

Women's engagement

from the Ministers for Women and Equalities

November 2012

 HM Government

Secretary of State

for Culture, Media and Sport and Minister for Women and Equalities

Welcome to the autumn edition of the women's engagement newsletter. I was hugely honoured to be invited by the Prime Minister to become Minister for Women and Equalities and Culture Secretary in September. And I am joined by a highly committed ministerial team - Helen Grant at the Ministry of Justice, Jo Swinson at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, and Baronesses Northover and Stowell.

We, an all-women ministerial team, are committed to working with you to make the country a fairer and better place. A place where women can, with confidence, raise their children to a debt free future. Where they are encouraged back to work and provided with concrete help to stay there.

Where families find it easier to balance home life with work life. And where business works harder with us to close the gender pay gap and put more women on the boards.

I'm sure that many of you, like me, watched with awe as our female Olympians and Paralympians broke countless records during the Games. On the back of this momentum I recently helped launch the Football Association's five year strategy to drive forward women's football in England. The plan is aptly entitled Games Changer.

And I think that also sums up how we feel about our work around women and equalities. We want it to be genuinely game changing. We want to work with you to challenge perceptions and develop opportunities around how, when and where women can fully contribute to a vibrant and successful society.

I would like to pay tribute to our predecessors, Theresa May and Lynne Featherstone, for all their hard work on this front. As a politician – and a working mother - I take on their mantle with pride and enthusiasm.



The Rt Hon Maria Miller MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and Minister for Women and Equalities

Pass on our newsletter and sign up

Please pass on our newsletter to anyone you think would be interested.

Meet the Ministers



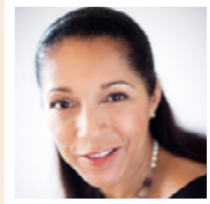
**The Rt Hon
Maria Miller MP**

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

Portfolio

Overarching responsibility for Women and Equality including:

- Women's Business Council and women's engagement
- Equal Civil marriage communications and stakeholders
- Overarching Equality Strategy (Including IMGE)
- Spending Review

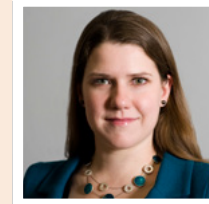


Helen Grant MP

**Minister for Women and
Equalities**
(shared jointly with the [Ministry of Justice](#))

Portfolio

- Equal Civil Marriage
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
- Equality Legislation (including litigation and cases)
- Working with other Government departments on Violence Against Women and Girls



Jo Swinson MP

**Minister for Women and
Equalities**
(shared with the [Department for Business
Innovation and Skills](#))

Portfolio

- Women and growth
- Women on Boards
- LGB&T strategy
- Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
- Body Confidence

Government News

Scheme to encourage 6,000 new childcare businesses announced

Last week, in her first keynote speech on women at Deloitte in London, Maria Miller announced that from next April 2013 the Government will be making £2 million available to provide small grants of up to £500 to people wishing to set up new childcare businesses. This will help as many as 6,000 new childcare start-ups. Good quality, affordable, reliable childcare is key to women being able to work. More childcare will mean more women can take up jobs, helping to support their families and realise their own career ambitions. The industry is also a major employer of women, and this scheme provides huge opportunities for female entrepreneurs to start up and run their own businesses.

This scheme will help stimulate the childcare market quickly. This comes on top of a package of measures that the Government is taking boost childcare, and ahead of the findings

of the commission on childcare which is looking at the affordability and availability of childcare. The Government is determined to ensure that we have a thriving sector where enterprise and innovation are increasing childcare availability and choice for parents.



More information about this scheme can be found [here](#).

Read Maria Miller's speech in full [here](#)

New equality information, support and advice helpline launched

Equality information, advice and support on discrimination will be provided by the new Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS).

This new service, which was officially launched by Helen Grant MP last week, will give bespoke advice

to individuals across the whole of Great Britain on discrimination issues. It will explain legal rights and remedies within discrimination legislation, across the three nations. It will explain options for informal resolution and help people to pursue them. It will refer people who cannot or do not wish to go down this road to conciliation or mediation services. It will help people who need or want to seek a legal solution by helping to establish eligibility for legal aid and if they are not eligible, to find an accessible legal service or to prepare and lodge a claim themselves.

The EASS is designed to help those individuals who need more expert advice and support on discrimination than advice agencies and other local organisations can provide. It will take referrals from such agencies and organisations and will work collaboratively with them, letting them know the outcome of cases if the client is happy for this to happen. The new service will also work closely with EHRC, referring on potential test cases and sharing information to inform the EHRC's wider work on equality.

You can find more information about the EASS and how to work with the new service to help individuals with discrimination problems at www.equalityadvisoryservice.com. If your website directs people to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's helpline for advice on discrimination, please update it to direct people instead to the EASS.

Following a procurement process carried out under EU rules, the contract to provide the EASS has been awarded to Sitel. Sitel will work with Disability Rights UK, the Law Centres Federation, Voiceability, the British Institute of Human Rights and the Royal Association for Deaf People. The helpline run by the EHRC has now closed.

New definition of domestic violence announced

The Government has announced a new definition of domestic violence and abuse, in response to a public consultation on the issue. From March 2013, the government definition of domestic violence and abuse will include young people aged 16 to 17 years old, and a Young People's Panel will be set up by the NSPCC which will inform the Government's work in this area.

The new introduction also introduces the concept of 'coercive control' as a key feature of domestic violence and abuse. The new definition now reads:

"Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

"Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

"Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim."

*This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

Age discrimination banned

People who believe they have been treated unfairly because of their age will be protected and will have the right to bring a legal challenge.

Age discrimination is already unlawful in the workplace and the Government has now given new protection to ensure older and younger people get fair treatment in the provision of goods, facilities and services.

"This sort of prejudice has no place in modern society and it is right that we introduce legislation that will protect people from unfair treatment," said Minister for Women and Equalities Helen Grant.

"Not only are we providing protection against age discrimination, but we have been careful to ensure that the law strikes the right balance between protecting older people and allowing business to make sensible decisions."

There will be specific exceptions which will continue to allow positive differential treatment, such as free bus passes and free flu jabs for older people, or commercial discounts for younger or older people.

At the same time, it will still be lawful for insurance companies and other financial services to use age when assessing risk in relation to the services they provide.

The introduction of the age discrimination ban will be the final part of the **Equality Act 2010** to be implemented and it will make it unlawful to treat a person differently because of their age.



A summary of responses to the consultation is available **here**.

Further details can be found at:

[http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/violence-against-women-girls/
domestic-violence/](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/violence-against-women-girls/domestic-violence/)

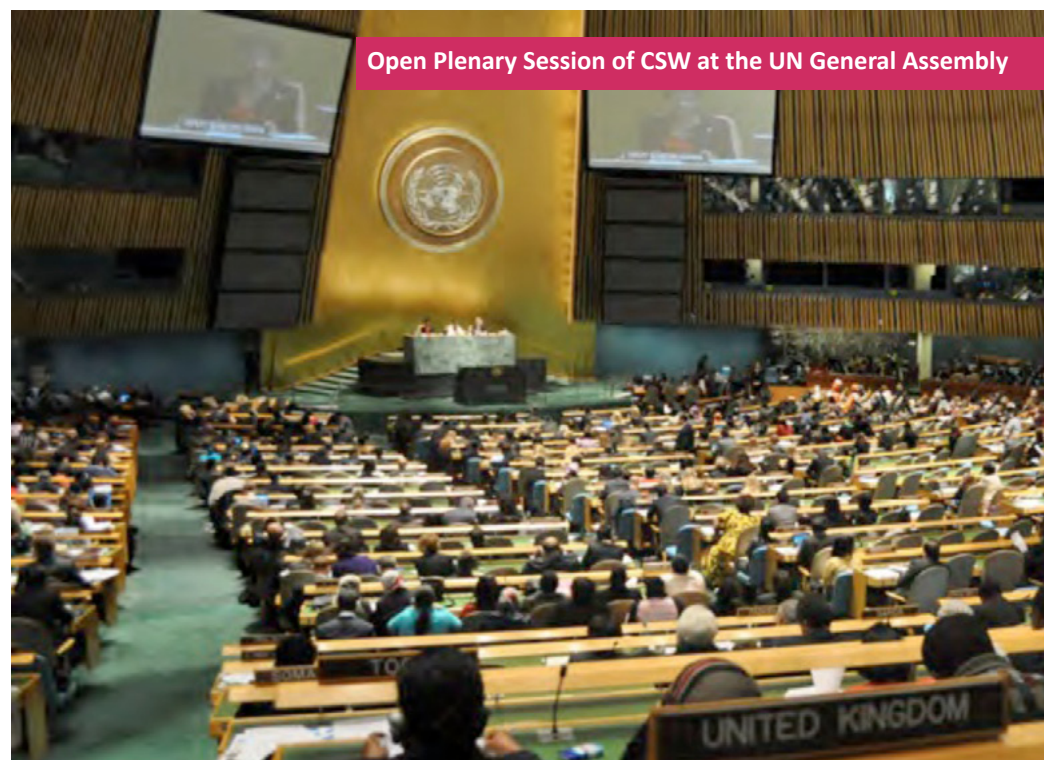
UN Commission on the Status of Women: preparing for the 57th Session

The Government Equalities Office is preparing for the 57th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) which takes place in New York in March 2013

CSW is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the advancement of women. Every year, representatives of UN Member States and many others gather at United Nations Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and advancement of women worldwide. The focus for 2013 is the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.

As part of the preparations we hosted a special meeting for NGOs

on 17 October. This was attended by Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Minister for International Development, Lynne Featherstone and over 80 organisations representing women's interests. Participants were briefed on the UK's domestic and international development policies on eliminating violence against women and girls, and on CSW purposes and processes. They also worked in small groups to identify and develop tactics to maximise NGO influence in the run-up to CSW, and at the event itself. Following this meeting, a liaison group has emerged to act as the focus of NGO partnership with Government in ensuring a successful CSW57.



If you would like to be on the CSW57 mailing list contact : womensengagement@geo.gsi.gov.uk

Personal Views

Olympics and Paralympics leave lasting legacy for women and girls in sport

The Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation predicted that the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics would be the best Games for women ever. But not even we were prepared for the impact that the 2012 Games would have on attitudes to women's sport. The sight of active, powerful and successful women – the likes of Jess Ennis, Kath Grainger, Ellie Simmonds, Nicola Adams, Jade Jones - was an exuberant challenge to the cultural norm that female worth is based largely on appearance. It proved to many that women's sport is exciting, passionate and – crucially - well worth watching.

We carried out some polling after the Olympics to measure the impact of these positive female role models on attitudes to women's sport. 75% of respondents agreed that more media coverage of women's sport would be a positive legacy of the Olympics, and 77% felt the same about increased funding. Critically, 81% of respondents thought that the female athletes at London 2012 are better

role models for young girls than other celebrities we see in the media.

These figures are encouraging, as are the recent calls from the new DCMS Secretary of State Maria Miller, for broadcasters to improve the coverage of women's sport. There is an urgent need for role models and a culture that celebrates fit sporty women in order to inspire girls and women to get more active. Currently just one in ten teenage girls and one in five adult women do enough physical activity to maintain their health.

If a legacy of these Games is that girls can grow up believing that being sporty and active is not just normal but aspirational, then they will have taken an important step. There are enormous cultural hurdles to overcome, but our bold and ambitious sportswomen have provided the perfect role models for the energy and focus we will need to bring to improving sport for women in this country. Let's make sure that 2012 is just the beginning.



Sue Tibballs - Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation

Personal Views

Flexibility works for everyone



John Timpson, member of the Women's Business Council.

Following the Government's announcement last week that flexible working is to be extended to all employees, John Timpson, member of the Women's Business Council, talks about his organisation's approach below.

Before I attended my first meeting of the Women's Business Council I decided to talk to Helen, who runs my Finance Department. In particular I wanted to ask her for her views on how flexible working works in our company.

Before Helen joined us in 2004 she worked for a company with a clear policy on women at work, "I wasn't a mum then," said Helen, "and resented the list of privileges given to working mothers."

"Today", she continued, "I am a working mum and I know that the most important thing is to get the culture right, so that every colleague is trusted to deliver their responsibility in whatever way is best for them".

Wherever possible, flexible working is there for everyone: parents, those caring for their elderly mum, sports fanatics and medical appointments. And although women are probably the biggest beneficiaries, flexible working applies just as much to the men. For example, Andy leaves at 3.30pm to pick up his kids from school and today Mike has taken his car for a service.

It is more difficult for the colleagues who work in our shops. Shoe repairers can't work from home, but we can always supply cover so they can get to their child's nativity play or go to the dentist, and everyone who works at Timpson gets their birthday off.

Our flexible working starts with a conversation - we like to help individuals who are keen to make a success of their career and it works because we have people we can trust. Louise, a senior team member, has two young children and her husband often works away from home. We don't see a lot of Louise at the office but she never misses a deadline. Jenny always leaves at 2.30pm to pick up her kids. Her husband works a night shift which gives her three hours on her own in the evening when she does a lot of her work. It's about mutual commitment, flexibility and trust.

The conversation had to end there. Helen was leaving early to pick up her children from school.