

A Symatrix Whitepaper:
Employment Law Update 2019
Gender Equality



Gender Equality

On 3rd July 2019 the Government published a policy paper – Gender Equality at every stage: a roadmap for change which set out the vision and actions to address persistent gendered inequalities women and men face across their lives with the aim helping them to contribute to the country's economy and balance caring responsibilities. This was published alongside The Case for Change and Gender Equality Monitor. The roadmap set out eight key challenges to tackle from childhood to retirement and the responding government action; In brief these are:

- 1) Limiting attitudes to gender; social norms which have impacts on expectations about gender roles and influences early choices.
 - The Government said it wanted to deepen the evidence base around the root cause of gendered aspirations and attitudes; by piloting different approaches in schools and early year's programmes, improving advice and support in schools. Through the Careers and Enterprise Company, the government are investing £2Million in developing and extending career related learning in primary schools to help children keep their horizons broad. Also Investment programmes to increase participation in STEM subjects, a programme of work to tackle stereotyping in the media and advertising – to eradicate harmful stereotypes, and support Industry initiatives which recognise and promote gender diversity in the work place, and publish research and tools to tackle poor body image that can impact self-confidence and aspirations, and what works to engage men and boys on gender issues.
- 2) Women tend to work in lower paid sectors and are less likely to progress. Even in industries where there are high numbers of women working, men are still likely to occupy more senior roles. The Government plan:
 - An independent review of gender pay gap in medicine, to improve progression for the female workforce in schools, work with Women in Finance Charter, Tech Talent Charter and British Retail Consortium. Plus, actively review the reporting metrics and consult on any proposed changes in 2021.
 - To make the service for reporting gender pay gap better and help people to understand the data.
 - A National Campaign for employers empowering them to understand how to help employees balance work and care and support progression. Guidance for employers will be updated later this year, with new implementation guides for HR practitioners on what works to support gender equality in the workplace.
 - The Women's Business Council will refresh its focus and work to play a leading role in promoting best practice.
 - A work place and Gender Equality research program, providing evidence based advice for employers, will research on themes of culture that leads to bullying, harassment and discrimination. It will look to build on Intersectionality, future of work, big data, AI and automation, SMEs and self-employment. Plus a Gender and behavioural Insights program to develop and test cutting edge interventions that improve gender equality in the work place.

3) Working age benefits systems hasn't always tackled the disadvantaged women and those with caring responsibilities face. They say that under new Universal credit households will get entitlements they were not claiming on legacy systems.

Work Coaches to help claimants claim and make better decision about job switching etc. Commitment to ensuring that affordable childcare should not be a barrier to women moving into and progressing in work.



4) Women take more time out of the labour market to care for children – this impacts progression whilst they are out of the labour market and long term savings

- Evaluating the Shared Parental Leave and Pay Schemes – to be complete by end 2019 will allow the Government to make assessment of current policy and consider next steps.
- Consider how to improve access to information parents want and need joined up information on childcare support, parental leave, family friendly policies etc. Later this year there will be the launch of Shared Parental Leave digital tool.
- £6 billion a year on Child Care Support.
- Celebrate employers who uplift shared Parental leave beyond statutory rates. Help to deliver model policies.

5) Women are providing more informal or unpaid care for others - , one in four of older women and one in eight of male workers.

- The Government want to help people make informed decisions, to help claim and remain in the labour market, be recognised for the contribution they make. Improve sign posting for information. In Autumn there will be new proposals and plan of action following Carers Employment Digital Discovery Project. Plus, consultation on dedicated employment rights for Carers – carers leave and working with Employers to help them improve their offering for carers. On 12th June the Government launched the Carers Innovation Fund to support projects that will develop creative and innovative solutions to support carers juggle work and responsibilities.

6) Some women face barriers returning to or entering the labour market. It can be hard to return to work at a level equivalent to their skills.

- The Government announced in June, the Returners Grant Fund – to support women especially vulnerable to return to work. Those with complex needs or multiple barriers such as homelessness or substance abuse.

7) Women are more likely to face financial instability later in life due to decisions made throughout life. The gender pay gap increases with age. Women aged 55 to 64 are less likely to have a pension, those who do, have 40% less wealth in them.

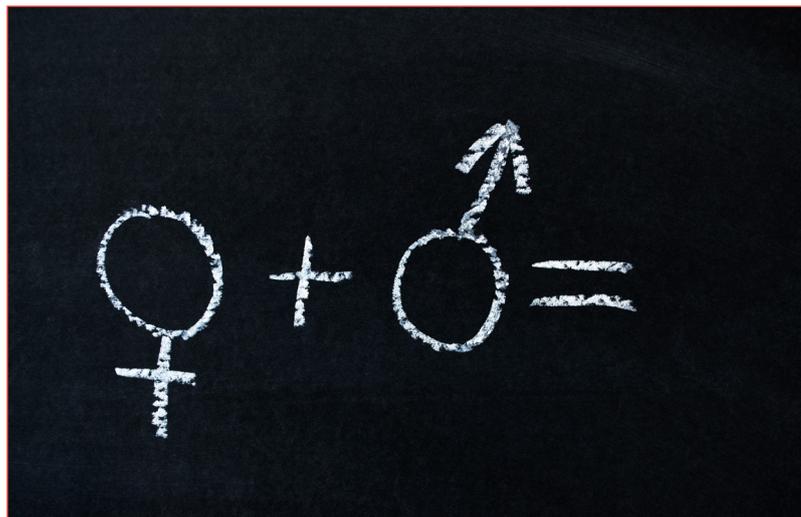
- Work with Money and Pensions Service to deliver comprehensive engagement exercise, update the online divorce process as a nudge to remind couples to consider the benefits of pension sharing, and build on success of automatic enrolment. Plus, a Planning and Preparing for later life survey will produce results that will help to inform this work. Also increase the transparency of funding offered to female entrepreneurs and expose gender gap investment.

8) The Government want to sustain good foundations for the future. E.g. the legislative framework to protect against discrimination and promote equality, high employment for both men and women, free at point of access NHS, education and high life expectancy.

- 2020 marks 50 years since Equal Pay Act 1970. Review enforcement, to ensure working as effectively as possible.
- Following consultation on Redundancy Protection and Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination – set up of a taskforce of employer group to consider next steps to tackle culture.
- Launch Consultation on whether to extend the 3 month time limit for employment tribunal claims after any incident of harassment or discrimination. Also a national survey gathering information on sexual harassment both inside and outside the workplace.

The 'case for change', examines in greater depth the factors that underlie gendered differences in work and pay, supporting the vision and action laid out. Thirdly, the Gender Equality Monitor (GEM) brings together a suite of indicators in a single place to monitor gender equality across five key areas:

- Economic participation and progression
- Attitudes and leadership
- Education and skills
- Crime and justice
- Health and wellbeing



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