



Maximising women's contribution to future economic growth

One year on — June 2014



Foreword



Ruby McGregor-Smith, CBE
Chair of the Women's
Business Council

We now see the highest ever employment rates for women and a near zero gender pay gap for the under 40s working full time. Things are certainly moving in the right direction

In 2013, the Women's Business Council devised and published a strategy which sought to capitalise on the skills and talents of women.

This strategy formed part of a larger initiative to support long-term UK economic growth and was derived, in the main, from one simple observation: the existence of a vast pool of untapped female talent, something which collectively had the potential to drive significant economic growth.

Despite launching our strategy against a backdrop of unprecedented economic struggle, we remained committed to demonstrating the benefits of women's contribution to the UK economy.

And we are pleased to see that we are making progress. Last year we reported there was an estimated 2.4 million women not working but who wanted to. That figure now stands at 2.3 million women¹, as more and more women have taken up employment over the last year, which is really encouraging news. Since we published our report in 2013, we now see the highest ever employment rates for women and a near zero gender pay gap for the under 40s working full time². Things are certainly moving in the right direction.

We are pleased with the Government's response to our report and welcomed the release of the Government Action Plan, published on 7 November 2013, which demonstrated a real commitment to delivering the Council's recommendations. The Council would like to extend our thanks to the Rt Hon Maria Miller MP, for the leadership she provided in supporting and driving forward the recommendations and we welcome the appointment of the new Minister for Women, the Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP, who shares our passion to see women reach their full potential.

Over the past year, our ambitious programme has seen Council members frequently engage with the business community whom we consider a key player in driving change. In addition, we have heard from a range of business leaders who, like us, believe in the compelling business case for helping women into work, and also many of the women themselves whom we seek to support in this endeavour.

There is no doubt that a change in mind-set, particularly that of senior business figures, is critical if we are to break down the barriers that many women face in forging a successful career. Indeed, our recent conversations with several male CEOs have convinced us that these highly visible, public-facing individuals should become a major focus for the Council as we carry our programme forward into 2014/15.

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To the Council's delight, we have identified good programmes already in place within many organisations to support women throughout their career, and we have been keen to share this best practice across the business community. It is clear that increased collaboration of programmes and ideas can only prove beneficial.


On that note, I am delighted to announce that Ministers have agreed to extend the membership of the Council. This will allow us to inject some fresh thinking into our work, increase our sectorial representation and importantly, extend our reach into all areas of the business community.

I am delighted to announce the following new members:

- Lynne Atkin HR Director, Personal and Corporate, Barclays
- Fiona Dawson President, Mars Chocolate and Global Retail, Mars
- Maxine Dolan Group Leadership Development Director, Tesco Stores Ltd
- Helen Lamprell Corporate and External Affairs Director, Vodafone UK
- Emer Timmons President, BT Global Services, UK
- Denis Woulfe Partner, Deloitte

If we are serious about getting our message out from the classroom to the boardroom – then it is clear that we all have a part to play. In a competitive global market, business needs to harness the very best talent – and that includes women. At our first anniversary, we are pleased to be able to showcase the exemplars we have found, promote best practice and champion the need for greater transparency to help remove persistent obstacles to success.

Thank you to all of you who have continued to give your support to the work of the Council and we look forward to working with you in the coming year to help women with talent, vision and expertise meet their full potential in the workplace. Our new and enlarged Council remains committed to stimulating change and enabling businesses to reap the rewards of greater women's participation in the UK economy.



About the Women's Business Council

The Women's Business Council is an independent, one-year working group that was set up by the Government in 2012 with the aim of ensuring real action by the Government, business and others to maximise women's contribution to economic growth. Its members are all business people working in a range of sectors – including advertising, recruitment, enterprise telecoms, legal, retail, financial and pharmaceutical, to drive the agenda forward. We reported in 2013 and our work is ongoing, with our new and extended Council, to deliver our important recommendations.

Council members



Lynne Atkin
HR Director,
Personal and
Corporate,
Barclays



Fiona Dawson
President, Mars
Chocolate and
Global Retail, Mars



Maxine Dolan
Group Leadership
Development
Director, Tesco
Stores Ltd



Wendy Hallett, MBE
Managing Director,
Hallett Retail



Helen Lamprell
Corporate and
External Affairs
Director,
Vodafone UK



Sue Langley
CEO of UK
Financial Services
Organisation at UK
Trade & Investment



Ruby McGregor-Smith, CBE (Chair)
Chief Executive,
MITIE Group PLC



Sue O'Brien, OBE
CEO, Norman
Broadbent



Jill Shedden
Group HR director,
Centrica plc



Cilla Snowball, CBE
Group Chairman
and Group CEO,
AMV BBDO



Emer Timmons
President, BT
Global Services, UK



John Timpson, CBE
Chairman,
Timpson Limited



Fiona Woolf, CBE
Lord Mayor of
London, Partner,
CMS Cameron
McKenna



Denis Woulfe
Partner, Deloitte



Nicola (Nikki) Yates
UK General
Manager for GSK

Introduction

Just a year ago, the Women's Business Council threw down an ambitious challenge for the business community in our report: *Maximising Women's Contribution to Future Economic Growth*³. The report contained around forty direct and indirect recommendations for business and a further set for the Government to consider.

We recognised that to bring about real and lasting change, there had to be a partnership between government and the business sector to deliver the package of wide-ranging recommendations. As business practitioners ourselves – we know what works best in our own sectors – and how to share best practice with others.

Between us, we have covered the length and breadth of the country and taken the Women's Business Council global at the United Nations back in March, to promote our work. The unique partnership approach that we have built with the Government to deliver the Council's recommendations has really resonated with governments internationally and we have spoken to several overseas ministerial delegations to share our insights.

If we are serious about getting our messages out from the classroom to the boardroom – then it is clear that we all have a part to play. In a competitive global market, business needs to harness the very best talent – and that includes women. At our first anniversary, we are pleased to be able to showcase the exemplars we have found, promote best practice and champion the need for greater transparency to help remove persistent obstacles to success.

One year in the life of the WBC

- Council delivered around 500 activities over the first year to promote WBC recommendations.
- A potential audience of over 10 million people reached through the media.
- Over 138,000 people reached through active engagement opportunities including: companies, governments, industry representative bodies, students, entrepreneurs, overseas delegations and NGOs.
- 100 wide-ranging, industry-led case studies on the WBC site.
- WBC digital publication remains in the top 1,000 government publications (out of 28,000) for pages viewed and on 4 occasions has made the top 100.

Six months on – December 2013

It quickly became evident from our discussions with our counterparts in all sectors of industry that in a competitive market, business needs to harness the best talent – and that includes women. We know from our initial research that the untapped potential is staggering.

There are currently 2.3 million women who are not working and **want to work.**



We have already seen some encouraging progress. We welcome the incoming legislation to enable greater flexible working and shared parental leave, together with increased levels of funding for childcare, which formed part of our package of recommendations and which are important steps to help support women in the workplace

But it is not just about legislative mechanisms, because as business practitioners, we are keen to advocate less regulation, to help stimulate economic growth. It's about business taking up the challenge and starting to deliver change from within their sectors, in a way that works for them.

In December 2013, some six months after the launch of our report, we had capitalised on the opportunity to share the excellent work that was taking place in a wide range of companies across the country. That is why Mitie has led the way by commissioning informative case studies and adopting an Industry-led approach which provides the insight of women at all levels of the management chain in organisations, to share positive outcomes, which has resonated well with the business community.⁴

We have been learning a lot along the way during our first year of implementation. In evaluating feedback and to further support the business community and provide increased focus for discrete business groups, we developed 'Five Simple Steps' guidance at the six month review in December 2013⁵. We wanted to better engage audiences, help dispel myths about the complexity of the recommendations and direct business to those areas where change is necessary and critical.

Companies alone cannot be expected to change the UK's business culture in its entirety, but they can shape and influence *their* part of it. And with gathering momentum behind the Women's Business Council's work, the argument becomes all the more compelling.

Changing the mind-set of the key players in the business world, who hold the key to removing the barriers for countless numbers of women, will remain a critical area for the Council's forward programme during 2014/15. Our discussions with male CEOs this year has convinced us further that there is much more that male leaders can do in the workplace, as visible agents of change, to help women progress and flourish within their organisations.

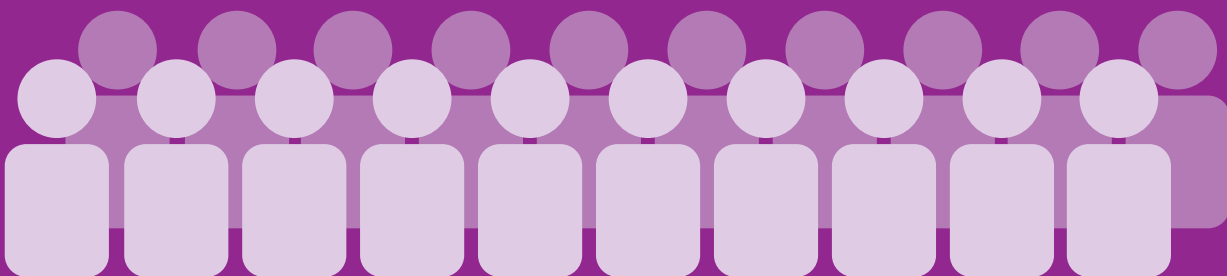
A success story here has to be Lord Davies' excellent work. In addition, the Female FTSE Board Report 2014,⁶ published in March, showed significant progress in work to increase the number of women on British Boards. We are delighted to see that within the FTSE 100, 99% of Boards now include women. However clearly more work needs to be done to develop the talent pipeline to senior management positions so that women can realise their full potential.

What we know one year on

Through our outreach activities this year, we have heard from many women themselves, from all walks of life, who have told us about their aspirations, the skills and talents they believe they can contribute to the UK's commercial success and, not unexpectedly perhaps, some of the challenges they continue to face.

We quickly recognised that encouraging greater diversity within any organisation is an essential driver of long-term success. We have firmly put the spotlight on these successful strategies over the last year, by working with like-minded organisations that are doing some excellent and innovative work such as Opportunity Now's Project 28–40⁷, to support organisational change through action in the workplace and through our own outreach and promotion.

Getting out to speak to the next generation of employees and picking up on future trends, makes good commercial sense.



But we all acknowledge that there is still a great deal to do. Harnessing talent has to be a priority and we are grateful to Brook Graham Diversity and Inclusion Consultancy and to PwC, for generously sharing their informative [Integrated Diversity and Talent Management Checklist](#), originally published in the Female FTSE Report 2014 Crossing the Finish Line.

Some of our recommendations centred on companies' internal policies and others required organisations to look beyond their immediate staff complement, in order to consider the needs of women outside the workforce whose talents and expertise, if harnessed, could contribute to the success of the organisation. As we approach the one year milestone, it allows us as Council, to consider some [organisational tools](#) which, if implemented would help individual organisations drive change at all levels of the company and beyond.

A forward thinking company will introduce internal schemes to:

- Showcase leaders as positive role models for women.
- Set up in-house mentoring and sponsorship schemes.
- Develop gender – friendly policies (flexible working and childcare support).
- Give high priority to supporting and mentoring those staff on career breaks and maternity leave.
- Provide development opportunities for all tiers of the workforce through speaking engagements.

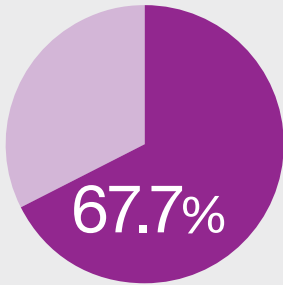
Together with external programmes to:

- Offer apprenticeships and work experience to girls and young women.
- Engage the next generation in schools and colleges with a particular focus on girls.
- Influence greater diversity through existing business supply chains.
- Encourage opportunities through engagement with (women) entrepreneurs.
- Provide opportunities to engage with women who have been out of the workforce for some years.

There is an opportunity here for us all to be clearer about what 'success' really means for the latest generation of graduates and young people entering the job-market and the modern workplace needs to be adaptable to attract and maintain the top candidates. Getting out to speak to the next generation of employees and picking up on future trends, makes good commercial sense.

We have seen encouraging signs of economic recovery in recent months and women are well placed to take advantage of new job opportunities.

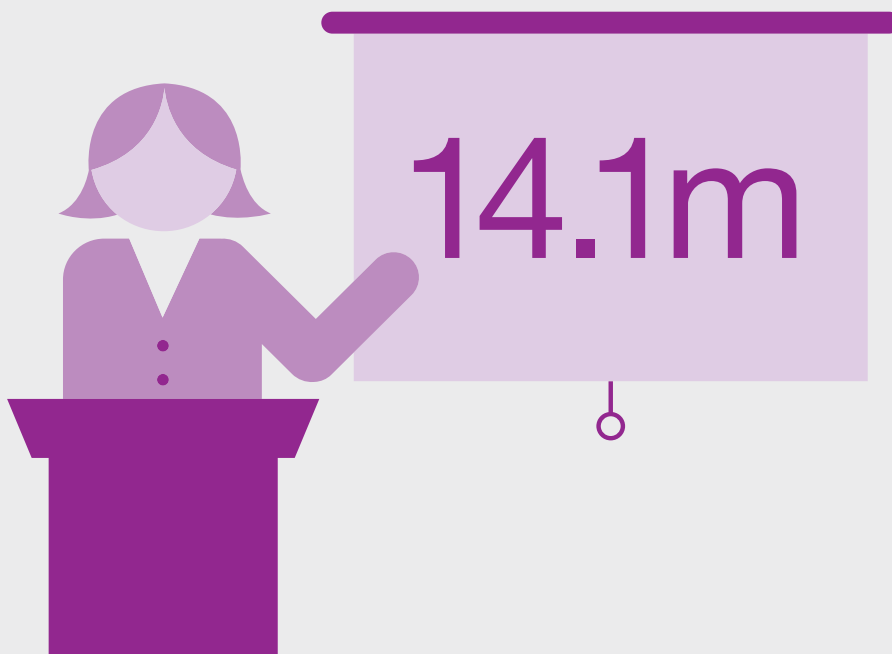
Highest ever female employment rate – 67.7%, up 1% on the year⁸



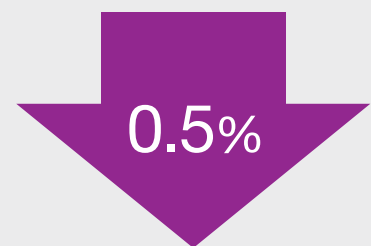
More women in self-employment than ever before – 1.4 million, up 166,000 on the year⁹



More women in employment than ever before – 14.1 million, up 292,000 on the year¹⁰



Lowest ever female inactivity rate – 27.6%, down 0.5% on the year¹¹



More women working full time than ever before – 8.1 million, up 255,000 on the year¹²



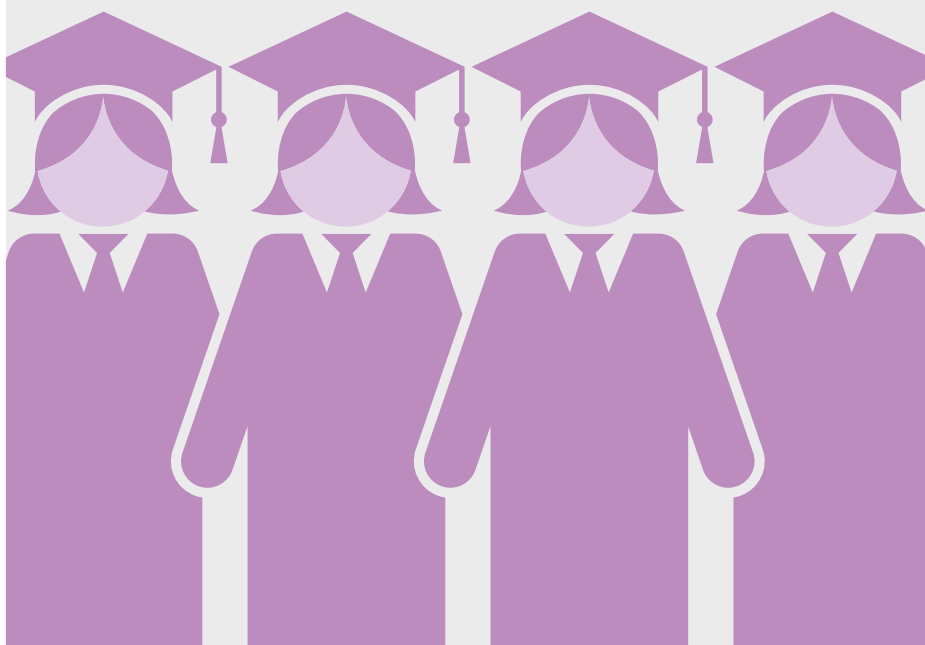
More women working part time than ever before – 6.0 million, up 37,000 on the year¹³



More women starting apprenticeships than ever before – 279,000, up 3,000 on the year¹⁵



More female graduates than ever before – 449,000, up 3,000 on the year¹⁴



More female graduates in STEM subjects than ever before – 160,000, up 4,000 on the year¹⁶



More women-led SMEs – 20.2% of all SMEs in 2012, up 1% on 2010¹⁷



Our priorities

When we published our report in June 2013, we highlighted a number of recommendations to support women in the workplace.

If implemented, it's a win-win situation for everyone, with clear benefits:

- For women themselves – in terms of improving their economic independence.
- For businesses – which can capitalise on a rich seam of untapped talent.
- To the economy – by improving its health and competitiveness.

So what challenges still lie ahead? We have found there is a compelling case to address unconscious bias.

A recent YouGov Poll conducted by the Government Equalities Office highlighted that two-thirds (66%) of people agree that sexism is still a problem in the workplace; three-quarters (74%) of women think that sexism is still a problem in many workplaces compared with 56% of men.

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These startling statistics make it clear that more effort needs to be made to tackle issues such as unconscious bias in recruitment and promotion systems. Addressing these unacceptable obstacles will offer real opportunities for women to progress through the pipeline, demonstrate their capability and to secure much needed board positions.

But that is why we think our work is so important and our new and enlarged Council will enable us to spread our messages further still.

The Women's Business Council site provides a valuable repository of information that is growing all the time. Uniquely, it is a free resource and we would encourage all organisations to use the information it contains.

It includes:

- Valuable evidence on the challenges facing women's participation in the UK economy to help businesses understand the range of barriers that still exist.
- A range of tools to support businesses to increase diversity and bring in new talent.
- Regular updates through new social media to keep everyone informed about the latest thinking, research and events.
- Topical blogs from Council members to inform and stimulate debate about the issues critical to the WBC.
- A new [directory of useful information](#), to signpost businesses and individuals to practical resources and information.
- A matrix of [national and international indicators](#) to enable the Council and the Government track progress and to help us demonstrate commitment and transparency.
- Credible examples of innovative ideas and best practice that really work in a commercial setting, in the form of case studies and are publishing our 101st case study to celebrate our first anniversary.¹⁸

As we move into the second year of implementing the Women's Business Council recommendations during 2014/15, we are looking forward to intensifying our efforts to increase business diversity with our new business partners.

And our first question to business leaders in the coming year is very simple: 'What are you doing for the women who work for you?'

1. Starting out

Supporting the choices of girls and young women

- Broaden girls' aspirations and their understanding of career options by creating more effective partnerships between schools, career development professionals, parents and employers.
- Utilise the skills and talents of girls and young women to increase the nation's economic competitiveness in a global market.

Improving careers advice



Supporting girls and parents with better information and resources



Promoting effective work experience and developing workplace skills



Supporting more girls into STEM careers



The work of the Women's Business Council started in the classroom and we are determined to see a mind shift in the generations of young women to come to ensure they meet their full potential

Our report, published last year found that family is a significant influence in career choices and that parents can often advise girls and boys differently and that parental misconceptions can have an adverse effect on pupil choices.

That is why we advocated the development of *Your Daughter's Future: a careers toolkit for parents*, which is being piloted in selected schools from May 2014¹⁹ and highlights key content which includes invaluable advice on how girls aged 12–16 would like their parents to support them in choosing and working towards the best career for them. There will be a strong focus on STEM and non-traditional careers in the toolkit, to showcase the broad range of options available. We are confident that this will be a useful resource for both student and parents to explore different options available and bust some myths about what careers girls can and can't do.

These initiatives will be critical to changing the way girls think about their future opportunities but equally important is how they themselves perceive successful women around them in the world of work. Getting inspirational role models out to talk to girls in schools, colleges and universities is critical – because individual life stories resonate powerfully on an individual basis. But it is essential that we encourage all women in the business world (and beyond) to engage with young women and that all walks of life and backgrounds are reflected.

CMI launched new research in the spring, 'The Power of Role Models'²⁰ which highlighted that women are still less likely to aspire to the top jobs, that outdated patriarchal stereotypes are often to blame and that more role models for women are needed.

There is a strong argument for more efforts to persuade girls to study STEM subjects at school – including laying the foundations in primary education

WBC member Cilla Snowball has been a tireless campaigner on this topic, giving an inspiring speech to a large audience at the CMI Conference on 10 October 2013 – where she championed the need for more leaders to step up the plate to speak out and encouraged greater diversity and representation.

We are urging all businesses to encourage their staff to join any one of the broad range of schemes which brings together speakers from the commercial world to inspire and support students at schools and universities. It is an excellent development opportunity for all employees and an important step in encouraging greater diversity of role models. Getting more publicity for your company and your product also makes good financial sense.

But we advocate going one step further. Think about the untapped young talent out there and offer a range of work experience and apprenticeship opportunities for young people wherever possible. And in those industries which have historically attracted male applicants – focus on speaking to, and offering opportunities for, young women. WBC member Sue O'Brien has worked with many organisations over the course of the year to encourage the take-up of apprentices.

Attracting graduates remains a significant challenge for the engineering and scientific sectors; there has been little improvement in women entering these sectors over the last decade. STEM subjects offer high potential for rewarding careers, yet these industries typically suffer skills shortages. The Social Market Foundation recently estimated a 40,000 per year shortfall in the number of STEM graduates in the UK²¹.

The Women's Business Council was delighted to have the opportunity to discuss our vision to raise girls' aspirations in an international setting, during the annual gathering of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, in New York in June 2014.

WBC member Nikki Yates joined UK government ministers and international speakers to share good practice about initiatives being undertaken within the Pharmaceuticals Industries. The aim was to encourage an increase in girls' participation and to promote innovative partnership working, such as that being forged by the WBC to increase the numbers of women entering into STEM professions. This won't happen overnight but through the work that the government is doing, together with schools and the businesses in those sectors – there is an opportunity to attract women into these traditionally higher paid professions.

We recognise that young women hold the key to the future. It is incumbent on all of us to inspire and educate young women to think about all the options open to them.

2. Getting on

Supporting women in the middle phase of their working lives

The creation of a work and social environment which ensures women can fully contribute their economic potential by:

- Ensuring effective talent management.
- Facilitating access to affordable, accessible and quality childcare.
- Supporting culture change in business through the promotion and adoption of flexible working.

Ensuring effective talent management



Facilitating access to affordable childcare



Promoting and supporting flexible working



Men as agents of change



Some key issues have emerged for us over the course of this important first year

These have included our conviction that for women to operate on a level playing field, there has to be access to good quality and affordable childcare and employers and the government both have a role to play here. There have been some welcome steps forward but we need to maintain a live debate about this important issue and how it impacts on women's access to good quality work.

We also recognise the importance of women maintaining links with the workplace both in the short-term, due to periods of maternity leave and for longer spells when women have been out of the workforce for some time, often due to caring responsibilities. Regardless of the time periods, the challenges often remain the same. Some women lose confidence in their abilities and others often lose vital skills. We believe that business could do more to engage these groups of women and tap into their experience and potential.

We have heard from key partners throughout the year (such as those highlighted in the Female FTSE Board Report 2014) that talent management is the key in creating a pipeline through which talented women can get to the top. This remains a challenge when women routinely leave the workforce for short or longer periods to care for others, to travel or to study. In any organisation, middle managers and sound management policies are the key to the success of not only future generations of female leaders but also those women who have taken a break from work to care for their family.

Senior men, and indeed the younger generations of men, coming along through the business pipeline have a critical role to play in shaping ideas and challenging outdated operational models which can exclude large tiers of the workforce from reaching their full potential. It is time to have that debate with younger men about their own aspirations and their solutions for ensuring fairness at work.

Flexible working is critical and now is the time to explore what really works and to share those ideas with others

WBC member John Timpson hosted a breakfast roundtable for male CEOs on 21 February 2014 to discuss what stronger roles male leaders could play to increase the numbers of senior women rising through the ranks and they all agreed that flexibility was the key. John Timpson's company has pioneered innovative flexible working arrangements over many years and you can find out more about John's insights [here](#).

We are delighted to see that from June this year, the Government will extend the right to request flexible working to all employees which will help tackle the unfair stigma that those who need to work flexibly are less committed to their employer.

Flexible working opportunities fit comfortably with the freedoms offered by modern technology and the modern workplace will use this to its advantage. This suits a growing number of men as well as women and a modern company will seek to find a balance for all its employees, regardless of their personal circumstances.

Flexible full time working is also a valuable option to complement part time opportunities (for both employers and employees) and companies could do more to promote this arrangement. It is also important to acknowledge where job-sharing at a senior management level has been successful and this should be championed as part of a set of flexible working options.

All employers want the best people and it's important to consider what it is employees need in order to do the job effectively to deliver. The world is changing and successful businesses must respond to the world around them. The 24/7 world and the availability of new technology means there is less distinction between home and workplace although it is important to recognise that total flexibility and merging of boundaries wouldn't suit everyone. But there is a case for exploring what does work for individuals and teams and that is best sorted out at a local management level.

We could all learn a lot from some of the UK's newest and most profitable sectors (eg the creative industries) which have flourished in recent years and have often developed with employee-led flexible working practices. The creative economy accounted for 2.55 million jobs in 2012, or 1 out of every 12 jobs in the UK.²²

So what we are saying to business leaders when we look at the business case is – ensure that work place practices meet the needs of a modern society by reviewing flexible working practices to ensure that anything other than the 'out-dated' 9–5 model isn't de-valued.

We would also urge businesses to ensure that their promotion and progression processes are objective and transparent so that they can fully utilise the skills of these women and help 'pull' them through the pipeline, utilising their vast experience and knowledge rather than just expecting them to 'push' themselves up in an outdated culture which can suppress their talent from the word go.

3. Staying on

Supporting women's continuing development and contribution in the third phase of their working lives

Ensure the skills and talents of women in the third phase of their working lives are fully used and are not lost to the economy due to caring responsibilities or the changing labour market by:

- Helping individuals and businesses better balance senior roles and caring responsibilities.
- Supporting these women to gain the skills to work in sectors forecasting growth and experiencing skills shortages.

Reskilling to match sectors of predicted growth



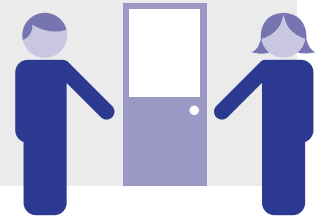
Helping to balance work and caring responsibilities



Challenging ingrained stereotypes and workplace culture



Helping women back into the workplace



One of the key findings from the Women's Business Council report was that women's needs may change dramatically through the working life cycle

Some of the changes may be planned, whereas other employees may just find that their family or personal circumstances have changed radically. And in a modern workplace that fosters the talents of everyone it's clear that it's not all about legislation – which can stifle innovation and growth – it's about culture. A business culture that recognises that people may need to take a break from the workplace and which actively supports those out of the workforce to return will have higher levels of employee engagement and commitment²³.

Centrica recently held a roundtable with interested parties to discuss what more could be done to support those women taking breaks from the workplace. Led by WBC member Jill Shedden, we were delighted to see so many organisations taking so much interest in the subject and providing some stimulating ideas. We recognise that we have a lot to learn from schemes already being delivered in some organisations and in supporting women to gain the skills to work in those sectors forecasting growth.

Not all women will have childcare responsibilities during their working lives, but many women will, and it is important that caring responsibilities and the necessary breaks from the workplace are taken seriously by employers. Women commonly experience a change in their work and career trajectory when returning to the workplace after having children, with about one third facing a downward shift in status²⁴. In addition, with an ageing population, more employees will have caring responsibilities in the future, so every company needs to acknowledge that this is a growing trend.

Successful companies will cater for those with caring commitments – and have a competitive edge – but it does require workforce investment and forward planning

Women have a 50% chance of providing care by the time they are 59; for men its 75. Women are also more likely to give up work in order to care²⁵. One in four women aged 50–64, and nearly one in six men are carers for older or disabled loved ones²⁶.

This is why we recommended that the Government increased support for carers who want to remain in the workplace, through partnership working between local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships. We look forward to seeing the developments currently under development by the Government to support the needs of carers.

Enthusiastic and committed managers who take their management responsibilities seriously and organisations whose management and appraisal structures promote these important management models – are best placed to bring on talented women. We applaud initiatives such as those pioneered by Tomorrow's Company²⁷ which have done considerable work to help organisations to build cultures that help women to reach the top. High performing companies need high performing managers and we welcome work being done to implement exemplar management training such as those being championed through 'The Power of Diversity' initiative.

These schemes ensure that middle managers – working in a range of sectors – understand the importance of keeping in touch with employees on a break and ensure that support is in place to help women come back up to speed after a break. Fiona Woolf, WBC member and the current Lord Mayor of London has been a strong advocate for accelerating the pace for change and looking to encourage managers across a broad range of professions to take greater care to nurture female talent and go the extra mile to bring that talent back.

This is a real opportunity to re-define the skills and qualities that are viewed as critical to business, to ensure that life skills and experience are given sufficient weight in identifying the best candidates for the job.

We know that nearly twice as many women (66%) as men (34%) expect to retire past state pension age and businesses cannot afford to ignore this talented pool of resources. A large proportion of women hit their peak in career progression later in life as a result of taking time out of the labour market to care for others and we need to be able to harness their valuable contribution. We therefore ask business not to make unconscious decisions on behalf of these women.

Our message to business is – don't assume that women aren't ambitious because they are in the third phase of their working lives. Businesses need to modernise their workplace and change the culture from within to support these women.

4. Enterprise

Helping women gain the necessary skills to set up and run their own business

- Ensuring women understand how enterprise opportunities can offer financial independence and flexibility in the workplace.
- Helping women to gain the necessary skills to run their own business.

Promoting enterprise through education



Increasing the availability of inspirational role models



Providing access to finance



Promoting support for women who want to start a business

SME APP

There is enormous potential in women's untapped entrepreneurialism and a strong case for providing more support for women who want to set up and run their own businesses.

Enterprise is vital for economic growth, national competitiveness and innovation. If women were setting up and running their own businesses at the same rate as men, we could have an extra one million entrepreneurs. Women are currently only half as likely to do this and that is bad for the UK economy, for women and their families.

Britain is one of the easiest places to set up and run a business. According to the World Bank it takes just 13 days to set up a business here, compared with the world average of 35 days. Britain ranks seventh in the world for ease of doing business, has the fewest barriers to entrepreneurship and remains the gateway for Europe.

We know in the current landscape:

- That the UK is one of the most entrepreneurial European countries for women.
- That we have seen an upward trajectory in the last few years of the number of women setting up their own businesses.
- That the UK is a global leader on equality.

All this makes for an excellent starting place to encourage other women to follow suit. But there are some challenges and we together with the Government are determined to intensify efforts to tackle the remaining barriers.

WBC member Sue Langley joined the Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP, Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Cabinet Minister for Women for a conference on 7 May 2014 to discuss how best to encourage female entrepreneurship because the barriers which women face when starting and growing their own businesses have been well documented by the Women's Business Council.

Encouraging young women to think about setting up their own businesses remains a priority

The main objective of the conference was to come up with a range of implementable ideas on how the Government could encourage more women to take up its enterprise offer. Attendees came up with a number of useful ideas about how the Government can work with a range of partners in the business and finance sectors to encourage more women to start and grow their own businesses. Ministers have committed to take away and consider how best to put this into practice.

While parents are a key to influencing career choices, the Council was also keen to see schools and the business community do more to promote enterprise.

The new partnerships will help deliver a key WBC recommendation that schools, businesses and others should work together to broaden girls' aspirations and the understanding of their career options. The partnerships will test different approaches to doing this looking at how systematic business engagement with schools can best inform girls' subject choices and subsequent career decisions. We hope that these will become genuinely self-sustaining, and that the learning from them can be quickly disseminated. This will complement the new tool for parents '*Your Daughter's Future: a careers toolkit for parents*', to ensure that schools and businesses do their bit to raise girls' aspirations and enhance their workplace skills.

We also welcome the 'Women's Start Up Project', a new pilot initiative aimed at giving teams of budding female student entrepreneurs who are not studying traditional business subjects, a taste of what it's like to run their own business by supporting them in developing the skills it takes to start up their own ventures. The pilot will initially focus on the Visitor Economy and Creative Industries sectors. WBC member Wendy Hallett has been an active participant in the Speakers for Schools scheme this year and as a successful entrepreneur herself has been an inspiration to countless young people.

We were also pleased to see recent developments to appoint Lorely Burt as the Women in Enterprise Champion aimed at raising awareness among women about available government and industry support for new and growing businesses, encouraging more women-led businesses to compete for public sector contracts, and to raise awareness of the sources and types of business finance. We look forward to her reporting back her insights this autumn.

[Our message on enterprise is for schools and careers services to note the value of entrepreneurs and the added value to the UK economy that more women taking up roles in these areas could make. In particular, we welcome the £1m Challenge Fund to get even more women running online businesses.](#)

Annex 1

Integrated diversity talent management checklist

In view of the continuing need and urgency to focus efforts on the development of a sustainable pipeline of female talent to Executive Director level, we offer the following checklist of practical steps companies can take.

Process	Key Questions	Metric/Action
1 Talent Strategy and Workforce Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on headcount requirements have you scanned the marketplace to understand the % of females and where they are? Have you set targets for a % of women at each level of your talent pipeline? Do you hold leaders accountable for developing 'diverse' talent? 	<p>% of females in the market becomes minimum</p> <p>recruitment target % of women at each level of talent pipeline</p>
2 Attraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you know how attractive you are as an employer to women? Do you know what women want from their employer and are you adapting your value proposition accordingly? Can you set a recruitment target for gender based on sound market analysis? Are you advertising in the right places to attract female applicants? 	<p>x% female applications</p> <p>x% females pre-selected</p> <p>x is constant or increases)</p>
3 Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you analysed your process at each stage to see where/if women are falling out of the recruitment process and whether this is disproportionate to male recruits? Do you set targets at each stage of the recruitment process for female recruits and do you analyse your performance? Do you receive feedback from female candidates (successful and unsuccessful) to improve your process? 	<p>x% females in selection process</p> <p>x% females offered</p> <p>x% females accept</p> <p>(x is constant or increases)</p>
4 Performance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have your performance managers undergone unconscious bias awareness training? Have you checked the distribution of performance ratings, males versus females, to ensure parity? 	<p>% of female top performers/all females = % male top performers/all males</p>
5 Assessment of Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the criteria you use for the assessment of high potential been 'gender-proofed'? Do you review the diversity of your high potential talent pool and hold leaders accountable for talent development? 	<p>% of females in high potential talent pool</p>

Process	Key Questions	Metric/Action
6 Training and Leadership Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Are certain development programmes regarded as 'career gateway' or 'transition' programmes? ■ What guidance is provided to the business leaders nominating the participants – does it reference gender diversity considerations? ■ If Executive Development programmes are offered (say with business schools), are equal numbers of sponsored candidates male/female? 	<p>% of parity in male and female nominations (representative from the pool from which participants are drawn)</p> <p>Gender split of participants on sponsored leadership programmes and mentoring programmes is proportionate</p>
7 Succession Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Has a woman ever done that 'top job'? ■ Is the succession pool a group of 'look alikes'? ■ Are you allowing pools of 1? This is not a succession pool 	<p>At least 30% of pool should be female (ie 1 in 3 candidates)</p>
8 Career Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Are critical operational or overseas roles offered in equal part to males and females? ■ Are mentoring programmes and sponsorship opportunities offered to women? ■ Are specific programmes offered to women as part of a positive action approach? 	<p>Gender split of participants on sponsored leadership programmes and mentoring programmes is proportionate</p> <p>Robust career plans in place for both females and males with ExCo sponsorship of females as required</p>
9 Compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What is your gender pay gap? ■ Are bonuses/increases discretionary? ■ Are retention bonuses or increases paid? 	<p>Conduct an equal pay review; if you haven't done so, you cannot know if you have a gap</p>
10 Leaving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Do you know why people leave your organisation? ■ Do you understand the profile of your leavers? 	<p>% turnover of males vs. females by grade/key career stage</p>

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Source: Vinnicombe, Doldor and Turner (2014), 'Female FTSE Report 2014: Crossing the Finish Line'. Cranfield International Centre for Women Leaders, Cranfield University School of Management. March 2014.

Annex 2 – Directory of useful links

Starting out

Businesses who have signed up and dedicated to raising the career aspirations of young people providing work experience/training opportunities across a wide range of sectors.	https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/business-compact-signatories
Encouraging and promoting STEM careers to women as well as finding female role models in STEM.	http://www.stemettes.org/
The Royal Society grant scheme to primary and secondary schools and colleges to run science projects in partnership with a professional scientist or engineer.	https://royalsociety.org/education/partnership/
This Government website allows you to register your profile, search vacancies and apply for apprenticeships in England.	https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship
City of London Corporation offers projects under the City's 'Raising Aspirations' theme with a range of activities including paid and unpaid work experience opportunities.	http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/business/supporting-local-communities/raising-the-aspirations-of-young-people/Pages/default.aspx
Lady Geek is a creative agency transforming the way companies speak to women which includes how to increase and nurture female talent within organisations.	http://ladygeek.com/
Wise promotes female talent in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) from classroom to boardroom.	http://www.wisecampaign.org.uk/
Plotr is a one-stop-shop for career inspiration and preparation.	https://www.plotr.co.uk/
STEM Diversity campaign bringing together business, educators, civil society and Government.	http://www.yourlife.org.uk/

Getting on

Everywoman is a global membership organisation that champions the advancement of women.	https://www.everywoman.com/about-us
Women on Boards UK is an action-oriented social enterprise supporting women seeking to leverage their professional skills and experience into non-executive director and other board level roles.	http://www.womenonboards.co.uk/about/
The Mentoring Foundation: FTSE 100 Cross-Company Mentoring Executive Programme assists companies in developing their talent pipeline through the creation of external mentoring relationships.	http://www.mentoringfoundation.co.uk/ftse-100-cross-company-mentoring-executive-programme/

The 30% Club are working to improve the pipeline below board level to widen the talent pool and support and encourage successful women in business.	http://www.30percentclub.org/
An Inspirational Journey provides a business-led approach to help build and maintain a pipeline of talent by engaging business in discussions around effective management and performance.	http://www.aninspirationaljourney.com/
Cranfield's general management programmes for executive management development are designed to assist managers at key transition points in their careers.	http://www.som.cranfield.ac.uk/som/p13925/Programmes-and-Executive-Development/General-Management-Development/Which-Programme
The leading niche social networking site from the National Black Women's Network	http://www.sistatalk.co.uk/
The National Black Women's Network champions the advancement of women across all professional disciplines by recognising excellence and promoting leadership.	http://nbwn.org
The Public Appointments section provides details of current vacancies on the boards of UK public bodies and on a range of UK Government committees.	http://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/

Staying on

Support for carers at work	http://www.nhs.uk/CarersDirect/workandlearning/work/Pages/Supportforcarersatwork.aspx
DWP's Age Positive initiative brings together research and information from employers on effectively managing an ageing workforce of all generations.	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/age-positive
The Work Programme (launched June 2011) provides guidance and support for those who are more at risk of long-term unemployment	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/work-programme-guidance-for-employers-and-providers
Support to working carers to help retain skilled workers rather than recruit and retrain new staff	http://www.employersforcarers.org/
Helping working parents achieve a work/life balance	http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk/
The Prince's Trust for Mature Enterprise is the only national organisation dedicated to providing everyone over 50 who is unemployed or under threat of redundancy with the support to achieve financial, social and personal fulfilment through sustainable self-employment	http://www.prime.org.uk/

Enterprise

Enterprising Women is an organisation that aims to promote, inspire and connect women in business. <http://www.enterprising-women.org/>

Mentorsme is Britain's online mentoring portal, which is funded and operated by the British Bankers Association (BBA). <http://www.mentorsme.co.uk/>

Helpful resources for those thinking of starting or growing their own business. <http://www.enterprisesupport.org.uk/>

Forward Ladies is one of the UK's largest business networking organisations for women. <http://www.forwardladies.com/>

Social Enterprise UK runs effective campaigns for their members, lobby on the sector's behalf, and carries out robust and respected research to help paint a picture of the UK's social enterprise movement. <http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/>

WEConnect International helps women-owned businesses succeed in global value chains. <http://weconnectinternational.org/en/>

WiRE helps support all rural businesses with a package of practical support, including networking. <http://www.wireuk.org/>

Young Enterprise is the United Kingdom's largest business and enterprise education charity. <http://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/>

GOV.UK offers tools and guidance to support entrepreneurs to set up and grow their own businesses. <https://www.gov.uk/business>

The Great Business campaign offers tools and guidance to support entrepreneurs to set up and grow their own businesses. <http://www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/>

Enterprise Nation's mission is to create an inspirational environment for business owners and would-be entrepreneurs. <https://www.enterprisenation.com/>

Other useful sites

Inspiring the Future is a free service with volunteers from all sectors and professions going into state schools and colleges to talk about their jobs and sectors. <http://www.inspiringthefuture.org/>

The Recruitment & Employment Confederation is the Professional Body for the recruitment industry and run campaigns on diversity issues. <https://www.rec.uk.com/>

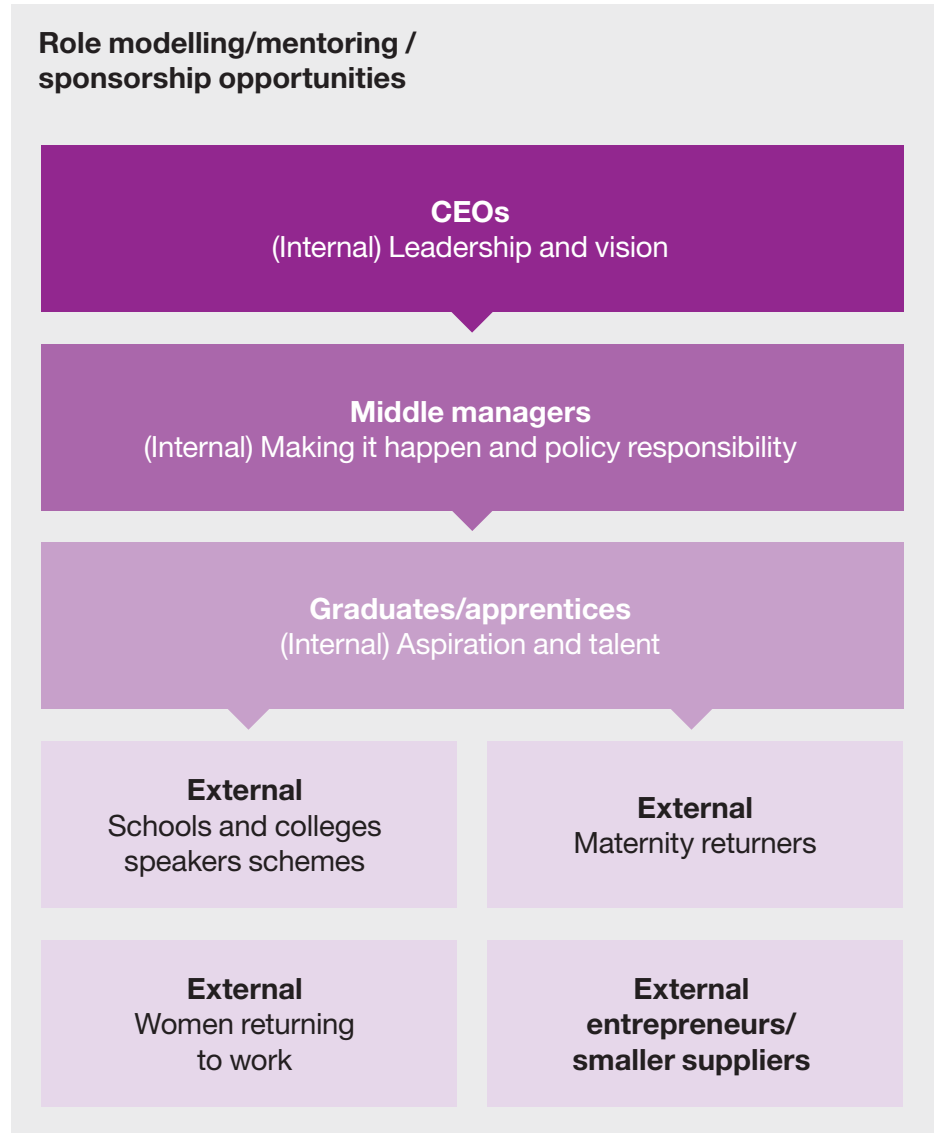
Timewise – for part time and flexible options for skilled people. <http://www.timewisejobs.co.uk/>

Ten2Two specialises in flexible and part-time working. They help local businesses find talented high-calibre professionals who can work flexibly. <http://www.ten2two.org/Ten2Two/index.asp>

Opportunity Now works with government and business to increase women's success at work. They have also launched an in depth survey in November 2013, 28–40 about women's experiences in the workplace and the barriers that hold them back. <http://opportunitynow.bitc.org.uk/>

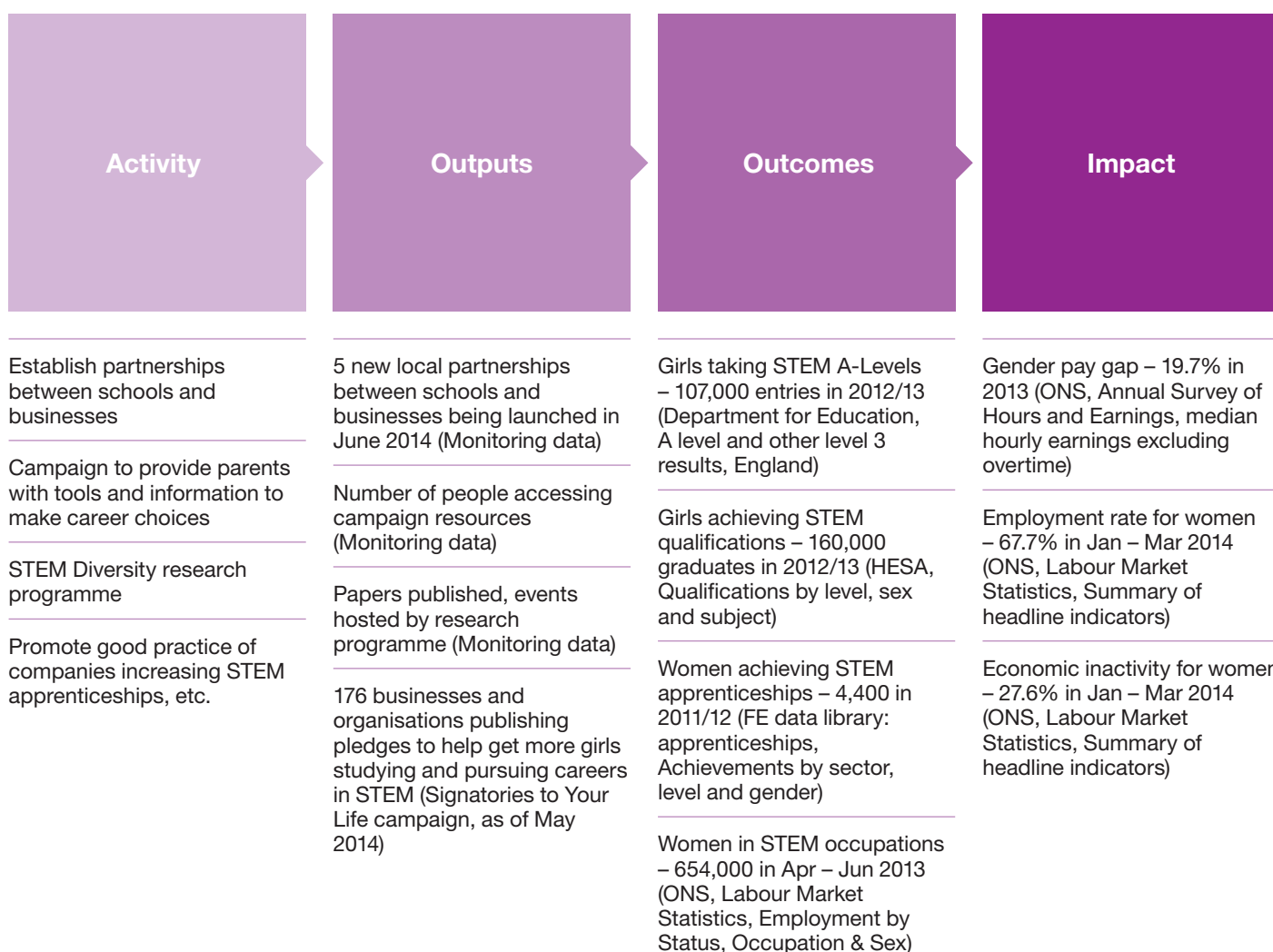
Annex 3 – Business organisational model

Integrated internal and external diversity engagement model for business (WBC recommendations)

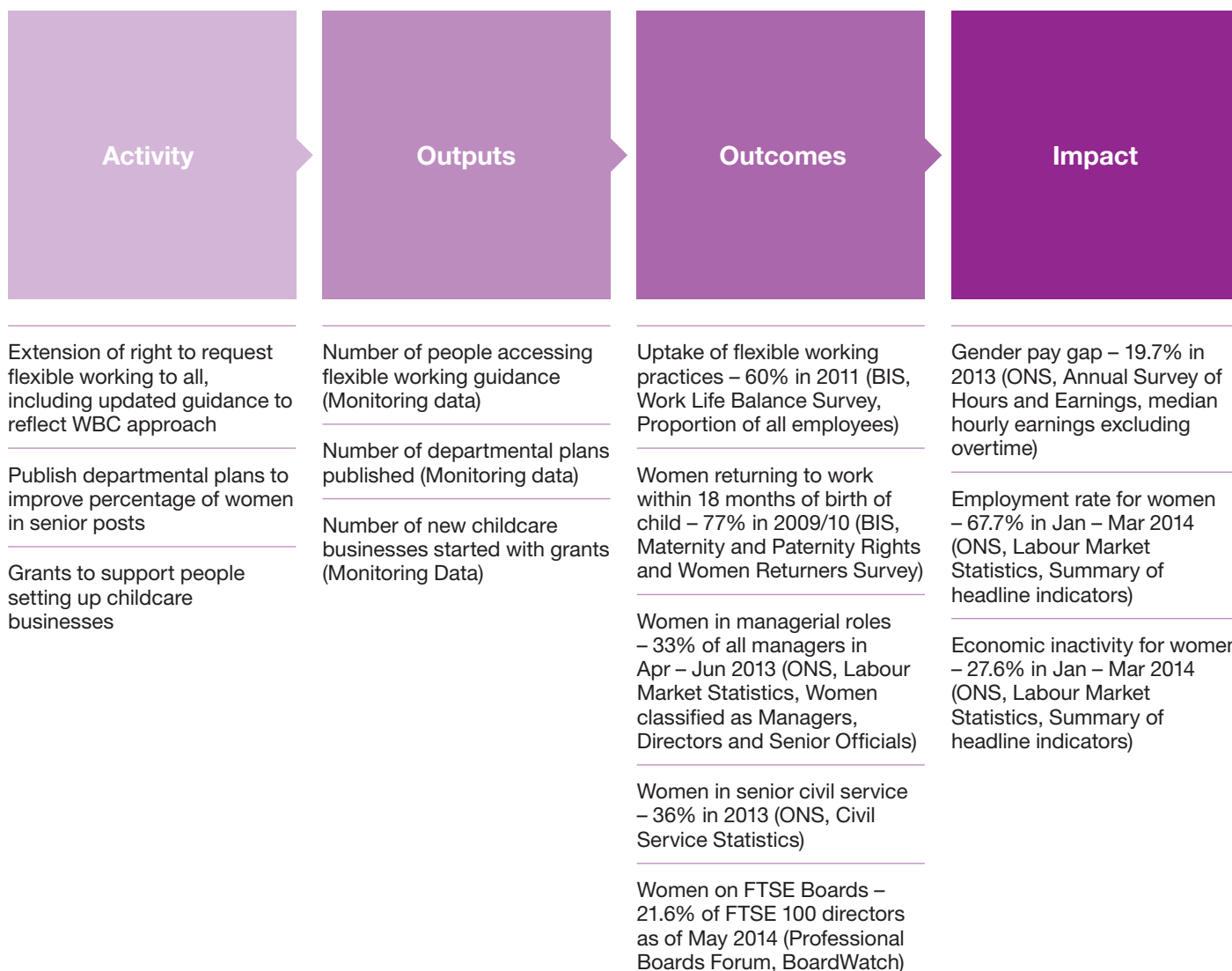


Annex 4 – National indicators

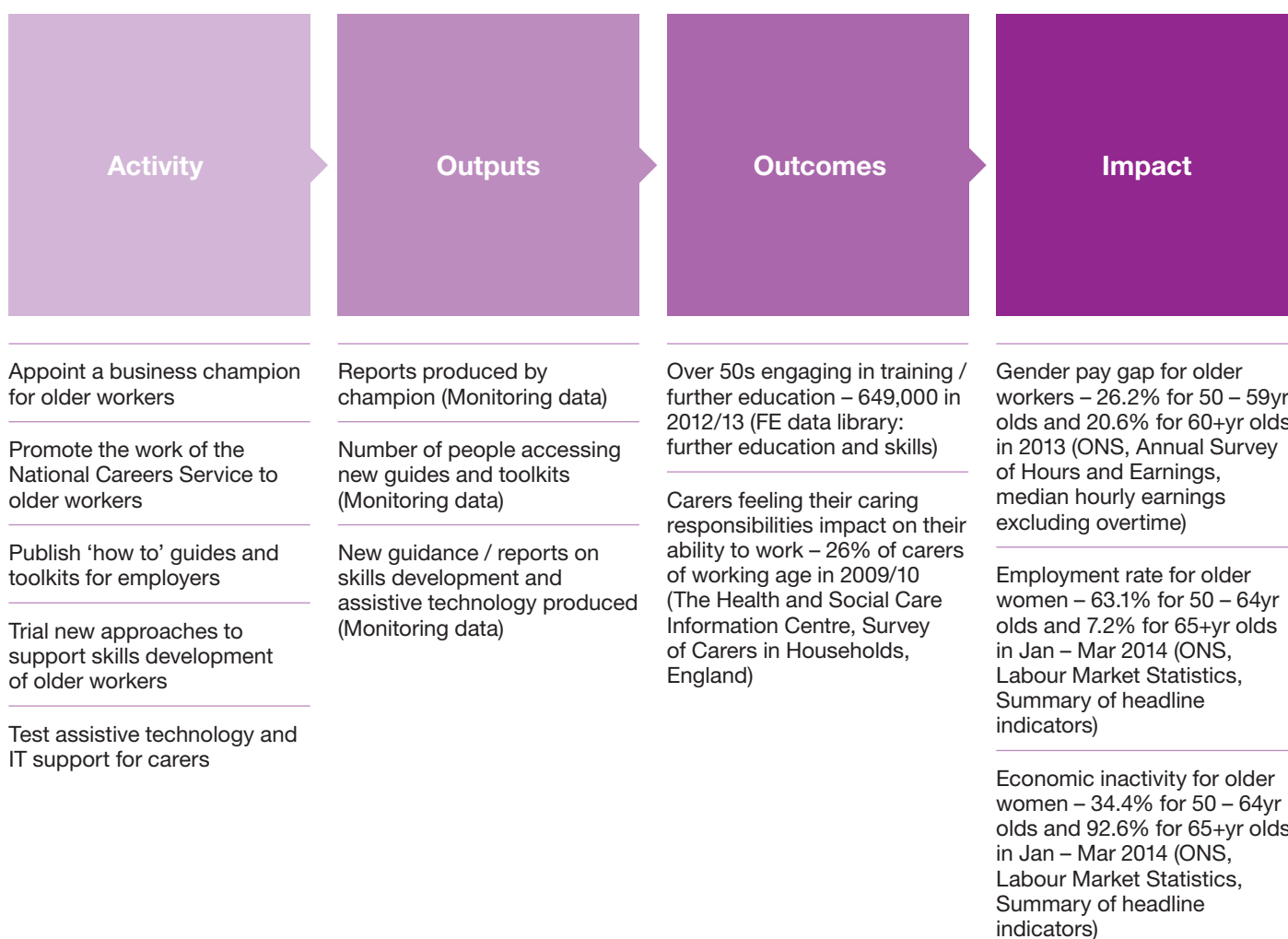
Starting out



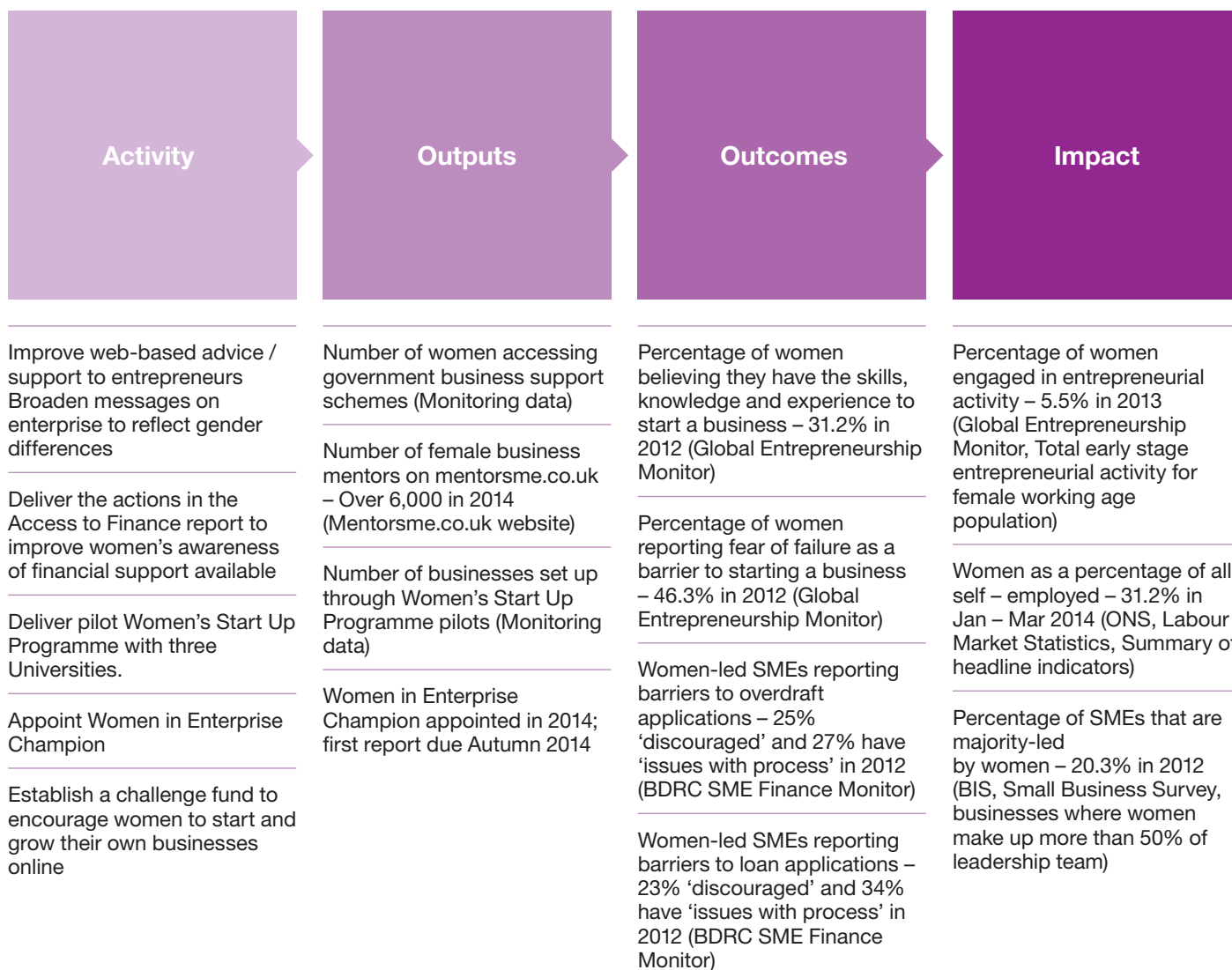
Getting on



Staying on



Enterprise



Appendices

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For more information, visit
womensbusinesscouncil.dcms.gov.uk