

Cross Party Group on Women in Enterprise

Minutes of meeting held February 28th 2017: Committee Room 4 – Scottish Parliament

Attendees: Judith Sijstermans, Scottish Parliament; Anne Meikle, Women's Enterprise Scotland; Tracy Thomson, Loans Officer, RBS Social & Community Capital; Liz Scott, Equalities Manager, Highlands and Islands Enterprise; Louise MacDonald, Highlands and Islands Enterprise; Maura Sheehan, Professor of International Management, Edinburgh Napier University; Susan Harkins, Principal Officer (Business Gateway), City of Edinburgh Council; Laura Galloway, Professor of Business & Enterprise, Heriot-Watt University; Laura Jackman, Heriot Watt University; Karen Anderson, Adiante Leadership; Elaine Morrison, Scottish Enterprise – speaker; Jane Gotts, GenAnalytics – speaker; Fiona Turnbull, WES Ambassador; Leah Hutcheon, WES Ambassador. **MSPs:** Gillian Martin MSP (Convenor); Alison Johnstone MSP; Kate Forbes MSP; Andy Wightman MSP; Jackie Baillie MSP; Ivan McKee MSP.

Apologies: Yvonne Greeves, National Women in Business Manager, Royal Bank of Scotland & NatWest; Carolyn Currie, Women's Enterprise Scotland; Lynne Cadenhead, Chair, Women's Enterprise Scotland; Laura McKelvie, Federation of Small Businesses; Claire Baker MSP; Angus MacDonald MSP; Oliver Mundell MSP; Rhoda Grant MSP

Minutes

Convenor (Gillian Martin) welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced first speaker, Jane Gotts from GenAnalytics. (Presentation attached).

Key speakers: Jane Gotts

Key points from Jane's presentation included –

- While women are not a special interest group, they are constantly under-represented, therefore there is a need to focus on measures and targets to ensure women are equally represented.
- Diversity matters because evidence shows that companies and organisations that promote diversity within their workplace have better financial returns.
- Data will drive diversity. But we need to change the conversation from it being a 'nice to do' to a 'must do', as ignoring the benefits of diversity can result in reputational damage.
- Women in Scotland continue to work in sectors characterised by low pay, low skills and part time work. Occupational segregation is still a key issue. There is a 'cross generational challenge' in tackling gender stereotyping – ideas of which begin at a very young age.
- GenAnalytics suggest 3 main areas of recommendation & action – Mainstreaming; Mentoring and Measurement. There is also a need to engage men fully in the debate.

In her final thoughts, Jane stated - the pace of change is still far too slow; diversity has an economic benefit to Scotland; businesses need support as diversity and change is not high on their agenda. It is important to look at how Scotland measures its diversity performance.

The meeting moved to the presentation from Elaine Morrison, from Scottish Enterprise. Key points from Elaine's presentation (attached) included –

- Global gender trends on women in business – 17% Fortune 500 Companies Board are female but only 5% of CEOs; In the UK, 17% of Business Owners are female; In Scotland, 17 of 66 board positions on Scottish FTSE 100 companies are held by women; 10% of senior managers in science, engineering and tech professions are women.
- While Scotland has a strong landscape of support in the ecosystem, the landscape can be very cluttered and very confusing.
- The Scottish Enterprise focus is on productivity and building Scotland's International competitiveness. Scottish Enterprise has a number of leadership development programmes in which women participate.
- Elaine presented figures on the women's businesses taking part in entrepreneurial programmes with participation ranging from 10% - 32% on the range of programmes.

In summing up, Elaine pointed to a number of issues in which Scottish Enterprise is engaging on issues of gender equality, such as – communications and language and how these affect women's participation; looking at developing case studies / role models; Increasing awareness of the support that is available and looking at needs (perception or reality); A Women's Leadership Development Programme is currently being discussed / approved.

WES Ambassador Presentations: Linking to points made in the previous presentations, **Fiona Turnbull of Fruix Storage and Bankhead Farming Partnership, and Leah Hutcheon of Appointedd** gave a personal view of their business journey experience. Key points included-

- In seeking to come out of low paid and low skilled work, starting up in business can be an option for women.
- The relationship between the business adviser and the client business is extremely important, and getting the match right can be crucial.
- Leadership courses can be very beneficial for women – either women only or mixed sex.
- It is important to make the messages from business support agencies more attractive and relevant to women, thus ensuring better engagement from women.
- Being with other women in similar business stages and circumstances can be important and provides much needed support for women.
- Early education is really important to tackle gender stereotyping in subject choice.
- Growth is really important for women's businesses and perhaps we should be more creative in our thinking towards more 'short cut' ways to growth.

Discussion (Contributors referred to by initials.)

1. JB asked if it was the case that due to the size (including business turnover) and sectors within which women's businesses generally operated, they were often **excluded from a range of initiatives and supports** available from Scottish Enterprise? This was also a key question for **gender disaggregated data** to be made available across all SE data sets. EM responded that SE were looking closely at this and with new developments in data collection, women's businesses should be more clearly identified. Also initiatives such as **women in leadership** programmes were working towards better support for women in business.
2. GM asked how we can be sure that the SE programmes were working for everyone? EM responded that tracking movement through - account managed companies; companies signed up to the Business Pledge; and working with organisations such as Edinburgh Napier University on **women in governance** course – will all help to bring women through some of the programmes offered by SE.
3. GM made the point that there is still a **lack of flexibility on the mainstream labour market** which can make setting up in business seem a more attractive option. However, there are still issues about potential blockages in the business pipeline for women.
4. KA stated that she felt a bit more positive about the **business pipeline for women**, but wanted to look at more programmes with impact. She referred to two strands of optimism – the fact that more social enterprises are started up (and are successful) by women; and the growth in commercial cooperatives.
5. MS outlined the importance of **leadership – and diversity** at all levels is important.
6. LG raised the issue that **low paid, part time work will be a feature of the labour market** for some time to come, with young men now entering these jobs. She had witnessed problems with confidence in women especially when seeking promotion.
7. LS stated that **occupational segregation** is still clearly an issue in the Highlands and Islands with a new report just being published by HIE in the coming weeks.
8. There are still issues around **caring and family responsibilities** falling mostly on to women. IMcK stated that we need to look to a shift towards shared parenting – and a shift in attitudes to caring as this can create a problem for fathers too.
9. AM summed up some of the discussion, highlighting some key points –
 - Large Scale Initiatives such as the City Deals should be equality impact assessed to ensure a range of diverse businesses and communities are benefitting.
 - A 'one size fits all' approach does not work in business advice and support.
 - New research soon to be released by WES shows that women in business do view themselves differently (not always as entrepreneurs) and feel strongly that there are differences between women and men in business.
 - While an undervalued and under paid sector, the care economy is huge and will continue to dominate forthcoming years.

GM thanked everyone for their participation and input and closed the meeting at 7.45pm.