One way to tackle this is to encourage greater take-up of shared parental leave in order to create a culture where men take a greater role in childcare and move away from the outdated stereotype that it is solely a woman's responsibility.

We heard from David Lammy MP who is the Chair of the APPG on Fatherhood about how critical it is that the issues around fatherhood are resolved. Despite it being over four years since shared parental leave was introduced, the number of fathers taking shared parental leave remains low and it is clear that more needs to be done to address this. It is also clear that many fathers want to play a greater role in raising their child but feel that their careers will suffer as a result; many parents feel they will suffer financially. There are issues around who is entitled to shared parental leave, as agency workers, those on zero-hour contracts and the self-employed are currently excluded. The system needs to be tailored to ensure that it works for everyone and is available from day one in their jobs. By encouraging more fathers to take shared parental leave, the workplace can adapt to modern parenting and help to ensure that women do not feel left behind in their careers.

"A thriving rich society utilises everybody's strengths and skills and to do that we must recognise we all need allies in people not like ourselves."

Keith Clarke CBE
Member of Women in Property Advisory Board

The LGBT+ community

Stonewall published a report in 2018 on LGBT employees in Britain's workplaces which found that more than one third of LGBT staff have hidden that they are LGBT at work for fear of discrimination. In addition, one in ten black, Asian and minority ethnic LGBT employees has been physically attacked by customers or colleagues in the last year[20].

---

[19] Hays (2017) Gender Diversity Report 2017
[20] Stonewall (2018) LGBT in Britain – Work Report. Available at: https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_work_report.pdf

Such figures highlight the urgent need for more inclusive policies in the workplace to ensure that everyone, regardless of their characteristics, feels safe in their place of work.

We heard evidence of the importance of LGBT+ affinity networks in supporting employees and raising the concerns of this community, but also of the need for employees who do not identify as LGBT+ to support and promote the work of these groups. Whilst companies showing their support for the LGBT+ community during events such as Pride is welcome, a more consistent approach is needed to ensure that LGBT+ employees feel supported in the workplace at all times. Organisations should make their support for LGBT+ equality public for example, in publications and on their website. We heard how if members of senior management feel safe and comfortable enough to come out in their companies then this has a trickle-down effect, empowering other colleagues to feel comfortable in coming out to employees too without fear of retribution. Peer mentorship was another interesting idea raised in our inquiry which involves a senior member of staff being mentored by a more junior. This can allow for senior management to understand the issues faced by different members of the organisation, such as those who identify as LGBT+, as well as listen to solutions about how to improve company policy.

Whilst LGBT+ people are protected by law, companies should ensure that they have a diversity policy which outlines how they ensure that employees feel welcome and supported regardless of their sexual orientation. Employees must ensure that homophobic language or behaviour is called out, corrected and dealt with appropriately. Senior management should ensure that they do not use such language and ensure that there is a constructive culture where LGBT+ employees can educate their peers on how to be a strong ally in the workplace.

It is clear that there is untapped growth and potential trapped in marginalised members of the workforce, and organisations need to set tangible objectives to address this issue. By working to embed an inclusive culture, this will benefit all employees, regardless of their characteristics.

"We need to see a visible and consistent commitment to LGBT people throughout the year; not just at Pride"

Ez Duggleby
Stonewall

Case study
A global employer for LGBT people
NatWest

NatWest has year on year retained its position as a Stonewall Top Global Employer, a clear indication that progress is being made in the bank to promote the LGBT agenda. They are the only financial services organisation to have spent the last 10 years within the Stonewall workplace equality index.

The Stonewall index expects the bank to navigate the challenge of upholding inclusive values and LGBT+ equality regardless of where they operate in the world. As a global employer, NatWest has launched initiatives in India, for example, to reimburse medical expenses where same-sex partners are hospitalised. NatWest also attended Pride in Delhi and Chennai, India, as well as Warsaw, Poland.

In 2018, NatWest joined the UN's LGBTI Standards of Conduct – global standards designed to help businesses promote equality for LGBTI people in the workplace. They also participated in Digital Pride – an online LGBT+ event consisting of a week of events, videos and debates and led a global discussion on the relevance of allies, role models and labels in the modern workforce. During Pride season, the bank is present at events all across the country from traditional UK Pride strongholds of London, Manchester, Brighton and Glasgow to supporting more local Prides in Rotherham and Norwich.

An important part of this work throughout the year is the Rainbow Network which has been providing insight, education and support to help members of the LGBT community since it was founded by two employees in 2005. The group is run by volunteers and uses its influence to make sure that NatWest stays on track in promoting and progressing the LGBT agenda. The ambition is for all colleagues to experience the same consistently inclusive culture and NatWest believes this is particularly important in certain locations where the local context is more challenging than that in Great Britain.

Chapter 7

Mental health and wellbeing in the workplace

Multiple reports demonstrate that poor mental health is costing UK businesses and the wider economy. The Government's own 'Thriving at Work report' into mental health estimates the cost of poor mental health to UK business to be between £33- £42 billion a year[21]. A 2015 report by the Mental Health Foundation found that women were nearly twice as likely as men to be diagnosed with anxiety disorders and rates of work-related stress and depression were consistently higher among women than men. However, a report by the National Institute for Mental Health found that people of black African-Caribbean and South Asian origin were less likely to have mental health problems detected by their GP[22]. We know that there remains a stigma around mental health in many cultures.

The APPG examined how employers can support particular groups, such as carers, as well as what can be done to normalise and support positive mental health in the workplace. It is clear that whilst the issue of mental health has gained prominence in recent years, more needs to be done in the workplace to create a culture where good mental health is entrenched, rather than simply an afterthought when an issue is identified. It was stressed during our meeting that just as everyone has physical health, everyone has mental health too. However, in the workplace, mental health and physical health are not seen on the same footing and there needs to be more of a focus on measures to support prevention as well as early intervention.

Despite mental health rising up the political agenda, a 2018 report by Shaw Trust on employer attitudes towards workers with mental health conditions showed the negativity and stigma associated with mental health in the workplace has grown significantly since 2009. One example is that there has been a 17% decline in the number of employers who would be flexible in offering adjustments or accommodations to employees with mental health conditions, despite the 2010 Equality Act.

Whilst the reasons behind poor mental health are myriad, we know that stress, a poor work-life balance and a negative work culture can all play a role in contributing to the issue. The 2019 Modern Families Index conducted by Working Families found that work was the main driver of stress and poor wellbeing. The survey showed that nearly four in five (78%) of working parents – including those who work flexibly – were putting in extra hours at work every week, despite evidence that longer hours are counterproductive.[23] Research from the International Centre for Lifecourse Studies in Society and Health at University College London finds links between long work hours and depression being stronger for women than for men, and that weekend working is associated with depressive symptoms in women. Self-employed people have to take the burden of supporting their own mental health and the impact that it has on their work. IPSE research shows that self-employed women in particular are more likely than men to say they have felt stressed or anxious, depressed, experienced feelings of inadequacy/ failure or lacked confidence as a result of work related financial worries. Remote working is extremely common amongst self-employed people; however, for many, especially women, the lack of workplace camaraderie can leave them feeling isolated.

---

[21] Department for Work and Pensions & Department of Health and Social Care (2017) Thriving at Work: the Stevenson/ Farmer review of mental health and employers
[22] National Institute for Mental Health in England (2003). Inside Outside: Improving Mental Health Service for Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in England. London: Department of Health

[23] 2019 Modern Families Index

According to research by Young Women's Trust, sexism in the workplace can also have a huge impact on mental health, particularly for young women who see themselves as easy targets. One in five young women says their mental health affected their ability to stay in work; this is especially negative for those on low pay, as there often are not the channels to raise concerns or systems in place to support employees. CEO of Young Women's Trust, Sophie Walker, told the APPG of the need for female-only spaces in the workplace in order to tackle sexism and allow women to raise the issues they are facing. In turn, employers need robust practices in place to tackle issues such as sexism and bullying as well as recognise the warning signs of deteriorating mental health.

There are approximately 6.5 million unpaid carers in the UK and three quarters of unpaid carers suffer from mental ill health, yet they are too often left out of discussions around mental health. Caring for carers in the workplace is becoming a growing issue as, on average, 600 people a day give up work due to caring responsibilities. With 58% of carers being women, it is clear that this is a gendered issue. The APPG heard how Centrica is working to support its employees who are carers through the Care Leave policy which allows up to six weeks of paid carers' leave per year, without using their annual leave allowance. The introduction of a 'Carers' passport' allows employees to continue with their flexible working arrangements already agreed, even with a change in line manager, and this passport stays with the employee throughout their time at the organisation. Centrica estimates that it has made a financial saving of £3.1 million by avoiding unplanned absences and improving employee retention, by supporting their employees with a flexible carer policy and peer support.

The APPG heard how businesses are adopting a number of approaches in order to cultivate a mentally healthy workplace. Flexible working was overwhelmingly put forward as a solution to ensuring a positive work culture in allowing employees to plan work around their responsibilities and needs. However, it was stressed that senior management, including line managers, also needed to embody the organisation's flexible working policy, in order for it to be successful. The APPG heard evidence from the Mental Health Foundation who offer all employees three paid, non-consecutive wellbeing days which do not have to be explained to line managers. These days allow employees to take time off at their own discretion to focus on their wellbeing and choose how they spend their days, as 'health' can have different meanings to different people at different times. The Mental Health Foundation also operates an email-free zone from 7pm to 7am in order to encourage employees to have a good work-life balance and switch off from work. Other measures discussed were mental health first aiders, providing mental health awareness sessions for line managers, as well as perinatal mental health awareness sessions.

A supportive workplace culture featuring a default approach to flexibility underpinned by better job design can help people suffering from ill-health stay in work, but more guidance and support is needed for employers in this area. The Government should work to ensure that there is updated mental health guidance which is fit for different industries, including those who are self-employed. This guidance should include examples of good practice from the industry as, despite many employers doing positive work in this area, the information is not widely circulated.

"I was treated as a person first and an employee second."

Georgia Webb
Member, Young Women's Trust Advisory Panel

Case study
Supporting carers
to stay in work

Centrica

Centrica's new global care leave policy gives employees more paid-for leave without using annual leave allowances, so they can meet their caring responsibilities. Centrica is now offering 10 days paid carers' leave, followed by another two weeks matched with two weeks annual leave. This means employees can access up to six weeks of paid carers' leave in total. Centrica also offers the right to request flexible working from day one, including offering reduced or alternative hours, as well as working from home where practicable.

Lynne has worked at Centrica for nearly 20 years. She looked after her mother when she had Alzheimer's and she now also cares for her father. She highlights that this took a toll on her emotionally and she had to take frequent time off work because of difficulties in finding her mother a suitable care home.

However, Lynne's manager enabled her to stay working through being understanding and flexible. She stressed how vital Centrica's care policy was to her but, more importantly, having senior management who understood and embodied what the policy was about. Lynne also joined the carers' network which allowed her to talk to people going through similar experiences as her. She highlighted that these were the things that made a real difference to her and kept her going.

"To have a caring policy is just a piece of paper but to have people who embody that policy is worth its weight in gold."

Employer toolkit: top tips

Outreach programmes and skills development

Employers should commit to paid, structured work experience and internships for NEETs and SEND students in jobs that are in high demand locally to transition them into high-quality work. As a minimum, employers should reimburse the cost of travel and lunch.

When offering work experience, consider the socio-economic background of the young person, including the type of school that they attend. If possible, collect data on these characteristics to ensure that you are taking steps to diversify the talent pipeline and offer these opportunities to young people who may not find it easy to access them.

As young people from disadvantaged backgrounds or young people with SEND often find it hard to access good-quality internships and work experience, employers should re-consider the emphasis that they place on such experience. Instead, employers should offer skills-based interviews, and where a candidate's work experience is lacking, employers should put greater emphasis on any voluntary work or extra-curricular activity.

Young Women's Trust offers a free telephone coaching service to support young women aged 18-30 living in England and Wales. The support helps with interview preparation, identifying strengths and skills and making a plan for the future. Further information can be found here: www.youngwomenstrust.org/what_we_do/services/work_it_out

Accessible workplaces

Employers should advertise all jobs, including the most senior, on a flexible, part-time or job sharing basis, unless there is a genuine business reason for not doing so.

All candidates should be asked if they require any reasonable adjustments to carry out the job properly. This will benefit all employees, build a culture of inclusion and avoid singling out people with disabilities.

Employers should design an employee well-being passport which outlines any reasonable adjustments or flexible working arrangements already agreed between an employee and their line manager.

This 'passport' ensures that even with a change in management, an employee is still able to retain their work arrangements. The carers' passport (www.carerpassport.uk) provides a straightforward way to document flexibility and support so it can be carried into an employee's future roles, without having to repeat the same conversations.

There is Government guidance on attracting, recruiting and retaining disabled people which can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/employing-disabled-people-and-people-with-health-conditions

Neurodiverse adults can use tools such as the Genius Within Adjustments Profiler to explore common work-related struggles and popular strategies to resolve issues. The test can be found here: www.geniusscreening.com/

Transparency

Employers should set out clear policies and processes to address sexual harassment in the workplace along with training for managers.

Employers should publish easy to access, practical guidance on the use of NDAs within their organisation.

There should be easy to understand and accessible company policy on issues such as pay, progression, flexible working arrangements, parental leave etc. This should include published pay scales and levels on job adverts.

Employers should voluntarily draw up action plans to tackle their gender pay gap and ensure that clear, time-focused targets are put in place to achieve this.

Where organisations are collecting data, they should also include questions on other factors such as ethnicity and disability to gain a better picture of the pay gap issue.

Employers should adhere to the Prompt Payment Code, which commits them to pay suppliers within a maximum of 60 days and work towards adopting 30 days as the norm. Many women who are freelance or run small businesses rely on being paid on time by companies in order to have secure income.

Affinity networks

Employers should try to ensure mentorship for all employees, but, at the very least, for staff members with a protected characteristic. Efforts should be made, where possible, to match them with a mentor with the same characteristic.

Employers should encourage employees to create and join affinity networks. This can be done through publicising the work of an affinity group or the creation of a new one through a newsletter. Senior management should consider joining an affinity group where appropriate and attending meetings and events to show their support, but these groups should be led from the grassroots up as far as possible.

Organisations should also be flexible about how affinity groups operate. A particular format for one group may not work for another and, therefore, it is best that the direction of the group comes from employees themselves.

Employers should ensure that affinity groups have access to human resources and senior management to share any issues and promote new ideas.

Allies and advocates

Employers should consider investing in workplace allyship training from providers such as Stonewall to ensure that the organisation is developing inclusive behaviours and approaches. More information can be found here: www.stonewall.org.uk/workplace-allies-programme

Implement a formal mentorship programme, as well as consider reverse mentoring. Pairing mentors/mentees across different diversity strands in the business will help change the way senior leaders engage with diversity and inclusion.

Simple measures such as including gender pronouns in email signatures will help minimise misgendering and can help build a more inclusive culture.

Employers should encourage a culture of challenging homophobic behaviour and ensure that such behaviour is taken seriously by establishing a clear code of conduct.

Mental health and wellbeing in the workplace

Employers should consider hosting a range of activities through the year aimed at supporting their employees' mental health. These can include team bonding day trips, lunchtime activity classes, such as crafts, or flexible working arrangements to ensure employees can maintain an active lifestyle.

If feasible, employers should consider offering a few 'wellbeing days' a year which allow employees to take time off work to focus on their mental wellbeing. Employees should be free to decide how they spend these days, as wellbeing can often have different meanings to different people.

Employers should ensure that they have a clear and accessible mental health policy for their staff. Shaw Trust has produced guidance on creating a work mental health policy which can be found here: www.shaw-trust.org.uk/en-GB/Commission-us/Work-Mental-Health-Policy

The Mental Health Foundation has guidance for individuals and organisations on how to support mental health and wellbeing at work. This can be found here: www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/how-support-mental-health-work

Senior management should role model a positive work-life balance and create a culture that ensures more junior colleagues do too. Simple measures such as enforcing an email-free zone overnight will prevent developing a late-night culture.

Government policy recommendations

Government action is necessary to create more inclusive workplaces. Following the APPG's meetings and open call for evidence, the APPG is making a series of recommendations to Government:

- The Government should make a commitment to improve the range and quality of careers provision in schools, working with the recruitment industry, as a means of ending occupational segregation.

- Whilst the APPG welcomes gender pay gap reporting, action plans in conjunction with pay gap figures are needed to give employers opportunities to address these inequalities. Specific, measurable and time-bound action plans to reduce their gender pay gaps should be introduced for all employers reporting. Better data collection is also needed to improve the understanding of certain sectors of employees, such as self-employed women, to enable the development of practical support solutions.

- The APPG eagerly awaits the results of the Government's consultation on ethnicity pay reporting. We actively encourage the Government to expand gender pay gap reporting to include ethnicity and disability pay gaps.

- The Government should make it a legal requirement that employers with 250+ staff publish their family-related leave and pay and flexible working policies clearly on their website.

- The APPG welcomes the Government's manifesto commitment to encourage flexible working and to consult on making it the default unless there is a business case against it. We urge the Government to consider legislating to extend the right to request flexible working to apply from day one in all jobs.

- The Government should ring-fence funding for disadvantaged women in the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which will replace EU structural funding after Brexit.

- The APPG welcomes the Government's commitment to publish a National Strategy for Disabled People in 2020. This should include an employment strategy for disabled people, focusing particularly on women with disabilities, people with neurodiverse conditions and persons with visual impairments, in line with the Government's pledge to increase the number of disabled people in employment.

- The Government should commit to delivering the National LGBT Action Plan and develop it into a cross-Government strategy on LGBT equality. The Government should commit to LGBT inclusion across all areas of education and training, including supporting young people in the workplace.

- The Government should work with different industries to produce and promote mental health guidance for employers. This work should also include recognising the causes of mental ill health, including sexism and other forms of discrimination, and running education programmes for employers on how to support employees.

- The Government should, with the help of business and specialist groups, convene a 'Good Work' taskforce which works across Government departments to examine how to make work inclusive and accessible for all. Rather than focus on each single strand of diversity, this taskforce would boost diversity and inclusion by considering how different strands of diversity intersect and shape a person's experience of the labour market and at work.

Gathering evidence

In compiling this report, the APPG heard evidence from a variety of organisations across the private, public, and voluntary sectors. A selection of panellists at each APPG meeting presented their thoughts and experiences of barriers faced by different groups and how to make the workplace more inclusive.

Each meeting also heard from audience members, who questioned panellists and joined in with discussion and debate around the topics considered. In addition, the APPG held an open call for written evidence throughout the year, welcoming submissions on a single topic and/or on the topic of inclusivity and intersectionality more generally. Each of these sources of evidence have informed the findings and recommendations in this report. We are grateful to all those who have contributed to our meetings throughout the year, as panellists and as audience members, and to all those who submitted written evidence.

Please find a list of all those who submitted written evidence below:

A2Dominion

American Express

Association of British Insurers

Atkins

British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy

City of London Corporation

Dr Nancy Doyle, Genius Within

Enterprise Rent-A-Car

ESRC International Centre for Lifecourse Studies in Society and Health (ICLS), University College London

EUMentorSTEM

Girlguiding

Institution of Civil Engineers

KMPG LLP

London Borough of Hackney

Manchester Metropolitan University

Shaw Trust

Spinnaker Global

The Association of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed (IPSE)

The Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Recruitment and Employment Confederation

University of Sussex

University of Wolverhampton

Women in Property

Working Families

The Women and Work APPG provides a forum to examine constructively and to debate the role that policy makers can play to deliver gender balance within the economy.

It also allows Members of Parliament and interested stakeholders to examine the responsibilities of employers and explore what more is required from the private, public and third sectors to deliver Government's ambitions for women and work.

The officers of the Women and Work APPG are:

Co-Chairs

Gillian Keegan MP
Jess Phillips MP

Vice-Chairs

Tracy Brabin MP
Deidre Brock MP
Baroness Burt of Solihull
Baroness Garden of Frognal
Baroness Goudie
Baroness Prosser
Baroness Uddin

The APPG secretariat is provided by Connect.

To discuss supporting the Group or to be added to our mailing list, please contact:

womenandworkappg@connectpa.co.uk
or tweet us @womenworkappg

Connect