

Attendees	Observers	Apologies
Helene Reardon-Bond OBE		Cilla Snowball CBE (Chair)
Caroline Dinenage MP		Deirdre Michie
Baroness McGregor-Smith		Nikki Yates
Lynne Atkin		Emer Timmons
Jill Shedden		Sue O'Brien
Denis Woulfe		Richard Lee
Dr Clive Hickman		Dr Fiona Withey
Wendy Hallett MBE		Sue Langley OBE
Helen Lamprell		Fiona Dawson
Chris Stylianou		
Roger Whiteside		
Dame Fiona Woolf CBE		
John Whelan		
Clare Williams (deputy for Rick Lee)		
Hilary Spencer		

## 1. Introductions – Helene Reardon Bond

- 1.1 Helene Reardon-Bond welcomed members and tendered apologies which included the Chair, Cilla Snowball.

## 2. Action Points/Progress – Helene Reardon Bond

- 2.1 The Women's Business Council minutes from the meeting of 13 December 2016 were reviewed.
- 2.2 noted that all Action Points from 13 December had been met and completed. The council were happy with this and signed off the previous minutes.

## 3. Ministerial Update - Caroline Dinenage MP

- 3.1 Caroline Dinenage MP informed the WBC that the Gender Pay Gap Regulations had been laid in Parliament for the private, public and voluntary sectors. These new reporting requirements will cover over 15 million employees in 9,000 organisations, representing nearly half of the total workforce.

- 3.2 Caroline Dinange MP suggested the success of these regulations was due to the work being conducted hand in hand with business and the activity that the Women's Business Council is doing to drive culture change within the business community
- 3.3 Caroline Dinange MP noted that the Government recently launched its Industrial Strategy. The strategy's objective is to "improve living standards and economic growth by increasing productivity and driving growth across the whole country".
- 3.4 Caroline Dinange MP noted that there were references to STEM shortages and scope to harness the talents of girls, and stated that she would like to see an input from the WBC members. The deadline for responses to the green paper is 17 April.
- 3.5 Helene Reardon-Bond noted that Cilla has requested the Women's Business Council Secretariat to draft a letter in response to the green paper outlining the economic role of women within the industrial strategy for the country.
- 3.6 Caroline Dinange MP noted that women's equality was a prevalent topic within parliament at the moment with a diverse agenda – from men and their role in the family to Women's high heels in the workplace.

#### **4. GEO Priorities – Hilary Spencer**

- 4.1 Hilary Spencer discussed the recent media attention of the GPG within Government Equalities Office (GEO). Hilary highlighted that the figures cited refer to the wider DfE. GEO data is included in the overall data for DfE due to its small size. According to the annual Civil Service statistics produced by ONS, the DfE gender pay gap was 5.9% in 2016, compared to 9.3% in 2015.
- 4.2 Helene Reardon-Bond drew attention to the Barclays hosted business meets parliament event from earlier in the week. Lynne Atkins attributed the success of the event to the speakers capturing such personal stories. Helene Reardon-Bond thanked Lynne for the wonderfully supportive commentary regarding the WBC which occurred at the event.
- 4.3 Hilary Spencer highlighted an anticipated budget announcement for Women Returners and the anticipated frame of work which includes WBC companies' case studies. Hilary spoke of the supportive role government wants to play in the bringing women back into the workplace and approval this work has from No 10.
- 4.4 Helen Reardon-Bond drew attention to the work of Vodafone and their work with women returners, which is focussed on increasing confidence and creating networks for women's who are returning from career breaks.
- 4.5 Hilary Spencer noted that Joanna Roper was appointed by the Foreign Secretary as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Special Envoy for Gender Equality in February 2017. Hilary outlined that the GEO was looking to work closely with the Joanna and clarified that Joanna's role will also be in parallel to the Brexit agenda and trade negotiations.
- 4.6 Hilary Spencer noted the work of the Secretary of State (SoS) as an active member of the UN High Level Panel, which was set up by the UN Secretary General in in 2016. The SoS is looking to bring this agenda into the domestic field with a focus on looking at the best ways to unlock the power of women to work and achieve financial independence. The SoS hosted a roundtable comprising of UN Stakeholders and senior leaders from the business community in January, including Cilla Snowball. The round table discussed opportunities for

the UK to become a centre of excellence and a trailblazer for driving gender equality through cutting edge practices.

- 4.7 The SoS is now looking to establish a business-led innovation group - to showcase the best of the best. Hilary noted that WBC members as thought-leaders in this field are well placed to be help drive this forward
- 4.8 Baroness McGregor Smith highlighted the work of several reviews being led by BEIS including the Parker Review which is looking at board racial diversity, the follow on from the Lord Davies Review; the Hampton- Alexander review, which has a new focus on the executive pipeline as well as boards, and Baroness McGregor Smith's own review on race in the workplace.
- 4.9 Hilary noted that she and Helene will be in New York later this week for the Commission on the Status of Women.

## **5. Women's Business Council Communication opportunities - Jade Howard**

- 5.1 Attention was drawn to the anticipated toolkits for 2017/18 (Paper 2). [REDACTED] noted that in the previous meeting the opportunities for outreach, awareness and exposure through the numerous international and domestic dates of significance had been discussed and mapped onto the WBC Communications Chart.
- 5.2 [REDACTED] highlighted that Paper 3 was a revised version of the WBC Communications chart which details No 10 Priorities (Brexit, Local Elections, Budget etc.) along with the anticipated toolkit publications over the coming year. [REDACTED] also highlighted that the work of the action groups have moved substantially in the last 2 months and the WBC secretariat have taken the opportunity to map out the anticipated toolkits over the coming year. The suggested dates are positioned for significant moments to harness greater media exposure for the Council.
- 5.3 [REDACTED] explained that the WBC Communications Chart is a working document and is subject to change. She also identified the role and alignment of the Communications chart with behaviour insights work across government.
- 5.4 [REDACTED] highlighted that many opportunities exist for the WBC to piggyback onto the governments agenda for equalities to maximise exposure. For example linking the Getting On Report with the GPG regulations launch and promoting the report as part of the solution for businesses who were identifying that they need to address their GPG.
- 5.5 [REDACTED] clarified that any of these mooted dates should not be considered as deadlines by the groups but rather opportunities to maximise impact.

## **6. Action Group Activity Update: Staying On – Lynne Atkin**

- 6.1 Lynne Atkin outlined that the *ComeBack* magazine was on track for an October launch (date to be linked with menopause day or older person's day) and has a broader scope than the previous year. The new edition will include 12 case studies, advice for menopause in the workplace, older worker apprenticeships, barriers to work and dynamic working.
- 6.2 Helene Reardon-Bond thanked Lynne, Helen and Fiona for their, and their staff, input into the Women's Returner budget bid.

- 6.3 There was a wider discussion regarding women returners and the roles for head hunters. The Council agreed that it is fundamental to businesses to sustain the engagement of employees over careers breaks. This will require a shift in culture as many consider these women to be 'gone'. It was discussed that part catalyst for this cultural change could be the advocating of alumni programmes, such as the Barclay's model, and access partners of women returners as a practical way to reengaged women on career breaks.
- 6.4 Fiona Wolfe noted the work within legal profession to ensure ongoing engagement. The justification of this continued engagement was to seek a return on the investment already made by the employer. This work has including upskilling those who were on career breaks through formal accredited courses. The aim of this work was to expand the firms skill and knowledge base and also to increase the confidence of returners
- 6.5 It was noted that Home Office is currently in the early phase of implementing a women returners' programme and there could be potential for the Civil Service to also lead a best practise initiative.
- 6.6 Fiona Woolfe highlighted the work of the Crown Prosecution Service who are implementing a strong returneeship programme at minimal cost.
- 6.7 The group discussed the need to look for opportunities for encouraging supply chains to also lead the best practise work of the WBC companies including supplier.
- 6.8 Clive Hickman questioned if there is an opportunity to expand the apprenticeship levy and engaged low skilled returners. The WBC has a role to shift the demographic thinking around apprenticeships, remove unconscious bias and highlight best practice.

## **7. Action Group Activity Update: Getting On – Helen Reardon-Bond**

- 7.1 Helene Reardon-Bond highlighted that the key statistic for the Getting On work is that currently, 35% of middle managers are women, and at current rates it will take until 2050 to reach gender parity.
- 7.2 The Getting On Action Group is on track to deliver the 'Getting on report' in late April. The aim of the product will be to normalise flexible working and signpost information available in other publications. Helene Reardon-Bond noted and thanked Mars for committing to sponsoring this products publication costs.
- 7.3 The group discussed and agreed that it is critical that all WBC toolkits are drafting using the same language and published in the same style.
- 7.4 Roger Whiteside highlighted the need for all Action Groups to work in partnership to avoid duplication and take the opportunity to maximise the WBC messages. This crossover is particularly evident between the Getting on Action group and MACA Action group. Rodger also highlighted that effective and consistent branding should be considered by all Action Groups for their publications.

## **8. Action Group Activity Update: Starting Out**

- 8.1 The Starting Out working group has met several times over the past 2 months and has agreed to focus on three main areas:
- Refresh of Your Daughters Future: Extension (and relaunch) of Your Daughters Future to enhance pathways into STEM careers. This is being led by the GEO

- Career Transition Pack: The development of a career pack to signpost students to STEM options at 16-18 – led by Dawn Bonfield
  - STEM Business/School Partnership Tool: Tips for business and directory of how to engage with schools for local STEM businesses. For launch around 23 June National Engineering Day – led by John Whelan
- 8.2 It was noted that the 23 June National Engineering Day is also the anniversary of the EU Referendum. This could be utilised as an opportunity to highlight the WBC working to address the skills gap of Brexit in a proactive manner.
- 8.3 Denis Woulfe noted that Chris Norwood from the MACA working group is currently leading some work on Girls in leadership.
- 8.4 John Whelan highlighted the need for the Starting Out Action Group to link in with existing and career guidance organisations. Caroline Dinenage MP pointed out that she is working with the Careers and Enterprise Company to relaunch Your Daughter's Future as an improvement on the careers advice given to women and girls.
- 8.5 The group noted that there is opportunity for the work to link in with the SoS Opportunity Areas and Social Mobility agenda. This was seen to be a natural point of cross over between the GEO and DfE and the WBC were keen to access this potential.

**9. Action Group Activity Update: Men as Agents of Change**

- 9.1 Denis Woulfe reported that the Action Group had created and agreed a project plan for its work. The toolkit is aimed at supporting a sponsorship programme for the FSTE 250, who can adopt relevant best practice. The sponsorship programme will focus on what a CEO can personally do for women in the C-Suite minus 2 and will include best practice and case studies.
- 9.2 Chris Stylianou echoed Denis Woulfe that companies cannot embrace the entire sponsorship framework. Chris Stylianou was eager to ensure that WBC members promote Men as Change Agents throughout the FTSE 250 and other large businesses and asked for WBC members to pass on who they know or speak to their contacts about becoming sponsors, this was taken as an action point.
- 9.3 Wendy Hallett highlighted there was an opportunity for further expansion of the Sponsorship toolkit through Retail Week and its expansion to the construction industry.

**10. Action Group Activity Update: Enterprise**

- 10.1 Denis Woulfe and Wendy Hallett gave an update on the Enterprise working group. The group is still waiting clarity from the government regarding the potential for an Enterprise Academy and will reassess their work once clarity is provided.
- 10.2 Helene Reardon-Bond thanked Denis for his work with innovate UK and moving the enterprise agenda forward.

**11. AOB**

- 11.1 Baroness McGregor-Smith requested that the WBC look into opportunities for the WBC to influence diversity within supplier chains.

- 11.2 Caroline Dinenage MP highlighted that she had met with 'PRS for Music' who were interested in replicating the WBC model for this industry. The group were supportive of this.
- 11.3 [REDACTED] highlighted that there would be a lot of social media activity for International Women's Day tomorrow and the GEO would appreciate any support retweets possible over the day.
- 11.4 [REDACTED] updated on the revised WBC website which has been developed by the WBC secretariat. It is anticipated that this site would be live for International Women's Day and suggested tweets would be sent around for use. [REDACTED] highlighted that the site was a platform for the WBC work and she was keen to hear any suggestions for content from the group.

**12. Close 10.00**

**Action Points**

- ✓ WBC members to notify the WBC secretariat of any upcoming speeches or events to promote via GEO/DfE social media channels.
- ✓ WBC secretariat to seek revised statistics on Women Returners economic value
- ✓ Denis Woulfe to e-introduce Chris Norwood to the Starting Out group
- ✓ WBC member to email a minimum of 5 FTSE 250/large companies contacts to the WBC secretariat for use in the promotion and sign on period of the MACA sponsorship programme.
- ✓ WBC Secretariat to circulate the GEO and DfE's social media activity plan for IWD
- ✓ Women's Business Council Secretariat to draft a letter in response to the green paper outlining the economic role of women within the industrial strategy for the country by April 17 2017.