

Equal Opportunities Committee
Woman and work: call for evidence

The next step – finding solutions

Our work so far has seen numerous issues raised and has given us a very useful description of the situation. Those issues are summarised below. We now seek views on **how to overcome the many difficulties described** to us. We invite submissions by **Wednesday, 6 February 2013**. Please—

- **structure your response using the headings in the summary below** – if you wish to add any further issues, use additional headings at the end of your response
- **mobilise your own networks** to raise awareness of our call for evidence and encourage responses from people you know and work with – whether in an individual capacity or on behalf of another group or organisation
- **read the policy on treatment of written evidence by subject and mandatory committees** before sending your submission
- **try not to exceed 6 sides of A4**
- **send submissions by email** to Equal.Opportunities@scottish.parliament.uk or by **post** c/o the Clerk, Equal Opportunities Committee, TG.01, The Scottish Parliament, EDINBURGH, EH99 1SP
- **contact us** with any queries, by email or by post as above or by telephone on 0131 348 5408.
- **#womenandwork** – we're asking people to share thoughts on what the biggest barriers women are facing in the workplace.

Summary of issues raised to date

- **Workforce issues** – such as shift working and its impacts; lack of part-time working in some sectors and, more generally, the increase in the number of men taking on part-time work; employers' reactions to flexible-working requests and comparative public, private and voluntary sector approaches; impact of public and voluntary sector cuts; the double disadvantage facing disabled women in the labour market.
- **Occupational segregation** – such as women being clustered in certain types of work – like caring, cleaning and clerical work; women taking on part-time, low-status or low-paid work because of caring responsibilities or underemployment; the impact of the glass ceiling and whether it is about more women in the boardroom or career progression more generally; the lack of evidence of measures to tackle gender inequalities, for example, meaningful work experience could be a way to challenge inequalities.
- **Childcare** – such as the need for widely available, flexible childcare to meet workers with shift patterns' needs; the need for childcare to be free at the point of delivery; the need for sufficient capacity in the workforce.
- **Women in business** – the need for support for women in business to help them start, maintain and grow their own enterprises.
- **Managing unequal pay in local authorities** – how to ensure local authority equal pay obligations are met.
- **Cross-cutting issues** – such as the impact of attitudes, in particular where they create a gap between employers' policies and their implementation; the difficulty of assessing and understanding patterns of male and female employment because of a lack of gender-disaggregated data on employment; how welfare reforms might impact on women and, consequently, families.