



Government
Equalities Office

Women and the Economy

Government Action Plan

November 2013

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Foreword



There are now more women in work than ever before – and they stand at the heart of this country’s economic growth.

Government has already taken strong action to address the barriers faced by women and girls in the labour market and in business. We are making lasting structural changes to ensure our workplaces match the needs of women in modern Britain, including introducing shared parental leave to give families more choice and control, extending the right to request flexible working to all, increasing child tax credits for lower income families, and extending the free entitlement to early education. We have also acted to encourage and support more women to start their own business, through mentoring, financial help and cutting red tape.

But to secure the recovery, we need to do more to maximise our competitiveness and harness female talent, both for the benefit of the UK economy and for the financial security of women and their families.

The Women’s Business Council, which reported earlier this year, has published clear recommendations for Government and for business to improve the health and competitiveness of our economy, focusing on four key areas they have identified where girls and women face particular challenges or difficulties.

This action plan sets out how our existing programme is helping women, and sets out how we can go even further to help more women realise their potential. I am pleased that we have accepted and will be acting on every one of the Council’s recommendations.

The business community must also rise to the challenge of supporting women to make the fullest contribution. Again, much has been achieved. There are now 400,000 more women in work than when we took office. The number of women FTSE100 directors has increased by 50% since February 2011 when Lord Davies reported. But there is much more to do and I call on business leaders everywhere to act on the Women’s Business Council recommendations.

Britain is undoubtedly in a global race – and it is a race we will not win unless we make full use of the skills and experiences of everyone in our economy. This document sets out how we will achieve that aim.

Maria Miller MP

Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and Minister for Women and Equalities

Introduction

The most important task facing the Government is to build a stronger, fairer economy capable of delivering lasting growth and widely shared prosperity. A key element of this is maximising women's contribution to economic growth, which is why we established the Women's Business Council (WBC) to get the best advice on how to better support women in the economy. Their report, published in June 2013, found that:

- By equalising labour force participation rates of men and women, the UK could increase economic growth by 0.5 percentage points per year, with a potential gain of 10% of GDP by 2030.
- If women started businesses at the same rate as men we could have an extra one million female entrepreneurs.
- There are over 2.4 million women who are not in work but want to work, and over 1.3 million women who want to work more hours.

The report went on to make recommendations for Government and business in four key areas:

- "Starting Out", supporting girls and young women in the education system and supporting their transition into the labour market or into enterprise.
- "Getting On", where women are looking to capitalise on the progress they have made, either by securing their positions or by looking to move into more senior and managerial roles, but where their careers may be interrupted by caring responsibilities.
- "Staying On", ensuring the skills and experiences of older women are not lost to the economy.
- "Enterprise", where there is huge untapped potential amongst women.

We welcomed the recommendations the WBC made in June this year and announced a series of early actions by Government to make a real difference in each of the four priority areas identified by the Council. Ministers have subsequently come together to develop a cross-Government action plan. In the following sections we outline our plans for delivery in detail alongside the policies and commitments we have already made.

Business Engagement

This is an ambitious programme but Government cannot bring about significant improvements alone. This is a partnership between the Government and the business community with each recognising they have a part to play in driving change. Having led the year-long inquiry into women's economic participation which led to their report in June, the WBC members continue to champion their recommendations with business.

Women's Business Council

The Women's Business Council is an independent working group that was set up by Government in 2012 with the aim of ensuring real action by Government, business and others to maximise women's contribution to economic growth.

Chaired by Ruby McGregor-Smith CBE (CEO, MITIE Group plc), its members are all business people working in a range of sectors – including advertising, recruitment, enterprise, retail, legal, financial and pharmaceutical:

- Cilla Snowball, CBE, Group Chairman and Group CEO of AMV BBDO.
- Erik van Snippenberg, General Manager and Senior Vice-President, GSK UK Pharmaceuticals. Erik has replaced Eddie Gray, CEO of Dynavax Technologies, formerly President of Pharmaceuticals Europe, GSK.
- Fiona Woolf, Lord Mayor Elect of the City of London, partner at CMS Cameron McKenna, specialising in electricity reforms and infrastructure projects.
- Jill Shedden, Group HR director at Centrica plc.
- John Timpson, CBE, CEO of Timpson.
- Sue Langley, CEO of Financial Services Investment Organisation.
- Sue O'Brien, group CEO of Norman Broadbent.
- Wendy Hallett, OBE, Founder and Managing Director of Hallett Retail.

Since the launch of their report, Council members have been:

- Developing industry-led initiatives designed by business for business to showcase existing best practice within a competitive commercial setting.
- Engaging with CEOs of the FTSE 350 companies to highlight the compelling recommendations in the report.
- Developing a sustained two year long programme, led by credible business champions that will help to identify sector specific challenges and solutions.
- Encouraging sectors to actively engage their members under the auspices of WBC, for instance, across the Service Industries and the Energy sector.
- Actively working with senior male figures in positions of power to bring about real change.

Many of the immediate priorities for members complement Government action, for example by:

- Making the case for diversity, from the classroom to the boardroom.
- Making the case for business engagement with schools and universities through innovative sustainable partnerships.
- Showcasing the business benefits of modern, smart and agile workforces that support everyone who has dependent responsibilities.
- Understanding the power of, and widely promoting, inspiring role models who have made a difference.
- Championing the business case for the need to accelerate the pace of change.

To accompany this report, we are also publishing an appendix setting out all of the WBC recommendations for Government, with details of how they are being taken forward.

Chapter 1: Starting Out

Educational Choices and Careers

The Women's Business Council identified a clear need to invest in the futures of our girls and young women. A key part of this is encouraging more girls to take up non-traditional subjects that could lead to careers in areas such as engineering and IT.

Since 2010, Government has:

- Provided more good school places by radically reforming our education system and clamping down on failing schools, so that every child gets the education they deserve.
- Set up two dozen new University Technical Colleges.
- Launched the new National Careers Service which encourages girls and young women to challenge stereotypes and encourage them to choose from the broadest possible career options.
- Delivered over 1 million apprenticeship starts, of which more than half have been women.
- Worked with schools to encourage take-up of initiatives such as "Enterprise Village" and "Inspiring the Future", which enabled schools to access at least 2,500 enterprise champions and role models.
- Funded a Diversity Programme, led by the Royal Society and Royal Academy of Engineering, to understand and address issues of diversity in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths workforce. This looks at issues such as recruitment, retention and access to work experience.

Case Study 1 – Apprenticeships: Julie Hunt, Managing Director, Face to Face Finance

When Julie was 17 she decided that sixth form wasn't for her, and took a position as an apprentice at a training provider's company near Norwich. She completed four NVQs in Administration and Customer Service and was one of the first apprentices in Norfolk and in the Top Ten for Trainee of the Year 1996. Julie was made redundant after five years, so took a position with a large life office, gaining financial services qualifications. In 2003 she opened Face to Face Finance, and shortly afterwards took on her first apprentice. Julie knew she wanted to help other young people to have the opportunities that she had when she took on her first apprentice in January 2004. "Our apprentices help to keep the company fresh and forward thinking, and growth and change is a constant, making the opportunities for everyone exciting.

Over the next 18 months, we will:

- Set up regional pilots to test different ways businesses, career development professionals and schools can work closely together to ensure young people are ready for work, have a clear understanding of potential career options and of the skills/qualifications needed for that career. These will be in place by April 2014.
- Work with the National Careers Council and parent groups to develop resources which provide parents with the information to help their children make well-informed career and subject choices. The first of these will be in place by March 2014.
- Launch 'Make it in Great Britain', a portal to opportunities for schools and engineering and manufacturing businesses to connect.
- Expand the STEM Diversity programme to encourage girls to consider STEM careers, by building on "Tomorrow's Engineer Week", the Big Bang Fair and other campaigns.

Case Study 2 – STEM Ambassadors: Kate Woolley

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Ambassadors come from a wide range of careers and professions, including environmental scientists, civil engineers, marine biologists, medical physicists, pharmacists, energy analysts, architects and games developers among others. 40% of STEM Ambassadors are women. Across the UK, STEM Ambassadors volunteer their time and support to promote STEM subjects to young learners in a vast range of original, creative, practical and engaging ways. They are an invaluable and free resource for teachers, helping to deliver the STEM curriculum and raise awareness of STEM careers, by revealing how essential STEM is throughout the world.

Kate Woolley is a STEM Ambassador who relishes the opportunity to challenge stereotypes of the industry, especially as a female engineer. *"Being a woman hasn't hindered my progress at all. It's important that we improve the image of engineering to young people and show them that we are professionals who create a better world to live in."*

Since becoming a STEM Ambassador, Kate has developed a close affiliation with her old secondary school by helping with careers fairs and talks, as well as speed networking events where pupils have to guess her job. Kate hasn't stopped there though, visiting 12 other schools and working with all different age groups.

"So many young people don't really understand what engineering is. I hope to inspire students and make them realise that what they are learning about in the classroom is applied in the real world in what is, to me, an incredibly exciting job."

Kate Woolley, STEM Ambassador

- Invest £200m to enable science and engineering departments at HEFCE-fundable institutions to provide world class, industry standard facilities and teaching for students. The money will be allocated in 2015-16 through a competitive bidding process and will require match funding from institutions on at least a 1 to 1 basis – creating a total fund of at least £400m. We will look for evidence of a commitment to equality and diversity as part of the criteria for funding.
- Extend tuition fee loans to part-time Equivalent or Lower Qualifications (ELQ) students studying engineering, technology and computer science. The necessary changes will take place through the 2015-16 student support regulations.

- Work with companies who are setting themselves aspirational targets to increase the number of STEM apprenticeships for women within their organisations.
- Issue revised statutory guidance on careers which will include raising aspirations and challenging stereotypes by the end of 2013.

Chapter 2: Getting On

Career Progression, Returning to Work and Childcare

Women face a significant set of challenges as they seek to get on in the second stage of their careers. The issues here are well known and centre on the challenges for women of taking career breaks to have children, getting back into the workplace after a break, and balancing advancing their careers with childcare responsibilities. The key issues highlighted by the WBC are support for childcare and flexible working.

Since 2010, Government has:

- Provided unprecedented levels of personal support through the Work Programme to help unemployed women get into the workplace.
- Introduced legislation to extend the right to request flexible working to all employees by April 2014 and introduce a new system of shared parental leave by April 2015.
- Launched "Think, Act, Report" which asks private and voluntary sector employers to make things fairer for women at work, through greater transparency on pay and other workplace issues. Over 130 leading businesses have signed up, covering nearly 2 million employees.

Case Study 3 – Think Act Report: FDM Group

Think Act Report is a voluntary initiative to help improve gender equality in the workforce. It sets out a simple, step-by-step framework to help companies think about key issues such as recruitment, retention, promotion and pay.

FDM Group is a leading and dynamic IT services provider which is signed up to the initiative. The IT industry is renowned for being one of the most male dominated sectors, made up of only 14.4% women in the UK. This issue stems from childhood perceptions and has been a problem in the industry for decades.

FDM commissioned an internal review to assess how many women were in the business and how many were in management positions. They took a number of actions to increase diversity; including launching a global 'Women in IT' campaign to encourage more women into the industry.

As a result, the number of women at FDM has been increasing steadily, with now over 50% of the management team being female and 23% of staff overall. In 2012/13, FDM was voted into The Top Ten IT Employers for Women by students/graduates across the country (trendence survey, Guardian UK 300).

- Legislated to give employment tribunals the power to require an employer who loses an equal pay case to carry out a pay audit, where there is likely to be systemic discrimination.

- Worked with business to increase the number of women on corporate boards. Women now account for 19% of FTSE100 directors, up from 12.5% when Lord Davies reported in February 2011.
- Set an aspiration that 50% of new public appointees should be women by the end of this Parliament and we recently published our action plan to achieve this. 37% of new public appointments made by Whitehall Departments in 2012-13 were women.
- Increased free early education places for 3- and 4-year-olds to 15 hours a week – and extended this so that 260,000 two-year-olds from lower income families can also access free early education place from September 2014.
- Helped lower income families with childcare costs – 70% of up to £760 for one child, or £1,300 for two or more children per month. From autumn 2015, we will introduce a new tax break for childcare costs for working families, worth up to £1,200 per child per year.
- Set out plans for an additional 100,000 families to be eligible for childcare support under Universal Credit. From 2015, this subsidy will be increased to 85% for parents who both have earnings above the income tax personal allowance.

Over the next 18 months, we will:

- Implement the new flexible working regulation and support business in providing flexible working opportunities through the provision of clear guidance for employers and employees in April 2014.
- Introduce a radical new system of shared parental leave in 2015.
- Publish the actions each Government Department plans to take to improve the percentage of women in senior posts, in response to the Cabinet Office research in to the 'Top 200' civil servants.

Chapter 3: Staying On

Supporting Older Workers and Carers

The WBC has rightly drawn attention to the fact that older women can face particular challenges, particularly in reskilling and retraining, but also balancing work with caring responsibilities. The Government agrees that training and employment support services should recognise and address the needs of women in this stage of their career.

Case Study 4 – Re-Training Older Women Workers: Hendra House

Hendra House is a family run residential home located in Ludlow, South Shropshire. It accommodates 28 residents who are cared for by a staff team of 32, 8 of whom are over 50. The owner, Vince Birmingham, is a firm believer and supporter of the apprenticeship programme providing opportunities to participate for all staff, regardless of age or role. In his experience age has never been a barrier to learning and 98% of the staff either have or are working towards NVQ qualifications.

Vince believes that employing and training all staff enables skill and knowledge sharing: *“Older and younger workers can offer real business benefits. We make the most of the range of skills and experience brought by our workers of different ages.”*

One member of staff, Lorna, obtained part-time employment as a care assistant at Hendra House in June 2010 at the age of 59. Building on her previous experience, she became an apprentice and with the support of her colleagues sailed through the learning to achieve an NVQ qualification, in spite of being initially anxious about the Maths and English requirements. As a result of the new skills and knowledge she has gained, Lorna feels she has been given a new lease of life and a renewed sense of self-worth. In addition, she recognises that she is also able to provide the residents with an even better quality of life.

Since 2010, Government has:

- Phased out the default retirement age so that most people can now work for longer.
- Begun to reform state pension provision to address historic inequalities by improving state pension income for those with little or no additional state pension – low earners, carers (often women) and the self-employed.
- Provided guidance and case studies to employers and business organisations on employing older workers and the business benefits of adopting flexible approaches to work and retirement.
- Worked with employer-led organisations across nine of the largest sectors to drive forward sustained changes in the employment and retention of older workers.

- Worked with leading business and age expert organisations through the Age Action Alliance's Healthy Workplaces group and have developed practical resources to help employers effectively manage the health and productivity of an ageing workforce.

Over the next 18 months, we will:

- Appoint a business champion for older workers.
- Engage with expert organisations such as Age UK and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education to trial new approaches to support the skills development of older workers from March 2014.
- Work with partners to publish a range of effective 'how to' guides and toolkits for retention practices for older workers.
- Set up regional pilots to test different ways to support carers to remain in work if they wish. We expect these to be in place by June 2014.

Chapter 4: Promoting Enterprise

Enterprise growth is central to this Government's plans to build a stronger economy, through making additional investment available to business, reducing red tape and changing the culture around enterprise in the UK so that more people feel emboldened to strike out on their own. There is enormous potential in women's untapped entrepreneurialism, and the WBC made a strong case for providing more support for women who want to set up their own businesses, identifying a 'missing million' female entrepreneurs.

Since 2010, Government has:

- Established 24 new enterprise zones and introduced the regional growth fund to bring investment to every part of Britain.
- Helped Jobseeker's Allowance claimants aged 18 and over to start their own business through the New Enterprise Allowance. Participants can access a volunteer business mentor who will provide guidance and support as they develop their business plan and through the early months of trading. Once participants have ended their benefit claim and started trading, they can also access financial support including the facility to access a loan to help with start-up costs.

Case Study 5 – Enterprise Allowance: Natasha Simpson

Natasha Simpson graduated in 2010 with a degree in psychotherapy. She started Unity Counselling in May 2011. She operates from consulting rooms in Forest Hill, Beckenham and Westminster and also sees clients in their own home or via Skype/webcam.

Natasha was signing on at Forest Hill Jobcentre Plus (JCP) when her adviser told her about New Enterprise Allowance (NEA). Natasha said: *"I already had the idea of setting up a counselling business, even before I graduated in 2010, I'd seen a survey that highlighted the need for more independent counselling services in primary care. But I needed help to make my dreams a reality and that's where the NEA came in."*

NEA provider Ixion took over, giving Natasha support in the early stages of setting up her business. She was given one-to-one advice from a business mentor, £1,000 Government loan to finance the rent premises and a laptop. Her future plans include professional development with the aim of becoming a relationship counsellor and she will also be taking a one year course in clinical supervision.

- Identified and trained 15,000 new mentors to support anyone setting up and growing a business, over 6,000 of whom are women.
- Invested £1.6 million over 3 years to support rural women's enterprise as part of the Rural Growth Network programme, working with Local Enterprise Partnerships in Swindon and Wiltshire; Coventry and Warwickshire; Cumbria; Heart of the South West (Devon and Somerset); and the North East.

- Made additional investment available to businesses, including to the Government Funded Start up Loans scheme, a scheme to provide loans and mentors for entrepreneurs. Over a third of these loans have been made to female entrepreneurs.

Case Study 6 – Start Up Loans: Katie Stanborough, Baby:Boo Imaging

Katie was a successful sales and development manager when she had the idea for Baby: Boo Imaging, a service that offers pregnant women private 3D/4D ultrasound scans.

Whilst on maternity leave, Katie trained to be a sonographer which enables her to undertake 4D ultrasound scans, giving pregnant mums the opportunity to see their babies live and in 4D for the first time. As well as the scan, Katie offers a range of keepsakes for mums and relatives to buy, to cherish the unique experience.

Katie needed some additional finance for the scanning equipment, which is when she approached her local council in Chorley, who were able to provide her with a Start Up Loan for the business in Tarleton.

Baby: Boo imaging offer early scans, sexing scans, bonding scans and also hosts baby showers.

- Legislated for child-minding agencies, which will be a hub of practical and business help whilst providing quality assurance for parents.
- Established a £2m scheme to provide small grants of up to £500 to childcare providers, including child-minders, wishing to set up new childcare businesses.

Case Study 7 – Childcare Grant Scheme: Rachel Patchett

The Government introduced the new Childcare Business Grants Scheme in April 2013 to boost the provision of childcare in England and to incentivise entrepreneurship. The aim is to encourage and support new childcare businesses by providing flat rate start-up grants of £250-£500.

The money is to help cover the costs of things like training, equipment, insurance, and adaptations to premises and is helping to get over 1,000 new start-ups off the ground and get more mothers back into the workplace. As part of the scheme, fledgling businesses can also team up with a free business mentor so they can access specially-tailored business start-up advice.

Rachel Patchett received a grant in May and is now running her own child minding business at RAF Leeming. She said: *“I wanted a new career which had more flexible hours, meaning I could spend more time with my children, and one which I could ‘take with me’ when we have to move with my husband’s job.*

“The grant helped cover the cost of things including OFSTED fees, my CRB check, and basic training – 1st aid and food hygiene, as well as professional membership and insurance. This meant I could then invest my own money in other things like equipment and toys. I would recommend the scheme to as many people as possible.”

Over the next 18 months, we will:

- Develop better customer insight to understand the diversity of entrepreneurs, recognising their different ambitions and the variety of support they may require.
- Improve our website to support entrepreneurs, which reflects the diversity of people setting up and running their own business.
- Launch our Small Business Strategy to make it easier for new businesses to start and thrive and for existing SMEs to achieve their full growth potential.
- Work with the British Banking Association and others to ensure women entrepreneurs are able to access to the finance they need.
- Consider what more we can do to support those with caring responsibilities to set up their own small business.

Womens Business Council Recommendations and Responses

Chapter 1: Starting Out

| Ref | Detailed action | Government response |
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| G1.1 | Support recommendation of National Careers Council that culture change is needed in careers provision for young people and adults. Such a change can only be brought about by business, careers professionals, schools, and the government working together. | We agree this culture change is essential. From April 2014 regional pilots will test different ways that schools, businesses and career development professionals can work together ensure young people understand the wide range of careers options available to them and help students to be 'work ready' once they leave education. We are working with organisations such as the National Careers Service, British Chambers of Commerce, National Careers Council to deliver this. |
| G1.2 | Ofsted's review of career guidance will be published shortly. We strongly recommend that Government reports on how it plans to implement these findings, including how it will actively engage with industry and business to improve careers guidance and deliver results. | We published our response to the Ofsted report in September 2013, setting out how we will take forward these recommendations. We will publish revised statutory guidance on careers advice and guidance later this year, ensuring schools are focused on having high aspirations for all students and place inspiration and appropriate support for students at the centre of what they do. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-action-plan . |
| G1.3 | The Department for Education should work with stakeholders to capture data, on a regular basis, that shows the outcomes and destinations of those leaving secondary school, similar to the data routinely gathered by universities. This should go beyond the first 3-4 years after leaving, up to and including age 26. | In September 2013 we announced we will improve destination data. We will seek the legal authority to link to employment and benefits data sets. We will further strengthen key stage 4 and key stage 5 destination measures, which show how successful schools and colleges are in supporting their students into the next stage of education or training, or into work, in preparation for publication in summer 2014. |
| G1.4 | Parents should have access to resources to help them provide advice and guidance to their children. We recommend that the Government work with key stakeholders to develop a broad communications campaign aimed at parents which should include a 'Parent Pack' to provide guidance on what subject choices their children will make and when, how those choices may translate into career opportunities, and how to broaden children's horizons and challenge gender expectations. This pack should be freely accessible online through the National Careers Service and popular websites such as Mumsnet and Netmums, and distributed via ParentMail. | We will produce an online guide for parents to help them support their children through school subject, qualification and career choices. The first stage of this will be published in March 2014. We are working with parent groups, the National Careers Council, the Education and Employment Trust and schools to develop this. As we develop the guide we will consider how best to promote it. |

| Ref | Detailed action | Government response |
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| G1.5 | Actively promote work experience that works for all participants. By providing several short (1-2 day) modules of high quality experience, rather than the protracted fortnight that is currently the norm, the process can be made more manageable. Further consideration should be given to developing job shadowing as part of this change. | We will incorporate work experience into the regional pilots helping businesses, career development professionals and school to work together. (G1.1) |
| G1.6 | Evaluate impact of new Traineeships (introduced in August 2013) and gather business opinion as to whether they are delivering the right workplace skills. Upon completion of Traineeship, students should receive a guaranteed interview and reference for use in future job-hunting. | Delivery of traineeships started in August 2013 and we have commissioned an independent evaluation of the programme. |
| G1.7 | Deliver a pilot scheme through schools to teach transferable workplace skills following on from the evaluation and best practice gathered from Traineeships; completion of this should be marked with a statement or certificate for use in future job-hunting. | We expect Traineeships to deliver this recommendation but will review this recommendation once their impact is known. |
| G1.8 | <p>Continue to work closely with sectoral bodies such as The Royal Society and the Royal Academy of Engineering and establish a more cohesive approach to encouraging girls into STEM subjects and STEM careers. This should pull together existing schemes under one badge, be aimed at both teachers and girls, and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encouraging more business leaders to become STEM Ambassadors; • promoting best practice from schools; and, • engaging with and getting support from business and schools. <p>This approach could be spearheaded by an independent business champion.</p> | We will be expanding the current STEM diversity programme to encourage more women to consider careers in STEM. We will build on the success of "Tomorrow's Engineer Week", the Big Bang Fair and similar campaigns. |
| G1.9 | We agree with the recommendation of the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology that Government should use new technologies to promote STEM careers and subject choices, for example by commissioning a STEM careers app [Higher Education in STEM Subjects, November 2012]. This should dispel myths about STEM subjects, highlight the benefits of studying STEM, and identify influential women in STEM careers. | We are extending the activities of the National Careers Service to improve the resources on STEM and other careers that are available to schools, young people and parents. The National Careers Service website now includes direct access to the National Stem Centre careers database and further improvements are planned. We are launching Make it in Great Britain, a portal to opportunities for schools and engineering and manufacturing businesses to connect. A beta version will be tested for user feedback at the Skills Show in November, and a full version launched in early 2014. A new mobile web site is now available through three Apps. A more flexible, dynamic website will be introduced in 2015. We will have new National Careers Service contractors from October 2014 with partnership strategies which set out how they will work with with other organisations, nationally and locally, which provide support to young people, including youth charities such as the Prince's Trust, employers, schools and colleges. |

Chapter 2: Getting On

| Ref | Detailed action | Government response |
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| G2.1 | The Government should continue to champion Think Act Report as it provides practical ways for employers in all sectors to improve. We recommend that it is expanded and continues to be actively promoted. | We continue to champion Think, Act, Report as an effective way for companies to show how they support women to make the most of their talents. We will publish an report later this year, highlighting good practice from those companies that have already signed up. |
| G2.2 | The Civil Service should act as an exemplar for talent management for senior women. It should consider whether additional steps could be taken to increase the number of women reaching the 'Top 200' group and report on progress. | We will publish a summary of actions taken by departments to increase diversity throughout the Civil Service in 2014. Annual figures on diversity in civil service are published by the Office of National Statistics. |
| G2.3 | We strongly welcome the recommendations of the Childcare Commission on financial support for parents and believe that the changes proposed to the tax system are going in the right direction. We urge the Government to closely monitor their impact to ensure that they will deliver the much needed support for families and working parents. If the economic climate allows this should be expanded further. | We are currently considering the responses to the consultation on the detail of tax free childcare and further support under Universal Credit which closed on 14 October 2013. The new provision will reflect these responses and will be phased in from Autumn 2015. We will monitor its impact on working parents. |
| G2.4 | Develop improved information for parents on childcare options in their area using Ofsted and local authority data. | <p>We are working with parents to find out what they think of the current information sources (Gov.uk, Family Information Services, Ofsted, and others) and make recommendations in the spring 2014 about which channels are most useful to parents and how services might be improved. We expect www.gov.uk to become a clear and authoritative source of information about the financial support available for parents to help with childcare costs. We are already legislating to provide for childminder agencies, which will offer a 'one-stop shop' for advice and help with finding a childminder. We are also reviewing and improving the information provided to Jobcentre Plus advisers to enable them to better support parents with childcare and work.</p> <p>In addition, we are legislating to improve information about childcare provision for children with special educational needs and disabled children.</p> |
| G2.5 | Promote best practice examples of sample contracts designed to support flexible working which moves away from stipulating '9 to 5' working patterns. | We are working with businesses to encourage them to share good practice which includes sample contracts. |
| G2.6 | Work with the WBC flexible working champion, John Timpson – who has championed flexible working models to great effect in his own company – and other supporters of flexible working to share good practice. | As part of the extension to the right to request flexible working we are working with a range of organisations to promote and share good practice. By April 2014 we aim to be able to signpost to a comprehensive range of role models. |

| Ref | Detailed action | Government response |
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| G2.7 | Use male and female role models to demonstrate that flexible working doesn't need to be a bar to a career in senior management. | As above. |
| G2.8 | Ask recruitment companies and Jobcentre Plus to fully acknowledge and understand the concept of flexible working, so that candidates who want to work flexibly can have a positive conversation during job interviews. | We are drawing together and sharing good practice on supporting flexible working across the Jobcentre Plus network. Through the Private Sector Working Group, which brings together a range of experts to develop practical ideas on how to encourage flexible working, we have been working with recruitment agencies and ACAS to develop guidance on flexible working. |
| G2.9 | Produce guidance for employees to help them consider the impact on their employer when making any request for a change in the way they work. | We are working with ACAS to publish good practice for employers and employees in November 2013. We will also publish guidance on how to make a business case for flexible working requests. |
| G2.10 | Dispel the misconception that equipment provided by employers for home and flexible working is a taxable benefit. | By April 2014 we will publish and promote online guidance for employers and employees on the tax rules on equipment provided for working from home and flexible working. |

Chapter 3: Staying On

| Ref | Detailed action | Government response |
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| G3.1 | At a national level, Government should work in collaboration with key business, skills and career expert organisations to steer effective change in support services for workers in the third phase. | We will incorporate this into the delivery of other recommendations on skills. We will build on learning from the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) pilot project work on the most effective ways of meeting the needs of older workers. This will report by March 2014. |
| G3.2 | Engage with relevant expert organisations at a local level to trial new approaches to support the skills development of older workers. | We are supporting the National Institute of Continuing Education (NIACE) to organise the National Older Learners Group (NOLG). This will allow good practice to be shared between organisations. |
| G3.3 | Develop effective targeted marketing campaigns to promote the work of the National Careers Service to these workers, to support them in making decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. | We are currently discussing proposals for future promotion of the service with the National Careers Service. |
| G3.4 | Provide specific training on the barriers faced by women in the third phase of their working lives to Jobcentre Plus staff and work programme providers. | We are developing training on the barriers and need of older claimants which will be rolled out across the Jobcentre Plus network. |

| Ref | Detailed action | Government response |
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| G3.5 | Increased support for carers who want to remain in the workplace through partnership working between local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships to test assistive technology and IT support for carers. Consideration should be given to using the model of the Access to Work fund, which provides grants for adaptations to support people with disabilities to join or remain in the workforce. | In Summer 2014 we will launch a series of regional pilots to support carers to remain in work if they wish. |
| G3.6 | Dispel the myths that exist around the tax rules on employer provided equipment to support home working. | By April 2014 we will publish and promote guidance for employers and employees on the tax rules on equipment provided for home working. |
| G3.7 | Appoint a business champion for older workers to promote the business benefits of recruiting and retaining older workers. | We will appoint a business champion for older workers before the end of 2014 and they will host a series of regional events to promote the business case to recruiting and retaining older employees. They will help develop then promote effective 'how to' guides for businesses. |
| G3.8 | Build on the Age Positive campaign and increase its impact. Raise awareness of the benefits that older workers with the right skills can bring to the workforce. | We are developing an Extending Working Life Framework for Action with stakeholders, which will be published early in 2014. |
| G3.9 | Publish a range of effective 'how to' guides and toolkits for employers, alongside practical solutions to help businesses adapt their recruitment and retention practices. | A short piece of research with a number of national employers is being undertaken over the next few months to test the take up of the strapline, "Happy to talk flexible working". Employers will display the strapline when posting job adverts to signal their willingness to consider different ways of working. |
| G3.10 | Publicise the availability of existing resources such as the ACAS guidance and Age Audit Toolkit available online http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=4241 | We will continue to promote effective guides and toolkits to businesses. The older workers business champion will also promote the help available for employers. |

Chapter 4: Promoting Enterprise

| Ref | Detailed action | Government response |
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| G4.1 | Research good practice by mapping which colleges and initiatives result in high levels of successful entrepreneurs to see what works and can be replicated elsewhere. | In June 2013 we published 'Enterprise Education: Impact in Higher and Further Education'. We will build on this research to identify specific approaches which result in high levels of successful entrepreneurs and see how this model can be replicated elsewhere. This will include micro finance schemes. |
| G4.2 | Review the effectiveness of the existing youth micro finance schemes for secondary school children and expand these if they are proven to stimulate greater entrepreneurship. | See above. |

| Ref | Detailed action | Government response |
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| G4.3 | Promote female entrepreneurs through the newly appointed Entrepreneur in Residence. | We are working with the Entrepreneur in Residence to improve the support we offer entrepreneurs and to collect case studies of women who are running their own businesses. |
| G4.4 | Promote access to finance information to female entrepreneurs. | We are working with enterprise networks, the British Banking Association and several banks to improve access to financial information. In addition the Enterprise Research Centre is currently looking at the undercapitalisation of women-led enterprise. Their initial analysis is expected in December 2013 and we will consider its findings carefully. |
| G4.5 | Work with business to create a new portal (or app) for advice and support which provides a route map into enterprise, highlights opportunities and provides skills self-assessment. | We have held a series of focus groups with women who have set up their own businesses to review the effectiveness of the support we currently provide. The results of these will inform the current work to improve the provision of information and support through GOV.UK and elsewhere. We will launch the new Small Business Strategy which will set out how Government will assist businesses to more easily access and use the support they need at the point they need it. |
| G4.6 | Broaden messages on what an enterprise is and ensure marketing of support services is inclusive, in recognition of the differences between men and women entrepreneurs. | <p>Alongside the Small Business Strategy we are developing better customer insight to understand the diversity of entrepreneurs, recognising their different ambitions and the support they may require.</p> <p>This will improve how we raise awareness about the support services available to businesses.</p> |
| G4.7 | The Jobcentre Plus Emergency Support Service should include enterprise support and this option should be marketed clearly to women. | We will ensure information on becoming self-employed is available through the Jobcentre Plus Rapid Response Service. We have also set up an on-going marketing campaign which promotes the availability of the New Enterprise Allowance. |

