

Gender Pay Gap Review Panel – September 2018

Addressed to Jean Dale, Soroptimists (Past President SI Jersey)

Forwarded to Joint Presidents of Soroptimist International of Jersey
Catherine Kirby & Christine Spink (April 2018-April 2019)

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We would like to thank you for including our charity, Soroptimist International of Jersey in this important review. Our focus is helping to improve the lives of women and girls through education and empowerment.

Do you think there is a gender pay gap in Jersey?

Yes. I understand this is not about 'equal pay for equal work' but the inequalities that exist in the amount women may earn over their lifetime in comparison to men.

Do you have any evidence to support your perception?

There is a lot of evidence from other countries but as far as I am aware no specific review has been undertaken in Jersey. However by walking in town and driving round the Island, it is women who drive cleaner's vans, mainly serve in shops, and offer care in care homes – all jobs that are not at the higher pay scale. In the JEP photographs of management teams, always male dominated.

What initiatives do you think could be adopted in order to reduce a gender pay gap?

Wage transparency, especially the bonuses paid to men and women. .

Affordable childcare so parents can make a true choice – at the moment it is often more economically viable to stop work or work part-time and care for your own children. Although more men in recent years have taken over childcare responsibilities, the main carers are still usually the mother.

Fortunately today having children is a choice, and it is not one that is going to make you better off financially! However, more shared parental leave would help create a balance for parents and then more

men in management roles might appreciate the juggling act parents have to perform between work and family life. I wish businesses would look more to the long term and realise in the great scheme of things children grow up very fast. Parents are so grateful for a bit of flexibility in the early years that they will repay their employer in spades in future years. And of course children are the adult workers of the future.

More women need to be in Senior roles. There is so much evidence to show that a more diverse management team create improved results for businesses, Jersey still has a long way to go.

What barriers do you think women face in relation to promotion and progression in the workplace?

There is still an inbuilt bias from many men to promoting women and taking them seriously. We are trying to change hundred's of years of history in a relatively short space of time! However, far too many middle aged and older men in positions of power and influence are not wanting to open their eyes to the 21st century. They might see a large percentage of women in their workplace and have the impression they are very progressive, but that does not mean the women have the same opportunities for advancement as the men. It may be a cliché but true that women apply for jobs when they have 100% of the criteria list, many men will go for promotion with maybe half the skills needed. Still far too many women do not believe in themselves, training and mentoring should be encouraged.

Is there any evidence to suggest that women returning to work after having children are less likely to be successful applicants?

I do not have access to any specific evidence. I appreciate it depends on how long they have been out of the workplace and if they have been able to keep up with changes in IT for example.

However, I do know from listening to other mothers there are not many part time or job shares out there. I believe there are many jobs that are unfilled in the Island, surely a part time person in the role is

better than none at all. As an Island with population issues, why don't we use our people resources better? What encouragement would businesses need – could this be explored?

Extra comment: Education.

The role of educating girls and boys at school is obviously very important in relation to all the above. A culture of equal opportunities for all. Often a barrier to women is their own limiting self-beliefs, not allowing this obstacle to manifest must start at school. Still far too many occupations are seen just for 'men' in science, engineering, IT, mostly higher paid ones and lower paid jobs in the caring industries are for 'women'.

In Year 4 (age 8-9 years) my daughter had a lesson about 'who can do this? Men or women?' they were shown pictures of cooking, looking after children, fire fighter, Doctor etc, already the stereotypes - women look after children and cook and men are firefighters was in place. The point of the lesson was of course anyone can do any job, but very hard to change those perceptions when they are already entrenched in the minds of the majority of the class at such a young age. We really need to empower the next generation, change to a culture of equality is happening too slowly. When we finally get there everyone will benefit.

Catherine Kirby
Joint President Soroptimist International of Jersey