

improving life  
at work

advancing  
**women** in the  
workplace

## Good Practice Guide



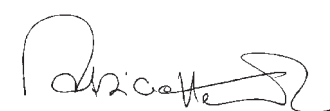
# ministerial foreword

There is growing evidence from businesses both internationally and in the UK that there are business benefits to be gained from implementing equality and diversity policies in the workplace. It is important that we share and discuss best practices to improve life at work so that more European organisations and workers can benefit.

Although women are increasingly playing a bigger role in the EU economy, they are still under-represented at a senior level. As a growing number of business leaders tell us, however, a more diverse workforce – drawing on the widest talent pool – makes good business sense. We have been working in partnership in the UK and Europe to assess the position of women in the EU labour market and identify the opportunities and barriers to women's advancement.

We are pleased to be hosting the conference at which this valuable handbook is being launched. It is a practical guide to support managers in implementing effective strategies for reducing barriers to women's advancement and for combating stereotyping in the workplace.

We would like to thank all those who have contributed to the research that informed this handbook, especially the companies who shared their experiences and in doing so, have contributed to good practice in the advancement of women in the workplace. We are also grateful to our partners in Denmark and Ireland, and to the European Commission, for funding this project. This resource is an encouragement to all readers to improve life at work for everyone.



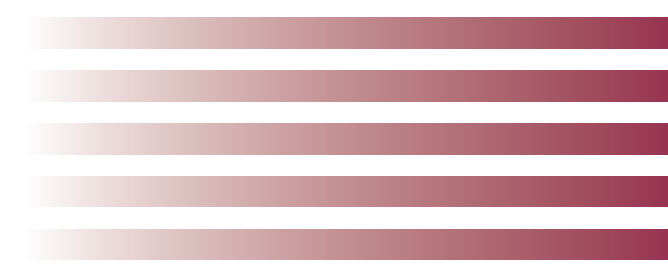
**Patricia Hewitt**  
Secretary of State for Trade and Industry



**Barbara Roche**  
Minister for Social Exclusion and Equality

29th January 2003  
Improving Life at Work Conference

# advancing women in the workplace



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# introduction

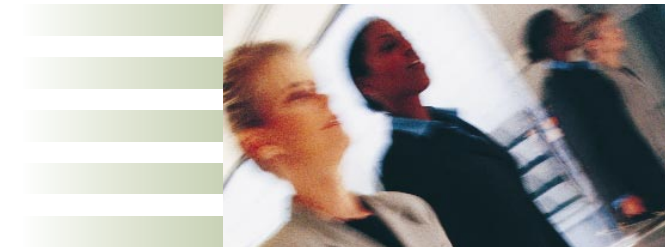
Current employment statistics reveal that women remain disadvantaged in the workplace. Women constitute a majority of low-paid employees, remain a minority of managerial and professional staff, and are excluded from some sectors of employment. A significant gap remains between the rates of pay for women and for men across Europe.

Some employers have led the way in attempting to address the barriers that impede the progress of women in the workplace. This handbook provides information on the actions that those employers have taken to advance the position of women at work. It details the types of approaches they have used, the way in which such initiatives have been taken forward within organisations, and the outcomes of these actions.

The aim of the handbook is to provide a guide for employers on how to improve the position of women at work, and on the types of actions they might wish to consider implementing in their own workplaces. Each chapter of the handbook points employers to initiatives aimed at resolving different types of barriers to the advancement of women at work, focussing on areas such as recruitment, access to training, and promotion, and gives examples of the types of barriers that employers have attempted to confront and resolve. The handbook draws on the experiences of employers who have put such policies into practice and outlines the real benefits they have gained from doing so.

This handbook is based on research conducted as part of the EU 5th Action Programme and has been written by the Women and Equality Unit (WEU). The study has been funded by the European Commission, commissioned by the WEU and the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and carried out by IRS Research. It focuses on the position of women in three countries: Denmark, the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom. Our partners in the research were the Danish Research Centre on Gender Equality, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions Equality Unit, the Irish Department of Finance, Opportunity Now and the Trades Union Congress (TUC). A full report of the research will be published in Spring 2003.

# why take action



## Background

Across Europe, women make up around 43% of the labour force, a figure that has grown significantly over the last few decades. In Ireland the proportion of women in work has increased from 28% in 1971 to 50% in 2001. The educational level of women across Europe has also increased significantly. As many employers realise, female employees are therefore an increasingly important resource for their businesses. However, across Europe, women largely remain in lower-skilled jobs and are concentrated in particular sectors of the economy. Four-fifths of part-time employees in the UK are women, often working in lower-skilled occupations. And women remain a minority in professional and managerial positions and in key growth areas such as technology.

In the UK, ethnic minority women are less likely to be employed than men across all ethnic groups. The gender difference is largest for those from a Pakistani or Bangladeshi background, with just 25% of women in employment compared with 61% of men. The difference is smallest for people of Afro-Caribbean origin, with 63% of women, and 66% of men, in employment. In Denmark, the overall activity rate was one third lower for non-EU nationals than for the national population. For ethnic minority females, the activity rate was 42% lower. In comparison, Ireland has the smallest difference, 3.5%, between activity rates of nationals and non-EU nationals.

## What this means for business

When the economy improves and unemployment falls, employers can find it more difficult to recruit sufficiently skilled individuals. Employers have found in this situation that recruiting and retaining women helps meet skill shortages.

The business case for recruiting women and ensuring that they have opportunities to progress in the workplace is therefore soundly based and relates to the profitability, sustainability and future growth of the organisation. A workforce that reflects the diversity of their customer base can improve the quality of the goods or services they provide by increasing companies' ability to meet their customers' needs. In this way, companies can see a real improvement in their bottom line - profitability.

Many employers recognise this business case and have developed policies that increase the diversity of their workforce, so that it reflects the diverse nature of their customers, and they draw on the widest possible pool of talent.



**The handbook and how to use it**

This handbook is not about giving women preferential treatment. It is about helping employers identify, and take action to remove, barriers to women’s progression in their organisations. It draws on the experiences of some of the companies who have put these policies into practice, to guide others who are interested in seeing what they can achieve for their company. Below are examples of what firms have said about why they took steps to increase the diversity of their workforce.

The chapters that follow explore different steps that your company could take to improve the diversity of your workforce, and remove the barriers to women’s progression within your organisation. Each chapter sets out a checklist of issues to think about when considering each type of activity, based on the findings of our research with companies in the UK, Ireland and Denmark. As you will see, there is no one solution for any of the issues raised that will fit all types of business - sometimes one solution will suit large companies but not small ones, or vice versa. Finally, case studies set out in more detail examples of how particular companies in the UK, Ireland and Denmark have taken action to address these same issues across the three EU countries.

**Why business is taking action - what companies say**

Diversity of staff is critical to our success as a global organisation...we want to attract the best talent to the organisation.

***Citigroup (UK)***

[The idea was that] it would make it easier for people to manage their outside work arrangements and [they would] be more committed to the organisation as a result of that.

***Dublin City Council (IRE)***

One of the major motivators was the belief that a more diverse staff will be able to provide better care for the community.

***King’s College Hospital (UK)***

There are three reasons: one is the legislation, two is the right thing to do, and third there is the business case...but the right thing to do and the business case are sometimes the same.

***Ford (UK)***

The aim is to provide a first class service to customers, seek out new business and have the best and most motivated workforce. To achieve this, it is necessary to demonstrate fairness and respect in our dealings with colleagues, customers, shareholders, investors, suppliers and communities in which the company operates.

***Halifax (UK)***

We believe that our overall approach to our HR policies has a major impact on our bottom line. We have gone from being a ‘break-even’ company to a very profitable company, partly because we’ve invested in new plant and partly because we have invested in our people in the broadest sense; people are very important assets of this business and we know that has paid off.

***MTM (UK)***

identifying areas  
for action and  
**monitoring**  
progress



**Checklist**

- What are the issues our company could benefit from addressing?
- Is the information needed already available within the organisation?
- What needs to be done to resolve the problems identified?
- Who should design and deliver the programme, and how can you involve employees?
- Who should be made accountable for the success of the programme?
- What is the best way of monitoring progress?

**What are the issues your company could benefit from addressing?**

Identifying the issues which could be tackled to benefit both female employees and your company is the first step. Every company faces a unique set of circumstances which means there is no “one size fits all” approach to building up your own business case for action. And, as the case studies highlighted below show, there are different methods to identify the barriers facing women at work. Some will be more suitable for larger organisations which tend to have procedures already in place to help them gather the information they need. Others will be useful to smaller firms.

Our research found that organisations used the following methods to identify the barriers facing women:

- reviews of their current policies and procedures;
- staff surveys;
- focus groups;
- statistical analyses of the gender balance across jobs within the organisation;
- task groups;
- conferences.

**Is the information needed already available within the organisation?**

Employers may find that existing data, routinely kept in relation to recruitment and promotion, are sufficient to pinpoint where action needs to be targeted. In some cases though, additional information may need to be gathered. Many companies use a range of existing and newly-gathered data to help them decide what actions they should take.

**What needs to be done to resolve the problems identified?**

The next step, having identified what might be stopping women from applying for the jobs you advertise, or from progressing as well as they otherwise might once working in your company, is to identify what measures (large or small) can be put in place to help.

It is obviously very important at this stage to go back to your current employees and ask: case study organisations who hadn't done this in the first instance often had to revise their activities.

Again, there are a variety of ways of doing this - see the list above for ideas.

### **Who should design and deliver the programme, and how can you involve employees?**

There is no one way to organise responsibility for equality or diversity policies. Decisions about this will depend on existing structures and staff numbers. However, the key to success is that both managers and employees need to feel that they "own" diversity and that it is central to the business.

While employer approaches differ, in general they can be grouped under four broad headings. These are:

- structural approaches using existing groups (usually taken within large organisations);
- nominated personnel;
- managerial responsibility and cascading; and
- direct responsibility of managers.

#### **Structural approaches**

Large companies tend to have existing structures such as representatives, committees and boards. It can be relatively easy to add equal opportunities to these, or to set up additional reporting bodies within the structure. If you take this approach it can be very clear where responsibility lies for success, however it is important that someone within the existing structure accepts this responsibility.

#### **Nominated personnel**

Appointing nominated personnel to take on responsibility for equalities issues can be effective. Several organisations have taken this approach. Again, this makes it very clear who needs to deliver, however the risk is that the nominated personnel do not have the power to deliver; they can't be expected to be the sole driver of change if there is no support for change around them.

#### **Managerial responsibility and cascading**

Some organisations find it useful to make senior-level appointments and to cascade responsibility down through the management structure. This approach has the advantage of having a broad range of people responsible for taking action. A risk may be that the message doesn't filter through.

#### **Direct responsibility of managers**

At the small companies interviewed, responsibility lay with the managing director and their team of managers. For small companies this is likely to be the only option as they are less likely to have the structures in place to make the first three options feasible.

#### **Types of action**

The type of action your company may wish to take to address barriers to women's recruitment and progression will obviously depend to a large extent on the types of barriers you have identified.

There are, however, two general approaches:

- activities focused specifically on female employees;
- activities open to all employees, but which are designed particularly to address the barriers you have identified.

Some employers, who have identified women's access to training as a particular problem have put in place women-only training programmes. Others, who identify a range of potential barriers adopt "multi strand" approaches from which both male and female employees are likely to benefit.

The rest of the handbook sets out in more detail the various approaches companies have taken to address the range of barriers to women's recruitment and retention they identified.

### **Who should be made accountable for the success of the programme?**

We found that where accountability for the success of the programme lies depends on the approach taken by the firm in terms of assigning responsibility for delivery. However, it was also the case that in general, it was felt to be most effective if accountability did not just rest with those with responsibility for delivery "on the ground", but also with a senior manager/board member. Having someone in a very senior position helped to keep things moving and sent a signal that the firm was serious about the changes proposed.

### **What is the best way of monitoring progress?**

It is important for employers to have data on the impact of the initiatives they introduce. They need to make sure that resources are being used wisely and with maximum business benefit.

Large organisations are able to take a systematic approach to monitoring and data collection. A range of qualitative approaches, such as attitude surveys or focus groups, are also in use.

Monitoring took a range of forms across the companies surveyed. Some analysed available statistics, but others took a more informal approach. In some cases employers used existing workforce data or gathered additional data to determine the success of their projects.

Some employers have made the achievement of workforce diversity and/or variable working arrangements part of the targets that their managers are expected to attain. This can constitute part of the appraisal process.

Without monitoring data it is difficult to estimate the extent of progress an organisation has made in meeting its targets. Staffing statistics are useful in monitoring the advance of women through the organisational hierarchy. Monitoring against external competitors and/or standards can help an organisation to benchmark its progress. Qualitative information gleaned from attitude surveys or focus groups can help organisations discover how employees feel about developments.

## Case studies

### BT (UK)

#### Identifying the issues

To begin addressing equality issues, BT first undertook a set of reviews. The company spoke to women both internally and externally, about what they saw as the barriers to women's recruitment to, and progression within, the company, and whether or not they were considered systemic. Policies and procedures were then reviewed, taking into account positive comments too, to see how good practice could be extended throughout the company.

The reviews identified the following issues:

- The Information Technology and Communications (ITC) industry is generally not attractive to women/girls.
- BT was not attracting enough female graduates.
- Part-time workers (who tend to be women) had difficulty accessing training.

#### Planning and implementing action

At a senior level in BT there is now a global equality and diversity forum. Most of the members are chief executives, who sit on the company's main board. The forum includes a representative for each line of business and a representative for each diversity area. There is a gender champion, race champion, disability champion, sexual orientation champion, and an overall diversity champion. The forum reviews policies, looks at legislation and examines trends and employee feedback. It also reviews BT's strategy.

Below that, each line of business has an equality forum which looks at the specific issues within that line of business, from a diversity point of view. There is one diversity expert in each HR team, and BT also has an army of diversity coaches. They are volunteers who can be from any grade.

The strategy for advancing women is monitored by the BT board. It is also reviewed three times a year by the Chief Executive's Council.

#### Activity

BT decided to tackle the issues their review highlighted through a specific programme. There were changes to job advertising to promote the industry to women, changes to recruitment to increase numbers of women graduates applying, and a review of training arrangements to overcome the difficulties that part-time workers had in attending.

Other initiatives included working with schoolchildren to improve their perceptions of the telecommunications industry, and working with careers services and special interest groups such as Women in Engineering.

BT has also:

- Developed a women's network;
- Established a women-only development course;
- Introduced new recruitment advertising initiatives, including advertising in women's magazines;
- Developed career planning;
- Introduced competency-based performance management;
- Provided crèches at training centres to help part-timers gain access to training opportunities and flexible working.

### City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council (MDC) (UK)

#### Identifying the issues

In 1996 City of Wakefield MDC undertook a staffing trends review. It uncovered severe gender imbalances between the lower and senior grades. Women represented 69% of the council's employees but just 13% of senior managers.

In the same year, a study confirmed a 'glass ceiling' for women in the organisation and possible causes might be a lack of career counselling; a lack of management development for women; the attitudes of male councillors and managers; stereotypes about the role of women; work-home conflict; and the corporate culture. The findings influenced the authority's 'Stepping Up' programme for women. The council continues to collect information through questionnaires, evaluation exercises, network meetings, workshops and one-to-one discussions.

#### Planning and implementing action

The council established a central team of dedicated staff who co-ordinate an authority-wide response to equality issues. The team comprises an Equal Opportunities (EO) Co-ordinator, an EO Officer, and half-time equalities officers for women and for disability.

Their responses to equality issues are acted upon by the corporate equalities group. This is made up of around five senior managers representing different departments from across the authority, who act as "champions" of equality and "make it a reality". The leader of the council is the equality lead officer.

Each department also has an equality group comprising about 12 people including senior-level people. Additionally, equality personnel work specifically on the Stepping Up initiative.

A key component of the programme has been the Stepping Up organisational structure, which comprises three main teams: the Human Resourcing group, the Mainstreaming group and the Co-ordinating group.



The Human Resources group, made up of HR specialists from across the authority, is reviewing HR practices with a focus on equality. The Mainstreaming group has senior management team representatives from all departments, together with selected Stepping Up group representatives. Senior managers within this group ensure that Stepping Up targets are met within departments.

The Co-ordinating group involves corporate and departmental Stepping Up representatives. This group also includes a dedicated Stepping Up monitoring officer whose role is to monitor relevant workforce trends across the organisation.

### Activity

In addition to designing a women-only training programme, the council also took action to:

- Make gender equality a priority within all council policies.
- Make procedural changes in recruitment and selection, including monitoring, gender mix on all interview panels, positive statements in advertisements and incorporation of Stepping Up information in induction programmes.
- Develop 'Stepping Up' action plans at corporate and departmental levels containing 'SMART' targets (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-based).

## Citigroup (UK)

### Planning and implementing action

Citigroup has appointed a Director of Diversity, which is a senior-level post that reports directly to the CEO. The post is supplemented by one full-time personal assistant and one analyst. The role was newly-created and the current postholder was previously the Head of Training and Development. Although this is a relatively new role in the European region there has been a diversity function in the US for several years.

*The company made a deliberate decision for the postholder to report to the CEO, to ensure that the role would be seen as business-owned and business-driven.*

Citigroup believes that, without grass roots commitment, policy does not translate into ownership by the business. Managers and employees need to "own" diversity. With this in mind, the Director of Diversity therefore works alongside business heads as well as in partnership with HR.

In addition to this corporate level activity, there is work going on within each business, as the company starts to mainstream the issue of diversity, particularly with the formation of the CitiDifference initiative and its associated diversity framework, including a senior diversity committee. If at any point there is an issue that needs attention, it is incumbent upon CitiDifference to put resources into that issue, including a team leader and task team, where necessary.



The process of engaging senior managers started off by making divisional business heads co-sponsors of task-teams which were challenged to achieve results within 100 days. In this role, they acted as figureheads: setting the vision, keeping the focus and engaging people in the task forces, by giving them visibility and the opportunity to be recognised for their success. There is regular input to the CitiDifference initiative from fifteen senior business heads, most of whom are also European Operating Committee members.

### Activity

Following an initial conference at which areas for action were identified, Citigroup appointed a Director of Diversity. Five '100-day' cross-functional teams were set up to tackle one of five areas identified for action: recruitment, retention, sponsorship and career development, work-life balance, and respect. Each team consisted of around 10 members and set itself a specific goal:

- **Retention team** - to apply a successful women's networking programme in at least two business areas;
- **Recruitment team** - to increase the proportion of women applicants;
- **Sponsorship and career development team** - to select five senior women and create career development objectives for them through a mentoring programme;
- **Work Life Balance team** - to implement a work-from-home programme for a pilot group in operations and technology and audit;
- **Respect team** - to define, measure and improve respectful behaviour in one business area.

The Chief Executive Officer also wanted to ensure there was a forum at which equal opportunities for women could be discussed. In 2000 the CEO and another pro-diversity business head sponsored a European Women's Conference. This was an internal event at which the key strands were identified: recruitment, retention, sponsorship/professional development and work-life balance. At a second conference in September 2002 career development issues were discussed. This led to the establishment of a women's network that focussed on fast-track, one-to-one, mentoring.

In **Ireland**, the company introduced measures to improve the company's ability to recruit and retain women. The Human Resource Office (HRO) put a programme in place, aimed at supporting women returners who had been recruited via a local Back to Work recruitment fair.

Women recruited through the fair tended to be older than many of the bank's existing employees and many were not educated to degree level. Therefore, to reduce their anxiety about entering a work environment in which the majority of staff were young graduates, the HRO arranged the following:

- all of the new, mature employees started work on the same date, as a group;
- the company arranged for all training for the new recruits to be conducted with them as a group; and
- the new employees were employed at the same location within the company.

The company has also set up a mentoring programme for senior women and put in place a Women's Council to facilitate networking and to promote education and training opportunities for women.

## Transco (UK)

### Planning and implementing action

At Transco, the CEO and executive teams receive annual progress reports. The managers of participants in the women's development programme undertake one-to-one pre-and post-review meetings, discussing and recording objectives and outcomes from the programme.

The women's development programme has been evaluated at the four levels of the "Kirkpatrick model" of training evaluation - measuring participants' reaction to the programme; what they learnt; the long-term effect of the training on individuals' job performance; and the impact on the business. Additionally the careers of programme participants are tracked over a period of two years at six-monthly intervals, using the criteria of promotion, secondments, lateral moves and leavers. Figures indicate that the proportion of females in senior management grades has increased threefold over the last six years, standing at 9.1% in 2002, up from 3% in 1997. Rises have also been recorded for managerial/professional groups (16.3% in 2002, up from 11.4% in 1997); and for supervisory and junior professional grades (standing at 15.9% in 2002, up from 12.3% in 1997).

The monitoring in respect of the mentoring programme is more informal because it is a confidential, informal process between mentor and mentee. However, participants in the pilot evaluated the programme, including the use of anonymous questionnaires, review meetings, sessions involving mentees only, mentors only and both groups. There was also tracking of upward, sideways or outward moves.

identifying areas  
for action and  
**monitoring**  
progress

## recruitment policies



### Checklist

- Where is the best place to advertise posts to ensure a diverse pool of applicants?
- Are any of the job requirements likely to prevent women applying?
- Are selection procedures being applied uniformly across the organisation?
- Are selection processes fair and open? Actions to consider

Many employers find that they have difficulties recruiting women to particular aspects of their business. In many areas, women are a tiny minority of entrants. This remains the case in technical and scientific subjects at undergraduate and degree level. This is partly because of the choices girls make at school and higher/further education which can restrict their options later on: two-thirds of females registering on modern apprenticeships are found in just four areas of work: business administration, health and social care, retailing and hairdressing.

Because women are still a minority of applicants in some areas of work, companies can face staffing and skills shortages. Some organisations reported that they had difficulties in attracting females at all levels, including junior staff and female graduate entrants.

### Where is the best place to advertise posts to ensure a diverse pool of applicants?

Some recruitment practices can restrict women's prospects. For example, advertising in places that are only likely to be seen by a narrow group of people will obviously make it harder to attract a wide pool of applicants. Advertising in a part of a newspaper which is traditionally read largely by men or largely by women (e.g. next to the women's page) may deter one sex or the other from applying even if they do read the advert. If you have always advertised some types of jobs in particular places, you might want to think about different places next time round.

Companies can find that broadening the range of advertising and recruitment strategies is simple and often very effective.

### Are any of the job requirements likely to prevent women from applying?

Similarly, if you have used the same job description for a particular job repeatedly, or tend to use the same phrases and criteria, it might be worth thinking about how this might deter some people from applying to work for you. In particular, job criteria might highlight certain skills or attributes that are no longer needed for the post and might put off women from applying.

### Are selection procedures being applied uniformly across the organisation?

Having widened the range of people who are applying for your jobs, you need to make sure that the selection processes you use are not creating barriers for some groups and not others. An objective, competency-based selection procedure can prevent this happening. It is obviously important that once in place, such a procedure is applied consistently across the organisation.

### Are selection processes fair and open? Actions to consider

#### Overcoming stereotypes

For companies operating in areas traditionally seen as 'male', such as manufacturing and engineering, one of the main problems for employers is overcoming stereotypes about the industry held by potential employees. Some companies find that engaging with local schoolchildren and university students can help to overcome this barrier.

#### Selection and promotion processes

Selection and promotion processes can be biased, perhaps for historical reasons which in the past have meant that certain 'male' characteristics are more valued than what might be seen as 'female' characteristics. Companies can review their selection procedures to make sure there are no unfair barriers. Training for those involved in selection to raise awareness of diversity issues can be an important way of overcoming these barriers.

#### Interview panels

Ensuring that selection and promotion panels have both male and female representatives is a crucial step to promoting women. Also, the style of interviewing can have an impact on success rates of women. Again, training for interviewers can be very important.

### Case studies

#### Ford (UK)

##### Identifying the issues

Ford conducted a comprehensive review of its selection processes. For each position (e.g. team leaders or foremen) the company looked at how employees were recruited, and examined the extent to which these procedures were consistent across the organisation.

##### Planning and implementing action

Ford then set up a working group drawn from across all the different plants and HR managers and line managers. The working group was asked to come up with a consensus of what should happen in recruitment.

##### Activity

Using the guidance from the working group, the company designed assessment centres which would be run nationally. Assessments are conducted by people who are independent of the recruiting plant, to improve the impartiality of the recruitment process.

Ford recognised that there is a wider issue involved in encouraging women to enter engineering. The problem starts early on, when choices about education are made.

*We are recruiting 20% women engineers but [the UK is] only educating 10 or 11% of women engineers, so we are trying to lead change in society as well, we are trying to say "think about engineering".*

Ford representatives work with universities to attract a diverse group of applicants. They targeted universities in the 'top sixty' in terms of results, and in particular looked at universities in terms of their student's gender and ethnicity. Ford has also targeted The Black MBA programme and the African and Caribbean Finance Forum careers fairs. Overall, its outreach work in graduate recruitment resulted in nearly 10,000 applications in 2001. Almost 40% of these applicants were black and Asian students, and nearly 50% were women.

*The diversity recruitment officer takes responsibility for much of this work, it's their responsibility to work with the Ford recruitment team in planning these actions. Other activities include a 'girl's day' to encourage schoolgirls to consider jobs in manufacturing and engineering, a day's event at one of our engineering centres, hosted by a TV celebrity, for women engineering undergraduates.*



### Dublin City Council (IRE)

#### Identifying the issues

It was felt by Dublin City Council that interview boards in the past may not have been very receptive to advancing women, because they were all-male boards in general. A female on the board would provide balance and would be seen as saying that you are open and receptive to having women in these positions and promoting them.

### Scottish Court Service (UK)

#### Activity

Training on recruitment may be presented as part of general management training, rather than training for selectors as such. The Scottish Court Service incorporates selection training into its programme for all new managers.

In addition to a formal two-day training programme for selection board members the Scottish Court Service operates a mock board prior to every selection board. This not only allows specific issues to be addressed prior to the interviewing but, together with the impact of the training, appears to have led to significant improvements in board practice:

*'Before we run selection boards we run a mock board to allow members to work together and identify any issues so that they can be ironed out or dealt with before convening for the first applicant. At mock boards about five or six years ago, [it was often the case that they] would ask questions specifically of women that they wouldn't have asked of a man. But that doesn't happen so much now, we cover it quite extensively in our formal, two-day programme that new managers have to go through.'*



### Halifax/HBOS (UK)

#### Identifying the issues

As part of its Fair's Fair programme, Halifax developed a range of diverse images in an attempt to attract people from different groups. These have been successful in attracting a diverse group of applicants.

#### Activity

One successful example was a poster that featured an Asian woman who worked at their Southall branch. This appears to have not just attracted a diverse pool of applicants to the company but a diverse customer base as well.

Meanwhile, at a "glass ceiling" forum run by executive women to explore barriers to progression at the Halifax, a feeling emerged that informal selection processes were influencing some senior-level appointments. Focus group feedback uncovered a strong belief that women were overlooked for promotion in favour of men, including a perception that men were more likely to appoint other men to senior positions. The Halifax reviewed and changed its executive recruitment process. The new procedure was more formal and structured, with selection designed to be more objective.

### Leeds Metropolitan University (UK)

#### Identifying the issues

To address the problem of women not giving a full account of their skills and experience, Leeds Metropolitan University started to include in their application pack guidance on how to address the requirements of the person specification, when completing the application form. This was seen as an area where people - but particularly women - let themselves down in applications. In their experience, women often undersell themselves.

#### Activity

The university does not allow any individual to participate in a recruitment panel unless they have participated in a two day training scheme, and they may not chair a recruitment panel if they were trained more than three years previously.

## BT (UK)

### Identifying the issues

BT started to advertise job vacancies in women's magazines. To maximise their chances of gaining applications from women they give details of their childcare and carers strategies as well as information on their maternity and adoptive leave provision.

BT is aware that girls do not find the communications industry attractive. The trade union representative confirmed that getting girls interested in this area was a particular problem:

*For the modern apprentice scheme they are continually trying to get more women into the technical side but girls aren't interested. It is seen as being a very male dominated area. I think there are only about 3% [female] recruits. But we have been looking at ways to improve this but the difficulties are related to the wider societal influences.*

### Activity

The company decided that it had to start very early with marketing to girls, and also to influence girls to take technical qualifications. It runs an Oxford Access summer science school to try to get girls interested in subjects in BT's area. The aim is to try to widen the 'talent pool' from which BT could select potential employees.

BT also participates annually in the 'Take your daughter to work' day. The company has also worked with careers services and with special interest groups such as Women in Engineering and Women in Engineering and Science, to encourage girls and to provide positive role models for them.

In addition to improving the image held by schoolchildren of the technology sector, BT was also keen to encourage the recruitment of female graduates. They reviewed their qualification requirements for employee categories such as graduate entrants, and examined whether there really was a need for technical qualifications or for degrees in technical areas. The company analysed the skills and abilities they were looking for, and wherever it was able, it broadened the qualification requirements that were proving a barrier to the recruitment of women.

## Transco (UK)

### Identifying the issues

Transco had started to look at the ethnic composition of its workforce as part of its equality programme, some time after it started its work on gender. The staff diversity profile is improving: the proportion of ethnic minorities in the workforce stands at 3.4% (up from 2.6% in 1997). However, this overall figure includes industrial staff, and there has been no movement in and out of this grade over the six years since the company's current equality programme commenced. If industrial staff are excluded then the figure is 5.4% (up from 4.2% in 1997). For clerical and administrative staff, which is the main entry point for recruits to the company, the current proportion of employees from ethnic minorities stands at 7.4% (up from 5% in 1997), which is broadly in line with the ethnic minority figure for the population as a whole.

### Activity

The company has been working towards becoming more diversity-aware. One area in which this has been particularly effective is the graduate recruitment and selection process. The company believes that the changes made as a result of the review have proved successful in bringing fresh talent into the business from a very diverse range of people – ethnically diverse and well-balanced between men and women. In 2002 their graduate intake had included 15% drawn from ethnic minority backgrounds and 30% of graduate recruits were female. The company is now working on encouraging more disabled graduates to come through the programme.

## King's College Hospital (UK)

### Identifying the issues

King's College Hospital had been carrying out research looking at the proportions (race/gender) from different groups applying for jobs, the proportions that are shortlisted, and the profile of those who are finally selected. Generally speaking, their applicant pools and shortlists broadly reflect the proportions seen in the local community, but this is not the case with the final appointees. The hospital was investigating the reasons behind the final selection decision at the time of the research.

This research was part of an Equalities Action Plan recently introduced to address such issues. The Plan sets a target date for establishing the baseline position of the current workforce by ethnicity, gender, disability and part-time/full-time status by March 2003.


 training

**Checklist**

- Is training arranged so that everyone it is intended for can actually participate?
- When organising training, has everyone who is likely to benefit from the training been invited to attend?
- Improving access to training - actions to consider

Recent figures show that women now receive about the same amount of training as men. However, part-time workers are much less likely to be involved in any work-related training. Women who undertake vocational education and training tend to do so in a very limited range of subject areas.

**Is training arranged so that everyone for whom it is intended for can actually participate?**

Women can find themselves excluded from training when it is planned with full-time staff in mind. Even if part-time employees are willing to attend training in their own time, lack of available childcare may be a barrier.

**When organising training, has everyone who is likely to benefit from the training been invited to attend?**

Many organisations find that women can remain in lower skilled jobs with little hope of progression. This can represent a waste of human capital, with both employees and employers not benefiting from the full potential of the employee, and it can lead to high turnover rates. Deciding in advance who is likely to progress through the company, and who is not, can mean that not everyone who might actually benefit from training and development is considered for it. This can be costly for the company.

**Improving access to training - actions to consider**
**Timing of training**

Provision of training opportunities can only be of use if individuals are able to attend the events. Employers can take positive steps to ensure that women, and in particular part-timers, are helped to attend training, for example by considering the needs of part-time workers when planning training.

**Childcare provision**

Lack of childcare can seriously restrict women's ability to attend training. This is particularly the case for part-time employees who have to attend training outside their normal working hours. Provision of childcare for those attending training can help resolve such difficulties.

## Case studies

### Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DEN)

#### Identifying the issues

Some organisations have developed training aimed specifically at women. The Danish Broadcasting Corporation has tried an innovative approach.

#### Activity

Between 1997 and 1999 the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR) ran a project on women and new technology (KNYT), funded by the EU programme ATTAK. This was part of a wider initiative to introduce new technology into the corporation. The KNYT project resulted in a group of female technicians not just becoming familiar with the new technology, but mastering it to the extent that they could then teach it. The professional development in the project led to the acquisition of teaching skills, project-work and project-leadership experience as well as technical qualifications.

In the process of creating the training courses the women gained professional skills, self-confidence, assertiveness and decision-making skills. This led to a number of them being offered promotion to new positions, such as project-leader, web-editor, education unit manager, system-unit manager and head of technology section.

This opened up new job possibilities and helped advance this group of women within the organisation. Recognition of the women's achievement by managers within the corporation also led to the teaching ideas generated by the project being used more widely in the teaching of technological topics within DR.

The training course made the computer program attractive to other women within the corporation, helping to make other female employees view the new technology more favourably and helping to overcome the barriers that prevented women from using it. This is a key issue, given that the technical nature of broadcasting is changing radically, rendering many former job positions obsolete and making the acquisition of new skills central to job retention. For women to remain working in this area it is vital that they are encouraged to update their skills.

### Women Workers' Union, Denmark (DEN)

#### Activity

Between 1999 and 2001 the Women Workers' Union (KAD) organised an educational and job creation programme aimed at integrating unemployed ethnic minority women. Again this was funded under the EU ATTAK programme. The educational part involved language courses, cultural skills-courses, personal development courses and courses upgrading the women's skills to equip them for selected workplaces. These workplaces took in the women for a four week work experience placement followed by eleven weeks of training (financed by the state) and then employed them for a minimum of three months.

A contact person was allocated to facilitate the newcomer's transition to work. The project entailed close co-operation between KAD, the selected companies and educational institutions (adult education institutes, language schools and training opportunity schemes). The project encompassed six independent courses in three municipalities. Fifty ethnic minority women participated in the course, of whom thirty were in employment at the time of this research.

### MTM (UK)

#### Planning and implementing action

One of the smaller employers in the case studies, MTM, makes every effort to make training available equally to full- and part-time staff. They try to organise training around the hours that the part-time staff are working. While this is not aimed specifically at women, since women constitute the majority of their part-time employees, it tends particularly to benefit them.

*We think people should be promoted on their ability and their positive attitudes towards work, but we don't want to disbar anybody because they are part-time or whatever. It was a case of understanding people had commitments outside work, and us saying that we want people to advance and take up opportunities for training and development, and if we want them to do that, then we have to do that at a time that they could accommodate.*

The company encourages people to take the European Computer Driving Course that covers basic computer skills including word processing, spreadsheets and databases. Everyone in the company has been encouraged to take the course, and the training centre is open all day and is open late one evening a week as well. The company allows employees a certain number of hours leave a week to take the course. Seven out of eight of the people attending this course are women.

*One employee has done the course and has taken over the team leadership role down in the inspection. She is now doing all the calibration records and spreadsheets because of the skills she has learned. But more than anything it has boosted her confidence no end. And in general, the course has encouraged people to go on and get into the learning culture.*

## The Scottish Court Service (UK)

### Identifying the issues

The Scottish Court Service stated that:

*We wanted to make our organisation more attractive to people coming in. Over the past few years, we've had a bigger recruitment problem and it's because we're centrally located and competing with a lot of other businesses. We needed to make sure our organisation was developing so that we could attract quality recruits.*

*We wanted our managers to be aware and staff to be aware of equal opportunities because we wanted to get more from our workforce in terms of value. We didn't want to lose people and we wanted to be more flexible to ensure employees were more loyal and more committed to the organisation.*

### Activity

#### Developing and cascading a training course

The respondent added:

*So there was an information pack that everyone received, training materials and a video were produced for managers and senior managers. The senior managers then cascaded the training to the managers, and then the managers cascaded it, and so in a very short period of time everyone got the message as soon as possible. There was a half-day training session for everyone.*

*It was interesting, because you heard quite a few people say things like "Oh I never knew that" or "that's really interesting" "oh, so I can manage to get that". Things like part timers going on training courses - they didn't know that they could get their childcare paid for. That was the message we were trying to get across - fairness to everybody.*

*One of the extracts from the video is someone going to their line manager and requesting development and the line manager turns around and says, "Och, you're fine, you're just a part-timer, don't worry about it". And that began to challenge things. Our message to our managers was: "don't write off your part-timers and jobsharers, you'll get a lot more value out of people if you manage them in a better way and provide them with opportunities.*

The Scottish Court Service also tried to make training accessible for part-time workers, who are predominantly female, by trying to arrange training at times which are convenient for them. Where this is not possible, the employer covers any additional child care costs:

*We don't run women-only courses, but if women are working part-time and they elect to go on a course, then we will aim to organise the course around the days that the part-time employees work. But that may not always be possible, particularly if you've got two or three job share workers wanting to attend. So we pay them for the day that they come in for the training at the normal rate, and if they incur extra childcare costs, then we'll pay for that as well.*

To help with the publicity effort to promote training opportunities for part-timers the Scottish Court Service introduced a 'Fair Treatment' policy that was rolled out using training sessions for all employees.

A problem can arise when services are under pressure. Operational pressures may mean that women find themselves more likely to be asked to withdraw from training opportunities. The Scottish Court Service trade union representative observed:

*I used to do the statistics for the centralised training services, and we used to collect statistics on the number of people who cancelled courses. And [we found that] a higher proportion of women were not attending courses because of operational difficulties. So we had a talk with local managers and advised them that if people were cancelling courses or were not able to attend, then there had to be an extremely good reason for it.*

# the glass ceiling



## Checklist

- Does promotion in your organisation depend on access to informal networks?
- Are women represented in all areas of your business, and at all levels? In proportion to their overall numbers?
- Do current training and development opportunities for managerial and professional staff need to be extended or revised to help women progress?
- Is flexible working available to your employees at all levels? If so, is it seen as available (and appropriate) for all employees?
- Is career advice or guidance available to your employees?
- Actions to consider

In the UK, women constitute just 30% of managers, 25% of executives and 10% of company directors (EOC, 2002). For Ireland, the figures are similar: women constitute 30% of middle management, 20% of senior managers and less than a tenth (8%) of Chief Executives (IBEC, 2002). In Denmark, women make up just 23% of the occupational group 'legislators, senior officials and managers' (ILO, 2000).

Despite increasing levels of labour market participation, women remain under-represented at senior levels in organisations, including those in which they are the majority of the workforce or the majority of customers. This phenomenon has been called 'the glass ceiling' and has been described by the Glass Ceiling Commission in the USA as:

*...invisible, artificial barriers that prevent qualified individuals from advancing within their organisation and reaching full potential. The term originally described the point beyond which women managers and executives, particularly white women, were not promoted. Today it is evident that ceilings and walls exist throughout most workplaces for minorities and women. These barriers result from institutional and psychological practices, and limit the advancement and mobility opportunities of men and women of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.*

## Does promotion in your organisation depend on access to informal networks?

In the same way as criteria for selection need to be objective and transparent, it is important that selection for promotion is open and criteria for promotion are unbiased in relation to gender and other aspects of diversity.

### **Are women represented in all areas of your business, and at all levels? In proportion to their overall numbers?**

It is important to determine whether, and if so why, women are under-represented in particular parts of your business. Examining rates of application for promotion, for example, is one simple indicator which might highlight an area for action. Particularly in male-dominated organisations, ensuring women have access to networks of support is another issue to think about.

### **Do current training and development opportunities for managerial and professional staff need to be extended or revised to help women progress?**

As highlighted in the previous chapter, ensuring that women have access to training offered is very important in terms of their progression. Training provision should take account of women's working patterns and caring commitments to be most effective.

### **Is flexible working available to your employees at all levels? If so, is it seen as available (and appropriate) for all employees?**

Flexible working can be an important tool in retaining valuable members of your organisation. However, it is often the case that part-time working, for example, is only open to those working in less senior positions. It may be that some flexible working options are not appropriate for all posts in your organisation, but it is worth thinking about which ones are appropriate for where.

### **Is career advice or guidance available to your employees?**

Work based training has increased for women over recent years. However women are more likely to receive training in 'soft' skills than men. Employers need to ensure that career advice and guidance are available and accessible to all employees, especially to part-time staff who are predominantly women.

However, it is important when addressing such issues to make sure that any action is not seen as giving women unfair advantage in the company: the issues raised in this chapter are about creating a level playing field for both men and women, not providing preferential treatment for one at the expense of the other.

### **Mentoring**

Mentoring can be an important way of supporting women's progress through a company. When implementing mentoring schemes, you should consider a number of key issues:

- How should the organisation select and match mentors and mentees?
- Should these be voluntary or nominated roles?
- How long should mentoring relationships last?
- How close should the normal working relationship be between mentor and mentee for the relationship to be effective?
- Should mentors always be women or should men also be invited to mentor women?
- What are the training requirements?

### **Job shadowing**

Job shadowing with senior managers is also a useful way of introducing women to more senior roles.

### **Women's networks**

Women's networks can be useful to support either mentoring or other development initiatives. They are seldom used on their own as a development tool, but can play an important role in supporting other approaches.

### **Promotion of flexible working for senior women**

Flexible working is a key factor in enabling all parents, but in particular women to balance work and family responsibilities, although the benefits of flexible working can go much wider than in relation to family commitments.

Flexible working is often viewed as a practice that largely benefits women at lower levels in the organisational hierarchy. However, employers are starting to recognise that these are issues for women in managerial and professional positions as well. Opening up flexible working opportunities can be a real help in retaining valued, highly skilled employees, as well as providing opportunities for career advancement that might not otherwise be there.

### **Women-only development and training programmes**

While there is no reason to believe that women cannot benefit from existing management development programmes, women-only programmes can provide particular support for learning new skills. Many organisations offer management development programmes designed and run specifically for women. However, it is important to present such programmes in terms of creating a level playing field rather than giving women preferential treatment.

### **Targets for training**

Setting targets for training, in the form of expected numbers or proportions of women, can help organisations see the extent to which they are succeeding in their aims.

### **Career advice**

Sometimes, women need advice on planning and managing their careers, particularly if they have had breaks out of paid employment. Some organisations arrange for their employees to have access to career advice or help with setting career objectives.

## Case studies

### Transco (UK)

#### Identifying the issues

Transco had found that the numbers of women fell significantly at the grade below recognised manager level.

#### Planning and implementing action

In 1997 it established the Transco women's mentoring programme to assist women progress to this level.

Transco uses the following definition of mentoring:

*a non-judgmental relationship, outside the normal manager/subordinate relationship, where a more skilled or experienced person (the mentor) can help another (the mentee) to enhance their learning and development.*

#### Activity

The programme aimed to facilitate the sharing of skills and experiences of Transco managers and encourage women to set realistic career goals. Both men and women were trained to become mentors.

As part of the initial pilot, senior line managers were asked to nominate suitable women as potential mentees. Nominees were then asked to confirm their interest, by writing to the programme manager saying why they thought they would benefit from a mentoring relationship. The programme managers then used this information to choose participants for the pilot.

Selected women managers were also contacted and asked if they were interested in becoming mentors for the pilot. A one-day training workshop was run for mentees and a two-day session for mentors, using external trainers.

The aim was to establish a mentoring relationship that was both supportive of personal development but also offered a challenge to the mentee. The mentoring relationship was developed around objectives defined by the mentee. Mentees were expected to manage the mentoring relationship and their individual objectives, while mentors were expected to provide support, encouragement and challenges, and to help their mentees increase their awareness of their ability and potential.

Specific elements of the programme include that:

- It is voluntary for both mentors and mentees;
- Mentors and mentees should, wherever possible, be logistically near to each other;
- Mentees are given mentors who are not connected in a managing relationship (usually outside department);
- The relationship between mentor and mentee is confidential;
- It has a formal duration of 12 months;
- Ongoing informal relationships can continue beyond formal programme end-date if both parties agree;
- Meetings take place around once every six weeks during the programme;

- There is an expectation that mentees will manage their objectives and meetings and the mentor will facilitate this;
- There is an invitation to mentors and mentees to contribute personal information to help facilitate the matching process;
- It is accepted that the role of the line manager is to manage the development of individuals and the achievement of objectives and that this role is not replaced by the mentoring relationship but is endorsed and supported by it.

The pilot mentoring scheme has been widely viewed as a success. While it is impossible to say that subsequent promotions are solely as a result of that programme, it seems to have played an important role in equipping women to apply for, and obtain, promotion. In senior management grades, the proportion of females has increased threefold over the last six years, standing at 9.1% in 2002, up from 3% in 1997. Rises have also been recorded for managerial/professional groups (16.3% in 2002, up from 11.4% in 1997); and for supervisory and junior professional grades (standing at 15.9% in 2002, up from 12.3% in 1997).

### TDC (DEN)

#### Identifying the issues

The Danish company TDC set up a pilot mentoring arrangement in March 2001. The scheme involved 16 mentee/mentor relationships aimed at developing more female top executives and managers.

The emphasis was on the development of mentees' personal leadership abilities, personal development and clarification of career intentions. The company also sought to find out what would:

- motivate more women to choose a career in leadership;
- help in developing more women to act as role models for other women in the organisation; and
- encourage male leaders to hire more women.

#### Activity

Only women who had been pre-screened as potential high achieving managers, and had already received intensive management training, were selected for the pilot mentoring scheme:

- All mentors were top executives and were invited to participate by the administrative director;
- A steering committee consisting of the Director of Human Resources and other high level HR and line managers was set up;
- The steering committee and the Human Resources consultant matched the mentoring relationships after conducting interviews with the mentees regarding their developmental needs and preferences in relation to a potential mentor, and with the mentors about their special interests and mentoring strengths;
- Mentoring guidelines that specified the involved parties' responsibility were distributed. Mentees were given responsibility for achieving their identified personal objectives;
- Mentors received personal briefings on what was expected of them;
- A start-up seminar was held for mentees at which the aims, methods and expectations were specified;
- Mentees attended seminars every three months aimed at facilitating the sharing of experiences, methods and outcomes;
- A network between mentees was developed.

The mentoring relations ranged from one-off meetings through to more frequent meetings focusing on discussion and advice regarding current difficulties or the pursuit of career opportunities.

Initial evaluations of the TDC mentoring project indicate that the mentees were very satisfied with the project.

The mentees have decided to become mentors to less experienced female colleagues at lower management levels. TDC has therefore decided to continue the programme and one of the component companies has started a parallel mentoring project.

The most important benefits gained by the mentees were reported to be that they gained access to a network, visibility in the organisation, and an increased understanding of the organisational culture at the top level. The other benefits included that mentees were:

- supported in aiming for posts at the top levels and in their handling of leadership issues;
- had someone experienced with whom to discuss management;
- avoided mistakes in career choices.

The success of the project appears to be attributable to several key factors: it was defined in relation to the company's vision and HR policy; it was supported by top management in a very visible way; and the mentees have taken full responsibility for their own development.

The project has given women practical help in advancing their careers and access to the informal mentoring processes, which, while important for progression in many organisations, women often find themselves excluded from. With the mentees starting their own mentoring initiatives this barrier has started to be broken down. The project also led to top executives becoming more aware of women as potential leaders.

## City of Wakefield MDC (UK)

### Identifying the issues

At City of Wakefield MDC, the use of mentoring was viewed as an important component of their 'Stepping Up' programme.

### Activity

Some 80 women have embarked upon mentoring arrangements since the programme was launched in 1999. In the first stage, all of the mentees were women from posts at senior officer grade and above. Mentors were men and women from higher graded posts.

In 2001, to mark International Women's Day, fifteen Stepping Up representatives shadowed Chief Officers and second-tier managers. This initial trial was considered to be a very successful approach to development, with both parties learning from the exchange. It is intended that job-shadowing will be made available on a more widespread basis in the future.

Also as part of the Stepping Up programme, the council set up departmental women's networks. These provided focused, localised support and development to women, which was particularly helpful in light of the large workforce size and geographical scale of the organisation. Network activities included sessions on the impact on pensions of maternity leave or reduced hours; managing stress; and a session when women

met for a day to talk through their concerns about management styles with a facilitator, who then relayed those concerns to the departments. A networking directory listing 80 women willing to support others in the organisation was also created.

The council has also set targets for female participation in its in-house training schemes. For example, the in-house postgraduate diploma in management has a target of 40% minimum female participation. For two out of the three six-monthly delegate intakes since September 2001 this target has been exceeded, and over the 18 months from September 2001 to May 2002 the total proportion of female delegates was 44%.

'Women only' corporate training days have been offered, as part of the 'Stepping Up' initiative. The training days include topics such as confidence, communication, management, leadership, effective networking and stress management development plan. Women from a range of grades attend, and the programme is offered at two levels: non-management breaking into management and management breaking into senior management (or senior to senior executive).

## Citigroup (UK)

Citigroup introduced a mentoring scheme as part of their 'CitiDifference' programme. Fifty-five women entered the pilot scheme, which was anticipated to last for one year. Women who were seen as being at key career stages, or were seen as having high potential (or both) were selected by business heads. The scheme gave the women the opportunity to have a one-to-one discussion with the most senior person in their area, to give them guidance and support. The company reports that few, if any, of the women taking part in the mentoring scheme have left, and they take this as a very positive sign.

As part of the CitiDifference project at Citigroup, a women's network – CitiWomen – has been established to focus on gender initiatives. This comprises a Steering Group of senior women, plus a number of other women volunteers organised into task-teams, focused on achieving goals in the following areas: recruitment, retention and pipeline, career development and sponsorship, and networking and learning.

In addition, the Diversity function has launched a series of lunchtime meetings with speakers on topics such as managing your career, time management, management skills, influencing and negotiating. These also provided discussion and networking opportunities for women from across the organisation.

As another element of the CitiDifference initiative, the Sponsorship and Career Development Team was set the objective of selecting five senior women in each business area, and creating career development objectives for these women within their division.

**Citigroup Ireland** also introduced a mentoring scheme for senior women. The women were identified and then aligned with a senior mentor. The mentors were generally male and very successful leaders within the organisation who have successfully managed and navigated their own careers. The intention was to put together a framework of individuals to whom women could go, to gain advice and help in navigating the complexities of the organisation. The initiative was introduced by the Women's Council in the UK and there was also a high degree of support from within the organisation as well. Despite this level of support however, the initiative has not been as well maintained. One key difficulty was that, in some cases, the mentoring pairs were not located in the same country.


 the gender pay gap
**Checklist**

- Are you confident you are paying men and women equally for the same, or equivalent jobs?
- Have you considered carrying out a pay review or audit?

The gender pay gap remains a problem across Europe. In Great Britain, women typically earn around 19% less per hour than men; in Denmark, men earn around 17% more than women, and figures for Ireland indicate a gap of 15 - 25% between women and men's pay depending on sector of employment. A gender pay gap exists even where women and men work in the same occupation.

The substantial gap between the average earnings of men and women may to some extent be explained by gender segregation in employment - the fact that women and men tend to be employed in different jobs. But even where men and women are employed in the same jobs, or jobs of equivalent skill or responsibility, there are cases where, perhaps for historical reasons, men are paid more than women by the same employer.

**Are you confident you are paying men and women equally for the same, or equivalent jobs?**

The substantial gap between the average earnings of men and women may to some extent be explained by gender segregation in employment - the fact that women and men tend to be employed in different jobs. But even where men and women are employed in the same jobs, or jobs of equivalent skill or responsibility, there are cases where, perhaps for historical reasons, men are paid more than women by the same employer.

**Have you considered carrying out a pay review or audit?**

Case study employers believed that social justice demanded they took action to reduce the pay gap for their employees.

You might therefore want to undertake a pay audit within your organisation. This would give you the information you need to make sure you are complying with your national legislation, and can help to challenge outdated attitudes to how different jobs are valued by managers.

In the UK, many employers have started to investigate pay gaps in their companies, and are taking steps to achieve more equitable pay. There are several tools, including one developed by the EOC, to help business conduct pay audits. Guidance is available from the EOC ([www.eoc.org.uk](http://www.eoc.org.uk)).

Several of the case study employers had started to investigate pay gaps in their organisations, and had taken steps to achieve more equitable pay arrangements.

## Case studies

### Ford (UK)

#### Activity

The Director of Diversity at Ford had been a member of the Equal Pay Task Force that produced the 'Just Pay' report on the gender pay gap. Ford had already undertaken a pay audit.

*We did an audit last year, when 'Just Pay' came out. We looked at [the pay of] Level 6 managers over the last ten years and there was no difference between men and women. We looked at people who started ten years ago, eight years ago, six years ago, and so on, and there was no difference at all. But we are going to do a more in-depth audit.*

### Halifax (UK)

#### Activity

Halifax was undertaking pay audits at the time of the research. They were following EOC guidance in doing so and were analysing the data and looking at the variations at different levels. The data did indicate some gender variances within the workforce. The organisation is recommending that each division looks at the causes of any discrepancies on a local basis and then investigates local solutions. This work was going ahead at the time the case study was conducted.

### Scottish Court Service (UK)

#### Activity

Audits can help reassure organisations that they are treating female and male employees equitably. The Scottish Court Service had carried out an equal pay audit and believed that there were no major issues regarding equal pay.

*We're fairly certain our pay is equal. The organisation did an informal pay audit some time ago, but we're fairly certain that we're ok. Previously civil servants' pay was determined by Treasury and Cabinet Office and everyone was paid the same amount. Now, government agencies and departments have the authority to determine their own pay structure and their own grading structure and levels of pay - but it has to be performance-related.*

The trade union representative appeared to be happy with the changes to practice, although there had been problems in the past:

*Men are paid the same as women. But that wasn't always the case. A number of years back the appraisal system was split into two sections, one was 'performance' and the other was 'suitability for promotion'. Traditionally, women would always rank higher in terms of performance, but lower in terms of promotion. Then when they introduced performance-related pay, they found that the men were scoring better and still getting promotion. Women were dipping in the performance section of the appraisal and so not getting pay rises. The union was always opposed to it, but it's only in the last few years that we've been able to change things.*

### Transco (UK)

#### Activity

Transco was another company that in recent years had started to conduct its own pay audits. The gender pay gap is small compared to the national average. In general, pay audits are conducted on a two-yearly basis. Transco is taking steps to ensure that no inequities or imbalances are built into the structure of the pay framework. The company prides itself on having been quite proactive on this issue. The company also said that it had been looking at the new tool produced by the EOC to deal with pay inequality, although it was not one of the group of employers that was involved in piloting this.

The union representative believed that generally there was reasonable pay equity in the company and that any imbalance between women's and men's earnings would be mainly as a result of the differences in seniority and career progression between men and women (i.e. more men are in senior jobs and hence have higher earnings).

### BT (UK)

#### Identifying the issues

An in-depth example of the complexities of resolving the gender pay gap comes from BT. The company has conducted extensive analyses to attempt to reduce the pay gap. While the company believes that it has been largely successful in applying equitable pay across staff groupings, there remains a historical legacy of gender-segregated employment patterns that continues to impact on attempts to rectify pay discrepancies.

The pay of men and women in BT is now almost equal, according to BT. There is just a 5% pay gap remaining across the company.

## Activity

At pay review time BT writes to managers to remind them about equal gender pay:

*Equal pay is a very complex thing and so we look at it in work family groups. We then do a comparison on the basis of experience, skills and performance. But we also look at market value, so some jobs we would grade at the same grade, say an MPG (management and professional) grade but they would actually have very different market values. So that if you compare an HR professional, and a software engineer, a software engineer is much more highly valued in the external market than an HR professional, much as it pains me to say. So there are some market reasons why people are on different levels. We very much look at same type of work, rather than a particular grading.*

*We are in our fourth year of our pay review. We did a huge amount of work, for example we recognised that if you look back at BT's legacy as an engineering company most men had come from the engineering background which traditionally had a high market value. It was thought to be very technical and therefore quite well paid. Women tended to come from the operator or clerical background, which had a lower market value and tended to be lower paid, not low paid, but lower. And so when they went forward into the management grade, because of the way it was structured it meant you got a percentage rise, so actually we were maintaining that gap.*

However, even where such rigorous approaches are made, there can still be problems arising from structural imbalances and gender segregation. The trade union representative observed that, even where thorough reviews of this nature are conducted, job segregation and the legacy of individuals' employment history can continue to impact and make it difficult to resolve gender pay gaps:

*Job segregation is clearly an issue. Women constitute around 20% of employees in the two main managerial and professional grades. MPG 2 includes first line managers, call centre managers (who are predominantly women), software engineers, HR, marketing, network management (male), field engineering (male), to finance (a bit more of a mix). If you look at the percentage distribution within the male/female salary range you would see a pattern where the bulk of men are towards the top end and the bulk of women are towards the bottom. This is because men who are promoted into these grades are usually promoted from 'male' areas of work, particularly technical specialisms, which are generally better paid.*

*The rules around the starting pay and promotion should have gone some way to improve things. [However] there is not enough visibility of the change having been made. We are about to enter into further discussions with BT on a review of the management and professional pay structures. Obviously a major concern for us is to get an equality-proofed structure which tackles the existing equal pay gap and also prevents it increasing in the future.*

## City of Wakefield MDC (UK)

### Identifying the issues

City of Wakefield MDC reported that, at the time of the research, gender pay equality was a major issue throughout all the nation's local authorities, including Wakefield. Moreover, a recent study encompassing several councils in the local region had found that all those taking part faced the same issues, including the concentration of women in the lowest pay grades.

The council reported that, although the authority had achieved above-average scores in several categories following the Opportunity Now benchmarking exercise for 2001, one area of concern identified had been that of ensuring equality in pay. 62% of all female employees received pay equivalent to, or less than, the Scale 3 grade rate compared with just 30% of men who received pay at or below this level.

Moreover, City of Wakefield MDC acknowledged that there was not one glass ceiling for women within local government, but two. Women who work part-time hit a glass ceiling (i.e. were unable to progress any further) at the Scale 4-6 grades. Women who work full-time hit a glass ceiling at the Principal Officer grades.

The council was hoping that the extra career development and other initiatives will help to resolve this problem by helping women to attain senior grades which in turn would be expected to have a 'knock-on' effect on pay.

balancing  
**work**  
and life



**Checklist**

- What are the issues your company might think about?
- What are the business benefits of flexible working?
- How do you communicate your flexible working policies to everyone within your organisation?
- How do you supervise employees working at home?
- Are you aware of the wide range of flexible working options available to employers?

Women and men with caring responsibilities can find it difficult to combine work with their other responsibilities. Employers who wish to retain women employees can adopt a range of strategies that will help parents combine employment with family obligations.

In 2001, 32.5% of part-time workers responding to the European Labour Force Survey said that their reason for working part-time was that they were looking after children or an incapacitated adult. However, in the UK, this figure is higher than the European average, with 46.8% of female part-time workers limiting their hours of work as a result of their caring responsibilities.

**What are the issues your company might think about?**

Terminology is one of the first hurdles to overcome in establishing what arrangements are wanted and/or in use. Employees may be unsure of the meaning of phrases such as 'work-life balance' and flexible working. A key issue is to make sure employees have a common understanding of the meaning of phrases used within your organisation. Clarification may also be needed in attempting to assess the extent of variable working and the need for any further initiatives. Another crucial issue is to make sure all employees know what options are available.

**What are the business benefits of flexible working?**

There is no set work life balance policy that will fit every business. These are some of the benefits experienced by employers:

- Improved productivity and performance;
- A recruitment tool to attract talent;
- Retention of employees;
- Employment of a more diverse workforce as a truer reflection of the customer base;
- Increased morale, commitment and loyalty;
- Improved employee flexibility: supporting innovation, creativity and your organisation's ability to deal with change.

Employers often find there is a business case for flexible working. However, it may be the case that some of your managers need convincing of the benefits of a flexible approach. Managers may also need re-assuring that, where there is a business case for not allowing flexible working, they are able to refuse it where necessary.

### How do you communicate your flexible working policies to everyone within your organisation?

One of the main barriers to uptake of flexible working is employees' lack of awareness of what is available. The case study organisations in this research had successfully promoted the availability and benefits of flexible working using workshops and in-house media such as magazines and posters.

Both managers and employees need to know how the flexible working scheme operates. If they do not, inconsistency in agreeing arrangements can occur and lead to resentment. Everyone should be consulted about new working arrangements and informed about how they will work in practice. When introducing work-life balance initiatives which are open to all employees, you should ensure that no one feels excluded from them in practice. If a scheme is not open to all employees, there should be objective reasons why this is the case.

You may need to consider whether extra communication will be required to meet changing working patterns. For example in a job share arrangement a period of overlap to allow an effective handover may be required. These practical procedures will need to be set up.

If it is essential that jobs are covered during the whole working day, working patterns such as job sharing or a shift system for part-time workers may offer the solution. One of the advantages of flexible working is that businesses can actually extend their working times and services.

### How do you supervise employees working at home?

In situations where employees work at home at all times a structured system for supervision needs to be agreed. Performance targets can be agreed and monitored. Communication is an essential element in this arrangement. In other instances people regularly attend the office with occasional working from home.

### Are you aware of the wide range of flexible working options available to employers?

Work-life balance is about adjusting working patterns. Regardless of age, race or gender, everyone can find a rhythm to help them combine work with their other responsibilities or aspirations.

Many employers now operate a wide range of flexible working or work-life balance options. Here is a selection of options which can be used in a wide variety of workplaces:

- **Staggered hours** is where employees within a workplace have different start, finish and break times. Employers may use staggered hours as a way of covering longer opening hours but it can also be a good opportunity to offer people more flexibility.
- **Compressed working hours** allows people to work their total number of agreed hours over a shorter number of working days. For many years the Health Service has operated a compressed working week offering staff the opportunity of condensing their 'at work' time while extending their 'off work' leisure hours.

- **Job sharing** involves two people carrying out the duties of a post that would normally be done by one person. Each person is employed part-time but together they cover a full-time post and divide the pay, holidays and other benefits. Some employers have seen the benefits of such a policy through improved skill retention of their employees and improved motivation and commitment to the company.
- **Part-time work.** There is no universal definition of part-time work. Government statistics define it as less than 30 hours per week, but in practice it means anything less than the normal full-time contract for a particular job in a particular organisation.
- **Flexible working hours** or flexitime schemes allow employees to choose, within set limits, the times they start and finish work. They also usually permit the carry-over of any excess or deficit in hours beyond an accounting period (usually one month), with the option of taking 'flexi leave'.
- **Shift working** allows employers to extend the use of plant or facilities in a factory or supermarket, as groups of workers or individuals work their hours on the same job one after another through a 24 hour period.
- **Shift swapping** means employees can negotiate working times to suit their needs and rearrange shifts amongst themselves or within teams.
- **Time off in lieu** is where employees agree with managers to take time off at a mutually convenient time to make up for extra hours worked.
- **Self rostering** has been introduced in some hospitals and other care services. The number of staff and the skill mix required during each working day are agreed and then individuals state the times they would like to work. Shift patterns are then compiled, matching as closely as possible the individual preferences of staff to the agreed staffing levels.
- **An annual hours** system organises working time on the basis of the number of hours to be worked over a year rather than a week - it is usually used to fit in with peaks and troughs of work.
- **Term time working** means a person can remain on a permanent contract, either on a full or part-time basis, but can have unpaid leave of absence during the school holidays.
- **Working at or from home** is possible in all kinds of ways - from people doing assembly work or sewing, or providing a personal service to paid consultants working with new technology. Teleworking, telecommuting, remote or homeworking are all arrangements where an employee spends some or all their time working from home. Many teleworkers have computer or telecommunication links with their office which facilitates communication between them and their manager and colleagues.
- **Breaks from work.** In addition to maternity, parental and paternity leave, some employers offer unpaid career or employment breaks and sabbaticals.
- **Flexible and cafeteria benefits.** A range of benefits for employees that help them balance work and the rest of their life. These include childcare information or vouchers, funding and/or time off for a course of learning, staff facilities (such as a gym), in-house medical or dental care. 'Cafeteria benefits' mean a person can pick and choose which aspects best suit their needs.

Many companies have successfully introduced flexible working practices and there are many good practice examples to learn from. Some of these can be found on the DTI Work Life Balance Website:

[www.DTI.gov.uk/work-lifebalance](http://www.DTI.gov.uk/work-lifebalance)

## Changes to legal framework in the UK -April 2003

The UK Government is introducing new employment legislation to help working parents. It wants work-life balance arrangements to become more readily available to parents of young and disabled children.

From April 2003, parents of children aged under 6 and disabled children aged under 18 will have the right to apply to work flexibly and their employers will have a duty to consider requests seriously. At the same time maternity entitlements will be improved and other new legislation will be introduced.

For more information on all these go to [www.dti.gov.uk/er](http://www.dti.gov.uk/er)

## Case studies

### Transco (UK)

#### Activity

Transco introduced a set of work-life balance policies around two years ago. The key policy is the flexible working policy: while at present more women than men have taken advantage of that policy, some men are also now using it. There has been some very positive publicity within the company to encourage men to take advantage of the provisions.

The company has found that women using the policy are tending to reduce their working hours slightly and this is predominantly for childcare reasons. However, flexible working does not necessarily entail reduced hours: A range of options is in use throughout the company:

*A whole variety of flexible hours arrangements is in operation, many of which go unrecorded. During summer 2001, some informal focus group work was undertaken looking at the issue of work-life balance, which found that many people do not understand what is meant if they are asked about work-life balance. However, once they were asked a question such as: "Tell me about your working arrangements and how flexible your boss is with you", it emerged that there is a considerable amount of informal flexible working going on that would not be recorded in company measures. Thus, if there were a change of contract such as a substantial change in hours, HR would need to get involved - but if a manager agrees that someone can come in half-an-hour earlier and leave half-an-hour earlier every day to collect children from school, the HR department would probably not know about the arrangement. So in a sense the central HR function has not got a full grip on what goes on, but it is quite happy that managers out in the field set up those sort of flexible working arrangements.*

To clarify the various options available to its employees Transco has produced a booklet on flexible working which also contains explanations of the flexible work patterns available.

Transco also has a range of provision for carers that exceeds what is required by law. The company gives a childcare payment to employees. It has also produced a booklet that gives information on statutory rights to parental leave and on the enhanced parental leave that is available to employees. At birth or adoption of a child, Transco employees are able to take enhanced parental leave of up to two years once they have been in continuous employment with the company for a year. This is available to both female and male employees. The company makes clear in its information booklet that employees returning to work will be offered an appropriate position at the same level as that held prior to the start of the break.

### Halifax/HBOS (UK)

#### Identifying the issues

As part of the Fair's Fair initiative at Halifax, focus groups discussed whether the flexible working portfolio and equal opportunity policies met women's needs for work-life balance. A major finding was that negative attitudes to flexible working for women at senior level were creating a barrier to women's progression within the company. There was a feeling that flexible hours could not apply to senior managers, whether male or female. Women felt that their childcaring responsibilities were ignored, and that women returning to work after maternity leave would therefore choose lower status jobs.

#### Activity

As a result of these findings, a range of flexible work practices was introduced and promoted through workshops and through the company's in-house magazine. A key aim was to encourage flexible working practices for women at senior levels. Cases of women job sharing at senior levels were featured in the magazine, highlighting the benefits to the company as well as to the job-sharing partners. As a result, managers and personnel became increasingly supportive in their responses to work-life balance issues. There has now been an increase in the numbers of senior and middle management women who work part-time or job share. Nine-day fortnights, four-day weeks, home working, variable working patterns and flexible work locations are all on offer.

The initial consultation also revealed that staff were unaware that the Halifax offered a childcare support line. As a result, this initiative was re-launched in 1998.

### City of Wakefield MDC (UK)

#### Identifying the issues

City of Wakefield MDC found that its work-life balance schemes were not being applied in the most effective way throughout the authority. People were not always aware of the flexible working arrangement or that they were available at all levels. There were also inconsistencies in the ways managers put the policies into practice. A working group of HR officers and Stepping Up representatives was therefore brought together to address these failings.

The aim was to achieve a better awareness and understanding of the policies - including the business case for having them - and to increase uptake. It was considered particularly important to stress that flexible working was available to all levels, to help women with childcare and other outside responsibilities to progress to higher-grade levels even if they require flexible working arrangements.

### Activity

In 2002 the council re-launched its work-life balance policy. All employees were issued with an information booklet written in 'plain English' outlining the policy, and a pack was distributed to managers that gave details of the schemes and the benefits they bring. The authority now has a comprehensive set of flexible working and work-life balance policies.

The re-launch was heralded with a major conference of some seventy managers to get them involved in the project. The conference included a focus on, and discussion of, the business case. The council has also recently learnt that they have been awarded funding from the DTI's Work-Life Balance Challenge Fund to allow them to employ consultants to help make the policy successful and sustainable.

## King's College Hospital (UK)

### Identifying the issues

The King's College Hospital flexible working scheme - 'KingsFlex' - came about because the hospital found itself with extensive staff shortages and skills gaps in occupations mainly performed by women. While the problem was to a large extent caused by shortages of some professional groups, e.g. nurses, nonetheless the existing working arrangements were thought to be exacerbating this situation. They found that women were saying they could not return to work after they had had children because they could not cope with the lack of flexibility.

### Activity

Following on from this, they introduced the KingsFlex scheme. Arrangements are organised at a local level and individuals typically make their working arrangements by talking to their manager. Managers are encouraged to facilitate flexible work arrangements wherever possible "We have a 'say yes where you can' culture".

#### The King'sFlex scheme consists of the following :

- Part time working
- Temporarily reduced working hours
- Job share
- Staggered working hours
- Annual hours
- Working from home
- Phased return-to-work (following extended absence)
- Career break
- Special and parental annual leave
- Personalised annual leave

While the scheme was not directly aimed at women, it probably benefited women more than men. There was some initial apprehension when the scheme was introduced - some managers were concerned that they would have no discretion regarding decisions about allowing various types of flexible working, but these fears were soon allayed.

The hospital feels the scheme has been a success and has been a key factor in reducing their turnover and vacancy rates. In the year following its introduction, staff turnover rates fell by 1.5% from 17% to 15.5%. Vacancies have reduced to 5% overall and to 5.5% in nursing and midwifery.

In 2000, the hospital won the Employer of the Year Award for a combination of its flexible working scheme and its provision for carers. This provision includes:

**Enhanced maternity leave scheme:** This provides up to eight weeks' leave at full pay, and ten weeks at half pay, with up to one year's leave in total. Two workplace nurseries are available, with a salary sacrifice scheme (approved by the Inland Revenue) so that parents can make payments for places in a tax-efficient way.

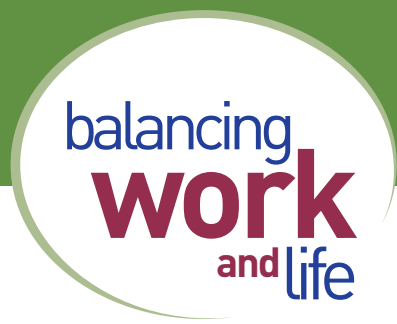
**Phased return-to work provision:** offers reduced hours of work on a temporary basis for up to three months before a full return to work, following extended absence such as maternity leave, career break or prolonged illness. Salary can be 'made up' using the remainder of the sickness entitlement or outstanding annual leave.

**Return to practice course:** For nurses or midwives returning after an extended break of five years, a free 'return to practice' course is available and the hospital will contribute up to £400 towards childcare while they complete it.

**Paternity leave:** five days' paternity leave is available to those with one year's continuous service. This is also granted for those who are the partner of a primary carer who is adopting or fostering a child.

**Special leave provision:** enables staff to take time off work for specific family, personal or domestic needs, subject to their meeting certain criteria. For example, all employees are eligible for up to five days' emergency carer leave each year.

**Temporarily reduced hours** are also available to enable individuals to deal with 'special circumstances'



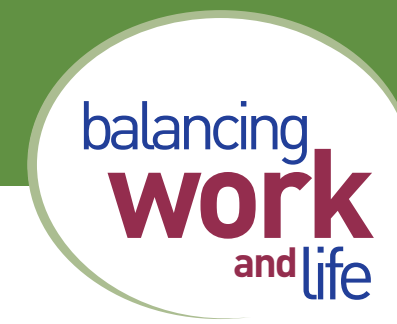
## MTM (UK) Activity

Being a small company does not need to be a barrier to flexible working. The two small case study organisations both had very open approaches to this issue. MTM have a workforce of 35 people who between them have 26 different working patterns! The company operates a full-time production week of 39 hours, but within that envelope they have a range of different working arrangements:

*We have all sorts of hours with different start and finishing times. We can accommodate almost anything, compressed working week, part-time, term-time week, variable part-time and term-time, homeworking, extended lunch breaks. We have part-timers doing between 8 and 32 hours a week.*

*We don't ask why people want to change their working hours. It can be for social or leisure issues, or care responsibilities. There are more female part-time workers (7) than male (1). But not all the women have care responsibilities, some just want more time for sports, or more time at home. And we have one dad whose wife is the main wage earner and he works part-time. He works on different rotas from one week to the next to fit in with his wife's hours.*

When women return from maternity leave we are very flexible in terms of what sort of hours they can return to. One person came back and did 30 hours a month, an average of 8 hours in 4 hour chunks each week.



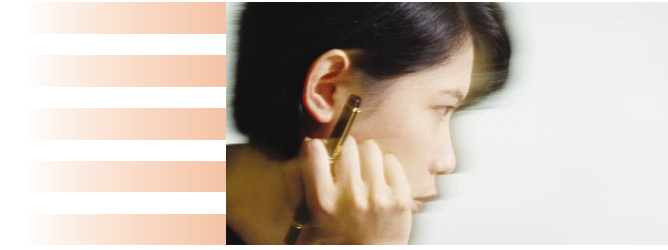
## Eircom (IRE)

### Activity

In Ireland, eircom's staff intranet includes a section on Diversity and family friendly policies, providing employees with advice on a broad range of issues such as elder care, breastfeeding, collecting children from school, disability, and more. The company's objective is to engender a feeling among staff that they are being dealt with holistically as parents and carers as well as employees.

eircom is also currently piloting a teleworking initiative called "ease to e working". The company had received Government funding to develop the idea and the intention was to use the scheme to increase working opportunities for women. In promoting the idea it has been necessary to demonstrate both the potential financial benefit to the business as well as the benefit it might bring to retaining valued employees.

# staying on track



## Checklist

- Keeping everyone onside
- Resourcing initiatives sufficiently
- Setting aside sufficient time
- Ensuring buy-in among colleagues
- Tackling the long hours culture

Employers in our research were, above all, realistic. Introducing their innovative initiatives had not been entirely without problems. They were asked to identify what, for them, had been the major problems or pitfalls. In this chapter, they identify what they see as the main problems that their organisations had faced when commencing such initiatives, so that other organisations can learn from their experience. Because it is important that individuals are able to speak frankly on these issues, we simply indicate whether the comment was made by a public or private sector employer or by a trade union representative.

## Keeping everyone onside

Generally, the policies described in this handbook were welcomed across case study organisations. However, some employers reported that some people felt excluded by the new policies. Typically, if the rationale behind the policies is explained to everybody, these attitudes can be overcome.

*There has been the occasional question from men along the lines of "why are you doing that for women, that's discriminatory", so that there is then a need to explain all the background and issues. However, by involving the managers (both men and women), awareness is greater that it is not a "men-bashing" exercise; and people can see the changes.*

**Private sector employer**

*The company operates in an industry that has been a very male-dominated, macho environment, and some of the vestiges of that are still around. There is also an element of other employees asking "why are women getting all of that"; it helps to counteract this by broadening out initiatives - for example, by including male peers at the conferences.*

**Private sector employer**

*There has been a little bit of backlash, not so much against women, more perhaps in relation to newer components of diversity....It is sometimes about lack of understanding of local managers, and maybe lack of understanding amongst local peer groups.*

**Private sector employer**

### Resourcing initiatives sufficiently

A lack of resources - whether budgetary or staffing - can make it difficult for organisations to make as much progress as they would sometimes like.

*A lack of continuity in personnel dealing with the issues and run down of resources for the equality unit has been a problem.*

**Trade union representative, private sector**

*Limited resources can be a problem and there has been a difficult economic climate. If the company can manage it now, it bodes well for more clement times.*

**Private sector employer**

*Budgetary restraint is often a factor that holds back progress.*

**Private sector employer**

*Lack of resources is always a problem. With more money of course the organisation could do more.*

**Public sector employer**

*Inadequate resources to put the policies into practice.*

**Private sector employer**

Arguments for additional resources can be made using an appeal to the business case. However, for some organisations, this argument is less easily made. In such circumstances, the staffing case can be the most persuasive argument.

*One problem with the "business case" argument for diversity in this type of organisation is that it is not a business with very strong or obvious customer links (such as a bank) where it can very easily be demonstrated that diversity goes to the bottom line - i.e. a diverse workforce is needed to appeal to a diverse customer base, and it makes very good economic sense to try and reflect the customer base. The company does have customers but it is a different relationship. In this type of business, equality initiatives are undertaken mainly with a view to ensure the best workforce, and are driven more from that point of view.*

**Private sector employer**

### Setting aside sufficient time

This can be difficult when companies are facing other challenges.

*There is a sense of other priorities - in a company that has lost so many people because of redundancies, the work-life balance becomes very challenging, and getting the job done will always override this in certain areas. When they cut jobs the work doesn't necessarily disappear, so they are loading more and more on people who remain and there is never a conscious effort to look at whether this job is do-able within 24 hours. They just expect those left to soak up the rest. Often women do a three day job but end up doing five days work.*

**Trade union representative, private sector**

*There has not been a great issue regarding lack of resources in the financial sense, rather it has been more in terms of time - the diversity function does not have a huge team.*

**Trade union representative, private sector**

*Shortages in long-standing vacancy areas can make it difficult to release people for training and also restricts our ability to shorten hours. This limits and constrains a department's ability to release staff for training and in making changes.*

**Public sector employer**

### Ensuring buy-in among colleagues

Sometimes, colleagues were unenthusiastic about developments, but when the inclusive aspects of planned changes are explained, often resistance can be overcome.

*There were some sceptics originally who took a bit of winning over, but as soon as we said these opportunities for flexibility are available to everyone for any reason, that sort of evaporated.*

**Private sector employer**

*There are inevitably pockets of cynicism among some male employees. The organisation tries to overcome that type of attitude by putting the message across that the programme is not about favourable treatment (as equality ultimately benefits everyone).*

**Public sector employer**

*There has also been an issue with a lack of support from wider employees (for example, some men), but the culture has been changing - there is a need to ensure that this culture change is kept up.*

**Trade union representative, private sector**

### Tackling the long hours culture

The long hours culture and ideas of 'presenteeism' can make it difficult to introduce initiatives such as part-time and flexible working in some organisations.

*The long hours culture can be a problem.*

#### **Public sector employer**

*There have been cultural barriers, in that people expect to have to work long hours because [this sector] is now a 24/7 culture. Some part-time staff felt that working hours were a progression barrier.*

#### **Private sector employer**

*Some [line managers] may also fear that someone who works only part-time will not be able to deliver the results required, for example there could be some feeling that for managers a full-time commitment is required as they need to be available throughout the working week.*

#### **Private sector employer**


 messages  
from  
employers
**Checklist**

- The business case
- Support and accountability
- Involvement and inclusion
- Identifying goals
- Framework and focus
- Not just the 'bottom line'
- Travelling hopefully
- Communication and celebration

Employers and staff representatives who took part in the research were asked if there were any lessons they had learned that they would like to pass on to other organisations. Overall, there were eight key messages:

**The business case**

At the outset, many employers cited the business case as a reason for introducing initiatives to advance women and/or increase the diversity of the workforce. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that many of the case study organisations believed that emphasising the business benefits was the most effective way to promote the advancement of women and the diversity case in general.

*The key thing has been getting management sponsorship of the whole initiative - including a recognition that it is important to the business. This also includes specifically a recognition of the need to create a diverse culture because the business is about servicing individual and corporate clients and of the need to mirror the diversity of those as much as possible.*

**Staff representative from Citigroup 'CitiWomen' initiative (UK)**

*It is important that initiatives are recognised to be business-driven.*

**Halifax/HBOS (UK)**

*If [you try] to roll it out across the business, without it being really embedded in the business objective, then it's going to be challenging. Get it into the business, get the business to embrace it and what you are trying to achieve. Your chances of success are going to be greater if you've got it as a performance indicator in your business.*

**Citigroup (IRE)**

*What we felt, and still feel today, was that if you are going to make more progress in the UK it's got to be a combination of hearts and minds and creating a very strong business case. The business case for women in business is just overpowering.*

**BT (UK)**

### Support and accountability

Many of the companies in our research saw senior level support as a key element in the success of initiatives. Involving managers and making them accountable for progress is also an important factor.

*Executive sponsorship is important - it gives out a message whenever they are present.*

**IBM (IRE)**

*Accountability to the CE is the big thing that is working, there is a hive of activity going on at the moment with people putting their plans together. This accountability to the CE is critical in really focussing people's minds on the issue.*

**Halifax/HBOS (UK)**

*There is a need for regular reinforcement of programme aims through line managers. In general terms, getting senior level and business support is critical. If you want integration of equality issues, it has got to be business driven.*

**Transco (UK)**

### Involvement and inclusion

Employers spoke of the need to involve all members of the organisation - directors, managers and employees - in moving forward and making progress. The need for any programmes developed, or any actions taken, to be seen as inclusive, not exclusive, is vital.

*You have to take care not to be divisive in any way. For example, with regard to flexibility, it's not just about people with families. Excluding people just doesn't work. And you cannot just say 'here's one I made earlier' - people need to participate in the development of initiatives.*

**King's College Hospital (UK)**

*I think it's staff involvement we've found has been the biggest benefit to us, because before that, people didn't see it as anything that affected them. So now we ask staff what they want. Even if we only have a small working party, those people then go on to act as ambassadors for the initiative or policy, especially if you ensure you've got a geographical spread as well as staff across levels.*

**Scottish Court Service (UK)**

*You must achieve management buy-in if you want it to succeed, you need to bring your business managers with you. You've got to be really passionate about the agenda, and ensure that when you're not there, they will be representing that agenda too, that you've bought their hearts and minds.*

**Citigroup Ireland (IRE)**

*The fundamental issue is how do you build an inclusive programme. You must avoid making it exclusive. How to get employee commitment rather than it being seen as just for women. You [must] make it a line management issue. You need to consider how diversity can be driven by line management. You need to show there's a clear business benefit. Diversity has to mean something more, it's about how you design policies and procedures. If you say this is for women only, men just switch off. The only way is to mainstream [diversity issues] and frame them in such a way that people feel included, and diversity should be seen as a core value.*

**Ford (UK)**

### Identifying goals

Many employers spoke of the need to take stock at the outset, to investigate what is really needed and wanted by employees, and to have a clear set of goals so that progress can be measured. Without these, it is difficult to gauge the extent of change. Monitoring can play a key role.

*Check first with people on the ground as to where they see a need or a gap, they are the best people to advise, and after that you need to research it well.*

**Dublin City Council (IRE)**

*The key thing is to make sure there is a really clear starting point - by using workforce data and staff opinion surveys - so that the nature of the workforce is known as well as what the issues are for staff and for managers. Then it is essential to look at where the organisation wants to be and to start putting the building blocks in place to get there. Organisations should then keep tracking all the way along - monitoring the different initiatives so that they know what works and what doesn't.*

**Halifax/HBOS (UK)**

The employee's contribution can go beyond merely identifying the problem or the gap, however; they can help identify the solution, too:

*Ask employees to give you the solutions rather than trying to tell them what the solutions are. Often they'll come up with solutions perfectly acceptable to the company that you would never have thought of otherwise.*

**MTM (UK)**

### Framework and focus

Many larger employers had found that having a framework and allocated roles within the initiative had helped focus the work. Without these, they felt that the initiative could have lost impetus and focus.

*It is critical to have a framework for the gender equality initiative. There tends to be so much enthusiasm and so many projects under way that it is essential to work within a clear framework. The role played by the Stepping Up Monitoring Officer was a critical part of the framework and the successes that the programme is achieving. Unless there is someone fulfilling that type of dedicated central role, it is difficult for anyone else to find the time to get people supporting and involved in the project. The input of dedicated personnel on any gender equality project is therefore very important to success.*

**City of Wakefield MDC (UK)**

*We now have a forum, a focus, a voice for all women in the university. We've set up a structure where members of the forum take specific issues forward.*

**Trade union representative, Queen's University Belfast (UK)**

### Not just the 'bottom line'

Many employers mentioned the business case, and their comments are reported above. However, business benefits go beyond just financial accounting. One trade union observed that progressive practices can bring increased loyalty, but possibly at a price that might be beyond the means of smaller companies. However, the final comment in this section, from one of the smaller companies, indicates that a flexible approach need not be costly.

*It enhances a positive and proactive reputation for the organisation.*

**Transco (UK)**

*Flexible working can help to reduce stress [in employees] and if an employer is willing to show flexibility, it is likely that an employee will be prepared to give something back to the employer in return. Policies and practices such as part-time and flexible working, childcare vouchers and so on, are very influential in retaining trained staff and the skills they offer. But while there are benefits from measures such as childcare vouchers, they can be costly and the benefits may not always be recouped immediately. For a smaller organisation it may be harder to offer these.*

**Trade union representative, Transco (UK)**

### Travelling hopefully

All the employers who participated in the research have achieved great progress in developing workplaces that were helping to include and advance women. However, achieving change can be a slow process. Some used the analogy of a journey, and in particular that it is perhaps better to continue to travel, than to arrive. Arriving implies that nothing more needs to be done, and all of the case study employers believed that there was always more that could be done.

*Don't play an endgame. There isn't one. It really is a journey, your destination keeps changing and so you have to keep going. And don't expect things to change overnight. But it's worth it.*

**BT (UK)**

*In big organisations, it's the size, it takes time to bring about change...the only way is to mainstream the changes and frame them in such a way that people feel included.*

**Ford (UK)**

*It's been three years since the diversity strategy was introduced and it is still seen as new. It takes time to change traditional views and ideas.*

**King's College Hospital (UK)**

*It's not an overnight thing. You have to keep talking to people, and you have to keep management happy. You need to be patient with things, it's not going to happen overnight, and you have to keep saying the same thing over and over. Eventually it will get through.*

**Queen's University, Belfast (UK)**

### **Communication and celebration!**

It is not just important to tell people about developments, it is important to keep on telling them. It is also important to celebrate the successes.

*There is a need to maintain the impetus, there is a constant need to review and communicate.*

**Trade union representative, Halifax/HBOS (UK)**

*Communication is vital, not only with management but with employees.*

**Queen's University, Belfast (UK)**

*Everyone should know about it. You need to communicate. You can learn from each other, having a dialogue helps.*

**Tesco (UK)**

*A 'drum beat' approach is needed on communications - little and often.*

**IBM (IRE)**

*It is important to celebrate achievements. Transco runs a 'Celebration Conference' for its women's development programme.*

**Transco**

### **And finally...**

Perhaps the last word should rest with one of our smaller employers.

*Work on the basis of mutual trust and don't be scared to have a go.*

**MTM (UK)**

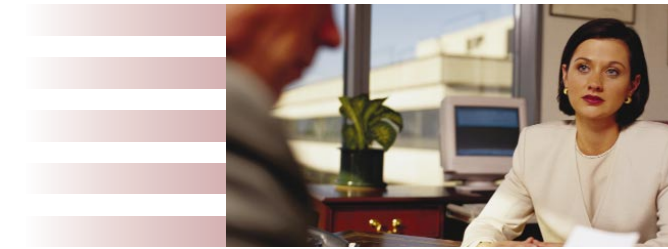
useful  
**contacts**  
and further  
information



More information can be found from the following contacts, as well as in the dedicated website for the Advancing Women in the workplace project, [www.advancingwomen2003.org](http://www.advancingwomen2003.org).

- **Danish Research Centre on Gender Equality**  
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**Tel:** +3 531 667 0344  
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**E-mail:** [info@justice.ie](mailto:info@justice.ie)  
**Web:** [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)
- **DTI Work Life Balance**  
**web:** [www.dti.gov.uk/work-lifebalance](http://www.dti.gov.uk/work-lifebalance)
- **DTI Employment Relations website - employment rights in the UK:**  
**web:** [www.dti.gov.uk/er](http://www.dti.gov.uk/er)
- **Equal Opportunities Commission**  
Arndale Centre  
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Manchester M4 3EQ  
**Tel:** +44 (0)845 601 5901  
**Fax:** +44 (0)161 838 8312  
**E-mail:** [info@eoc.org.uk](mailto:info@eoc.org.uk)
- **European Commission, Employment and Social Affairs Directorate website:**  
**web:** [http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/equ\\_opp/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equ_opp/index_en.htm)

the case  
**study**  
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## In the United Kingdom

### Halifax/HBOS

Halifax is a national financial services organisation that has recently undergone a merger with Bank of Scotland to form HBOS. Halifax subsidiaries include Halifax General Insurance Services, Clerical Medical, esure and Intelligent Finance. Overall, there are around 60,000 employees within the new company, with Halifax employing around 38,000 of these. About 70% of the Halifax workforce is female. Some 71% of women work full-time, compared with 29% who are part-time. Staff from ethnic minorities comprise around 8% of the workforce. The case study describes actions within the Halifax wing of the company, although reference is made where appropriate to the wider organisation (i.e. HBOS).

### Ford

Ford is a car design, manufacture and sales company. The total workforce size at Ford in the UK is around 20,000, but the company also owns Jaguar, Land Rover, Aston Martin, Volvo and Mazda. The policies described in this case study apply across all of the component companies. Ford has several manufacturing plants, but in England these are predominantly clustered around the East London and Essex regions.

### British Telecommunications (BT)

BT is a global telecommunications company that was previously a nationally-owned UK company until privatisation in 1984. It employs 95,000 people in the UK, and 107,000 globally. Around a quarter of its workforce in the UK, and 30% globally, are female. Around 14% work part-time, and in the UK, just under 9% of its workers come from ethnic minority backgrounds.

### MTM

This small company uses screen printing and engraving technology to manufacture labels and name plates for industrial customers. They employ 35 people, of whom 18 are women. They have equal numbers of production operators and four of the six managers are women. The company is based in Chesterfield.

### Original Eastern Foods

The company produces a wide range of high-quality, hand-made Indian and Chinese foods. Its main customers are restaurants and retail outlets. The company now employs around 30-35 people, with about three-quarters of these being female. Around four-fifths of the women employees work part-time. 10% of the workforce comes from an ethnic minority background. The company is based in Mansfield.

### Citigroup

Citigroup is a global financial services company, which was formed following the merger of Citicorp and Travelers in 1998. Its portfolio of brands includes Citibank, Schroder Salomon Smith Barney and Travelers Insurance. It divides its businesses broadly into four categories: global corporate and investment bank; global consumer; global investment management; and private banking. Global employee numbers amount to some 268,000 people. The case study relates to the global corporate and investment banking wing of Citigroup Europe, which employs around 23,800 people. Around 40% of the workforce are female, with the majority of these working full-time.

### Transco

Transco is the owner and operator of the major part of the national gas pipeline and runs the freephone national gas emergency service. It is responsible for gas delivery to consumers across the country. Having emerged from the British Gas stable, Transco is now part of Lattice Group, and represents about 95% of the group. At the time of the interview the company was going through a merger with National Grid. Transco currently employs a workforce of around 13,800 people, of whom 17% are female. The majority of female employees work full-time.

### Leeds Metropolitan University

Leeds Metropolitan employs a total of 2,782 staff, of whom 1,567 are women. Fifty-eight per cent of permanent women employees are full-time, but if those on casual contracts are included then this proportion changes to 51% full-time. At the time of the interview, 7% of the staff were drawn from ethnic minority backgrounds.

### Queen's University Belfast

Queen's is the main university in the province of Ulster. The university employs around 3,000 full-time staff (staff who work more than 16 hours per week), and just under half of these are female. Women constitute around 40% of staff at Lecturer A level, 30% of staff in Lecturer B posts, 20% of Reader/Senior Lecturers and 10% of staff at professorial level.

### Tesco

Tesco is a major UK food retailer. It employs 200,000 people across the UK, and 64% of these are female. In the retail part of the company, there are more women managers than men (52%). In distribution, women constitute 15% of managers. In Head Office, Customer Services and Finance there are 3,000 managers, 1,000 of whom are women (33%). The majority of staff in retail work part-time (72%) but part-time workers are a minority in the other two sections of the business.

### King's College Hospital Healthcare Trust

King's is a teaching hospital providing healthcare services in south London. They are a major employer in an area that is ethnically diverse. They employ around 4,200 people, of whom over 3,500 are female. Nurses constitute the largest single employee category, with 1,645 of the 1,848 being female.

### City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

The council is a local authority for a city located in a traditional ex-mining district in the north of England. It is the largest employer in the area, and its responsibilities include schools, housing, roads and transportation, social care, leisure and general services. The authority employs a total of over 16,000 employees (excluding teachers), of whom 72% are female. The majority of female employees work part-time, with just 37% working full-time. Over 30% of senior managers are female.

### Scottish Court Service

The Scottish Court Service is in the public sector and is part of the justice group in Scotland. They work closely with the Crown Office and provide the staff that support the Courts at various locations across Scotland. They employ a total of 884 people. Women account for 53% of the total number of staff.

### In Denmark

#### DR - The Danish Broadcasting Corporation

The Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR) is an independent, fully license-financed, public television and radio broadcaster, with public service obligations. The station broadcasts two television channels and four radio stations. In 2000 DR had 3,350 employees (full-time, excluding trainees and employees in retirement schemes). Of these, 2,684 had permanent positions.

#### Lego System A/S

The plastic toy manufacturer, Lego System A/S, is part of the larger Lego group. The company consists of 37 different companies with 7,745 employees around the world. In Denmark, Lego System A/S employs 3,310 people who produce the plastic toy bricks.

#### KAD - Women Workers Union: ET NIK

Between 1999 and 2001 the Women Workers' Union (KAD) carried out a project named ET NIK, funded by the EU program ATTAK. The background for the project was that the Women Workers' Union organises unskilled female workers and has a rising number of members with an ethnic background other than Danish. Members from ethnic minority backgrounds suffer more from unemployment than Danish Members. Moreover, KAD wished to develop multicultural strategies to ensure the best possible integration of ethnic minorities on the Danish labour market.

#### TDC

TDC is a formerly state-owned telecommunications company, now a private company. TDC has 17,000 employees, 40% of whom are women. Women account for 30% of the total number of managers (1,200) and 11% of executives.

## In the Republic of Ireland

### Citigroup Ireland

Citigroup Ireland is part of the global Citigroup organisation. The company operates in the financial services sector. Citigroup in Ireland employs a total of 1,056 people, and 56% of these are female. The organisation is based in Dublin.

### Dublin City Council

Dublin City Council is the local authority for Dublin. Approximately a third of all posts in the council are indoors posts, such as administration, and of these posts, around 80% are undertaken by females. About two-thirds of the staff are outdoors staff, such as the fire brigade, general operatives, crafts grades, bricklayers, masons, etc, and women constitute just a small minority of these staff.

### Department of Social and Family Affairs

The Department of Social and Family Affairs is part of the Irish Civil Service. They supply a range of services for families, employees and employers. Most of the Department's offices are based in Dublin, with others at locations across the Republic of Ireland. It employs a total of 4,804 people. Of these, 3,250 (68%) are female, 2,449 (75%) of whom work full-time. Over 97% of male employees work full-time. Women constitute 96% of part-time employees. Women constitute 54% of middle management grades, 27% of senior management and 50% at the top level are women.

### EirCom

Eircom's principal business is the supply of national and international fixed-line voice and data communications services. It was established in 1984 when it became a semi-state company. It is owned by Valencia Telecommunications Ltd. Information on the numbers of employees and male/female breakdown is confidential.

### IBM

IBM is a global company providing information technology hardware, software and services. In Ireland, IBM employs 20,000 people, of whom 25% are female. Around 20% of management positions are held by women.

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