

## 5. Work

### **UN Commission on the Status of Women**

#### **Conclusions on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality (extract)**

**Forty-eighth session, 1-12 March 2004**

The Commission urges UN agencies, Governments, the private sector, NGOs, and other stakeholders, to:

‘adopt and implement legislation and/or policies to close the gap between women’s and men’s pay and promote reconciliation of occupational and family responsibilities, including through reduction of occupational segregation, introduction or expansion of parental leave, flexible working arrangements, such as voluntary part-time work, teleworking, and other home-based work’.

### **The Council of the European Union**

#### **Conclusions on men and gender equality (extract)**

**30 November and 1 December 2006**

The Council of the European Union:

- ‘urges the Commission and Member States to ensure equal career opportunities for both sexes, taking into account the dominance of men in decision-making positions, and to take measures aimed at encouraging boys and men to choose education and employment in female-dominated fields and vice-versa with a view to dismantling gender segregation in the labour market; in this context, invites Member States and the Commission to take concrete actions towards eliminating the gender pay gap.
- recognises the crucial role that the social partners and companies play in reconciliation policies, in promoting awareness-raising schemes in companies and the take-up of flexible work options, especially by men, including in male-dominated professions’.

## Introduction

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## Labour market trends

Waged work has long been seen as central in shaping and sustaining male identities,<sup>115</sup> and the ways that 'masculinities' are played out in different working environments are affected by wider shifts in the economy and labour market. (There are also complex interconnections with domestic unpaid work, which are addressed in more detail in the section on 'Fatherhood', page 65).

Economic restructuring since the 1970s has transformed the old patterns of standard 'Fordist' manufacturing in industrialised countries, and of lifetime attachment to a single employer and place of work. The associated processes of 'globalisation' have also accelerated economic interdependence and interaction between countries. Whilst the effects of these shifts vary in different geographical locations and for population groups, they have had a significant impact – and for some, a polarising effect – on workers and the wider population, and on gender relations.

Connell has argued<sup>116</sup> there is evidence of new dominant patterns of managerial masculinity ('transnational business masculinity') emerging among men with positions of power in global corporations. These patterns are marked by an extreme commitment to work and competitive achievement, strong division between home and working life and a declining sense of responsibility for others. However these forms are not universal; they sit alongside more traditional patterns of management.<sup>117</sup> Other commentators have emphasised more the mediating effect of factors such as state responses, historical and institutional arrangements and cultural and religious values. They emphasise continuing diversity in men's management practices around the world, both between and within states.<sup>118</sup>

Global forces have also had an impact on groups of workers whose livelihoods have been increasingly affected by shifting flows of capital and the investment decisions of global corporations. In the UK, there has been a significant loss of unskilled 'male' manual work, in sectors such as manufacturing and mining, in areas and regions suffering industrial decline. This has, in particular, affected towns and cities in the north of England, South Wales, and Scotland. As a result, there was a large rise in the number of men of working age – especially older men – becoming 'economically inactive' (i.e. not employed, or recorded as unemployed) during the 1980s and 1990s.

Over the same period, there has also been a significant shift towards a service sector economy, with care and interpersonal skills – characteristics that are more commonly identified with women – at a premium. New organisational structures and employment practices (e.g. flexible working hours, zero hours contracts, homeworking), the introduction of information and communication technologies (e.g. teleworking) and new management approaches have fundamentally altered the nature of the UK labour market.<sup>119</sup>

A common feature of the 'new economy' is job insecurity, with workers increasingly offered short-term contracts rather than a 'job for life'. Whilst average job tenure for men in the top income quartile is 12 years, for those in the bottom income quartile it is seven years.<sup>120</sup> Some argue this fragmentation has corroded the identity of (male) workers and loosened ties to particular

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115. Morgan D.H.J. (1992) *Discovering Men: Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities 3*, London: Routledge; Connell R.W. (1995) *Masculinities*, Cambridge: Polity Press

116. Connell R.W. (1998) *Masculinities and Globalization, Men and Masculinities*, Vol. 1, No.1

117. Connell R.W., Wood J. (2005) *Globalization and Business Masculinities, Men and Masculinities*, Vol. 7, No.4

118. Pease B., Pringle K. (eds.) (2001) *A Man's World: Changing Men's Practices in a Globalized World*, London: Zed Books

119. McDowell, L. (2001) *Young Men Leaving School: white, working-class masculinity*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation/Youth Work Press

120. TUC (2008) *Hard Work, Hidden Lives: The Full Report of the Commission on Vulnerable Employment*, London: TUC

employers and neighbourhoods<sup>121</sup>. Research on men's work orientation<sup>122</sup> has suggested that some men (particularly those who are more family-orientated) see job insecurity either as a threat to their 'breadwinning' identity and their financial security, or as a turning point and opportunity for reappraisal. Other men (particularly those who are more career-orientated) can experience tensions at home, owing to the need either to relocate and/or negotiate their career moves with their partners.

Changes in the structure of the economy have been accompanied by a steady rise in the numbers of women in paid employment, and a decline in men's workforce participation. However, women's employment is often part-time (especially following the birth of a child) and men's full-time, reshaping the post-war sole male 'breadwinner' model to a 'one and a half' earner model. The trend over the past 20 years of an increasing number of jobs in the UK economy is expected to continue in the longer term, despite the impact of the current 'credit crunch'. But there is no consensus on whether any new jobs will be taken by men or women, and whether they will be high quality jobs or not.<sup>123</sup>

In the short term, recent unemployment data have shown consistent increases in the unemployment rate for women as well as men – with women in particular faring worse than in previous recessions. Although it is too early to know if these trends will be sustained, job losses in sectors with a greater concentration of male workers (for example construction and manufacturing) are mirrored by sectors with a higher concentration of female workers (for example business services and retail) where redundancies are also growing.<sup>124</sup>

## Men, work and organisations

Workplaces themselves may be more or less 'gendered' in the ways they are organised and structured, and this will significantly affect the shifting relations and dynamic positioning of men and women within them. Organisational structures, cultures and practices tend still to be based on an assumed norm of lifetime, full-time, continuous (male) employment. 'Masculine' values are also strongly embedded within the majority of organisations, with men exercising power in the workplace over women in a variety of ways (e.g. job segregation, sex discrimination, the gender pay gap and sexual harassment).<sup>125</sup>

These relations are increasingly complex. For instance, men from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities may be subordinate in the workplace to white female managers and supervisors. Gay men may be marginalised; in one recent survey in 21 public and private organisations, the discomfort and lack of support felt by gay participants at work was revealed by the unwillingness of many to identify their own workplace in the report.<sup>126</sup>

121. Sennett R. (1998) *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Characteristics of Work in the New Capitalism*, New York: W.W.Norton; Bauman Z.(1998) *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor*, Buckingham: Open University Press

122. Nolan J., *Job insecurity, gender and work orientation: an exploratory study of breadwinning and caregiving identity*, GeNet Working Paper No. 6, February 2005

123. Walby S. (2007) *Gender (in)equality and the future of work*, Manchester: Equal Opportunities Commission

124. TUC (2009) *Women and Recession: how will the recession affect women at work?*, London: TUC. Rake K. (2009) *Are women bearing the burden of recession?*, London: Fawcett Society. Note that topline measures of unemployment and redundancy may underestimate the impact on women. Women are less likely to be entitled to redundancy pay which accrues only after two years of service, and women with employed partners are less likely to register as unemployed.

125. Collinson D.L., Hearn J.(2004) *Men and Masculinities in Work, Organisations and Management*, in Kimmel M., Hearn J., Connell R.W. (eds.) *The Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*, Thousand Oaks, Ca: SAGE

126. Guasp A., Balfour J. (2008) *Peak Performance: Gay people and productivity*, London: Stonewall

Earlier research on men and masculinities in organisations tended to concentrate on manual workers, highlighting both their subordination vis-à-vis middle-class managers<sup>127</sup> and the often sexist nature of informal factory floor interaction between men.<sup>128</sup> One study has, for example, shown how male manual workers construct organisational identities which negate 'others' – including managers, office workers and women.<sup>129</sup>

The **Considerate Constructor's Scheme** is working to transform the sexist image of the building trade. The scheme is a voluntary code of practice that states that those signed up to it must ensure there is no lewd language or behaviour on site. There are more than 3,500 building sites adhering to the code – since its launch nine years ago, more than 18,000 construction workers have signed up.<sup>130</sup>

The literature on organisations and management has long drawn on the assumption that the subject is male, but not analysed this reality critically. In practice, men not only continue to dominate management positions (about 95 per cent of senior management in the UK is male); they benefit disproportionately from higher salaries and remuneration packages too.

More recent work has sought to explore the nature of managerial masculinities. It has, for instance, highlighted how managers often discriminate against interview candidates who are female and tend to appoint men like themselves – reinforcing the status quo. It has revealed how male managers frequently mismanage cases of sexuality and sexual harassment.<sup>131</sup> There has also been increasing emphasis on exploring 'peer scrutiny' among managers, and the standardisation of management practices.<sup>132</sup>

Many men are expected to show unswerving loyalty to their company, thereby distancing themselves, or being distanced, from caring responsibilities. Some are strongly motivated by the potential gains in status and rewards from upward progress. But others, especially working fathers, find the demands of paid work (e.g. long hours, tight deadlines, excessive time away from home) intense – particularly within ever larger transnational corporations. This can affect their health, and put additional strain on their (female) partners and on family relationships.

The **Diversity Champions** programme is a good practice forum in which employers can work with Stonewall, and each other, to promote lesbian, gay and bisexual equality in the workplace. In 2008, the programme is approaching 400 members.

Members benefit from access to Stonewall's benchmarking services and a dedicated client account manager. There is a good practice seminar series which delivers learning on relevant topics, such as sexual orientation monitoring. Access is also provided to the latest research, knowledge and advice on specific organisational initiatives.

Information from [www.stonewall.org.uk/workplace](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/workplace)

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127. An early example is Willis P. (1977) *Learning to Labour*, London: Saxon House

128. Ackroyd S., Thompson P. (1999) *Organisational Misbehaviour*, London: SAGE

129. Collinson D.L.(2000) 'Strategies of resistance: power, knowledge and subjectivity in the workplace', in Grint K. (ed.) *Work and Society: A Reader*, Cambridge: Polity

130. Drawn from Hanman N., 'Male feminists march on', *The Guardian*, 7 August 2006

131. Collinson D.L., Hearn J.(2004)(ibid.)

132. Connell R.W., Wood J. (ibid.)

## Occupational segregation

'Horizontal' occupational segregation involves men and women doing different jobs, often in different sectors. This is usually combined with vertical segregation, with men occupying more senior and better rewarded positions, and women undertaking more part-time and/or precarious work. Again, there are differences between men according to ethnicity; for example, white men are more likely to be managers or professionals than Bangladeshi, black African or Caribbean men, and less likely than Chinese or Indian men.<sup>133</sup>

Occupational segregation, together with differences in working-time arrangements and terms and conditions, are key structural factors sustaining an enduring 'gender pay gap'; in 2007, women earned 17 per cent less per hour than men in full-time work, and 36 per cent less in part-time work. In June 2008, the Government announced proposals to require public sector bodies (and the 30 per cent of private organisations that tender for public contracts) to reveal information on the pay of men and women in their organisations.<sup>134</sup>

Some occupations (e.g. manual labour, the armed services, firefighting, senior management) are routinely identified as 'men's jobs', whereas others (e.g. hairdressing, childcare) are more commonly regarded as 'women's jobs'. In response, the Government intends, as part of the package outlined in the previous paragraph, to extend positive action so that employers can take into account, when selecting between two equally qualified candidates, the under-representation of disadvantaged groups. Whereas this is more likely to affect women and people from ethnic minority groups, it could also affect men who are under-represented in particular occupations.

Although the gender division of labour in employment has proven remarkably resistant to change, it is not static, and there are examples of sectors where the makeup of the workforce has shifted over time. Clerical work, for instance, was initially defined as a respectable occupation for working-class or lower middle-class men, but became dominated by women over the course of the last century.<sup>135</sup>

Occupations are also often segregated between men from different ethnic groups. For instance, one in seven Pakistani men in employment is a taxi driver, cab driver or chauffeur, compared with one in 100 white British men. Over one-quarter of Bangladeshi men are chefs, cooks or waiters compared with one in 100 white British men.<sup>136</sup>

Whilst there is a significant body of research into the obstacles facing women seeking to enter male-dominated occupations, recent research has sought to explore the perspectives and experiences of men who make non-traditional career choices. Drawing on interviews with primary school teachers, flight crew, librarians and nurses, Simpson identifies a threefold typology of men with different motivations and career aspirations:<sup>137</sup> 'seekers' (those men who actively choose the 'female' occupation), 'finders' (those who find the occupation in the process of making general career decisions), and 'settlers' (men who had tried a variety of different, often 'masculine', jobs with limited levels of job satisfaction and who then entered their current 'female' occupation and settled). She concludes that such men tend to benefit from their minority status by being treated differently and/or experiencing faster career progression and better pay. But although these men feel comfortable working with women and enjoy service and care roles, they adopt a variety of strategies to re-establish their masculinity and avoid their identity being undermined by the 'feminine' nature of the work.

133. Annual Population Survey, January 2004 to December 2004, Office for National Statistics

134. Government Equalities Office, *Framework for a Fairer Future: The Equality Bill*, Cm 7431, June 2008

135. Morgan D.H.J. (ibid.)

136. Annual Population Survey, January 2004 to December 2004, Office for National Statistics

137. Simpson R. (2004) *Masculinity at Work: The Experiences of Men in Female Dominated Occupations*, Work Employment Society, no. 18

The extent of the change that is underway should not be exaggerated. For instance, in relation to the childcare and early-years sector, Rolfe highlights that men still form only two per cent of the workforce.<sup>138</sup> In recent years, government initiatives have sought to expand the workforce and increase the number of childcare places, but the sector has experienced difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff. One reason for this is over-reliance on a small section of the labour force – predominantly young (white) women – however this is becoming unsustainable as they seek other opportunities. The recruitment of men is therefore increasingly regarded as a matter of necessity. But despite attempts to raise the profile of childcare as a career, and to advertise more widely, this has had little effect on the numbers of men in the profession. The establishment of the Children’s Workforce Development Council may lead to the improvement of training, career development and workforce mobility, but the low pay and low status of childcare work act as significant barriers to male recruitment. Another barrier is the evidence of abuse by male workers in childcare settings, and fears of accusations; in response, Pringle has sought to develop a model whereby the potentially positive contributions of men can be maximised, whilst the safety of women and children is protected.<sup>139</sup>

In seeking to reduce the gender segregation in the labour market it is important to consider the role of apprenticeships. Whilst there has been a significant increase in the overall number of apprenticeships available since 2000/2001, there are slightly more men undertaking apprenticeships than women; this has been recognised in reports by the Equal Opportunities Commission and the government-sponsored ‘Women and Work Commission’.<sup>140</sup> During 2006-2007, 54 per cent of people starting apprenticeships were men, and 46 per cent were women – but 70 per cent of advanced-level places were filled by men. Apprenticeships remain clearly segregated along gender lines,<sup>141</sup> and those taken up by men are overwhelmingly in male-dominated sectors which tend to be higher paid. Male apprentices dominate construction (99 per cent men), vehicle maintenance (99 per cent men) and engineering (97 per cent men). Conversely, three per cent of apprenticeships in children’s care, learning and development, and eight per cent in hairdressing go to men.<sup>142</sup> A government review in 2008<sup>143</sup> stated that positive action will be taken to assist under-represented learners, increased funding for more places would be made available, and pilot projects will be developed to ensure a ‘critical mass’ among those who are under-represented. However, it has been argued that these measures are insufficient to tackle the entrenched issues involved.<sup>144</sup>

‘However men deal with their working lives, they are likely to find the old demarcations between men and women far less clear cut. Men may be working alongside women in what were once traditionally masculine jobs; they may be taking up jobs which only women used to work in; they may be switching back and forth between different kinds of masculinity, even in the course of a single working day’.

Hockey J., Robinson V. (2007) *Being a Man Today: Are you up to it?*, University of Sheffield

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138. The highest proportion of men in the childcare workforce in Europe is eight per cent (Denmark).

139. Pringle K. (1998) *Men as Workers in Professional Child Care Settings*, in Owen C., Cameron C., Moss P. (eds.), *Men as Workers in Services for Young Children: Issues of a Mixed Gender Workforce*, London, Institute of Education

140. Equal Opportunities Commission (2006) *Free to choose: Tackling gender barriers to better jobs, One year on progress report*, EOC; Women and Work Commission (2006) *Shaping a Fairer Future*, London: Department for Communities and Local Government

141. They are also less frequently accessed by those from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups, and those who are disabled.

142. Apprenticeship starts, 2006/07 figures, [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)

143. Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills/Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) *World-class Apprenticeships: Unlocking Talent, Building Skills for All, The Government’s strategy for the future of Apprenticeships in England*

144. TUC (2008) *Still more (better paid) jobs for the boys: Apprenticeships and Gender Segregation*

## Working hours

Despite increasing emphasis on the importance of 'work-life' balance, the pressures of paid work are intensifying, owing to factors such as new work practices, the impact of new technology (e.g. email, internet) and declining trade union membership. In recent years working hours fell for men, but an increase in the hours worked by women means that longer hours are being worked in double-earner families. Data for the first quarter of 2008 indicate, however, that working hours are rising again, particularly for men, owing to the challenging economic climate.<sup>145</sup> Both men and women appear to be expected to work harder too, and reported levels of stress at work are increasing (particularly among professional and managerial groups). Among full-time workers, over 80 per cent of both men and women would like to spend more time with their families, and 69 per cent of men and 58 per cent of women say the demands of their job interfere with their family life (at least sometimes).<sup>146</sup>

There are considerable differences in the working hours of men and women, particularly in relation to part-time work. Forty per cent of the female workforce is employed part-time,<sup>147</sup> compared to less than ten per cent of male workers. Black and minority ethnic women are significantly less likely than white women to be working part-time, whereas the reverse is the case for black and minority ethnic men compared to white men.<sup>148</sup>

The arrival of children tends to have a polarising effect on men and women's working hours. Women frequently move to part-time work following the birth of the first child; just prior to the first birth, over 90 per cent of working women spend 31 or more hours a week at work, but a year after only 40 per cent are in full-time employment; this movement towards shorter hours continues over the next decade. For many mothers it also entails 'occupational downgrading', with a significant loss of status and pay.<sup>149</sup> In contrast, the proportion of men working full-time is slightly greater for those with children: 91 per cent of working men are employed full-time prior to children, while 96 per cent of working fathers with a pre-school child and 97 per cent of working fathers with a youngest child of school age are employed full-time.<sup>150</sup>

One in eight of the UK population is working more than the 48 hours per week stipulated by the Working Time Regulations. According to the TUC (Trades Union Congress) Commission on Vulnerable Employment,<sup>151</sup> there is evidence that many UK managers do not believe that they have any obligation to address working-time issues. A survey of workers' experiences of the Regulations<sup>152</sup> found widespread non-compliance: 44 per cent of those who had signed an opt-out from the Regulations had been told that it was a condition of their employment; 31 per cent of night workers had not been offered health assessments; and 50 per cent of those working long hours who had raised concerns about working-time, or knew that someone else in the workplace had raised them, said that the issue had not been resolved.

145. TUC (2008) *Return of the Long Hours Culture*, London: TUC

146. Crompton R., Lyonette C. (2007) *Are we all working too hard?: women, men, and changing attitudes to employment*, in *British Social Attitudes*, 23rd report, National Centre for Social Research, London: SAGE

147. Connolly C., Gregory M., *Moving Down: Women's Part-time Work and Occupational Change in Britain 1991-2001*, The Economic Journal, February 2008

148. TUC, *Ten Years After: Black workers in employment 1997-2007*, 14 April 2008

149. Connolly S., Gregory M. (2007) *Moving Down: Women's Part-time Work and Occupational Change in Britain 1991-2001*, Department of Economics, Discussion paper series No.359, Oxford: Oxford University

150. Paull G., *Children and Women's Hours of Work*, The Economic Journal, February 2008

151. TUC (2008) *Hard Work, Hidden Lives: The Full Report of the Commission on Vulnerable Employment*, London: TUC

152. DTI (2004) *A Survey of Workers' Experiences of the Working Time Regulations*, DTI Employment Relations Services No. 31. London: DTI

## Flexible working

'Another man asked his employer for flexible working and he said he would like his wife's employer's number so he could check if she had done all she could to reduce her hours first, before he accepted his'.

Elizabeth Gardiner, Working Families, presentation at seminar *Women and Men Working Together to Achieve Gender Equality*, Government Equalities Office, 3 December 2007

Under the 2002 Flexible Working (Eligibilities, Complaints and Remedies) Regulations and Flexible Working (Procedural Requirements) Regulations, workers with a child under the age of six (or 18 in the case of a disabled child) have a right to request flexible working arrangements<sup>153</sup> from their employers. The legislation was extended to carers of adults by the 2006 Work and Families Act. (For leave arrangements, see section on 'Fatherhood', page 65).

Nine out of ten requests (or a variant of them) are currently accepted by employers.<sup>154</sup> Most of these are from women, who are three and a half times more likely than men to make a request. However, men are nearly twice as likely to have their request refused (23 per cent versus 13 per cent).<sup>155</sup> Overall, 57 per cent of working women have some kind of flexible working arrangement, compared to 23 per cent of men.<sup>156</sup> There remain ingrained assumptions among employers that flexible work practices should be taken up by staff who are more junior, less career-orientated and/or parents of young children – and implicitly, that they should be taken up principally by women. Men who wish to work flexibly may feel that employers and colleagues will view this negatively, and that it will affect their career prospects.

An independent review by Imelda Walsh<sup>157</sup> for the Department for Work and Pensions, of flexible working in relation to parents of older children, concluded in May 2008 that the right to request flexible working should be extended to those with children up to the age of 16. This age was identified on the basis that it would allow parents to support their children up until GCSE level. If accepted, following consultation by the Government, this will open up this right to an additional 4.5 million parents (as well as the existing 3.6 million parents and 2.5 million carers).

The review comments that there is a tendency to assume that flexible working is more attractive to women because they tend to earn less, so any reduction in their hours will result in less of an effect on the household income than the male earner reducing his hours. However it argues that flexible working must be seen as an issue that affects men as well as women. If this is not more widely accepted, especially by men, there is a risk that flexible working will entrench inequalities between men and women in terms of status and rewards from work.

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153. These may include part-time working, job-sharing, flexitime, compressed working hours, staggered hours, annualised hours and working reduced hours for a limited period.

154. Hayward B., Fong B., Thornton A. (2007) *The Third Work-Life Balance Employer Survey*, Employment Relations Research Series No.86, London: Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform

155. Walsh I. (2008) *Flexible Working: A review of how to extend the right to request flexible working to parents of older children*, London: Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform

156. Equal Opportunities Commission (2006) *Facts about women and men in Great Britain*, London: EOC

157. Walsh I. (ibid.)

## Work and health

Roughly nine out of ten of the working age population in Britain report they are in good or fairly good health, and most people die after retirement. However 16 per cent of men and six per cent of women die during working age.<sup>158</sup> There is a particularly significant difference between the health status of men aged 16-64 who are in work or training and those who are not – the latter group being roughly five times worse off.<sup>159</sup> The association between low socio-economic status and poor health is also well-established. Among the unskilled – but only in this social class – men have significantly worse health status than women.<sup>160</sup> Disability and sickness continue to be important factors causing absence from work and economic inactivity, particularly for men.

European analysis<sup>161</sup> suggests men have a higher rate of accidents (even after adjustments are made for fewer hours worked by women); are more exposed to heavy lifting;<sup>162</sup> suffer more from noise or hearing loss (e.g. in industry); and experience more occupational cancers (e.g. from asbestos, pesticides, paint, nickel, hardwood dust). Women experience more upper-limb disorders (e.g. due to 'light' assembly-line work and data-entry work), suffer more allergies and asthma (e.g. from cleaning and sterilising agents, and dust) and skin diseases (e.g. through contact with cleaning agents or hairdressing chemicals), contract infectious diseases more often (e.g. in healthcare or work with children) and experience more violence from the public through greater contact, particularly in the service sector.<sup>163</sup>

In the UK, asbestos is the foremost cause of work-related fatalities, killing around 3,500 people per year; those at greatest risk worked in construction-related trades between 1950 and the 1970s.<sup>164</sup> There has also been a recent rise in the number of men diagnosed with the more severe form of pneumoconiosis (a lung disease caused by breathing in coal dust whilst working for long periods in the mines). This reflects the importance of occupational histories when assessing the health of men in later life.<sup>165</sup>

Both men and women report high levels of stress from their work. For men, this is often related to long hours and poor management;<sup>166</sup> for women factors include doing low status jobs, combining work and caring and experiencing discrimination and sexual harassment. Relationship problems can lead to lack of concentration, taking time off, inability to manage conflict and having to stop work altogether. Mental health problems are a particularly important cause of absence and worklessness, and often remain undiagnosed – or diagnosed only when severe.

158. Calculations based on 2006 life tables, Office for National Statistics, cited in Dame Carol Black, *Working for a healthier tomorrow: Review of the health of Britain's working age population*, 17 March 2008, London: The Stationery Office

159. Figures for England only.

160. Department of Health, Health Survey for England 2005, cited in Dame Carol Black, *Working for a healthier tomorrow: Review of the health of Britain's working age population*, 17 March 2008, London: The Stationery Office

161. European Agency for Health and Safety at Work (2003) *Gender issues in health and safety at work: a review*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

162. Women in cleaning and catering and care work also suffer injuries from lifting.

163. Men also experience high levels of violence in some sectors where they predominate, such as bus and taxi driving, and the police force.

164. O'Regan S., Tyers C., Hill D., Gordon-Dseagu V. (2007) *Taking Risks with Asbestos: what influences the behaviour of maintenance workers?* HSE Report RR558.

165. Granville G., Evandrou M. (2008) *Older Men, Work and Health*, London: Help the Aged/TAEN (The Age and Employment Network)

166. According to a survey by Experian in May 2006 (reported in the *Guardian* newspaper on 8 June 2006), more than one in three men relied on alcohol to switch off from job stress; 17 per cent have visited a doctor to discuss their exhaustion; 40 per cent of men have difficulty switching off from work, and 22 per cent said they suffered from depression because of job-related stress.

Labour Force Survey data for the UK show that in 2005-2006 the average days lost due to 'work-related illness' per worker were similar for men and women.<sup>167 168</sup> The highest rates of work-related illness for men were in the 55-74 age range. Over the years 2003-2006, the average incidence for 'non-fatal work-related injuries'<sup>169</sup> for men was 220,000 and for women an estimated 108,000. The rate for men was statistically significantly higher than for women (1.5 per cent compared to 0.85 per cent). The 25-34 year old age group carried the highest risk for males. In 2005-2006 men took an estimated 4.4 million days off work due to non-fatal work-related injuries, and women 1.7 million days. The average days lost per worker was statistically significantly higher for men (0.32 days) than women (0.19 days).<sup>170</sup> For 'fatal injuries', the overwhelming majority (95-98 per cent) are to men.

There are therefore significant differences in gender risks and health outcomes at work, linked in part to factors such as the 'intensification' of work, occupational segregation and mobility (or lack of it) and the design and organisation of work and workplaces.

Men also tend to be employed in higher-risk occupations (e.g. construction, transport, security, police force, prisons, fishing, agriculture and mining). But across Europe work-related accidents are falling and the rate of reduction is greater for men than women. It is suggested the reasons are a shift away from traditional high-risk manual jobs, improvements in the safety of workplaces where men work and safer working practices adopted by men themselves.<sup>171 172</sup>

It is important to highlight the connections between men's health at work and men's practices. For instance, men's risk-taking behaviour can affect the incidence of injury or the onset of addictions (e.g. alcohol, drugs). Men are often unwilling to seek medical assistance, and may experience problems in emotional communication. They may also be more likely to enact violence, either on themselves or others<sup>173</sup> (see section on 'Health', page 83).

A recent government-backed review of the health of Britain's working age population<sup>174</sup> (the 'Black' report) has highlighted the human, social and economic costs of impaired health and well-being in relation to working life. The review identifies an expanded role for occupational health, arguing that such services should not just assist those in work, but also those who are workless. Around seven per cent of the working age population are workless and receiving incapacity benefits because of long-term health conditions or disabilities, reflecting entrenched patterns of poverty and social exclusion. The report recommends, among other things, the development of a new 'Fit for Work' service to be piloted with those in early stages of sickness – and potentially extended to those on incapacity and other out-of-work benefits.

The Black report also acknowledges the potential importance of gender-sensitive approaches in enhancing the effectiveness of workplace health improvement initiatives. The evidence is that these can significantly improve men's knowledge of health, detect potentially serious conditions earlier and improve their health outcomes.<sup>175</sup>

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167. Health and Safety Executive (ibid.)

168. Health and Safety Executive, *Self-reported illness and work-related injuries in 2005/06*, National Statistics

169. Defined as workplace injuries as a result of a non-traffic accident, resulting in over three days absence from work.

170. Health and Safety Executive (ibid.)

171. European Agency for Health and Safety at Work (ibid.)

172. Health and Safety Executive, *Key Messages from the LFS for Injury Risks: Gender and Age, Job Tenure and Part-time Working*, 19/6/2000

173. Hearn J., Pringle K. (2006) *European Perspectives on Men and Masculinities*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan; Pringle K. et al. (2006) *Men and Masculinities in Europe*, Whiting and Birch

174. Dame Carol Black, *Working for a healthier tomorrow: Review of the health of Britain's working age population*, 17 March 2008, London: The Stationery Office

175. Men's Health Forum, 'Black marks for employers on health', press release, 18 March 2008

**Work Fit: a workplace-based lifestyle improvement programme** was developed jointly by the Men's Health Forum and BT and was launched for UK-based BT staff in 2005. Following an internal media and trade-union-backed campaign, prospective participants were invited to register for Work Fit. Participants received a series of tasks by email over a 16 week period, linked to supporting information on the BT intranet, together with a free pedometer, a tape measure (to check waist circumference), a specially-designed health information booklet and other written health information. They could also request personal support from a nurse by email, and about 400 people used this service over the course of the programme.

Some 16,000 men and women registered for Work Fit (about 20 per cent of the UK-based workforce), a much higher number than originally anticipated. The proportion of male participants varied from about 60-75 per cent depending on the age group, but middle-aged overweight men appear to have been particularly responsive. The proportion of male participants was broadly in line with the workforce generally. This level of male involvement was a significant achievement given men's general reluctance to engage with health issues, not least related to lifestyle change. Those who followed the programme significantly increased their physical activity levels, improved their diet and improved their chances of losing weight.

Information from [www.menshealthforum.org.uk](http://www.menshealthforum.org.uk)

## Young men and work

Young men – and particularly working-class young men – have long been regarded as a problem for society and have been the objects of public and political concern.<sup>176</sup> Attention has focused in recent years on issues of youth unemployment, violence, anti-social behaviour and educational failure, and the connections between these (see sections on 'Education', page 105, and 'Violence', page 123).

Young men's 'underachievement' is less severe than some have feared;<sup>177</sup> those who have stayed on in education have had access to a wide range of employment opportunities and are still successful in the labour market – and more so than young women.

Some young men drift between jobs that they do not regard as offering good career prospects. They often believe they are poorly prepared at school for the workplace. Careers advice and work experience may be regarded as of limited value, and young men frequently make a distinction between 'crap jobs' and 'career' jobs, viewing the former as temporary.<sup>178</sup>

Certain jobs tend to be ruled out by young men on the basis of the pay and skills involved. Many of these jobs would typically be done by women, suggesting that young men's choices draw upon long-standing perceptions which have consistently devalued the real level of skill of 'women's work' (both care work and work for pay). Within the context of the changing labour market, where interpersonal and communication skills and high standards of customer service – skills often associated with women – are frequently at a premium, it seems likely that marginalised young men's expectations in terms of status and pay will increasingly not be met.<sup>179</sup>

176. Pearson G. (1983) *Hooligan: A History of Respectable Fears*, London: Macmillan

177. Stafford, B., Heaver C., Ashworth K., Bates C., Walker R., McKay S. and Trickey H. (1999) *Work and young men*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

178. Lloyd, T. (1999) *Young Men's Attitudes to Gender and Work*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

179. McDowell, L. (2001) *Young Men Leaving School: white, working-class masculinity*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation/ Youth Work Press

Wages are lower for young workers, and the earnings of young men relative to those in older age groups are now markedly lower than they were in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>180</sup> The National Minimum Wage (NMW) rate<sup>181</sup> for workers aged 22 and over is £5.73 an hour; for 18-21 year olds, £4.77; and for 16-17 year olds, £3.53. Workers aged under 22 – and in particular 16-17 year olds – can therefore be paid at relatively low levels. Those who are undertaking apprenticeships are not entitled to the NMW at all, even though in reality their responsibilities are frequently the same as those of employees.

The economic position of some young men has deteriorated over time. Those with a combination of personal, social, health and educational disadvantages – few qualifications, a history of offending behaviour, substance abuse, poor health and homelessness – experience particular difficulties and are very likely to find themselves unemployed.<sup>182</sup>

Young men, from all ethnic groups, with qualifications have better labour market outcomes than those with none. They are less likely to be unemployed, they earn more and have jobs at higher occupational levels. However, the effect of qualifications varies between groups and between areas. People of African origin, in particular, tend to gain less from their qualifications than other groups. Apart from those of Indian origin, young men from other minority ethnic groups earned less than similarly-qualified white men.<sup>183</sup>

Young workers – both male and female – are particularly vulnerable, especially in times of economic hardship, to falling recruitment, cuts in training schemes and increased competition for work. The opportunities available for relatively unskilled workers tend to be temporary, frequently requiring short-term work, sub-contracting or working for agencies, and workers often become trapped in precarious and exploitative work where it is difficult to avoid recurrent unemployment. Research highlights the barriers – low expectations and self-esteem, lack of qualifications and basic skills, lack of parental support – which prevent young men from moving from precarious positions into the more secure sectors of the labour market, and illustrates the ways in which they become trapped in cycles of unemployment and insecure work. This employment insecurity tends not to reflect negative attitudes on the part of the young men or necessarily a lack of skills; it is largely a consequence of the 'flexible' nature of the low-skilled employment available.<sup>184</sup>

A key element of the Government's 'welfare-to-work' approach since 1997 has been employment training programmes, in particular the 'New Deals'. Early evaluation of the 'New Deal for Young People', with young men making up over 70 per cent of entrants, has shown a reduction of 45,000 in long-term youth unemployment, with 100,000 young people per year leaving unemployment earlier than they would otherwise have done.<sup>185</sup> More recent Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) research indicates that the proportion of participants who leave the programme for jobs is 46 per cent – higher than initial figures. Since the programme was established '*not only have the numbers of long-term unemployed 18-24 year olds fallen but the rate of decrease has been around three times that of unemployment as a whole*'.<sup>186</sup>

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180. Meadows P. (2001) *Young men on the margins of work: An overview*, YPS: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

181. Rates from 1 October 2008

182. Meadows P. (ibid.)

183. Meadows P. (ibid.)

184. Furlong A., Cartmel F. (2004) *Vulnerable young men in fragile labour markets: Employment, unemployment and the search for long-term security*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

185. White M., Riley R. (2002) *Findings from the Macro Evaluation of the New Deal for Young People*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report, 168

186. Hasluck C., Green A.E. (2007) *What works for whom? A review of evidence and meta-analysis for the Department of Work and Pensions*, Institute for Employment Research for DWP, Research Report, 407

Despite this success, training schemes are not a panacea. Programmes appear to have been more successful in rural areas, especially in the south of England, and less so in inner city areas. In northern cities in particular there is evidence of 'churning', with young people undertaking programmes and returning to unemployment.<sup>187</sup> There is also evidence of strong competition for places offering quality training, and that therefore lower-quality placements are more likely to be available to the less well-qualified. The linkage between lower-quality schemes and employment can be poor, with many subsequently entering occupations that are totally unrelated to their 'training.'<sup>188</sup>

Those already closest to labour market participation appear to have benefited most, and programmes have been less successful in engaging those facing multiple disadvantage. Individualised support from personal advisers is particularly important for those in marginalised groups, and depends on a considerable degree of local flexibility and the targeting of extra resources.

**A schools-based project for preparing young men for work:** the 'Into Work' project, carried out by Working With Men, aimed to develop an appropriate programme targeted at young men (aged 14 and 15). It consisted of school and workplace sessions on the following themes: interview and telephone experience; completion of application forms and CVs; exploration of training options on leaving school; where and how to look for jobs; being a man in the workforce; opportunities to discuss possible career options, incorporated during (and after) the sessions. There were three opportunities for half-day workplace visits (of the young men's choice) and a visit to the local college, Jobcentre and careers office. As a result of the programme, young men learnt about the workplace, felt more confident and developed workplace-related skills. Less predictably, the programme also helped to refocus them within school, and helped them to identify the importance of getting the examination results they needed for their career development.

Lloyd T. (2002) *Underachieving young men preparing for work: A report for practitioners*, YPS: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

## Older men and work

Participation in the labour market decreases for both men and women from around age 50, and is part-time for the majority who do work after the State Pension age. In 2004, 72 per cent of men aged 50-64 were in employment, compared with 18 per cent of men aged 65-69. Sickness, disability and injury is the reason given for not seeking work by more than half (58 per cent) of men aged 50-54.<sup>189</sup>

Older male workers are a diverse group. For instance, 80 per cent of white British men aged 40-64 were economically active compared to 66 per cent of Pakistani men and 58 per cent of Bangladeshi men of the same age, according to the 2001 Census. Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese men are also more likely to be working part-time, or in temporary and casual jobs.<sup>190</sup>

In comparison with male workers aged 25-49, those aged 50+ are less likely to be in full-time employment (42 per cent compared with 68 per cent), more likely to be self-employed (18 per cent compared with 14 per cent) and three times more likely to report ill-health or disability.<sup>191</sup>

187. Sunley P., Martin R. (2002) *The Geography of Workfare: Local Labour Markets and the New Deal*, Economic and Social Research Council

188. Furlong A., Cartmel F. (ibid.)

189. Morgan R. (2005) *Older people and the labour market, Focus on Older People*, London: Department of Work and Pensions

190. Granville G., Evandrou M. (2008) *Older Men, Work and Health*, London: Help the Aged/TAEN (The Age and Employment Network)

191. Yeandle S. (2005) *Older Workers and Work/life Balance*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Over the last decade, rates of labour force participation among older men have increased, reversing the previous trend towards early retirement. This is in line with the current Government's aspiration to expand the pool of available labour and counter the impact of falling fertility rates.

The government's national strategy on ageing<sup>192</sup> aims to end the perception of older people as dependent, and to ensure that longer life is healthy and fulfilling and that older people are full participants in society. Key strands within the strategy involve raising employment rates, encouraging greater flexibility in working careers for those aged over 50, managing health conditions and combining work and family commitments. This is supported by the establishment in 2007 of a Public Sector Agreement target to tackle poverty and promote greater independence and well-being in later life. In relation to employment and training specifically, in 2006 the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations came into effect, overseen by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The regulations affect all workers, and their effectiveness in protecting older workers (e.g. from ageism in the workplace) has been questioned.

Research indicates the importance of transitions (e.g. retirement, health deterioration, bereavement, divorce) in the lives of older people, and the impact they have on their sense of self and independence.<sup>193</sup> For older men, retirement highlights an increasing contradiction between their self-perception as 'productive, and as contributors to society, and their current experience of being 'unproductive' and 'dependent'. It is often accompanied by a sharp decline in social networks and contact through work, making older men vulnerable to social isolation and marginalising them from practical support.<sup>194</sup>

There is also a risk that extending working lives and raising the conventional pension age may entrench existing inequalities and insecurities. For instance, pension provision is higher among professional men, whereas men from ethnic minority groups have been identified as 'under-pensioned'. Whilst decisions to retire are based on a range of factors, likely income in retirement is central; men in paid work with good occupational pension provision and long career histories inevitably have more choice and control over the decisions they make in relation to their futures.

## Men who are disabled

Difficulties encountered by some disabled men at work can be multiple due to working cultures and beliefs held generally within society. Men's common perception that they must live up to the standards expected of their gender – for example, that they cannot 'fail', must be 'strong' and 'tough'<sup>195</sup> – may appear to be at odds with the reality of a disabled male worker (who can be seen as 'weak'). Men in the workplace, whether workers or managers, tend to apply their own beliefs about masculinities to their colleagues (including any who are disabled) and make judgements about their perceived value or effectiveness within the office. This can reinforce stereotyping and create distance between colleagues. Often this may result in the harassment of an individual, especially when negative comments are seen to have an effect. The positive theme of the richness and value of diversity may be lost.

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192. Department for Work and Pensions (2005) *Opportunity Age: meeting the challenges of ageing in the 21st century*

193. Parry J., Vegeris S., Hudson M., Barnes H., Taylor R. (2004) *Independent living in later life*, Research Report 216, London: Department for Work and Pensions

194. Ruxton S. (2006) *Working With Older Men*, London: Age Concern

195. For an analysis of how this masculine 'ideal' has become established and maintained, see Segal L. (1990) *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men*, London: Virago Press

Segregation from a group may be greater when a colleague suffers from a mental illness and this is known to other workers. There is a great deal of uncertainty and misunderstanding around mental illnesses in the workplace, which can further undermine a disabled person's standing. A primary misconception appears to be that mental illness is about 'low intellect' rather than the fact that someone is simply ill.

Disabled men earn between 17 per cent and nine per cent less than non-disabled men; the gap for women is between 11 per cent and six per cent. Disabled people are two and a half times more likely to be out of work than a non-disabled person, are more likely to move from full-time to part-time work, and less likely to receive training. Disabled men aged 26-49 do least well in all these areas.<sup>196</sup> In the last 30 years, the employment prospects of disabled men with poor educational qualifications and no working partner have deteriorated more than any other population group. Whilst it has been suggested that this fall is due to disincentives in the benefit system, it may also be due to the increasing reluctance of firms to accommodate poorly-qualified workers with failing health or impaired capacities.<sup>197</sup>

## Vulnerable workers

The TUC's 'Commission on Vulnerable Employment'<sup>198</sup> estimates that around two million workers in the UK are in 'vulnerable employment', which it defines as precarious work that places people at risk of continuing poverty and injustice resulting from an imbalance of power in the employer-worker relationship. It argues that many of these workers experience great insecurity: without employment contracts, working through agencies or with reduced rights because of their immigration status. Some employers exploit gaps in the legal framework and the lack of effective enforcement of employment rights; others break the law, especially in low-paid sectors such as cleaning, hospitality, security and construction.

Whilst women are at particular risk of low pay and of working below their potential, 40 per cent of low paid workers are men. Some groups of men are especially vulnerable. Among men from black and minority ethnic communities, for instance, Bangladeshi and Pakistani men are most likely to be low paid; between 2001 – 2005, the former were paid 40 per cent less, and the latter 20 per cent less, than the average.<sup>199</sup> Black and ethnic minority men are also twice as likely to be working part-time as white men (18 per cent compared to nine per cent), although women are much more likely to be working part-time overall.<sup>200</sup>

Another vulnerable group is men who have migrated, for a range of reasons, to the UK. Over the past decade, migration to the UK has increased markedly – with a growing proportion from new EU Member States in Central and Eastern European countries. Migrants are a diverse group; whilst some are in highly paid, secure employment and are not especially vulnerable, others are commonly subjected to exploitation whilst working in sectors such as cleaning, hospitality, agriculture and food processing. Migrants now form approximately five to six per cent of the UK workforce. Whilst the stereotype is of the young male worker without dependents, the numbers of male and female migrants are roughly equal.

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196. Equalities Review (2007) *Fairness and Freedom: The Final Report of the Equalities Review*, [www.theequalitiesreview.org.uk](http://www.theequalitiesreview.org.uk)

197. Berthoud R. (2007) *Work-rich and work-poor: three decades of change*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, The Policy Press

198. TUC (2008) *Hard Work, Hidden Lives: The Full Report of the Commission on Vulnerable Employment*, London: TUC

199. Platt L. (2006) *Ethnicity and child poverty*, Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force

200. TUC (2008) *Ten Years After: Black Workers in Employment 1997-2007*, London: TUC

## Poverty

The proportion of men without a job has nearly trebled (from five per cent to 14 per cent) over the past 30 years.<sup>201 202</sup> Figures from 2004 show that black Caribbean, black African, Bangladeshi and mixed ethnic groups have the highest unemployment rates (between 13 and 14 per cent), around three times the rates for white men.<sup>203</sup>

At the end of the 1990s the group of 'economically inactive' men outnumbered the recorded unemployed by more than two-to-one, according to one study.<sup>204</sup> Among men aged 25-64, the main groups of men detached from full-time employment were (in descending order of size) the long-term sick or disabled, the long-term unemployed, the early retired and full-time carers. Among these categories, 98 per cent of the long-term sick/disabled were benefit claimants, with Incapacity Benefit the main form of support. A number of factors appear to have prompted this trend, including government encouragement – especially during the 1980s – for claimants to move off the unemployment register and onto disability and sickness benefits, and tighter approaches to staff selection among employers.<sup>205</sup> However, in the period 1997-2005, the percentage of men who were economically inactive, who gave long term sickness as a reason, declined from 43 per cent to 38 per cent.<sup>206 207</sup>

Traditional industrial areas – such as South Wales, North-East England, Merseyside, Clydeside and South Yorkshire – were most severely affected by large-scale job losses among men during the 1980s and 1990s, representing up to 30 per cent of the entire cohort of 25-64 year old men. Among older and some younger men, chronic ill-health and disability are widespread, some of it attributable to unhealthy and unsafe environments in previous employment.

In response to the restructuring of the economy, the Government has promoted 'flexible' labour markets, with individual (male) workers expected increasingly to take responsibility for looking after themselves and their families, rather than relying on the welfare state. Paid employment has been repeatedly endorsed as a means of financial support, a route out of poverty, and a source of personal well-being and self-respect.

The thrust of the Government's welfare reform programme has concentrated on two main strands. The first has been to 'make work pay' (e.g. through establishment of the National Minimum Wage [NMW] and tax credits). Whilst the introduction of the NMW has been widely accepted, its effect has been more limited than anticipated, partly because the rates have been relatively low and partly because enforcement mechanisms have been weak.<sup>208</sup>

Tax credits (together with benefits) have helped some groups – particularly lone parents – out of poverty by supplementing wages. However, *'low-paid men supporting families are highly likely to remain poor, and improvements in tax credits have not raised more of them above the poverty line'*.<sup>209</sup> Although less poor than men with children, the situation of single low-paid men has

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201. Berthoud R. (ibid.)

202. There are variations between different groups of men. For example, men with a partner have traditionally had very high employment rates, and this is still the case.

203. Annual Population Survey, January 2004 to December 2004, Office for National Statistics

204. Alcock, P., C. Beatty, S. Fothergill, R. MacMillan, S. Yeandle (eds.) (2003) *Work to Welfare: how men become detached from the labour market*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

205. Berthoud, R., (1998), *Disability benefits: A review of the issues and options for reform*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

206. Among women, during this same period a near-constant 20 per cent gave this reason

207. Labour Market Trends (2005) *Economic activity and inactivity: Economic inactivity by reason*. Table D.2.

208. The Government has recently introduced a range of measures designed to strengthen the enforcement regime.

209. Hirsh D., Millar J. (2004) *Labour's Welfare Reform: Progress to date, Foundations*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

worsened over time<sup>210</sup> – particularly as a result of the recent abolition of the 10p tax band (the impact of which has not been fully mitigated by the raising of personal tax allowances in May 2008). Whilst the effects on different low-income groups have been uneven, the cumulative impact of Labour's tax and benefit changes since 1997 has nevertheless been to increase the average incomes of the poorest tenth of the population by 12 per cent, and cut those of the richest tenth by six per cent.<sup>211</sup>

The second strand has centred on moving individuals from 'welfare to work' (e.g. through training schemes such as the New Deal<sup>212</sup>). There is evidence that the New Deal has had a positive impact on employment rates and the job-seeking capacities of individuals.<sup>213</sup> In practice, these programmes have focused largely on assisting men, who participate to a much greater extent than women in the New Deal for Young People and the New Deal for the Long-term Unemployed.<sup>214</sup>

In July 2008, a government Green Paper<sup>215</sup> announced proposals for a new package of 'tough' welfare reform measures. These include scrapping incapacity benefit by 2013 and abolishing income support, and creating a more streamlined system based on two working-age benefits – the Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), for those who have a medical condition which prevents them from working, and Jobseekers' Allowance (JSA) for those who are able to work. Whilst those with severe disabilities will get more cash under ESA, other disabled people will be expected over time to return to work.

The conditions attached to receiving JSA will also be strengthened with a 'work for benefits' scheme for the long-term unemployed, under which they could be forced to take part in full-time activity such as community work. Concerns remain about the impact of increasing compulsion, which may be counter-productive – producing a truculent workforce, higher drop-out rates and inhibiting more constructive relationships with personal advisers. This emphasis on 'toughness' also seems very misguided in the context of massive job losses as a result of the economic recession.

The Government argues that other measures will offer greater support, in return for claimants demonstrating greater personal responsibility. For example, assistance to disabled workers and their employers will be increased, and maintenance payments from non-resident fathers will be fully 'disregarded' so that payments will not be taken into account when calculating how much out-of-work benefits a lone mother should get.

Overall, a tentative assessment of the Government's welfare reform measures since 1997 suggests that, as a result of the changes so far, women have benefited more from direct redistribution (via tax and benefit changes), whilst greater resources have been invested in men's human capital through training and retraining.<sup>216</sup>

210. Millar J., Gardiner K. (2004) *Low pay, household resources and poverty*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

211. Institute for Fiscal Studies, 'Abolition of the 10p starting rate', press release, 21 April 2008

212. These are: The New Deal for Young People, for those aged 18-24 and unemployed for at least six months; The New Deal for the Long-Term Unemployed, for those aged 25+; the New Deal for Lone Parents; the New Deal for Partners; the New Deal for Disabled People; and the New Deal for People Aged 50 and above.

213. Hirsh D., Millar J. (ibid.)

214. In contrast, the New Deal for Lone Parents has more women participating in it, because the bulk of lone parents tend to be women.

215. Department for Work and Pensions, *No-one written off: Reforming welfare to reward responsibility*, July 2008, Cm 7363

216. Ruxton S. (2002) *Men, Masculinities and Poverty in the UK*, Oxford: Oxfam

## Recommendations

**Employers in the public and private sectors should increase commitment to gender equality in the workplace.** This should include action to: increase the numbers of women at senior levels; limit excessive executive pay and bonuses; develop training on gender equality issues for all staff; and address all forms of violence, bullying and sexual harassment at work. The Gender Equality Duty provides a lever for action in relation to public authorities, and should be extended to include the private sector.

**Employers should tackle discrimination against gay staff at work** by introducing inclusive policies, establishing employee network groups, identifying senior lesbian and gay role models and by senior leaders expressing commitment to lesbian and gay employees.

**Schools, careers services and employers should take a more proactive approach to challenging gender stereotypes in employment and training choices.** They should encourage more young men to take up opportunities in non-traditional sectors and provide more men with access to training on the 'soft' skills now required in many workplaces. Promoting gender equality should be central to the Government's proposals for the creation of a National Apprenticeships Service.

**The European Working Time Directive sets a 48-hour maximum working week, but there is an opt-out for UK employees which should be ended.** Employers should also take positive measures to tackle the long hours culture, and there should be disincentives for employers to demand overtime work.

**In order to meet the priority of the Ministers for Women of supporting families to care for children and older and disabled relatives, male workers – and especially managers – must be made more aware of flexible working arrangements,** and strongly encouraged to take them up and to play a more active role in caring. The Government has a role in working with key stakeholders (e.g. employers, unions) to encourage and disseminate best practice, and to address men directly through social marketing campaigns.

**The Government should implement the recommendations of the Walsh review, extending the right to request flexible working arrangements to all parents with children up to age 16.** Particular efforts should be made to ensure that fathers are made aware of this entitlement and employers are encouraged to grant it. In the longer term, the right to request flexible working should be extended to all workers.

**Implementation of the recommendations of the Black report should include the development of work-based initiatives to engage men around the health issues they face, and to address the negative impact of some men's practices – e.g. risk-taking, addictions, violence – on their own health and that of others.** Workplace initiatives should also help address men's less effective use of other forms of health service. Many services traditionally delivered in NHS settings should be taken into the workplace (e.g. basic health checks, screening services, routine GP appointments).

**The National Minimum Wage for 16-17 year old men and women in work (including on apprenticeships) should be raised to the same level as 18-21 year olds.** In the longer term, the adult NMW rate should be extended to all young people.

**Greater support for older men should be focused by employers and service providers on trigger points such as the transition to retirement;** services should be accessible, easy to navigate, and should provide multiple points of access to a wider range of services. More information about services should be made available to older men, and marketed proactively at them.

**Employment rights awareness and legal advice should be improved, and there should be tighter regulation of sectors where risks are greatest for vulnerable workers.** The framework of legal protection should also be strengthened.<sup>217</sup>

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217. See the more detailed recommendations of the TUC Commission on Vulnerable Employment