

Women's Business Council - Terms of Reference

Rationale

The Women's Business Council was set up by the Government in 2012 to advise on how women's contribution to growth could be optimised. The aim: to focus on areas with the greatest economic benefit, to make recommendations for business, government and others with a clear economic case for action and oversee the delivery of the business strategy.

The Women's Business Council was established for one year initially, in April 2012, to consider the business case for women's economic participation and to deliver a report to Government. Following the publication of the Council's report in 2013, the Council remained in place to oversee the delivery of the business recommendations, raise the profile of the Council's priorities and champion best practice.

Objective

1. To advise Ministers on how to maximise women's contribution to the UK's future economic growth, by:

- identifying the barriers and challenges that prevent women from meeting their full potential;
- highlighting potential regulatory barriers that prevent companies from supporting women in the workplace or deter entrepreneurship opportunities;
- suggesting sound economic ideas to overcome obstacles for business;
- generating proposals for government and business to maximise women's opportunities to achieve their aspirations and economic success; and,
- act as a sounding board on the impact of proposed policy announcements on women in business.

2. To be an Ambassador for the Council's forward work programme to support women's economic advancement, by:

- raising the profile of the Women's Business Council within the business community and beyond;
- encouraging business to work with schools, colleges and universities to raise girl's aspirations and to promote opportunities within the workplace;
- developing and sharing novel programmes across the business world to support women's advancement in the workplace;
- working in partnership with the Older Worker's Champion to consider the needs of women in the third stage of their careers and promote best practice; and,
- stimulating a growth in women's entrepreneurship within the UK.

Role of the Chair

The Women's Business Council Chair, must have relevant expertise. They will be appointed on the basis of willingness and capacity. In particular, they will be responsible for:

- signing off the Council's minutes and papers;
- ensuring the delivery of the Council's work outcomes;
- reporting on progress to Ministers at regular intervals;

- convening three meetings every year; and,
- steering the secretariat on the work to be undertaken on behalf of the Council.

Women's Business Council Operating Conditions

Members are required to:

- commit to the Council for a three year term (2015-2018);
- commit to three meetings every year;
- look to independently support the work of the Council at least twice a year;
- support and advance the Women's Business Council's aims and adhere to the terms of reference;
- publicly convey the agreed Council messages when attending meetings and forums or speaking to the media on behalf of the Women's Business Council,
- ensure the secretariat is aware of all public-facing activity relating to the work of the Council and check protocol with the Chair if required; and,
- contribute to the activities of the Council both at and between meetings.

The Women's Business Council Chair and Ministers reserve the right to refuse or discontinue any membership where there is any evidence that an individual does not fully represent the aims of the Council.

Role of the Secretariat

The Government Equalities Secretariat will coordinate and service regular Women's Business Council meetings, in consultation with the Chair. Responsibilities include:

- producing the forward work programme in conjunction with the Chair and Council;
- the production of meeting agenda and papers;
- the preproduction of meeting minutes;
- facilitation of agreed work outcomes;
- organising keynote events and identifying high level speaking engagements;
- maximising Council member's media opportunities on behalf of the Women's Business Council;
- providing members with timely updates on business activities between meetings;
- arranging and facilitating ministerial meetings;
- maintaining the Women's Business Council website; and,
- producing 6 monthly reports/publications on progress.

Budget

The Chair and members will be unpaid.