

THIRD PARTY INPUT FROM HR NOW - Views on behalf of small commercial sector businesses in Jersey (under 25 employees)

Please get in touch with the Panel at scrutiny@gov.je.

1. Do you think statutory measures should be introduced in Jersey for gender pay gap reporting?

There is already a huge burden of compliance and reporting on small businesses and they struggle to keep up with changes in employment law, health and safety and best practice. This area is something they generally support but forcing more statutory regulation on them is punishing them and shows a stick not carrot approach.

EG 1: **multiple small IT businesses** offer highly enhanced maternity leave benefits (way above statutory) in an effort to positively attract more female candidates into the sector. This is seen as a benefit to the teams and the client offering for these businesses.

EG 2: **Market rate benchmarking data** is now checked by many smaller businesses to show that they are considering a wider impartial picture when they recruit or when they review salaries/promotions.

A significant way that Government to provide a carrot to support these sectors is to offer **FUNDING** and incentives for smaller businesses to input to salary survey data and to benefit from such market rate benchmarking. This would help encourage good practices and base salaries on informed data rather than guesswork.

EG3: the third sector has already grouped together in some areas (care areas) to provide this sort of salary/benefits data to help make informed and IMPARTIAL reward plans and strategies but **Government could help more here**. The finance sector is already well established in market rate/salary surveys so does not need such support. Government could easily provide this via the chamber of commerce!

2. What are your views on other types of mandatory reporting such as the ethnicity pay gap?

Again you need carrot not stick. This would be seen as additional work load on employers for no benefit.

For a start you haven't identified the ethnicities you want to measure – I expect following the UK categories is not relevant. There have been no ET Claims of unfair pay on this basis in Jersey that I know of so you are not addressing an issue that is relevant to Jersey employers – help them find staff don't make it more onerous!

What is the benefit to Jersey of doing this? – it might be better to establish a clear **population strategy** that informs the Population office/ work permits and licences before you begin to measure. With settled status only beginning to take effect on travel this seems to be putting the cart before the horse.

3. Do you think there has been any change in the cultural influences which affect the gender pay gap in Jersey?

The plans to increase nursery hours funding for low paid and then wider will have a significant impact in the next 5 + years, but only if you can support the commercial sector in finding staff to provide MORE nursery places to be taken up. It is not funding to pay for childcare that is putting parents off returning to work but finding ANY NURSERY PLACES AT ALL!! Many returning parents have to put off return to work for up to six months because they can't get childcare at all regardless of the price.

The Parental leave provision will also improve the ability of male/female childcare opportunities.

It is worth acknowledging that because of housing and work permits Jersey has the highest age of first baby in Europe which means that there should be an opportunity to grow your career to a certain level before taking the time out. I think these policies already offer significant support and take an incredible unfair toll on employers – please note we have already had multiple examples of people taking FULL PARENTAL LEAVE but they have insufficient contributions to receive any parental grant so the employer is forced to pay the full whack and gets no rebate from Soc Sec in this circumstance. There would be a significant push back from employers if even more burden to fund parental leave is placed on them. It is the most costly on employers in Europe already.

4. Do you think the Government took a gender-sensitive approach to its Covid-19 policies?

The Government did not inform the nursery sector at all about lock down – the first the nurseries heard was from the staff. They were panicking and assumed they would go bankrupt within 14 days and this was a deplorable way to treat essential businesses. Suddenly when key government workers wanted to get back to work they were allowed to open!?

The Government should have taken a far bolder approach to sectors where vaccines are considered key for safety eg Care Homes. It is significant that they have not taken the same approach in the Hospital so there is a lack of parity or common standards being applied to the detriment of the commercial sector again.

5. What impact do you think Covid-19 has had on men and women in the home and workplace?

Women took the majority of the home-schooling and had to continue to run the home and find solutions to working from home.

Most women would far rather work in the office from the feedback from our clients.

Working from home can not be confused with childcare. You should not be permitted to work from home if you have childcare responsibilities – you can not work in your job and look after a child of ANY AGE at the same time. That should be a clear message from the Government to support employers.