

Gender Equality Pay Reporting Launch Event - 14 September 2011

I am sorry you were unable to attend the launch of the new voluntary approach to gender equality reporting. As a business that embraces diversity, I very much hope I can still count on your support for this important initiative designed to increase transparency on gender equality in the workplace.

The Coalition Government is committed to tackling the barriers women continue to face in the workplace. Promoting equality of opportunity and equal treatment goes to the heart of our approach to UK economic recovery and growth. But real and long-lasting change will not happen through Government dictating how organisations should be run – it will only take place when the people who know what their organisation needs take the lead.

The UK's most forward thinking businesses already know the importance of attracting, retaining and promoting the best talent – both male and female. They know women can bring fresh perspectives, new ideas and experience, and they know that an organisation that better reflects its customer base is better able to understand their needs.

I want to see employers continue to drive this agenda forward. That is why last December I announced in our Equality Strategy, *Building a Fairer Britain* that we will not be using the powers taken by previous government in the Equality Act 2010 to require companies to report on their gender pay gap. Instead, we have been working with key partner organisations and business to develop a voluntary approach to improving transparency on pay and wider workplace issues.

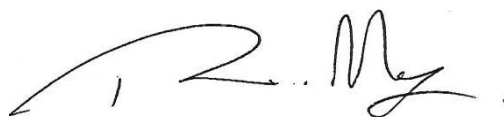
We are asking organisations to take a step-by-step approach: starting by undertaking their own analysis of the barriers facing their female employees in the workplace; where necessary to take action to address them; and in time report on their progress. In short: think, act and report. Critically, organisations choosing to engage with the approach will have the flexibility and ability to choose the workforce and/or pay measures which are most appropriate for their organisation. I attach a copy of the 'Think, Act, Report' framework for your information.

The reasons for a voluntary approach are simple - I believe that lasting change will come when businesses themselves realise the benefits of greater gender equality. Transparency is a powerful tool to achieve this change. Transparency lets everyone see the progress that employers have made. It shows staff what is happening in their firm, it lets suppliers know what is expected of them and it lets customers decide where they want to take their business. Importantly, it will also be a real opportunity for employers, like you, who are committed to diversity, to shine a light on the excellent practices they are already undertaking, further consolidating their position as trailblazers in this field.

A voluntary approach, with transparency at its heart, is the right way to make the business world a better place for everybody.

I hope you will join BT, Eversheds, Tesco and others in engaging with this new approach. To register your interest or to find out more information please visit the voluntary gender equality page on the Home Office website at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/vger.

I look forward to working with you.



Rt Hon Theresa May MP