

The Gender Pay Gap and what is needed to eliminate itⁱ.

A view from Dr Jackie Longworth for Fair Play South Westⁱⁱ

“The purpose of the economy should be to support social well-being.”¹

INTRODUCTION

The Gender Pay Gap is both a cause and a symptom of women’s inequality in the UK economy.

It causes inequality when it is due to outright illegal discrimination such that women are being paid less for work of equal economic value. It also causes inequality by creating poverty and limiting women’s access to goods and services for themselves and those they care for.

It is a symptom of the fact that women are segregated into lower paid jobs despite having similar (or better) qualifications than men. There is debate about the chicken and egg of whether the jobs largely done by women are low paid (and under-valued) because they are largely done by women, or whether low value jobs are dominated by women because they are low paid; the answer is probably a mixture of both.

In this note it is assumed that women’s inequality in the economy is a bad thing per se; it is a matter of social justice and social well-being. There are other arguments, such as the £23bn loss to the economy of under-using women’s skills and the cost to the social security bill of making up family incomes, which are not addressed here. There is also debate around whether it is women’s pay or family income which should be the focus of attention. Clearly this depends what problem is being addressed, but in terms of women’s equality and their position in the economy over their life course it is clear that their independently earned income is of crucial importance; family income is not always evenly distributed within the family; women are frequently the only or main earner; women suffering domestic abuse are often trapped by lack of economic independence; women’s circumstances change, through widowhood or divorce for example, such that their access to independent income becomes vital; as they grow older women’s income usually depends crucially on their earnings earlier in life. One measure of progress towards economic equality is therefore the elimination of “the Gender Pay Gap”.

In Part 1, this paper addresses the definition of the pay gap, and why referring to a single number does not help develop actions to eliminate it, particularly when the single number is based on median full time hourly pay. The variations in pay gaps with factors such as age, occupation, and geography are examined.

In Part 2, the paper looks in turn at some of the factors which contribute to the overall gap, making recommendations for practical solutions. Many of these practical

¹ LSE Information Exchange note HEIF 5: “Confronting Gender Inequality, findings from the LSE Commission on Gender, Inequality and Power”

solutions require a radical shift in the macroeconomic model towards more sustainable and inclusive development as recommended by the LSE Commission on Gender, Inequality and Power in footnote1.

Part 1: DEFINING THE GENDER PAY GAP

The headline measure of the gap used by government and others is based on the median hourly pay of full time women in the UK as compared with that of full time men. The usefulness of this headline single figure is limited for a number of reasons: it is based on median pay; it is about full time women only; it is about hourly pay only; it covers the whole of the UK economy. The following sections discuss the limitations of each of these points. In this note 2014 provisional data for gross pay are used, which include the effects of additional payments for overtime, shift premiums, and incentive payments (bonuses) to some extent and are before allowing for tax and employee social security deductions². Later data have become available since this work was initiated, but in practice variations with time on these timescales are small compared with the other factors discussed and do not impact the conclusions.

1.1 What does median pay tell us?

The median is a point on a distribution curve, such that half the population earn less than that point. So if half of full time women earned less than £9 an hour and half of full time men earned less than £10 an hour, then the median pay gap would be $(10-9)/10 \times 100\% = 10\%$. However, this measure ignores the fact that distributions around the 50% (median) point are different for women and men. The point is illustrated in figure 1, which shows the gross hourly pay of full time men and women at different points in the distribution; clearly the gap is higher at higher pay levels than it is at lower pay levels. This is partly because the minimum wage limits the size the pay gap can be amongst the lowest paid workers but it is also because very few women are able to access the highest paid jobs. Indeed, at the 90% level the hourly pay gap is 18.4% even between full time women and full time men.

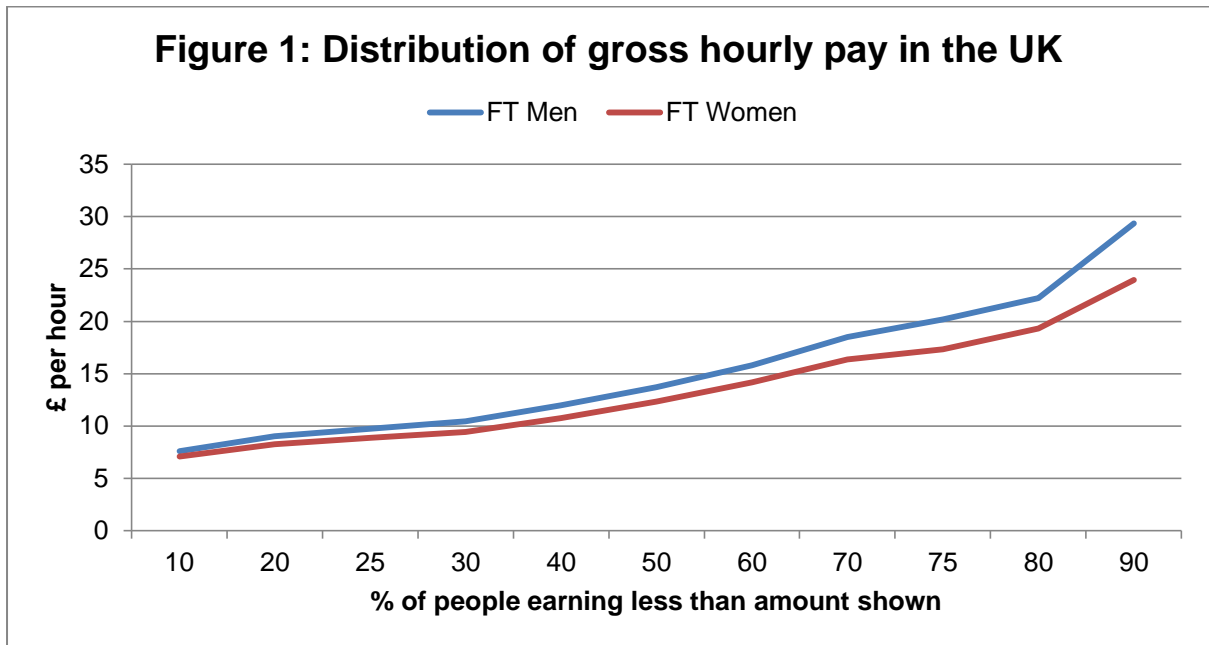
These are some of the different pay gaps which could be used for the gross hourly pay of full time women and men across the UK as a whole.

	50% Point (Median)	25% Point	75% Point	Mean
FT Women / FT Men	10.30%	8.80%	12.20%	14.20%

It is noted that the mean full time pay gap is higher even than the 75% point on the distribution, confirming that in this case the mean is significantly affected by the relatively small numbers of very high earning men.

² ONS ASHE Data for 2014:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-337425>



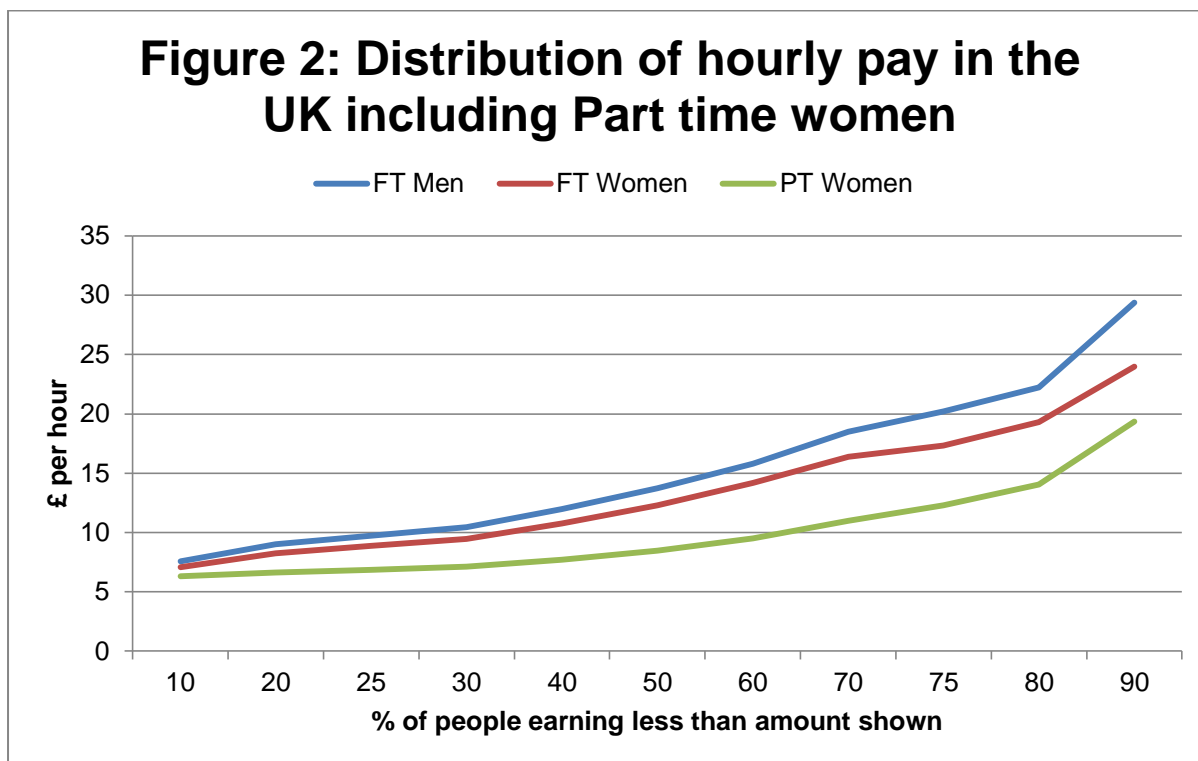
Source: ONS, 2014

What the distribution tells us which the median can't is how many people earn less than a given amount. For example, the 2014 Living Wage recommended by the Living Wage foundation is £7.85 per hour (outside London)ⁱⁱⁱ; some 12% of full time men and 17% of full time women across the UK earn less than this. (Note from the next section that this becomes 42% of part time women).

1.2 What does the full time pay gap tell us?

Across the UK, some 14% of working men and 43% of working women work part time (ONS, 2014). These proportions are highly variable in different occupations and in different parts of the country as is discussed below, but even at the UK level it is clear that quoting the pay gap for full time women only is missing out on the reality for a large number of women. For men, the difference between median pay of all men and that of full time men is only 6%, whereas for women it is 19%. Figure 2 superimposes the distribution of hourly pay for part time women on that of full time women and men. Some 42% of part time women earn less than the Living Wage per hour. For part time women the gross hourly pay gap is both much larger than that for full time women and exhibits less variation within the pay distribution.

	50% Point (Median)	25%	75%	Mean
FT Women / FT Men	10.3%	8.8%	12.2%	14.2%
All Women / All Men	19.7%	14.7%	18.3%	17.7%
PT Women / FT Men	38.3%	29.2%	39.2%	33.6%



Source: ONS, 2014

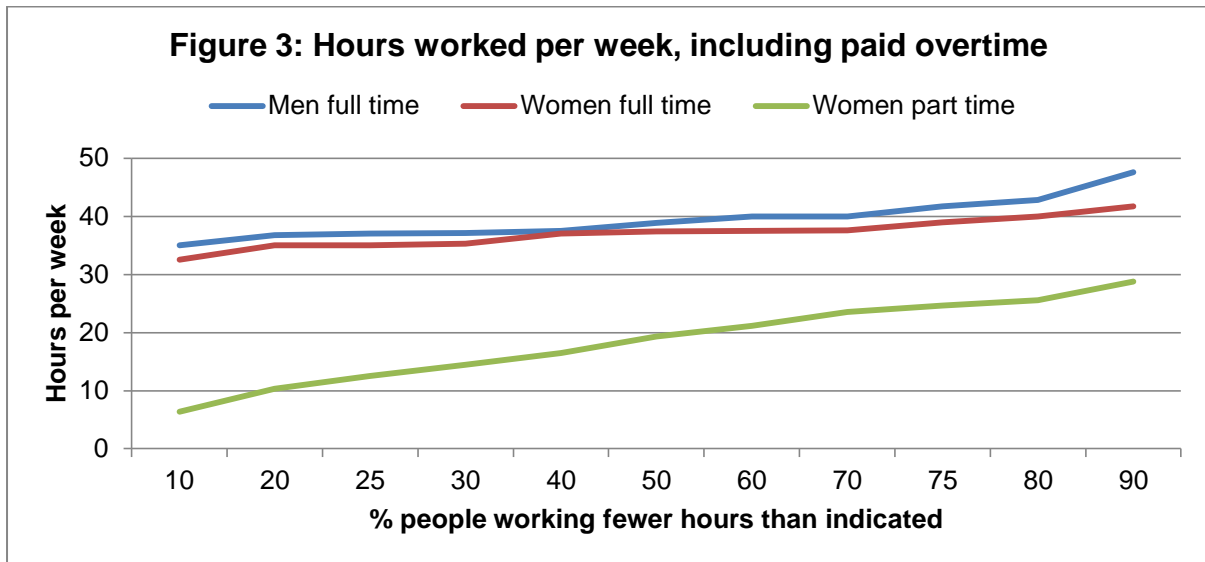
If a single number is to be used (which as discussed above is not desirable), then a more useful indicator would be the pay gap between all women and all men, which is 19.7% using gross hourly median pay across the UK as a whole.

1.3 Is the gap in hourly pay all that matters?

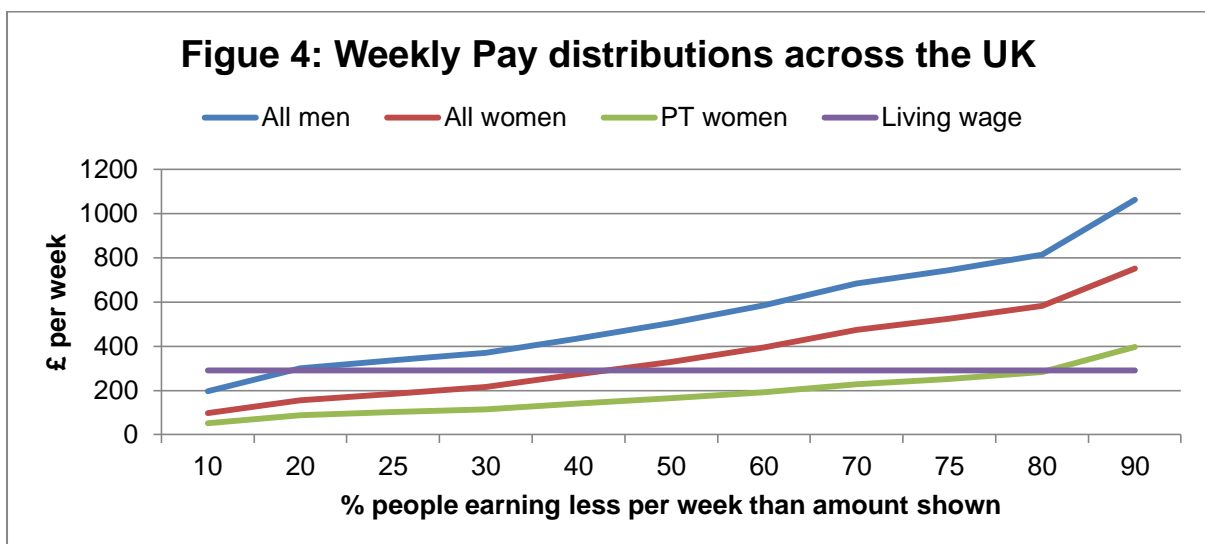
If the reason for looking at the gender pay gap is to discuss equity and social justice, then gaps in hourly pay are clearly important. It cannot be equitable that even full time women earn less per hour than full time men and the fact that part time women earn so much less per hour even than full time women is unfair if not illegal in some cases.

However, if the reason for looking at gender pay gaps is to inform discourse and policy making on poverty and/or lifetime earnings then the data on weekly earnings gaps are essential too. As discussed above, women suffer from the double whammy of both earning less per hour and working fewer hours a week. Even full time women in practice are able to work fewer hours than full time men, with the medians of 37.4 and 38.9 hours per week respectively (figure 3); this suggests that flexible working other than 'part time' as defined by ONS may be a factor in the full time pay gap.

The result is that the weekly pay gap is higher than the hourly pay gap for all women, both full and part time, as shown in figure 4, alongside that for part time women only. Some 43% of all women and 80% of part time women earn less than the living wage per week.



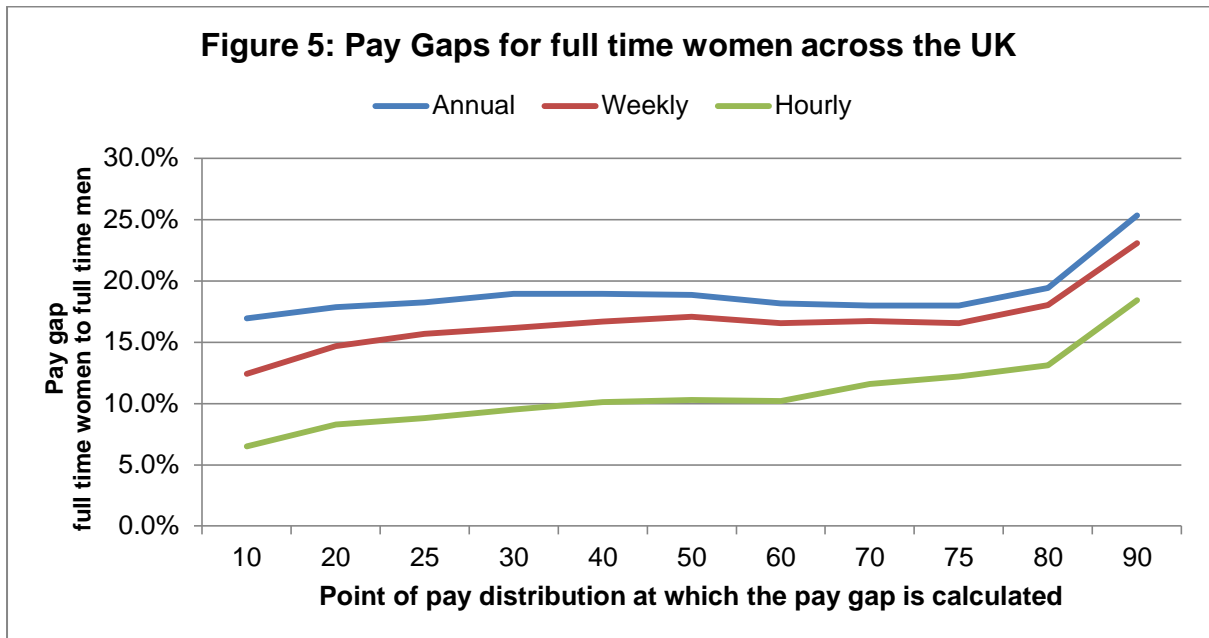
Source: ONS, 2014



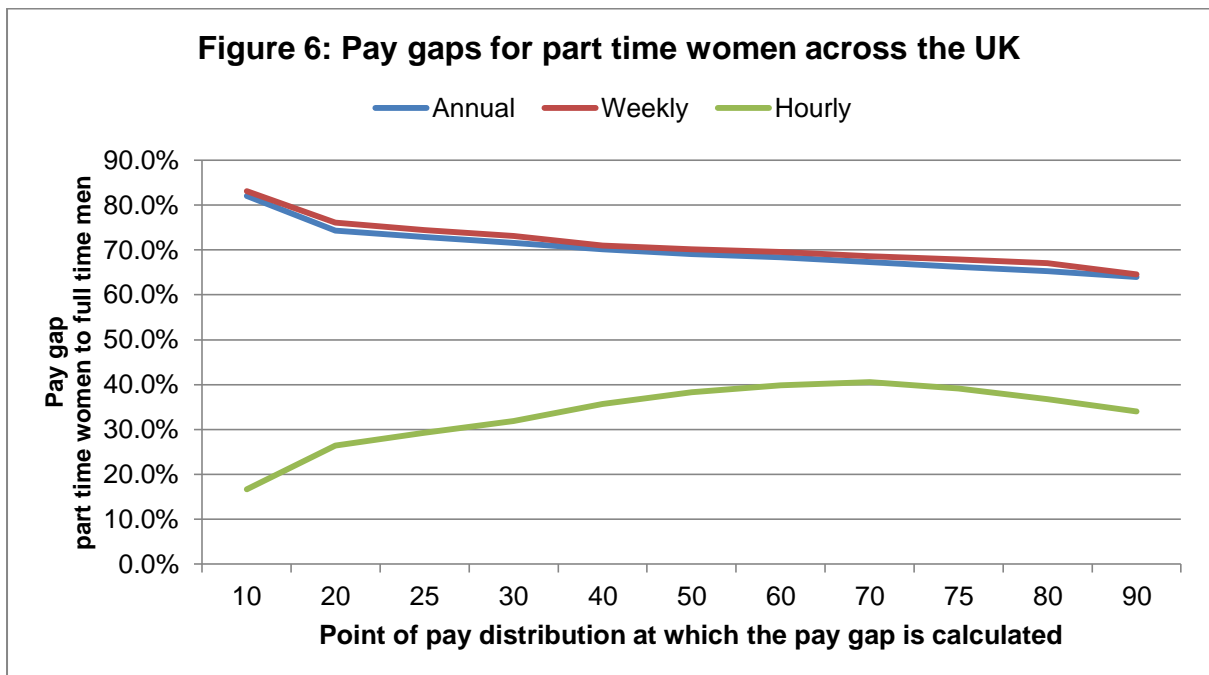
Source: ONS, 2014

It is also instructive to consider annual pay gaps. This is because the ONS ASHE data for hourly and weekly pay are based on a specific week of the year when the survey is conducted (ONS, 2014). Some irregular payments, such as annual bonuses, are underestimated by this approach. Additionally, irregular working hours, for example due to sickness or annualised hours contracts may skew the data somewhat. The consequence is that annual pay gaps are bigger than the weekly or hourly for full time women (figure 5).

However, for part time women, the annual pay gaps are similar to the weekly and both much higher than the hourly (figure 6).



Source: ONS, 2014



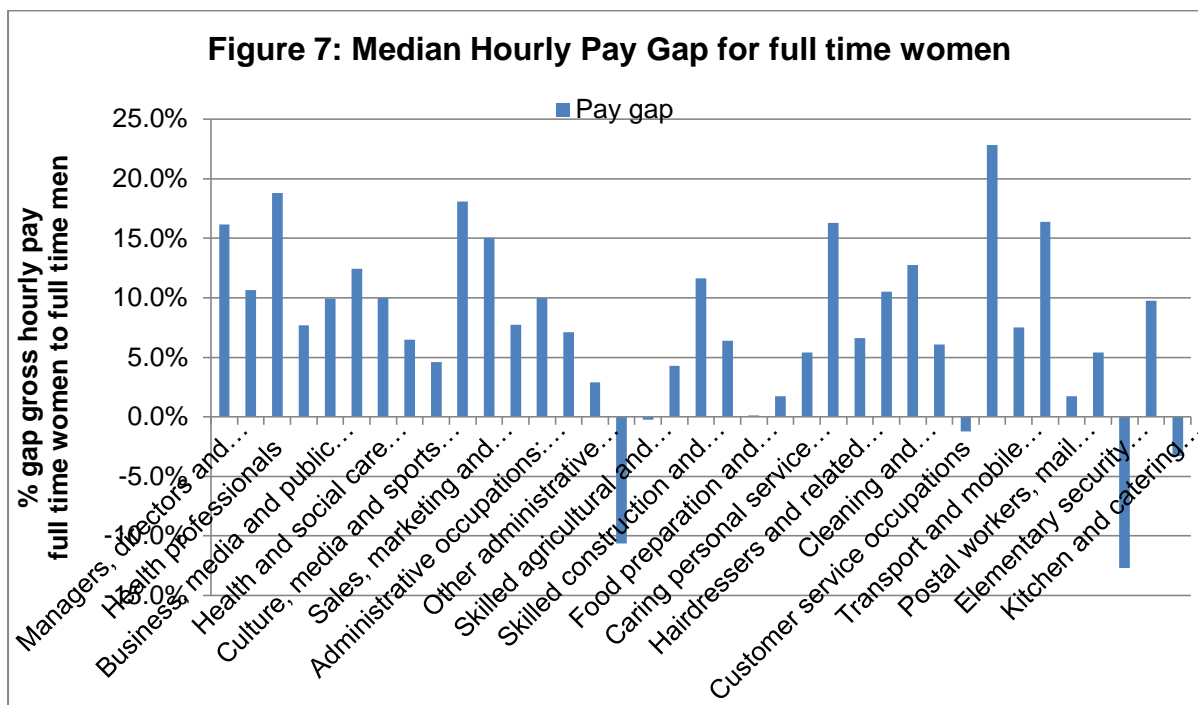
Source: ONS, 2014

1.4 How helpful are the UK wide data?

In order to understand the causes of and solutions for the various gender pay gaps discussed above it is necessary to understand how the gaps are affected by a number of factors, including occupation and geography as well as age. These factors are inter-related, making analysis complicated. Here we attempt to isolate some of them using disaggregated data from ONS, 2014.

1.4.1 The effect of Occupation (see also Appendix 1)

The ONS ASHE data are published for a wide range of occupations at different degrees of detail. It is clear from the data that the pay gap in median gross hourly pay exists in almost all occupations even for full time women (figure 7).



Source: ONS, 2014. Note that not all the occupations are named in this graph.

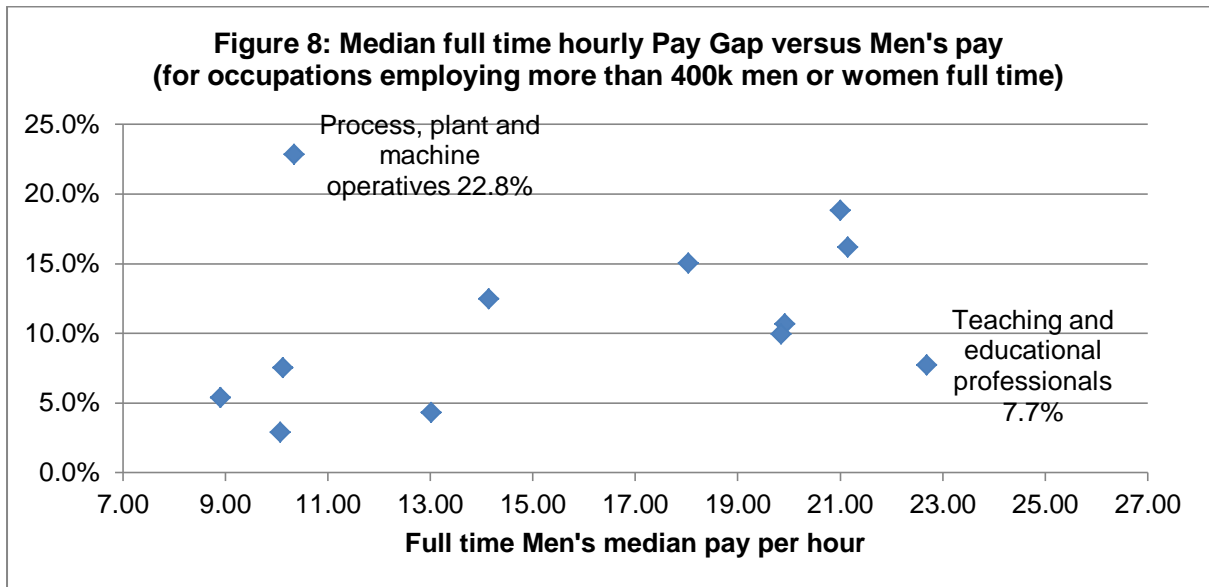
Since the occupational groups span not just different types of employment but also levels within them it may be hard to understand these ‘within occupation’ pay gaps as other than largely due to illegal discrimination. This discrimination appears to be higher in higher paying jobs (figure 8), with a couple of exceptions which are discussed further below.

However, the full time ‘within occupation’ pay gaps mask some much bigger gaps between occupations, usually known as due to occupational segregation. Figure 9 shows that:

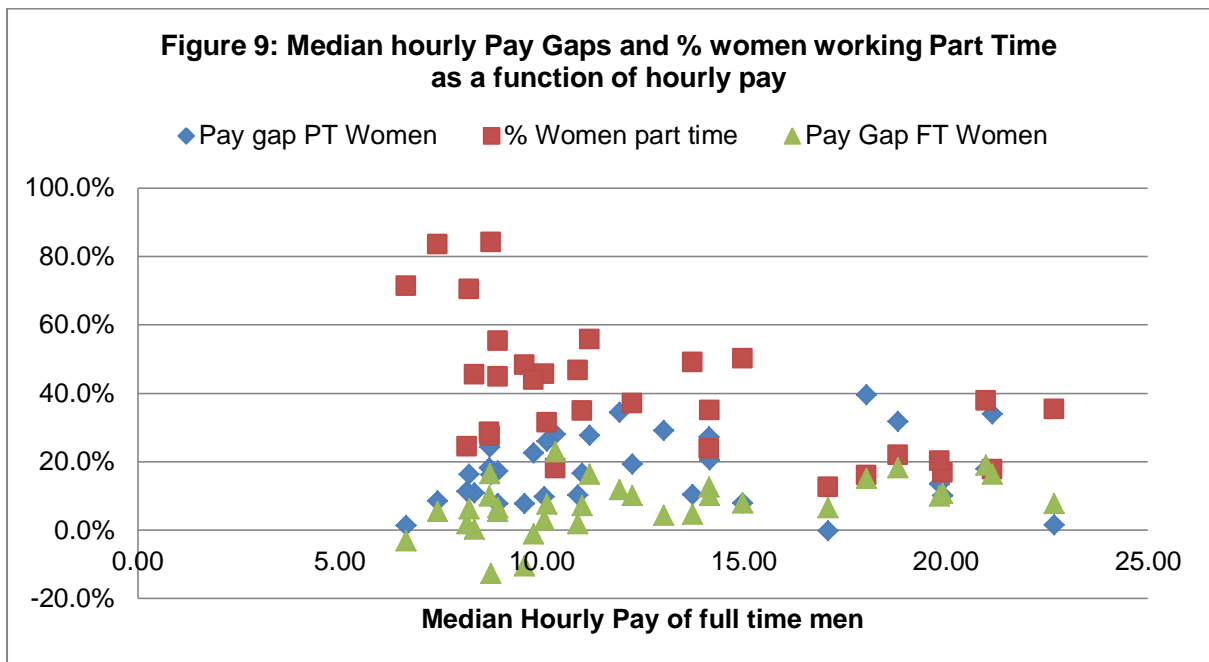
- 1) In a majority of cases, the median hourly pay gap is higher for part time women than it is for full time women, and both exhibit a slight trend for a higher gap in higher paid jobs (green triangles and blue diamonds);
- 2) There is a much bigger trend that part time women are employed largely in the lower paid occupations (red squares).

Even in the case of the profession with the biggest “within occupation” gap (that labelled “Health Professionals”) more detailed examination of the data reveals that this is largely due to occupational segregation within the overall heading, as shown in Appendix 1.

This trend is not a surprise; there is plenty of anecdotal evidence that women are segregated into low paid jobs. However, as is discussed in more detail in Appendix 1, the picture is different for part time women and full time women.



Source: ONS, 2014



Source: 2014

The ONS ASHE data discussed in Appendix 1 also confirm that part time women are employed largely in lower paid jobs such as caring, sales, administration and cleaning and that the top seven jobs for men do not feature any of the top seven for part time women. There are more professions/occupations in common between part time women and full time women, many of them similarly low paid, notably the Caring personal service occupations which top the list for both and are 55% part time (median pay around £8.3 per hour).

However, not all the common jobs for full and part time women are low paid; for example, 38% of the 1070 thousand female health professionals work part time for roughly the same gross hourly pay as full time women (median pay around £17 per hour). This profession does not appear in the top seven list for full time men; it employs about 270 thousand of them which is only 66% of the number of part time women, but the gross median hourly pay gap between women and men is 18%.

Another example is the Teaching and educational profession which employs about 880 thousand women, 35% of them part time; this is a rare case where part time women seem to earn similar gross hourly pay to full time men (median £22), both of them higher (by around 8%) than full time women. It may be significant that these two significant employers of part time women in higher paid jobs are largely in the public sector.

Full time women also experience job segregation in relation to full time men (see Appendix 1). There are low levels of men in the particularly low paid employments of “caring personal service” (20% of full time employees) and “other administrative” occupations, for example. There are low levels of women in the higher paid employment of “science, research, engineering and technology professionals” (16%). Appendix 1 shows that the two occupations in common from the top seven lists are: Managers, directors and senior officials (31% women); and Sales, marketing and related associate professionals (37% women). These are both relatively well paying professions and both have significant pay gaps (medians 16% and 15% respectively).

The size of the pay gap between full time women and men within some higher paying job categories is difficult to understand as other than discrimination, and having to work flexibly (other than part time) is likely to be a factor. This discrimination may arise in recruitment and promotion processes as well as illegal unequal pay.

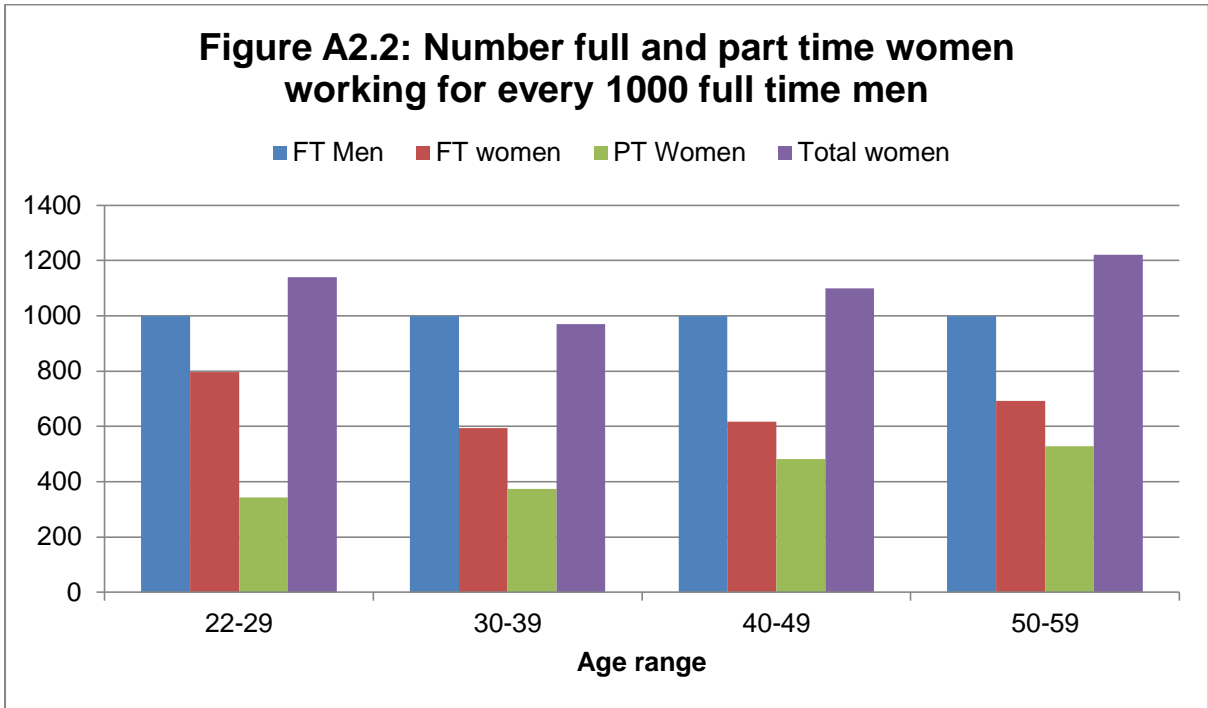
However, the main conclusion on the impact of occupation on overall pay gaps is that occupational segregation is the bigger contributor

1.4.2 The effect of Age (see also Appendix 2)

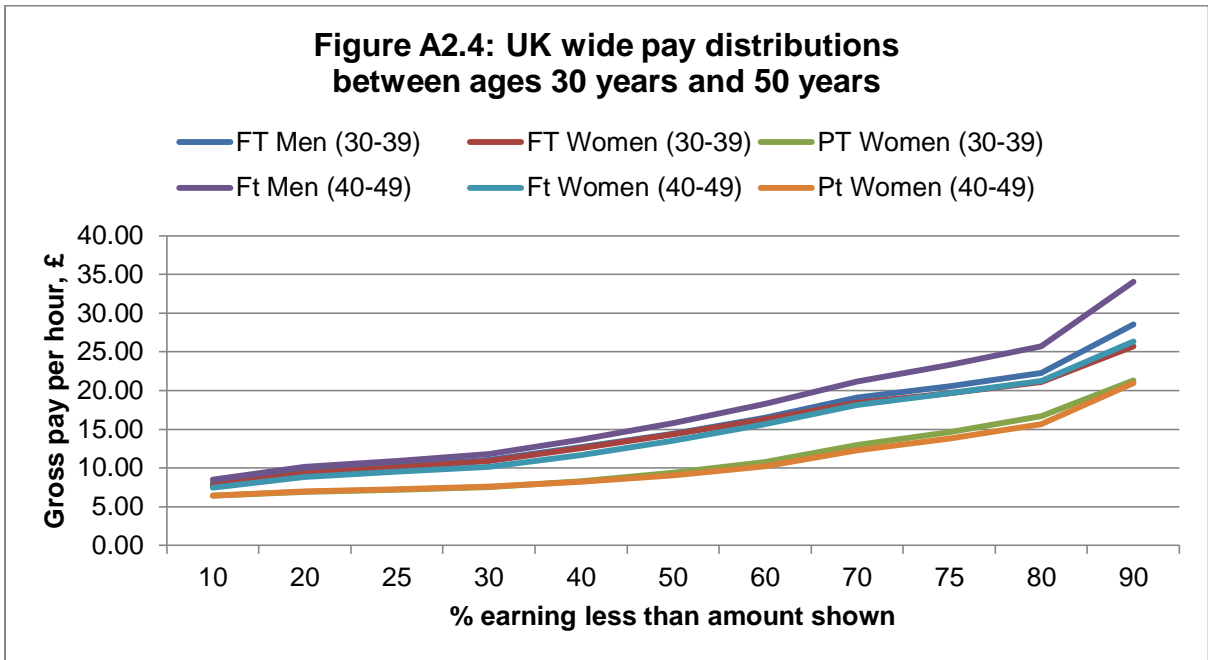
Appendix 2 shows just how complex are the factors which cause any overall age effect. The fact that the median full time pay gap across the UK economy for those under 40 is ‘close to zero’ is a vagary of bringing together so much variation and hides the many inequalities which exist.

For example, it does not account for the movement of women from full time work into part time work which is consistently lower paid (figure A2.2 from Appendix 2, reproduced here).

Nor does it recognise that for the 50% of full time women who earn more than the median there is much less chance that they will earn at the higher end of the distribution, and this chance reduces with age (figure A2.4).

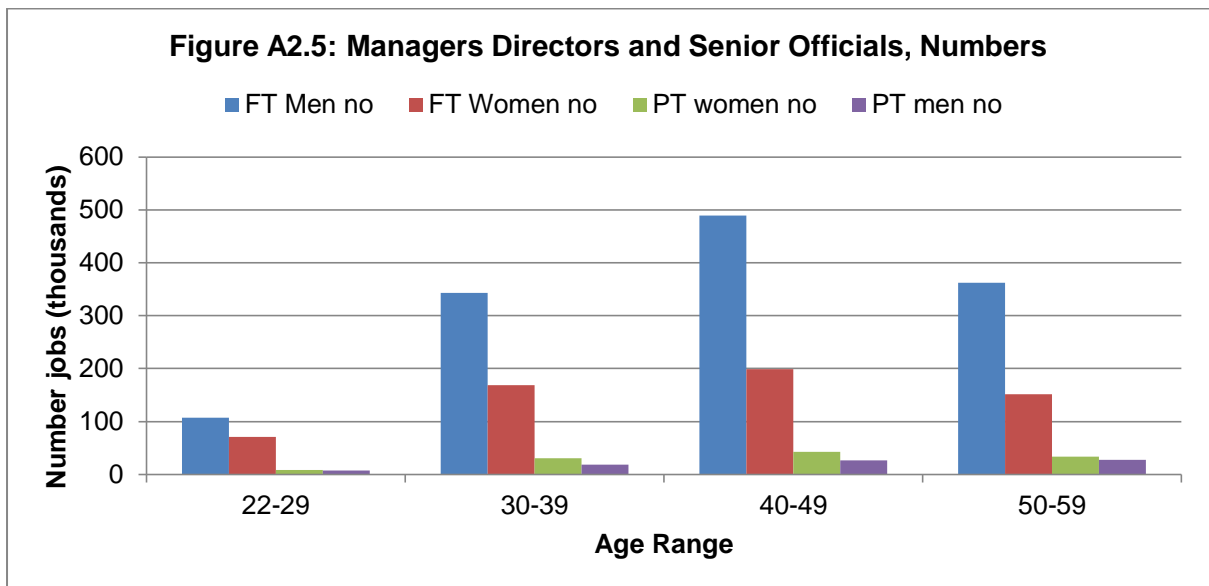


Source: ONS, 2014

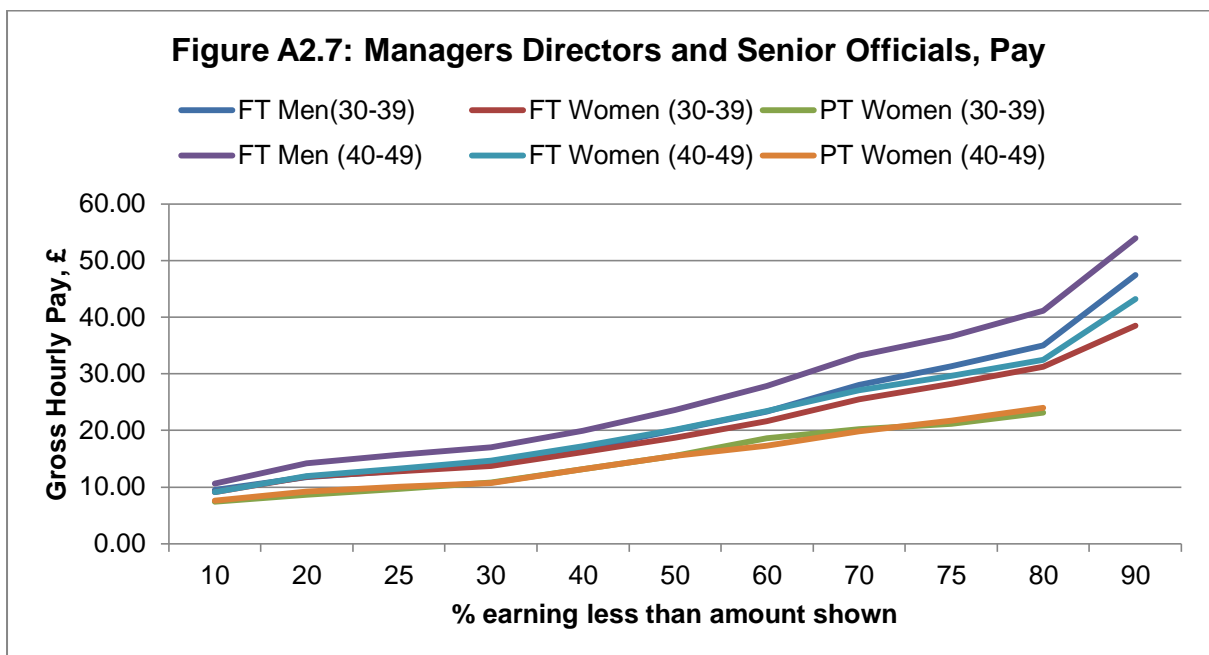


Source: ONS, 2014

The age effect is much stronger in higher paid occupations and is due to both reductions in the proportions of women in these occupations (see, for example figure A2.5) and to the increase in men’s pay relative to both full time and part time women (figure A2.7).



Source: ONS, 2014



Source: ONS, 2014

The general conclusions on the impact of age are that:

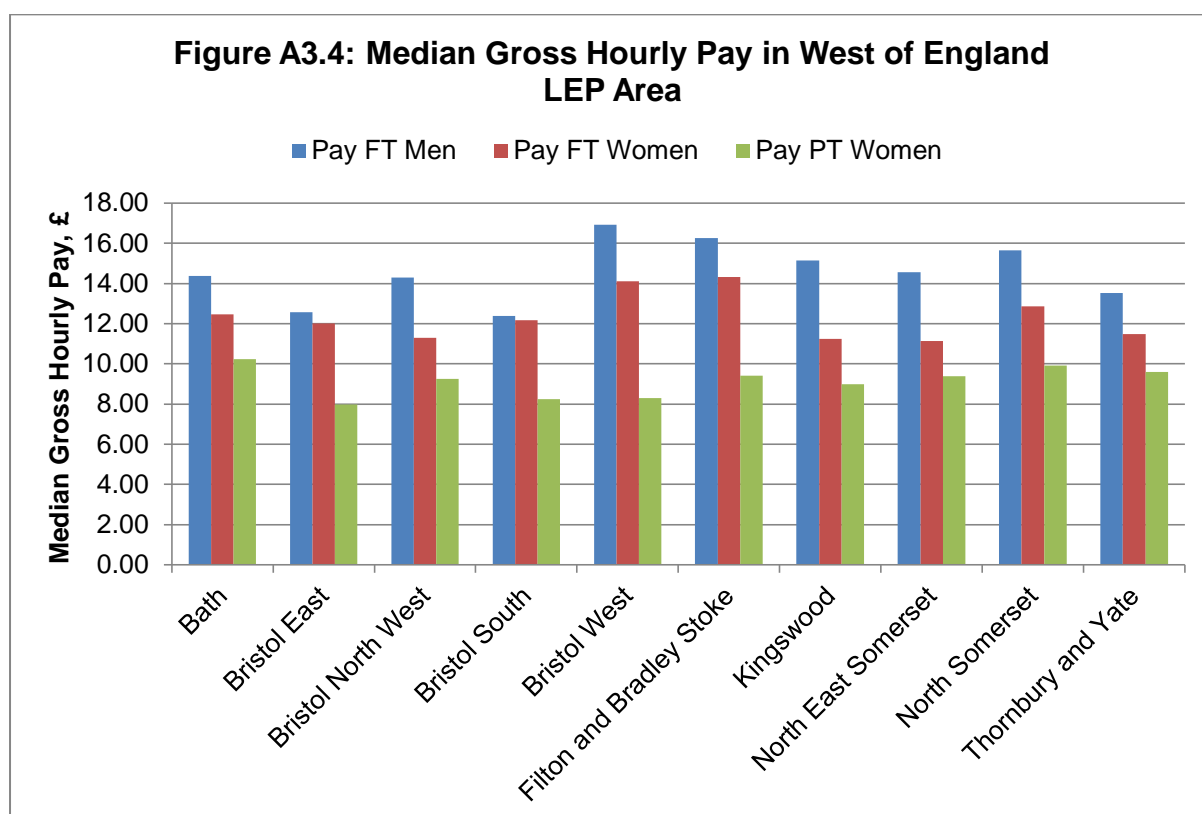
- 1) Occupation has a much bigger impact on pay gaps than does age within an occupation.
- 2) The movement of women between occupations as they age has a big impact on the pay gap because they tend to move into lower pay sectors. This appears to be the case even for women who continue, or return, to work nominally full time.
- 3) Women also tend to move into part time work as they age, which has a double effect both because part time work is generally less well paid within occupations and because the occupations where part time work is available are generally in low paid sectors.
- 4) Within occupations, the full time pay gap increases with age because women's pay grows more slowly than that of men. Age thus amplifies the

more general effect that the higher the full time pay the fewer the full time women.

1.4.3 The impact of Geography

Previous work^{iv} by Fair Play South West has shown that where people live makes a big difference to the pay gap they experience when viewed at the Local Authority or Constituency level. That analysis was based on 2012 ONS data and covered all women, not segregated by occupation or age. The effect is less marked at the wider regional level, which is the level at which ONS publish data by occupation and age.

Appendix 3 provides a summary update using data. This shows that the variation in women's pay tends to be less than men's wherever they live; men's pay is much higher in places close to areas with high GDP.



Source: ONS, 2014

The main conclusion from Appendix 3 is that transport plays a crucial role in whether residents of a constituency can access well paid jobs in nearby constituencies and that this affects women more than men.

Part 2: CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS

From the data analysis in Part 1 and the three appendices it is clear that when a woman experiences a gender pay gap the extent will depend on her occupation, whether she works full or part time, her age and where she lives (ONS, 2014). There is also evidence that women move between occupations and between full and part time work, with a trend towards lower paid occupations with time. This in part explains why the pay gap overall is so much bigger for women aged over 40 years.

Pay gaps within occupations tend to be smaller than those between occupations. However, they tend to be bigger at the higher end of pay distributions and in those occupations which attract higher pay across the distribution.

To understand the causes of pay gaps it is therefore necessary to understand both the factors which impact pay within occupations and those which cause women to move between occupations at certain times in their lives. To do this, numerical data and statistics need to be supplemented with qualitative information gathered from surveys and consultations with women and women's organisations. In this part some of these factors are examined, bringing together qualitative intelligence^v and the quantitative analysis above.

2.1 Inadequate flexible work options

It is well established that a significant proportion of care for young children, the elderly infirm and other vulnerable adults is provided unpaid by women who also need and/or want to have paid employment and careers. This almost inevitably means their employment needs to be within reasonable commuting time from home, school or childcare providers and that the hours worked can be chosen flexibly.

The ONS defines full time work as 30 hours or more per week and on that basis in some occupations and/or at some ages more than 50% of women work part time (ONS, 2014). Additionally, even those women working full time on this definition tend to work fewer hours than is typical for full time men because of this need for flexibility. There is no doubt that people who are able to work fewer hours earn less per hour than those able to work more hours and this applies within occupations (with few exceptions) as well as between them.

Much of the discrepancy within occupations is down to discrimination and prejudice. There continues to be a view amongst managers and some peers that those who cannot put in the hours are less committed and less valuable than those who do; this is frequently exacerbated by poorly designed appraisal and development schemes which reward presentism rather than efficiency. The laws which prohibit discrimination in pay and conditions for part time working are not adequately implemented or policed. Employers need to go further and advertise all jobs as available for flexible working at the same hourly rate regardless of hours worked. It is argued that a voluntary approach to this is not working (or not working fast enough) and there needs to be a statutory requirement (Fair Play South West, 2014).

The variation in availability of flexible working is even more stark between occupations, with higher paying occupations less likely to employ people on contracts with fewer hours. This means that when women become carers they find themselves not only having to reduce their hours of paid employment but also having to move to lower paid occupations in order to do it. Add to this their need to work locally and the uneven geographical distribution of the higher paid sectors and it is easy to see how many women end up in low paid jobs as they reach their 30s and 40s. The evidence is that their careers rarely recover even when they subsequently can return to full time paid employment. The solution here is not only that all jobs should be advertised as available for flexible working but much greater consideration

of women's needs should be given in planning and transport policy-making and implementation. Women have less access to private transport than do men and are less able to undertake long commutes involving multiple journeys (for example via childcare or school drop-off) on public transport not designed with them in mind.

2.2 Undervalued 'women's work'

Low pay is a women's issue. Across the UK 42% of part time women, 17% of full time women and 12% of full time men earn less than a Living Wage per hour (ONS, 2014). It cannot be socially just that so many women can work a full week and still not earn enough to live on. Combining the low pay and low number of hours many women are able to work, some 43% of all working women earn less than a Living Wage per week. Increasing the minimum wage will go some way to remove this social injustice, but it needs to go up by more than announced by the government in 2015 to eliminate poverty pay.

The fact that so many more women than men are low paid is largely down to occupational segregation and the different values placed by society on different occupations. In the main, those occupations which are about caring for people, such as caring and personal service, are lower paid than those which are about working with things, such as process, plant and machine operatives. Even within health as a profession those, such as nurses, who work closely with the day to day needs of people are paid less than those, such as medical staff, who are somewhat removed from patients as people. Society needs to rethink the value it places on caring if it is serious about eliminating the gender pay gap.

2.3 The childcare conundrum

Many women would like to work more hours but are unable to access adequate childcare arrangements. To be 'adequate' childcare needs to be of high quality, conveniently located and affordable. The extension of the right to "free" childcare for 30 hours a week for some children will be welcomed when it is rolled out from September 2016. However the following points emerge from consultations with women and childcare providers:

- 1) "Free" childcare is frequently not free because providers find the sum they receive from local authorities does not cover costs fully. This is partly because some authorities cream off some of what they receive for childcare before passing it on to providers. It is also the case that the basic subsidy from government is meagre and would not cover decent pay for childcare workers. The result is that some providers charge a top-up fee for "free" places, others charge higher fees to those who don't qualify for free childcare. Realistically "free" childcare should be re-labelled "subsidised".
- 2) The response of some providers to low fees is to cease contracting with local authorities at all. It is clear that at 15 hours per week the demand for places already outstrips supply and there is no clear mechanism for ensuring that an increased demand can be met. Local Authorities are given a role in making sure provision is adequate but not the funding to do it and with expected cuts in government grants this is set to get worse. The result is that many women

cannot find local childcare even if they could afford it. This is a consequence of funding demand rather than supply.

- 3) The hours of childcare available, whether subsidised or not, are not usually enough to enable women to move into full time work because they don't allow for travelling time. Given the poor availability of flexible working options in higher paid jobs this means that many women are stuck in low paid work even with subsidised childcare. With the current approach increasing funding for childcare is not going to make much impact on gender pay gaps.
- 4) Many women worry that the quality of available childcare is not as good as they would wish for their children. This is not surprising given the very poor pay of childcare workers which leads to high turnover and inexperienced workers. Providers thus face a conundrum; if they pay a decent wage they have to charge higher fees, which are unaffordable for many women.

The response to these issues cannot be the piecemeal approach we have seen from successive governments. Childcare benefits children and their future development as much as it does their parents and should be considered as infrastructure at least as important as transport, energy and housing (WBG, 2016). Early years' education and childcare must be seen as of sufficient value to society to warrant a publically provided service in the same way as the Education system provides for school-age children and young people.

2.4 Inadequate advice and guidance on career and study options

The data analysed in Part 1 confirm that women and men choose different study topics and occupations throughout their lives, and that these choices lead to women being in lower paid jobs.. For example, very few women chose engineering as an occupation, though a growing number are choosing other STEM³ subjects. The fall-out rate from working as an engineer is also higher for women than it is for men. This is one of the highest paying professions for full time men see appendix 1).

There are many theories on why women make these choices, including the beliefs that such higher paid jobs are 'men's work', that they cannot be combined with caring responsibilities and that they are physical and non-creative. There is an important role for advice and guidance providers in countering some of these beliefs, but consultations suggest that young people nowadays receive almost no careers advice and what there is to a large extent reinforces prejudices rather than opening up options^{vi}. The role of making provision for advice and guidance has been delegated to schools; some of them commission outside experts but many expect teachers to fit it into their busy schedule with almost no support or training. It is also believed that many schools value the A-level/University route more than vocational education and steer their pupils accordingly. There is an urgent need to reinstate a professional independent careers advice and guidance service and ensure that schools and colleges use it. Such a service should be subject to the public sector equality duty to promote equality of opportunity including for women.

³ Science, Technical, Engineering and Maths. Usually includes construction and relevant medical support occupations.

The support for providers of advice and guidance should include adequate labour market information including potential earnings and employer demand for skills. Employers, too, have a role to play in ensuring that their workplace culture and practices match their claim to be an equal opportunities employer; for example, consultations reveal that many women leave well paid jobs because “I don’t want to have to behave like that to get on”.

2.5 Public Transport not meeting women’s needs

Some 30% of women have no access to a car particularly during the working day because either they cannot afford one or the family car is used by their partner for work. Except in London, public transport systems tend to be designed on a hub and spoke model focussed on the centres of conurbations. This means that a journey to work via school or childcare drop-off might involve several changes and a long commuting time. Furthermore, some service timetables are designed for the ‘male’ working day rather than recognising part time and flexible worker needs. Combine this with the fact that high paid jobs are unevenly distributed and it is not surprising that many women seeking work choose a more local, lower paid, job. The problem occurs in major cities but is even more apparent in rural areas, some of which have very infrequent services or none.

Planners, transport authorities and developers need to consider the differing needs of women and men when deciding how to distribute residential and employment space and to ensure that public transport opens up the connections between them.

2.6 Poor recruitment, personal development and promotion practices

Some employers have developed good practice in their internal processes to eliminate unconscious bias and recognise the value of different types of contribution to the business or service. However, many have not (Opportunity Now, 2010). As discussed above, women are frequently undervalued because they work fewer hours. Many processes rely on the opinions of line managers who have not been trained on how to avoid bias. Traits such as command and control are rewarded whereas cooperation and teamwork are not. Some employers are still not removing personal information from selection applications and some are still asking inappropriate questions in interviews^{vii}. Some appraisal schemes are used to determine pay rises to the exclusion of consideration of personal development. Guidance for employers on how to avoid these and other biases exists (ACAS, 2006) but is not well disseminated and implemented.

Some employers who do practise personal development apply this selectively in a way which disadvantages women. For example, training may be available only outside their working hours or remote from the workplace. It is often applied only to certain jobs, excluding those at the lower paid end of the distribution. Some offer development opportunities only to improve performance in the current job rather than enabling promotion to higher paid jobs.

Public sector employers are under a legal duty to promote equality of opportunity and effective gender impact analysis would identify and correct such biases; unfortunately effective gender impact analysis is rare and becoming rarer, a situation

which requires better enforcement to correct. Private sector employers should also be encouraged, if not required, to gender proof their recruitment, personal development and promotion practices. In the meantime, public sector procurement should be used to drive this agenda forward in the private sector.

2.7 Poor access to legal remedy

Many of the causes of the gender pay gaps discussed above are not subject to legal remedy and require voluntary shifts in policy and practice if the gaps are to be eliminated.

However, some aspects of bias do count as discrimination and are illegal; for example, unequal pay for work of equal value, discrimination in recruitment or promotion. The onus for taking a case to law is on the person discriminated against and this usually does not test the adequacy of wider processes. The introduction of tribunal fees and hardening rules on when and how cases can be taken are reducing access to legal remedy for large numbers of women. Women's organisations have called for several improvements to the system, including: removal of tribunal fees for discrimination cases; introduction of group action claims; a duty on judges to require improvements in processes and to monitor compliance.

2.8 Multiple disadvantage

The data analysis of Part 1 looks at the economic position of all women, not divided into their other characteristics such as race, disability, lesbian or trans. From consultations and other data it is known that the position can be worse for some groups of BME women and for disabled women, the so-called double jeopardy. There is a need for better data on the causes and solutions of double jeopardy; as a first step the ability to take multiple discrimination cases should be restored to Equality Act 2010.

Access to English language courses for women whose first language is not English should be improved.

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

The "Gender Pay Gap" is found to be a series of different gaps between the pay of women and men. They occur within occupations as well as between them, though occupational segregation has the bigger effect. The gaps tend to be higher both for the higher paid occupations and at the higher pay end of pay distributions within occupations; the focus on median pay as the measure hides the latter effect.

The pay gaps for women working part time are much higher than those for women working full time when compared with full time men. Women tend to move out of full time employment in their 30s, some into part time employment and some out of the labour market for a time. Those moving into part time almost always do so into lower paid occupations. The number of women working full time increases again in their 40s but there is evidence that they do so into the lower paid occupations which offer flexible working hours. The result is that the overall pay gaps for full time women increase for the age range 40 to 49 years. The reasons for this move of women from

higher paid jobs are mostly associated with their need to combine unpaid caring with paid employment. This means they tend to need jobs local to where they live or which have good accessibility by public transport. They also need flexibility on which hours they work and tend to be able to work fewer hours than men even when classed as full time.

The effect of increasing pay gaps with age is exacerbated by the trend for men's pay to increase faster than women's up the pay distribution whether they are full or part time and even within occupations. This may be partly another result of having to work flexibly but there is evidence that it is also a result of discriminatory practices in recruitment, personal development schemes and selection for promotion.

Many young women make choices of study and careers which steer them into lower paid occupations before they experience a need for flexible working but possibly in anticipation of it. There is an urgent need for improved careers advice and guidance.

Women's segregation into low paid occupations and into the low pay end of distributions within occupations is not just an equality issue. It means that many women are in poverty and/or dependent on benefits even when they work. Those who can depend on a partner's income at some points of their lives often find themselves losing this support at other points and then feeling the effect of not having had a decent independent income. 43% of working women earn less than a Living Wage per week, as defined by the Living Wage Foundation.

As a result of this analysis the following recommendations are made :

- 1) The laws which prohibit discrimination in pay and conditions for part time working should be adequately implemented and policed.
- 2) Employers need to advertise all jobs as available for flexible working at the same hourly rate regardless of hours worked. A voluntary approach to this is not working (or not working fast enough) and there needs to be a statutory requirement. The right to request flexible working is falling far short of what's needed.
- 3) Planners, transport authorities and developers need to consider the differing needs of women and men when deciding how to distribute residential and employment space and to ensure that public transport opens up the connections between them. Public authorities are under a legal duty to do this.
- 4) Combining the low pay and low number of hours many women are able to work, some 43% of all working women earn less than a Living Wage per week. Increasing the minimum wage will go some way to remove this social injustice, but to eliminate poverty pay it needs to go up by more than and faster than announced by the government in 2015.
- 5) Society needs to rethink the value it places on the caring occupations if it is serious about eliminating the gender pay gap.
- 6) Childcare benefits children and their future development as much as it does their parents and should be considered as infrastructure at least as important as transport, energy and housing. It should be funded accordingly.

- 7) Early years' education and childcare should be seen as of sufficient value to society to warrant a publically provided service in the same way as the Education system provides for school-age children and young people. There should be a fundamental rethink of how childcare is provided to ensure that supply is funded rather than demand.
- 8) There is an urgent need to reinstate a professional independent careers advice and guidance service and ensure that schools and colleges use it. Such a service should be subject to the public sector equality duty to promote equality of opportunity including for women.
- 9) The support for providers of advice and guidance should include adequate labour market information including potential earnings and employer demand for skills. Employers, too, have a role to play in ensuring that their workplace culture and practices match their claims to be equal opportunities employers.
- 10) Public sector employers are under a legal duty to promote equality of opportunity and effective gender impact analysis would identify and correct such biases; unfortunately effective gender impact analysis is rare and becoming rarer, a situation which requires better enforcement to correct.
- 11) Private sector employers should also be encouraged, if not required, to gender proof their recruitment, personal development and promotion practices. In the meantime, public sector procurement should be used to drive this agenda forward in the private sector.
- 12) The effectiveness of the law in reducing pay gaps should be improved in several ways including: removal of tribunal fees for discrimination cases; introduction of group action claims; a duty on judges to require improvements in processes and to monitor compliance.
- 13) There is a need for better data on the causes and solutions of 'double jeopardy'; for example, women who are BME are disadvantaged more than both men who are BME and women who are not. As a first step the ability to take multiple discrimination cases should be restored to Equality Act 2010.
- 14) Access to English language courses for women whose first language is not English should be improved.

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ⁱ Work in support of the response from Fair Play South West to the Inquiry of the Select Committee for Women and Equalities
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ⁱⁱ Fair Play South West is the gender equality network for the south west of England, representing women from Gloucestershire to Cornwall to Dorset and Wiltshire.
www.fairplaysouthwest.org.uk

ⁱⁱⁱ The Living Wage Foundation is a partnership of employers and non-governmental organisations initiated by Citizens UK. <http://www.livingwage.org.uk/>

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