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In-work poverty and the search for decent work for women in Wales:
A literature review

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Executive Summary	1
Introduction and Background	6
Methodology.....	7
Section 1: Decent Work	8
Oxfam Scotland	8
Factors important to women	10
Section 2: Context	17
Labour Market.....	17
In-work poverty.....	18
In-work poverty - causes.....	20
Section 3: Gender Lens	24
Theoretical Framework.....	24
Women and the labour market.....	27
Section 4: Best practice	33
Employer commitment to fair employment practices	33
New business models	36
Sectoral employment	37
Progression	41
Who Cares?.....	44
Enhanced gender data analysis and policy assessment	47
A voice for workers.....	50
Section 5: Welsh Government	51
Well-being of Future Generations Act.....	52
Policy statement on skills.....	52
Anti-Poverty Action Plan.....	54
Section 6: Policy Implications and Recommendations	55
Business commitment to fair employment practice	56
1. Social Values	56
2. Government Values.....	57
Gender pay gap	58
Innovative forms of work.....	58
Employment.....	59
1. Skills and progression.....	59
2. Apprenticeships	61
Caring Work	62
1. Childcare.....	63

2. Parental leave	64
3. Part-time work.....	64
Data Analysis	65
Rebalancing power relationships within organisations.....	66
Section 7: Conclusion	67
Appendix A: Terms of reference	68
Bibliography	69

Executive Summary

Introduction and Background

Rising levels of female employment have made the UK labour market almost unrecognisable from that of five decades ago. Yet, whilst women's contribution to the Welsh economy is growing, disparity between men's and women's participation in, and treatment by the labour market remains. A more equal labour market is important for both women themselves and for the economy. Government estimates indicate that by reducing the gender pay gap the UK economy would benefit by £150 billion. Similarly, if female employment levels in the UK matched those in other countries, the UK GDP would be raised by 9%. This makes a strong case for a more gender focused labour market policy to respond to the increasingly de-regulated labour market that disproportionately affects women more adversely than men.

The starting point for this report was Oxfam's Scotland unique piece of work; *Decent Work for Scotland's Low-Paid Workers: A job to be done* (Decent Work: Stuart *et al* 2016). Oxfam Scotland's research into decent work arose in response to its recognition of the changing nature and experience of work in Scotland and the UK. Decent Work's conclusions are that the priorities of low-paid workers should significantly inform changes to policy and practice to make major progress towards the delivery of decent work for all. Whilst the research was not performed from a gender perspective, the ensuing analysis suggests that the priorities for workers in Scotland to secure decent work differ according to gender.

It is an awareness that gender needs to inform in-work poverty measures that is at the heart of Oxfam Cymru's current research agenda. This literature review forms part of Oxfam Cymru's programme to develop a set of policy solutions to enable women on low incomes in Wales to progress in their careers and move themselves out of poverty or reduce their risk of entering poverty. The remit of the paper is to engage with the literature to analyse evidence on the links between gender and poverty, unravelling the possible underlying causes in order to be able to outline policy recommendations that fall within the Welsh Government's devolved powers surrounding employability.

Employment has long been regarded as the fundamental solution to escaping poverty and the UK has achieved notable success in reducing unemployment levels. The number of working households in the UK continues to rise, such that by 2016 the proportion of children living in a household where no-one works has fallen from nearly one in four to less than one in six. The number of long-term workless households has also followed a similar overall downward trend since 1996. Whilst lone-parent families account for 65.9% of all children in workless households, growth in the share of working households in the UK has been partly driven by increased proportions of lone parents working. Despite the success of decreasing unemployment levels they have not resulted in the universal financial gains suggested by largely neo-classical economic models due to changes in the UK labour market.

The supply of labour to the labour market has risen due to decreasing unemployment levels generally, a net increase in immigration levels, supplemented specifically by increasing numbers of women involved in paid work. The demand side has been affected by a number of major changes in the UK labour market over recent decades. The most fundamental changes have been caused by a decline in manufacturing, a rise in the service sector and an increase in technological developments through globalisation, which have affected both skill requirements and the occupational profile of employment. The pattern of employment in sectors now reflects a larger number of higher-skilled

jobs along with a lower rate of growth in some low-skilled occupation and a decline in routine, mid-skilled, mid-paid jobs. Alongside the changes in the profile of employment, an increasing emphasis has developed on labour market de-regulation aimed at achieving greater flexibility in labour supply which has had implications for employment requirements. Conditions of employment are now marked by an increase in insecure and low quality jobs.

There is a heightened awareness that, despite the raised employment rate, in-work poverty continues to blight the lives of a significant number of people. The pendulum has swung such that the majority of low-income children now live in a working household. Work reduces the risk of having a poverty-level income – even a household where there’s only one person working part-time is three times less likely to be in poverty than a household where the adults are unemployed. But, increasingly having a job doesn’t guarantee an escape from poverty. Around 23% of the population of Wales live in poverty (after adjusting for housing costs) and is behind only London (28%) and on par with the West Midlands. Every other UK country and English region has lower levels of poverty than Wales. In-work poverty is a multi-faceted policy challenge caused by various factors including the use of temporary contracts, a low rate of pay, reduced progression opportunities due to the loss of mid-level jobs, the sector of employment as well as an interrupted employment pattern which can affect the receipt of state financial support. To reduce the percentage of children in households with low incomes necessitates both a reduction in household worklessness as well as an increase in the incomes of poor working households. Of concern is that in-work poverty is not just a problem of the present; forecasts indicate that in-work poverty is set to rise.

There is a growing body of research on increasing income inequality in industrialised countries. Very little of the literature focuses on how poverty affects men and women differently. Yet men and women *are* different; both biologically and in their socially constructed roles. Poverty viewed through a gender lens is conceptualised in this report through a framework which locates the gendered risks and nature of poverty through the interaction of the individual with organisational and societal behaviours. It provides a gender focus to view women’s engagement with the work place, deciphering the underlying reasons for female in-work poverty rather than simply observing or calculating female poverty levels. Of the limited research performed on women’s engagement in the world of work, much has focused on women’s poorer labour market attachment caused by their role as primary caregiver, resulting in their diminished human capital which inevitably leads to reduced income levels. However, these characteristics are the consequence of gendered processes and procedures which result in many women being concentrated in occupations which reflect their gendered characteristics. These are the sectors which typically are undervalued by society.

Due to the averaging effect of household income calculations, the extent of how in-work poverty differs according to gender is difficult to uncover. However, what can be said with certainty is that on average almost a quarter of all employees earn less than the voluntary Living Wage with women dominating this category in Wales; there are more women than men on zero hours contracts; more women than men work on a part-time basis; women dominate work sectors that are strongly correlated with poverty and which offer low progression opportunities; and the socially constructed role of women as main carers means that women are more prone to follow a low-pay, no-pay cycle.

Based on a rigorous and reflective review of the available research on gender and in-work poverty, this report synthesises the knowledge and practices available from existing studies and evaluations both in the UK and world-wide. Outlined below is a summary of the recommendations which, if reflected in Welsh Government policy measures surrounding employability, would make decent work a reality for more women in Wales.

Recommendations

Social Values

- Emulating Scotland and other major cities in England, the Welsh Government should establish or endorse a body whose stated aim is to improve the working conditions of low-paid workers. Organisations in low-pay sectors should be incentivised to join this decent work organisation.

Government Values

- The Welsh Government can play a role in poverty reduction through its procurement policy and use it to influence employer behaviour. The Welsh City Regions, the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan and the Wales and Borders Rail Service and Metro project could address decent wage concerns by making the voluntary Living Wage and other decent work imperatives requirements of its tenders not only for the construction operatives but for other sectors involved through sub-contracting and out-sourcing.

Innovative forms of work

- The Welsh Government should support, encourage and fund employer cooperative enterprises especially in the provision of childcare and elder care.
- The Welsh Government could publicise the benefit of the dual customer approach and incentivise the adoption of such practices by employers in the private sector.

Gender pay gap

- Public awareness of gender inequality and stereotyping should be raised through more public education work (in schools, businesses and the community) in order to challenge embedded and limited ideas of women and men's respective roles and abilities.
- A Welsh Government requirement should be the publication of gender pay gap statistics for every public body and for all private businesses classified as small or medium-sized in Wales.

Skills and progression

- Educators and career-support providers should encourage girls to consider non-traditional career and study options to widen female aspirations and open pathways to better paid and more secure employment in STEM sectors.
- A focus should be placed on training to update women's expertise when re-entering the labour market with an emphasis on transferable skills to widen employment options into more highly paid sectors such as construction, IT and Telecoms and nuclear fuel industries.

Apprenticeships

- The Welsh Government should sponsor apprenticeships for female teaching assistants in schools and childcare operatives in worker cooperatives. Apprenticeship providers should mentor and support those who are following an apprenticeship in gender atypical sectors and occupations.

- Flexible, non-gendered apprenticeships should be offered to enable women to respond better to opportunities by providing good quality, cost effective childcare near or at the place of work.

Childcare

- Increase affordable, good quality childcare which reflects the atypical hours that non-traditional work patterns impose on women.
- New models of elder and childcare should be funded, such as worker cooperatives which should be established at the place of work, education or at the centre of housing estates.
- Extend the provision of free childcare to children under 3 for low-income parents.

Parental Leave

- Leading by example, the Welsh Government should ensure that non-transferable Shared Parental Leave is taken up by workers in the public sector.
- Private sector funding to SME's should be linked to the provision of decent work conditions, including reporting on the take-up rate of Shared Parental Leave.

Part-time work

- The Welsh Government should educate employers to understand the benefits of providing mothers with the right to return to the same job with reduced hours.
- A collaborative approach between Job Centre Plus and other organisations (such as the Timewise Foundation) should be adopted to expand the number of flexible part-time jobs that offer good quality, decent work.

Data analysis

- The Welsh Government should increase the amount of data analysed by gender, such as longitudinal pay examination, start-up enterprise scrutiny and more detailed spatial analysis to better inform policy.
- The Welsh Government should perform Gender Impact Assessments in advance of every significant planned expenditure. Gender-responsive budgeting would improve training programme outcomes.
- Wales should benchmark its gender performance against international data and audits should be performed assessing gender-target achievements and the results should be publicised.

Rebalancing power relationships

- The Welsh Government should encourage public bodies and private organisations to maintain a work-life forum to foster collaborative employment that supports workers achieve decent work.
- The Welsh Government should support the development of a Welsh Poverty Truth Commission to listen directly to those living in poverty with a specific remit to address policy from a gender perspective.

- The Welsh Government should incentivise the inclusion of employees at board-level decision making.

Many of the recommendations, and hence policy solutions, emerging from the extant literature detail additional sanctions and measures which will not always be welcomed by the multitude of SME's operating in Wales. Increased bureaucracy is at odds with the political climate which has dominated the UK to a greater extent and Wales to a lesser extent. Consequently this report finds that in the long term, in order to avoid providing solutions that conflict with the socio-political environment, alternative forms of business need to be supported by the Welsh Government. Whilst mention has already been made in the recommendations, it is important to emphasise organisations which embrace decent work as a fundamental concept of their daily operations; such as worker cooperatives. Whilst the UK has significantly less employee cooperatives than other countries, one of its most notable and successful cooperatives is the John Lewis Partnership which has shown a viable alternative way to organise the workplace, to support the concept of decent work and to make a contribution to society.

The literature reviewed in this paper substantiates the need for a more gender focused employment strategy which would involve policy giving greater attention to the position of women in low-paying jobs. Tackling economic inequality and poverty with a gender lens must be a top priority for Wales. Clearly, the causes and symptoms of these issues are complex and wide ranging. As the Oxfam (2014) report indicates, the Welsh Government's *Tackling Poverty Action Plan* is a step in the right direction, but far more needs to be done.

Introduction and Background

In-work poverty is of growing concern to many countries and Wales is no exception. Governmental policy to address this issue has been implemented in a gender-neutral manner and Oxfam Cymru is concerned that this approach is inadequate for women working in Wales. The Welsh Government is currently reviewing its employability policy and wider economic strategy and Oxfam Cymru has submitted evidence to highlight concerns on the absence of any reference to gender in the draft employability strategy. Oxfam Cymru argues that employability policy development should be undertaken through a 'gender lens' to provide women with equal opportunity, thereby allowing women who are most disadvantaged in the labour market to garner specialist support to build and develop their networks to maintain sustainable routes out of poverty.

To support this stance, Oxfam Cymru has commissioned a number of research projects to unpick the manner that in-work poverty in Wales affects women differently to men. The collective aim of the projects is to provide policy solutions to enable women on low incomes to progress in their careers and move themselves out of poverty or reduce their risk of entering poverty. The policy recommendations are geared to fall within the devolved powers of the Welsh Government and the results will be published towards the end of 2017. This literature review is one of the research projects.

The review reflects on the findings of Oxfam's Decent Work Research Project in Scotland (Tinson *et al* 2016). This participatory research project involved over 1,500 low-paid employees exploring the question: *What does decent work mean to you?* The concept of decent work was pioneered by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to sum up the aspirations of people in their working lives (ILO 2017). Oxfam's focus on the low-paid was chosen deliberately because they are aware that for too many people, work fails to provide a route out of poverty.

In conjunction with the additional participatory and qualitative research projects being performed under the Oxfam Cymru umbrella, the findings presented in this literature review contribute towards an emerging policy agenda aimed at improving the position of those women who are towards the bottom of the labour market. This literature review identifies the different policy areas and responses that, if brought together as part of a clear Welsh government strategy to improve the position of women, have the potential to significantly improve labour market outcomes for women in terms of poverty reduction and accompanying increases in social mobility and living standards.

Aims and overview

Generally, a gender perspective is omitted from policy debates about poverty and social exclusion. Yet the incidence of poverty, the reasons for it, and its impact differ according to gender (Bennet and Daly 2014). The research will build on wider Oxfam and external research that understands that women face different and additional challenges to men in obtaining decent work and identify which areas of employability policy require a specific gender focus to enable it to be effective.

By reference to the literature, this review aims to:

- Identify the policy changes required in the devolved context in Wales to empower low paid women to progress in their careers, enabling them to secure a sustainable route out of poverty; and
- Ascertain the key policy levers available to Welsh Government and local authorities and how they should be used to enable the policy change to happen.

On the basis of these findings, it will:

- Make recommendations for gender-oriented measures to prevent and tackle poverty linked to gender; and
- Identify means of sustained employment and especially wage progression and enhancing job mobility for women in low-paid jobs.

For the purposes of this report, the extent to which gender creates disadvantage in the work place has been the guiding principle in the literature review. The author is conscious that there are a multitude of organisational processes which can intersect to handicap individuals in the workplace, such as class, sexuality and race (Acker 1990) however, they are outside the parameters of this work.

The material collated in this paper indicates that there is clear evidence of a need for a strong, gender focused strategy to inform a multi-faceted employability policy to ameliorate the conditions of women working in-poverty in Wales.

Methodology

Introduction

This research project was undertaken in line with the guidance provided by the Terms of Reference for Research provided by Oxfam Cymru. Oxfam Cymru guided the research to a secondary data analysis and provided a list of key sources to be used in the literature review; a copy of which can be found in Appendix A. Additional material has also been incorporated in this literature, based on *ad hoc* searches of particular sectors, material already known to the researcher, and citations followed up from key papers. Consequently this literature review is a rigorous, informed and reflective consideration of the material considered rather than a fully-fledged systematic review, which was not feasible in the time available.

Oxfam Cymru's terms of reference emphasise the identification of policy solutions that fall within the remit of the Welsh Government's devolved powers. Whilst 'work' is a matter reserved for the UK Government, 'skills' is an area of policy devolved to the National Assembly for Wales. Adherence to the terms of reference leads the review recommendations to include matters within the Welsh Government's portfolio of powers only. Other matters, such as taxation, social security and benefits through the Universal Credit system, fall within the remit of the Government at Westminster and are excluded from the recommendations, although reference may be made to them to make sense of the barriers faced by women at work in Wales.

This study is organised as follows:

Section 1 sets the scene for this research paper by exploring the results of the Decent Work Research project in Scotland (Tinson *et al* 2016) which shows a significant degree of consistency in the areas that matter most to low-paid workers. Whilst the research is not structured to address how gender and in-work poverty interact, there is sufficient detail to reveal the female respondents' priorities in terms of decent work. Oxfam Scotland's results are explored in a Welsh context as and when the availability of statistical data allows.

Section 2 provides a contextual background illustrating that the conventional policy emphasis on getting people into work has not alleviated the number of people living in poverty. It describes the phenomena of in-work poverty, a striking characteristic of the Welsh economy, and analyses the

consequences and causes of in-work poverty, noting how women's interaction with the workplace is different to men.

Section 3 assesses the various theoretical models used in organisational and sociological research in order to provide a framework to interpret the various barriers encountered by women during their working life. It reveals that using a synthesised model provides a more robust lens to view women's engagement with the labour market, in terms of their participation and segregation.

Section 4 analyses the relevant literature from the UK and globally to ascertain the practices and procedures implemented in other countries which increase female participation and maximise the benefit women and the community derive from their input.

Section 5 briefly considers the Welsh policy environment in a devolved context and highlights the relevant legislation and policies that support the drive for decent work for women.

Opportunities are emerging to improve policy and practice through a focus on policy interventions at a devolved level and through the adoption of decent work practices by employers. Section 6 draws on the evidence uncovered by the review, to offer up a number of recommendations that can be used to guide the way the Welsh Government drives forward the decent work agenda for women working in Wales.

Section 1: Decent Work

Oxfam Scotland

In conjunction with the University of the West of Scotland and Warwick Institute for Employment Research, Oxfam Scotland commissioned a report; *Decent Work for Scotland's Low-Paid Workers: A job to be done* (Decent Work: Stuart *et al* 2016). Oxfam Scotland's research into decent work arose in response to its recognition of the changing nature and experience of work in Scotland and the UK. Despite declining unemployment rates, the underlying trends of insecure work with low rates of pay and irregular hours results in families living below the poverty line. There is growing recognition that paid work is far from being a means of avoiding poverty.

Using mixed methods research incorporating low-paid workers, the report presents its findings on the priorities for decent work for workers in Scotland. Oxfam Scotland's report is guided by the Oxfam Humankind Index (Oxfam 2013), a multi-dimensional model that looks beyond economic growth and production as a measure of prosperity and, instead, considers a broader range of factors that matter to people and communities. From this Index, five distinct dimensions of decent work are identified as: pay, terms and conditions, health and safety, work-life balance, and the intrinsic nature of work itself. Guided by the Index's dimensions, the research isolates 26 priorities for decent work. Using focus groups, individual interviews, street stalls and an opinion poll the research team captures the views of more than 1,500 people as to what decent work means guided by the 26 priorities.

Oxfam Scotland's report is not specifically geared to uncover women's perspectives regarding decent work. However, as women made up the majority (61%) of the respondents who took part in the study their opinions help shape the report's findings. The report's analysis also uncovers some important gender differences. The results are ranked according to the emphasis the research participants accord them. The findings suggest a significant degree of consistency as to what matters most to low-paid workers. Table 1 shows the top 5 priorities according to research method for all respondents (both male and female) involved in the project:

TABLE 1: Top 5 priorities for all respondents (male and female) according to research method

Ranking	Focus Groups	Street Stalls	Opinion Poll
1	A decent hourly rate	A decent hourly rate	A decent hourly rate
2	Job security	Job security	A safe working environment
3	Paid leave	Paid leave	Fair pay to similar jobs
4	A safe working environment	A safe working environment	Job security; paid leave and no discrimination (ranked equal fourth)
5	A supportive manager	A job with no discrimination	

Source: Decent Work for Scotland’s Low-Paid Workers: A job to be done page 4.

As can be seen from table 1, the top 5 are fairly basic conditions. Yet it is important to note that there are important differences from male and female respondents’ results. In table 2 below, factors valued more by gender are identified:

TABLE 2: Factors valued by gender

Factors women value more	Factors men value more
A supportive line manager	Being paid fairly compared to similar jobs
Support to return to work after absence	Regular and predictable hours
Additional benefits beyond pay	Work that does not involve excessive hours
Flexibility in choosing working Hours	Being paid fairly compared to senior staff
A job which is easy to get to	No value supplied

Source: Decent Work for Scotland’s Low-Paid Workers: A job to be done page 4.

The factors that women value more than men when evaluating decent work can all be seen as emanating from the way that women are socially constructed as bearing a greater responsibility for caring and home-based responsibilities. This can result in women accepting jobs that accommodate their external responsibilities, rather than taking higher paid but inflexible jobs or jobs that best match their existing skill set.

In table 3 below, the results from the female respondents are broken down according to the research method used:

TABLE 3: Top 5 priorities for female respondents according to research method

Rank	Focus Group	Street Stall	Opinion poll
1	Job security	Decent hourly rate	Decent hourly rate
2	Decent hourly rate	Job security	Safe environment
3	Supportive manager	Paid leave	Fair pay to similar jobs
4	Paid leave	Safe environment	Paid leave
5	Safe environment	No discrimination	No discrimination

Source: Decent Work for Scotland’s Low-Paid Workers: A job to be done page 14 (focus group) page 15 (street stall and opinion poll).

The above factors are identified as the most important when ranked by female workers and Oxfam Scotland used statistical data to compare the reality of the results with people’s perceptions. The conclusion is that a significant number of female workers in Scotland experience conditions which are not compatible with a decent job.

Whilst Oxfam Scotland’s research took a gender neutral approach, its findings from a female perspective can be synthesised to create a list of priority factors for women. In table 4, the results of table 2 and 3 are merged. The contents and ranking of factors in table 4 do not reflect a statistical basis, but are simply included to provide a guideline for the purposes of this literature review.

TABLE 4: Factors important to women

	Factor	Table
1	A supportive line manager	2 /3
2	Support to return to work after absence	2
3	Additional benefits beyond pay	2
4	Flexibility in choosing working hours	2
5	A job which is easy to get to	2
6	Job security	3
7	Decent hourly rate	3
8	Paid leave	3
9	Safe environment	3
10	No discrimination	3
11	Fair pay to similar jobs	3

Source: Author’s compiled data derived from table 2 and table 3.

Whilst acknowledging the importance of the Decent Work Report, Oxfam Cymru’s concern is that the decent work agenda needs to be supplemented by a specific consideration of how gender affects an individual’s interaction with the world of work. There is a paucity of research on how women on low-pay interact with the labour market and what specifically helps to support women and their poverty reduction through addressing low-paid work concerns.

However, in the absence of such research, this review unpicks the relevance of the most important decent work factors for women in Scotland and considers their applicability to those women living in Wales on lowpay. In the next section, using the factors outlined in table 4 to guide the discussion their relevance to Wales is considered.

Factors important to women

1. Supportive line manager

A supportive line manager is regarded as an important facet of decent work. The Oxfam Scotland report finds that a manager who is appreciative of good work, who supports staff to do their job well and recognises both personal and work-life needs is highly valued by workers. However, a survey on behalf of the Scottish government discloses that 13% (324,000) of Scottish adults in employment did not feel they had a supportive line manager (Scottish Health Survey 2013). No discernible gender differences are reported.

The significance of this factor to women is illuminated by Green *et al* (2016) who find that line managers can play an important linking role between workers and business in low-paying sectors. A supportive line manager can foster retention and progression from low-paid roles, a fundamental requirement for women in low-paid work.

In the absence of gender or Wales specific statistics, data from the DWP's UK survey, *Health and wellbeing at work* (DWP 2014) is turned to which emphasises the important role a good line manager can play in relation to employee ill-health. The workplace culture contributes to employee stress, resulting in long-term sickness absence. The DWP's report finds that 44% of employees report work as being stressful. This is more common among those working in the public sector and those working in large organisations (DWP 2014). The report also reveals that having a supportive employer and discussing health conditions at an early stage is associated with a reduced incidence of extended (more than two weeks) sickness absence. The good news emanating from the report is that most employees (61%) who reported having an extended sickness absence or health condition had adjustments made by their employer. The most common adjustment being time off at short notice, followed by flexible hours (DWP 2014).

However employees with just a mental health condition are less likely to report adjustments being made than those with a physical health condition or both. This could be linked to the fact that access to flexible working, provision of injury prevention training and occupational health has increased since 2011 yet the survey found no increase in the provision of mental health associated policies. This finding has significant implications for women as they report higher stress levels than men attributed partly to their external commitments and partly to the occupations they often find themselves in (HSE 2016).

In the absence of regional and gender data for Wales a tentative link can only be made between the high incidence of women working in the Welsh public sector and the more common reporting of stress in public bodies.

2. Return to work support

The female respondents in the Oxfam Scotland project value appropriate support on their return to work following injury or ill health. Despite this workers in Scotland earning less than £20,000 per annum feel they don't have such support (Yougov for Oxfam 2016).

Additionally, women may require return to work support after maternity leave. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) commissioned a programme of research to investigate the prevalence and nature of pregnancy and maternity-related discrimination and disadvantage in the workplace. The outcomes of the resulting report are based on survey interviews with 3,254 mothers and 3,034 employers. (EHRC 2016a).

The report reveals that over three in four mothers (77%) said they had a negative or possibly discriminatory experience during pregnancy, maternity leave or on return from maternity leave. If scaled up to the general population, this could mean that 390,000 mothers a year are affected (EHRC 2016a). Mothers who work for small employers (those with fewer than 50 employees) are more likely to say they felt forced to leave their jobs due to a negative response to a flexible work request. This is of particular resonance with Wales which is dominated by SME's (Skills SE Wales 2016). Mothers who work in the public sector are less likely than those in the private sector to feel that they were forced to leave their job, report financial loss, or report a negative experience related to a flexible working request (EHRC 2016a). This is a positive result for women working in Wales as 66% of Welsh public sector jobs are filled by women (Stats Wales 2016).

Continuing with this positive trend, mothers in Wales are less likely to say they experienced harassment or negative comments and a lower than UK average (10% compared to 11% UK average) of mothers in Wales felt forced to leave their job through employer actions (EHRC 2016a). Some sectors sustain a more negative working environment than others, these tend to be the low-pay,

female-dominated sectors. UK figures show that mothers in the caring, leisure and other service sectors are more likely to say that they felt forced to leave their job (19% compare to an average of 11%); to experience risk or impact to their health (54% compared to an average of 41%) or to report having a negative experience (82% compared to an average of 77%). They are also more likely to say that they felt unsupported by their employer during their pregnancy (8% compared to an average of 3%) (EHRC 2016a).

Women report a higher than national average rate of self-reported illness caused or made worse by work. Whilst no gender analysis is available for Wales alone, the national female figure of 4.18% exceeds the overall rate of 3.98% (Labour Force Survey 2016).

Both the TUC and EHRC report that mothers working on agency, casual and zero hours contracts are more likely to report a negative impact on opportunity, status or job security (EHRC 2016a). Recent publicity on the use of casual contracts highlights that rights are undermined by the use of such contracts, rights such as maternity pay and the rights of mothers to return to work after maternity leave (TUC 2015).

3. Additional non-pay benefits

The female Oxfam Scotland respondents find access to non-financial benefits beyond pay to be important. The additional non-pay benefits include help with childcare or signposting to additional support such as tax credits. Evidence suggests that not only does the workplace fail to provide such additional benefits but that employers are reducing existing levels. Provisional figures indicate 42% of people employed in the private sector and 11% in the public sector are without workplace pensions in Scotland (ONS March 2016).

The national Living Wage, introduced in April 2016 is an important step forward for workers aged 25 and over. But unfortunately, some employers have offset most if not all the gains by cutting back on overtime, paid breaks and even discounted meals (Stuart *et al* 2016). The voluntary Living Wage is an even bigger boost to low-paid workers' pay packets but, in both Wales and the UK it is still more common in higher paid sectors, such as construction, scientific and technical, than in low-paid sectors such as social care (Bevan Foundation Briefings 2016).

Delegates at the Welsh Women's Summit (2016) value additional non-pay benefits including childcare assistance through the provision of a childcare crèche at their place of work for example. In the absence of data on Welsh employers, UK data reveals that in 2015 only 20% of low-paid workers reported employer-provided assistance with childcare (Tinson and MacInnes 2015).

4. Flexible working hours

Women responding to the Oxfam Scotland survey indicate that flexibility in choosing working hours is highly valued. Yet despite this, 31% of employees have no influence over their working hours (Workplace Employment Relations Survey 2011).

The TUC's (2015b) report *Women and Casualisation*, finds that many workers are not in permanent employment but are working on some form of casual contract. Casualised and precarious work pose particular problems for women, partly because of the weaker maternity rights associated with some of these types of contracts and partly due to difficulties reconciling variable hours or job insecurity with caring responsibilities. Casualised work typically results in working patterns and hours dictated by the employer leaving the workers with little flexibility or autonomy to plan. Whilst recent media focus has been on zero hours contracts, there are multiple forms of casualised work which are

equally problematic. These include short-hours contracts, agency work, fixed-term contracts and spurious self-employment.

The *Women and Casualisation* report reveals gendered implications of casualised work which result in over half of temporary workers being women and women making up the majority of Britain's growing zero hours workforce. This is particularly true of workers in poor-quality jobs in Wales, many of whom are on temporary contracts, 55% of whom are women (ONS 2016a).

5. Easy to get to job

This factor is valued by the Scottish female respondents to the Oxfam Scotland survey for two reasons; firstly, women find that using public transport to reach their workplace is expensive, and secondly, some women are unpaid for their travel time. This is particularly the case for social care workers.

The TUC's (2014a) findings reveal that workers can be penalised if they are on zero hours contracts which allow workers to turn up for a shift without work actually materialising. The consequence of this is that high travel costs can often be incurred without pay. This is especially problematic in Wales due to the high level of temporary work and women's involvement in these forms of contracts.

These sentiments are echoed by the delegates at the Welsh Women's Summit (2016) who view the lack of affordable public transport across Wales as impacting women's attempts to make work pay. The delegates' view is that there is a need for the Welsh Government to reduce public transport fares as well as offering free or reduced transport for those who are volunteering.

6. Job Security

The Oxfam Scotland respondents value a permanent, open-ended contract rather than living under the shadow of temporary unemployment and the insecurities that surround such short-term contracts.

Temporary and zero hours contracts have characterised labour markets since the 1990s and Wales is no different. During 2016, 83,000 people were on temporary contracts in Wales. This represented 7% of the total number of employed workers in Wales. Of those on temporary contracts 28,000 workers could not find a permanent alternative. In common with the Oxfam Scotland findings, women are over represented in the temporary workers figures; 46,000 of those on temporary contracts are women (ONS 2016a).

Zero hours contracts are a significant feature of the lower paid occupations. In 2014, the TUC report *Ending the Abuse of Zero Hours Contracts* (TUC 2014a) notes that one in five of all workers in social care alone are on zero-hours contracts. Similarly, the CIPD (2016) identifies that zero hours contracts are heavily concentrated in lower pay occupations with nearly 60% classified as unskilled or in caring, leisure or other service occupations. Zero hours contracts are endemic in hospitality (24% total employment) and health and social work (21% total employment).

Whilst employers argue that zero hours contracts are beneficial for both employers and workers, providing employers with flexibility and offering workers a stepping stone into permanent employment, the TUC reveals that zero hours contracts are increasingly contributing to the growth of in-work poverty (TUC 2014a). Employers are only required to pay zero hour contract workers for the time they actually work, they are under no obligation to pay an individual who turns up for the start of a shift but is not offered work.

Employers contend that zero hours contracts are valued by workers with caring responsibilities, but the TUC's report suggests that the unpredictability of hours and lack of work guarantee can put a strain on families and make it very difficult to arrange childcare or elder care, a factor more onerous for women. Due to their uncertain employment status and the intermittent nature of their employment, many parents also lose out on family-friendly rights, including the right to request work flexibility and the return to their substantive job after maternity or paternity leave. Employers are also able to avoid redundancy payments by laying-off staff at short notice.

An important point is made by the TUC who emphasise that the market power of employers over employees is fundamental to understanding the impact of zero-hours contracts. This imbalance of power means that employers are able to benefit from all the flexible benefits associated with zero-hours contracts, but all the financial and security risks are transferred to the workers (TUC 2014a: 3).

7. A decent hourly rate

The Oxfam Scotland report reveals that respondents value an hourly rate or salary that is enough to cover basic needs such as food, housing and things most people take for granted without getting into debt. Yet the same report reveals that 440,000 Scottish workers were paid less than the voluntary Living Wage in 2015, two-thirds of whom were women. In addition, low-paid women are more likely to be concentrated in undervalued sectors.

There are striking similarities in Wales. A key feature of the discussion on employment during the Welsh Women's Summit (2016) centred around low-pay and in particular women's dominance in low paid jobs. Delegates at the Summit highlight a lack of quality decent jobs and observe that work typically associated with women fails to pay a decent hourly rate.

The Summit's findings are supported statistically across regions of the UK. In 2016, the highest rates of people earning less than the voluntary Living Wage were in the East Midlands (27.7%: ONS 2016d). Wales as a whole was not far behind as 285,000 employees (24.9 %) earned less than the voluntary Living Wage. In Welsh parliamentary constituencies the majority of those employees earning less than the voluntary Living Wage were women (172,000). For women working in the Gower almost half (48.7 %) of jobs paid less than the Living Wage, followed by Dwyfor Meirionnydd (46.8 %: ONS 2016d). Women in part-time employment represented over 63% of all women earning less than the voluntary Living Wage (109,000: ONS 2016b).

There has been opposition to the payment of the voluntary Living Wage by some sectors (TUC 2016b). Commonly held misconceptions about payment of the voluntary Living Wage have been challenged by many including one of the foremost accountants in the UK, Simon Collins, senior partner and UK chairman, KPMG.

Previously many businesses worried that increased wages hit their bottom line, but there is ample evidence to suggest the opposite. By paying the Living Wage we have seen improved staff morale, a rise in service standards, improved retention of staff and increased productivity.
(KPMG 2016)

Other benefits of adopting the voluntary Living Wage include speeding up the reduction in the gender pay gap (at the lower wage bands) as well as resulting in other benefits including a reduced social security bill and increased productivity and staff retention (Tinson *et al* 2016). However, this approach has not been embraced by all sectors of the economy in Wales. Some sectors, notably

accommodation and food, health and social work and wholesale and retail, are plagued by below-average pay and shorter-than-average hours.

8. Paid Leave

Paid holidays and paid sick leave are regarded as an important part of decent work by female workers in Scotland. Yet reports reveal that 5% of all employees in Scotland did not receive the statutory minimum paid holidays they were entitled to in 2014 (Stuart *et al* 2016).

Wales has one of the highest rates of employees missing out on their minimum legal entitlement to paid holidays (7.6%) in the UK (TUC 2015a). In terms of job sectors, the greatest concentration of missed holiday entitlements is found in sectors traditionally dominated by female employment (TUC 2015a) such as accommodation and food (12.5%), administration and support services (9.2%) and construction (8.1%). In contrast, the figure for the finance and insurance sector is only 1.9% and for public administration and defence it is only 2.8% (TUC 2015a).

Of concern to women is the impact that zero hours contracts have on their entitlement to paid leave, such as maternity pay and leave. Most zero hours contracts give staff 'worker' status. This entitle them to rest breaks, annual holiday, sick pay and to be paid the national Minimum Wage. However, a zero hours contract does not give staff 'employee' status, which carries further rights such as the entitlement to claim for unfair dismissal, to maternity pay and leave, to ask for flexible working, to statutory minimum notice periods, and to redundancy payments (ICAEW 2015).

9. A safe working environment

A safe working environment free from physical and mental risk or harm is rated highly by female respondents to the Oxfam Scotland survey. Such a concern could be based on evidence that 3% of the workforce reported illness caused or made worse by work in the previous 12 months, while 33,000 reported stress, depression or anxiety caused or made worse by work (Oxfam Scotland).

The Labour Force Survey (2016) reports that in Wales the rate of self-reported illness caused or made worse by work in the last 12 months was higher than the average figure for the UK as a whole. UK analysis by gender for the year (2013/14-2015/16) shows the total female figure is 4.2% but no analysis by gender for Wales is provided. However, despite this lack of gender analysis by the Labour Force Survey, the TUC have identified that gender matters in occupational health and safety (TUC Gender 2017). The employment experiences of men and women differ due to horizontal segregation or to their different treatment from employers. Consequently men still tend to predominate in visibly more dangerous occupations such as construction, where there are high levels of injury from one-off events, whereas women are clustered in occupation where the work-related illness arises from less visible, but more long-term hazards.

A report by Gofal for the TUC (Mental Health 2014) indicates that mental health issues have been exacerbated by the recession in 2008. Workers' lives have been made increasingly difficult as they have battled with wage cuts, welfare reform, increased cost of living and threats to job security. The report observes that issues, such as redundancy, reorganisation, low-paid jobs and zero hours contracts become much more common during a time of austerity and may result in increased levels of stress, anxiety and depression among the workforce.

Gofal's report includes figures from the Centre for Mental Health's (2007) briefing called *Mental Health at Work: Developing the Business Case* which estimates that mental health problems cost employers nearly £26 billion each year in the UK. In Wales, mental health problems cost the

economy an estimated £7.2 billion every year, through health and social care expenditure, absenteeism and reduced productivity at work.

The HSE's (2016) report into work-related stress, anxiety and depression finds that almost 500,000 people are suffering from stress at any one time. The occupations driving the higher rates of work-related stress in decreasing order of severity are; welfare professionals, nursing and midwifery professionals, and teaching professionals. These are all categories dominated by women and consequently explains why 60% of people reporting stress are women. Women's stress levels are more likely to remain high after work, particularly if they have children at home.

The TUC's report (2017) finds that women are at particular risk of violence, harassment and bullying both in and outside the workplace. The occupations dominated by women – such as working in contact with the public in banks, bookmakers, shops and in solitary settings, particularly as teachers, social workers and health-care workers - have a higher risk of violence or threats of violence.

Also, due to vertical segregation, women are less likely to have supervisory jobs and are more likely to be found at the lower end of the hierarchical structure in lower paid and low status jobs where bullying and harassment are more common.

10. No discrimination

The Oxfam Scotland respondents feel that this factor is important due to discrimination encountered on multiple levels due to ethnicity, gender and disability. Of course, it is possible for some, or all of these to intersect.

Poverty rates are higher for women in all ethnic groups compared to white British men, with Pakistani and Bangladeshi women having the highest rates at 50% (Bennett and Daly 2014). Muslim women experience some of the largest employment penalties in the UK (Moosa with Woodroffe 2009). Despite relatively high levels of pre-migration employment, women refugees fare much worse than men in all types of work, and are more likely to be in occupations dominated by women including sales and customer service (Bennett and Daly 2014). Evidence has shown that financial benefits accrue to the host country by investing in support to help refugees work (Mansour 2016), yet refugee and migrant women represent one of the most deprived cohorts in the UK (Mansour 2016).

The recent Brexit vote has intensified concern that EU-led protection of employees' rights will be eroded over time. From a female perspective, concerns over protected maternity pay and leave are very real given the lack of rights associated with the growing number of temporary contracts found in the work dominated by women. There is also added uncertainty for Wales, as a devolved nation, as it is unclear what will happen to areas that are currently largely covered by EU legislation in a post Brexit era. Given that many of the workers' rights that do exist in the UK come from EU legislation, it is vital that the withdrawal of the UK from the EU acts as an opportunity for Wales to reinforce and improve worker's rights rather than remove or weaken them (Tinson *et al* 2016).

11. Fair pay

The Oxfam Scotland report highlights that pay inequality between the company boss and its workers causes concern for some respondents, whilst others show concern over the inequality between pay bands (Stuart *et al* 2016).

From a female perspective, the gender pay gap results in inequitable pay between the sexes. The NPI report, *Women, Work and Wages* calculates that despite the gender pay gap decreasing by 3%

between 2005 and 2015, on average women are paid 80% of the figure paid to men. Women are more likely than men to be low paid and one of the biggest causes of this inequity is the higher prevalence of female part-time work. Yet, even if part-time work is stripped from the data and full-time women and men's earnings are compared, the gap remains. In this context, for every £100 paid to a man, a woman receives £90 (Tinson *et al* 2016). The pay gap between men and women is smallest (5%) at the lower end of the pay scale, due to the equalising influence of the national Minimum Wage. According to Tinson and MacInnes (2015) the implementation of the national Living Wage is estimated to speed up reducing the gender pay gap by up to one fifth and the widespread adoption of the voluntary Living Wage would speed up this reduction even further.

Summary

Unpicking the underlying reasons for the priority given to the above factors by the female respondents of the Oxfam Scotland report provides a better understanding of why they are so highly valued. It also allows a comparison, where the data allows, with women in Wales who are also lowly paid. The comparison indicates that there are striking similarities between the two nations and suggests that an attempt to improve the situation of women in in-work poverty in Wales must be take into account not only the factors that are more important to women, but the underlying reasons as to their importance. In section 2, the labour market and in-work poverty are contextualised in terms of both Wales and the UK.

Section 2: Context

Labour Market

Throughout the 20th and 21st century, the UK's level of unemployment has been one of the criteria used to assess each government's success. It was an emotive statistic during the 1980s when it hit a peak of 13% (ONS 1996). These high levels have not been reached again despite the advent of the 2008 Financial Crisis and current unemployment levels have dipped to 4.7% (ONS February 2017). The proportion of working households in the UK continues to rise in 2016 (only 14.8% of households, where at least one person is aged 16 to 64, are workless,) and the employment rate for married or cohabiting men and women is 92.7% and 74% respectively (ONS 2016b). The trend for long-term workless households (2006-2014) follows the same downward gradient as overall workless households and the ratio of long term to total workless households has remained fairly constant, indicating some success in encouraging the long term unemployed into employment (ONS 2016e). The proportion of children living in a household where no-one works has fallen from nearly one in four in 1994–95 to less than one in six in 2014–15 (ONS 2016b). Whilst lone-parent families account for 65.9% of all children in workless households, growth in the share of working households in the UK has been partly driven by increased proportions of lone parents working, which has risen from 55.4% in 2004 to 67.9% in 2016 (ONS 2016b). Despite the success of decreasing unemployment levels they have not resulted in the universal financial gains suggested by largely neo-classical economic models due to changes in the UK labour market.

The supply of labour to the labour market has risen due to decreasing unemployment levels generally, supplemented specifically by increasing numbers of women involved in paid work. The demand side has been affected by a number of considerable changes in the UK labour market over recent decades. A fundamental change, as Green *et al* (2016) point out, is a decline in manufacturing and a rise in the service sector. Not only does this changing sectoral profile of employment have implications for occupations, but it has implications for the evolving occupational profile of employment. The pattern of employment in sectors now reflects a larger number of higher-skilled

jobs along with a lower rate of growth in some low-skilled occupations. The long-term consequence of such changes are a decline in routine, mid-skilled, mid-paid jobs relative to both low-skilled non-routine jobs (such as care work) and high-skilled jobs. As the Joseph Rowntree Foundation UK Poverty report points out, this ‘hollowing out’ of the labour market looks set to continue as 35% of jobs that exist in the UK today are at risk of being made redundant by technology. Jobs paying less than £30,000 are almost five times more likely to be at risk than those paying over £100,000 (JRF UK Poverty 2016). Such changes in the employment profile are attributed (Green *et al* 2016; Tinson *et al* 2016) to technological change, the financial crisis, globalisation and changing consumer preferences.

Alongside the changes in the profile of employment, an increasing emphasis has developed on labour market deregulation aimed at achieving greater flexibility in labour supply which has had implications for employment requirements. Conditions of employment are now marked by an increase in insecure and low quality jobs (Green *et al* 2016). The recent changes in the labour market structure in conjunction with the increasing supply of labour has resulted in growing awareness that a significant characteristic of the 21st century is in-work poverty. In the UK people are said to be in poverty if they live in a household whose total income is less than 60% of the median. If a person is in poverty for one or two years over a four year period, this is described as transient poverty. Persistent poverty refers to a person living in poverty for three or more years over a four year period (Social research 2014a).

In-work poverty

Over the last twenty years there have been many attempts to reduce the number of people on very low incomes. The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) has reported a remarkable transformation in patterns of low income in the UK (Belfield *et al* 2016). Heading the success stories have been the reduction in the number of children and older people on low incomes. The proportion of children in low income, materially deprived families in Wales has fallen by 3% between 2013 and 2016 (Bevan Foundation briefings 2016). Analysis shows that changes in employment contributed 2 percentage points to the reduction in the child poverty rate between 1997/98 and 2008/09, and that the steady rise in the number of lone parents in employment accounted for a significant element of this gain (CPAG 2012). Pensioner incomes have grown so much that, after housing costs, they are now the least likely major demographic group to be in income poverty (Belfield *et al* 2016). Pensioner poverty has fallen from around 26% in the 1990s to 14% in 2015 for the UK (DWP 2017), although Wales has started to see a rise in the figure according to Age Cymru (Age Cymru 2016). Therefore, despite the number of pensioners growing overall, they constitute a smaller percentage of people in poverty compared with previously (Tinson and MacInnes 2015). The pattern of very low income has changed so that those now classed as poor tend to live in households where there is someone in work (Bennett and Daly 2014).

Two thirds of children classified as poor, are poor despite the fact that at least one of their parents is in work. Simply eliminating household worklessness entirely would reduce child income poverty by no more than 5 percentage points, from 28% to 23% (Belfield *et al* 2016). In the UK among working age households, people in households where there was always at least one adult working made up over one-third of people in persistent poverty and over half of those in transient poverty (Social Research 2014a). In-work poverty is of even more relevance in a Welsh context.

Wales tends to have a higher percentage of working-age adults living in relative income poverty than the other UK countries. Over the four years from 2005 to 2008, a greater proportion of people experienced poverty in Wales (36%) than in England (33%), that number remaining unchanged from 2000-2008 (Social Research 2014a). Alarmingly that figure grew even further exhibiting a 3

percentage point growth between 2010 and 2014 (Tinson and MacInnes 2015). This represents around 700,000 people living in poverty in Wales, or 23% of the population (after adjusting for housing costs: Bevan Foundation briefings 2016). Wales is behind only London (28%) and on par with the West Midlands at 23% of the population living in poverty. Every other UK country and English region has lower levels of poverty than Wales (National Assembly 2015). Wales has a higher percentage of workless households than England, and a lower proportion of households that are always in work. This contributes to the higher level of poverty, both transient and persistent for Wales (Social Research 2014a). In Wales, around 300,000 people in poverty live in households where someone is working (Bevan Foundation briefings 2016). Poverty has risen in working families and fallen in workless families.

Work certainly reduces the risk of having a poverty-level income – even a household where there’s only one person working part-time is three times less likely to be in poverty than a household where the adults are unemployed. But increasingly having a job doesn’t guarantee escaping poverty – a combination of low-pay and part-time hours mean that more than half of people in poor working-age households live with at least one person who is employed (Bevan Foundation briefings 2016). Of concern is that in-work poverty is not just a problem of the present and there are some forecasts that poverty will increase by 2020 (Hood and Waters 2017). There is a growing recognition that in Wales, as in the rest of the UK, society understands how to get people into work, but not how to ensure that work moves people out of poverty.

Consequences of poverty

Living in poverty causes educational under-achievement, negatively impacts physical and mental health and causes financial damage to those who experience it. The levels of educational attainment of children living in poverty are negatively affected compared to other children. Educational under-achievement by children living in poverty in Wales can be seen as early as the age of three, when they enter nursery. Whilst the gap closes in the early years of primary education, it widens again by the age of eleven. Between the ages of 14 and 15/16, standardised tests and examination results reveal that on average there is an achievement gap of 32 to 34% between children living in poverty compared with other children (JRF 2013). A key indicator of educational attainment is the percentage of 15 year olds achieving the equivalent of five or more higher-grade GCSEs, including English (or Welsh) and Mathematics. This is because having literacy and numeracy skills at this level is critically important for progression to further study and into employment. In 2011, only 21% of children living in poverty in Wales achieved this outcome compared with 55% of other children (JRF 2013).

In health terms, living in poverty harms both life expectancy and healthy life expectancy. Contrary to the ‘more equal Wales’ goal of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, large differences in life expectancy endure between the least and most deprived areas. In men, there remains a gap in life expectancy of around 9 years between the least and most deprived (around 7 years for women), and an even larger gap in healthy life expectancy of approximately 19 years. These gaps show no clear sign of reducing over time (NHS Wales 2016).

In financial terms, people living in poverty encounter a poverty premium which makes it even more difficult for them to improve their financial situation. Both the Bevan Foundation’s investigation (*Paying the Price of Being Poor* 2009) and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation’s report (*UK Poverty: Causes, costs and solutions* 2016) reveal that consumers with limited or no interaction with financial services, such as those without bank accounts, those who prefer to manage their budgets in cash or those with poor credit histories often end up paying more for goods and services than those who

pay by direct debit or who have access to mainstream credit facilities. Such consumers use expensive methods of paying for necessities, such as pre-payment meters for gas and electricity when direct debits would be more cost effective, or spreading the cost of insurance over twelve months when a single payment would be cheaper. People who are denied access to conventional credit have limited options when attempting to spread the cost of payment for larger household items. Instead they turn to alternative high cost lenders such as home credit companies, sub-prime credit shop or illegal lenders. Also they have limited access to automated cash dispensers which do not have a fee attached to their use or they may rely on costly cheque cashing facilities which can mean people often have to pay disproportionately more to access their cash. They thus suffer the 'double burden' of having a low income from which they also have proportionately high outgoings (Bevan Foundation 2009: 9)

However, as the Oxfam Scotland report (Stuart *et al* 2016) is quick to emphasise, income is just one factor to be considered when assessing the experience of low-quality, low-pay work. The long term effects of having a low income are significant on a human level and can affect people's quality of life including their physical and mental health, how well their children do at school, and their relationships. From a broader perspective, low income costs the Welsh public purse about £4.5bn a year (around £78bn in the UK). If low income originates from a lack of qualifications, the economy and society are deprived of essential skills and talents (Bramley *et al* 2016). Bennet and Daly's policy and evidence review finds a clear association between living in poverty and having poor maternal mental health (Bennett and Daly 2014). The benefits of improving the standards of employment are not only a reduction in poverty but also a reduction in health inequalities (Stuart *et al* 2016).

In-work poverty - causes

Therefore work does not eliminate the risk of poverty. Indeed the changing sectoral and occupational profile of employment in tandem with the institutional and regulatory changes in the labour market have led to increased concerns about low-pay, poor job quality, limited social mobility and their contribution to poverty risk. The causes of in-work poverty are complex and varied and include:

- Rate of pay
- Number of hours worked
- Employment sector
- Progression
- Low-pay, no-pay
- Government policies

Rate of Pay

Both Stuart *et al* (2016) and Tinson and MacInnes (2015) agree that central to in-work poverty is low-pay, which is strongly related to part-time work. In total 270,000 jobs, mainly held by women, are paid below two-thirds of the UK median hourly rate of pay (Tinson and MacInnes 2015). In Wales, on average almost a quarter of all employees earn less than the voluntary Living Wage with women dominating this category. In the part-time market over 70% of women earn less than the Living Wage in some parliamentary constituencies of Wales (ONS 2016b). There has been no reduction in the extent of low-pay in Wales for a decade; low-pay rates are consistently higher in Wales than most of the UK as a whole (Tinson and MacInnes 2015). Scrutiny of the data shows that on a regional basis, the percentage of jobs paid below the national Minimum Wage in Wales is comparable with other English regions such as Yorkshire and Humber, the North West and the West Midlands (ONS 2016c).

Number of hours worked

Oxfam Scotland attributes in-work poverty to the number of hours worked and both Green *et al* (2016) and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation report, *Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Wales*, link it to the employment basis; namely part-time work, temporary work or zero hours contracts. The Welsh Government's social research emphasises that in-work poverty is dependent on both the rate of pay and the number of hours worked (Social Research 2014a).

A surge in self-employment and temporary or part-time jobs has been a striking characteristic of the past two decades. According to the New Policy Institute funded report *Women, work and wages in the UK* over half of women working for themselves are doing so part-time (54%), compared to a minority of men (13%: Tinson *et al* 2016). In excess of 50% of all jobs created since the mid-1990s have been those which tend to be lower-paid and less secure than their full-time, permanent equivalents. More women (350,000) work on zero hours contracts than men (270,000: 2014- 2015: Tinson *et al* 2016). In such jobs there is less training, more job strain and less job security accompanied by lower annual and hourly wages. A majority (68%) of those on zero hours contracts are low paid (Tinson *et al* 2016). Those working relatively few hours have driven the increase in working poverty in Wales.

Whilst increasing self-employment levels have been applauded as signs of a dynamic economy, the income generated from such activities is such that 18.8% have required their incomes to be topped up by tax credits (Dellot and Wallace-Stephens 2017). For families in which at least one adult is working part-time or self-employed, there has been an increase of around 100,000 in poverty over the last 10 years (Tinson and MacInnes 2015).

Employment sector

Green *et al* (2016) emphasise that the sector of work strongly correlates with poverty. The biggest risk of in-work poverty is associated with the accommodation and food sectors, where the risk is more than three times the average. The incidence of poverty is also raised in residential care and in wholesale and retail, at twice the average. Poverty in these sectors is high for all types of household even those where two adults are working. These sectors are typically dominated by women as they offer part-time work options. This 'crowding' in gender segmented labour markets contributes to an excess supply of labour, resulting in lower earnings for women (Felstead *et al* 2013: 9). However, it does not explain why crowding in of women results in lower earnings, yet in occupations that are male dominated – such as construction – earnings tend to be above average.

In-work poverty is a function of wage rate and number of hours worked. As the Bevan Foundation briefings (2016) are quick to point out, there are marked differences in hours and remuneration in the various employment sectors. Across the UK economy as a whole, people worked an average of 32.9 hours per week. However, the average number of hours worked are below this figure in the accommodation and food services sector, the health and social work sector and the wholesale and retail services sector. In Wales the situation is exacerbated as the median hourly rate of pay for these sectors is below the voluntary Living Wage rate at £6.67; £7.66 and £7.80 for accommodation and food, residential care sector and wholesale and retail respectively (Bevan Foundation briefings 2016).

Of even greater significance is that some of the sectors that are forecast to create the largest numbers of new jobs in Wales are sectors where there are very high levels of low-pay – such as food and accommodation, retail and social care. Another feature of this sector is that progression levels in this sector are low. Whereas in the UK, around 26% of employees who were in a low-paid job had moved

onto a higher paid job a year later, this figure is much lower in accommodation and food services than the average for all sectors with only 17.4% moving out of low-pay (Bevan Foundation briefings 2016). Some sectors, such as food and accommodation, retail and social care, and low-pay appear to be almost synonymous and results in some people experiencing a 'sticky floor' (Bevan Foundation briefings 2016). This means that in some areas of Wales, it is likely these low-paid sectors will grow rapidly in the coming years resulting in an increase in employment as well as an increase in poverty at the same time (Bevan Foundation briefings 2016).

Green *et al* (2016) questions whether the disparities in low-pay by sector are attributable to differences in worker characteristics or whether there is a separate sectoral effect. A series of regression analyses indicates that there is a 'sector effect' (Green *et al* 2016: 13) which is independent of characteristics of individuals working in the sectors. This suggests that focusing policy on these sectors might be a useful way to target low-pay.

Progression

If there were a way of progressing within low-paid, poor quality work then the problem would be minimised, however this is rarely the case. As the Oxfam Scotland report points out, by 2012 almost 75% of low paid workers had been in the same position for over a decade. The Resolution Foundation report showed that nearly half (46%) had escaped low-pay during the decade, but found themselves back in or at risk of low-pay by 2012 (Hurrell 2013). Sissons *et al* (2016) were unable to identify whether this 'sticky floor' was due to the individual's characteristics and actions or was a restriction imposed by organisational boundaries. However, they were able to clarify that being a woman reduced the chances for progression.

Restricted progression can be attributed to labour market changes, organisational factors or to personal factors relevant to the worker. Labour market changes have caused a decline in routine, mid-skilled, mid-paid jobs relative to low-skilled non-routine jobs which restricts the opportunities for progression for low paid workers. From an organisational perspective it may reflect weak internal progression pathways or flat organisational hierarchies which offer limited opportunities for workers to increase their earnings (Lloyd and Payne 2012). The individual's contribution to constrained advancement could be due to a limited interest in progression (Hay 2015), to apprehension that progression would jeopardise the ability to work reduced hours that caring responsibilities demand (Green *et al* 2016) or to concerns that the accompanying pay rise would be less than the ensuing reduction in overall household income caused by a reduction in state benefits. However, Green *et al* (2016) point out that from a policy perspective an individual's enthusiasm to progress is partly shaped by their workplace context and opportunities and therefore a positive change in these can have a positive impact on an individual's attitude.

In-work progression as a means of addressing in-work poverty is now an area of growing policy and is a fundamental element of the Universal Credit (UC), a new single working-age benefit payable to both those out of work, and those in work and on low-pay. In its Work and Pensions Committee report the government outlines one of its key objectives as moving people out of a cycle of long-term low-pay and supporting low-paid claimants to become ultimately independent of the welfare state. The focus is on supporting low-paid claimants to increase their earnings to at least the equivalent of 35 hours per week at the national Living Wage. Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches have been tasked with addressing structural barriers to progression, such as access to childcare, skills development and job opportunities, on a personalised basis. The Coaches are also expected to engage with employers to develop a greater understanding of local labour market requirements. The UC system also includes in-work conditionality. Conditionality in welfare requires people to behave in a certain way to access

benefits. Such conditions tend to be enforced by penalties or sanctions that can reduce, suspend or end benefit access (Work and Pensions 2015).

However, progression is not an option for those women in insecure or low-paid work as they may have inadequate time to take up opportunities due to childcare constraints or the nature of zero hours contracts or part-time work. Therefore, reforms to in-work benefits through UC reflect a version of the labour market which is not open to many women. Mansour (2016) strongly criticises in-work conditionality for individuals in low-paid work arguing that it fails to offer and support a sustainable transition out of poverty especially for those with disabilities and health conditions resulting in reduced workplace engagement.

Low-pay, no-pay

The chances of living in poverty are also exacerbated by the significant number of workers who move continuously between low-paid work and unemployment, known as the 'low-pay, no-pay cycle' (Shildrick *et al* 2010; Thompson 2015). The *Low-Pay, No-Pay* report (Shildrick *et al* 2010) associates the cycle with low-quality, insecure employment that fails to provide labour market security or progression.

In the area studied by Shildrick *et al* (2010), better-quality jobs had gradually been replaced with low-skilled, low-paid and insecure employment. Wider experiences of disadvantage, such as ill health, bereavement and having to care for others restricted the ability to work and explained why employment was lost. Insecure employment and unemployment contributed to ill health and depression which then in turn inhibited further employment. Mothers often found they had to choose between fulfilling family caring duties and remaining in employment. Similarly, attempts to improve job prospects through education and training were often thwarted by caring responsibilities. This viewpoint is supported by Mansour (2016) who notes that lone parent and others with multiple needs are also known to be more associated with a pattern of interrupted work profile.

The Low-Pay, No-Pay Cycle (Thompson 2015) report shows that people living in the low-pay, no-pay cycle tended to be relatively poorly qualified however, even the best qualified (those with degrees and diplomas) did not face improved labour market fortunes. The study found that individuals and households would repeatedly experience poverty both when in work and when out of it. Some simply chose to avoid benefits altogether, using small savings or loans to tide them over in between jobs. These individuals were described as 'the missing workless' (Shildrick *et al* 2010: 5). The conclusion drawn from all research reviewed in this area (Thompson 2015; Shildrick *et al* 2010 and; Mansour 2016) is that the capacity to do and sustain work cannot be separated from household economies or situations.

Government Policy

The *Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Wales* report (Tinson and MacInnes 2015) highlights that recent UK government budgets and public policies have not provided much aid for younger adults. Young adults are adversely affected as the new national Living Wage does not apply to those under 25, and housing benefits cuts impinge on those aged 18 to 21. This is on top of other areas of public policy, such as sanctioning, which disproportionately affects young people. Also, although the national Living Wage increases wages it does not compensate for the tax credit cuts or the cuts to social security for the UK as a whole.

Summary

The literature in this section reveals in-work poverty to be a multi-faceted policy challenge. Whilst poor work and economic marginality characterise the lives of increasing numbers of workers at the bottom of the labour market, a number of the recent negative developments in the labour market disproportionately affect women. A focus on female poverty is important as it has implications not only for women themselves but it also affects their wider family members. As Tinson *et al* (2016) emphasise, in low-income families it is often women who act as managers of family finances, shielding their children from the worst effects of poverty. In addition, female employment levels increased by 6% in the twenty years since 1995 (Tinson *et al* 2016) and as a result helped to boost the living standards of many in the UK. If female employment levels in the UK matched those in other countries, then the GDP would raise by 9% (PwC 2017). Similarly, reducing the gender pay gap could boost the UK economy by £150 billion (Gov 2016).

Employment is now the key policy focus for tackling poverty however there is growing recognition that for many people, work *per se* does not provide a route out of poverty. The body of research developed thus far shows that work policy aimed at poverty reduction needs to be tailored to fit the regional, sectoral and population specifics yet very little exists which considers gender specific methods. There is thus a clear case for focusing on women's employment in Wales as a means of addressing poverty and living standards. Women engage differently with the labour market and a theoretical framework is necessary to understand the reasons underlying this.

Section 3: Gender Lens

Theoretical Framework

According to Bennet and Daly (2014: 6), gender is an integral component of social relations based on perceived differences between the sexes. It acts as an indicator of power and creates unequal access to resources. Gender is societal and structural in nature and determines an individual's engagement with the labour market, affecting the acquisition of education and skills. In the following discussion, the term 'gendering' is used to describe a process of assigning characteristics of masculinity or femininity to a role or position that results in power and privilege being largely attributed to masculine characteristics (Mills *et al* 2010).

There are a variety of different theoretical approaches to investigate how gender affects an individual's interaction with the workplace (Grimshaw and Rubery 2015). This paper uses critical organisational theory. Its relevance to the subject being studied is highlighted by Alvesson (1985:136), who points out that critical organisational theory views organisations as constituted by 'actions, conditions, and discourses concerning social norms and frames of reference for human activity'. A review of organisational and sociological literature over the last thirty years reveals that the principal theoretical models used to explain gendering in the work place can be categorised into three broad groups; gender neutral; supply-side; and demand-side groups of theories.

A notable gender neutral theory is the so-called 'pipeline' argument (Kanter 1977). This attributes women's positioning in the workforce to their historical minority status and reasons that, as their numbers grow, they should be able to influence their working environment and progress. Quite simply, according to this perspective, change should happen but it will take time for sufficient numbers of women to flow through the pipeline. This theory has been invalidated as the proportion of women making up the total workforce has increased year on year, yet the gender pay gap persists and women are still under-represented in the higher echelons of organisations or other institutions (Leopold *et al* 2016; Evans 2016).

Supply-side theories, also collectively called the Attributes group of theories, (Morris and Von-Glinow 1990) focus on the individual's contribution to labour market operation. Attributes theories suggest that the differences between men's and women's behaviour, attitudes, socialisation and traits are the cause of the differential treatment of women in the workplace (Gottfried 2013). For example, Hakim (1995) argues that women's low job status can be attributed to their personal characteristics such as being risk averse and more passive. Hakim asserts that passivity engenders a lack of ambition and hence women do not strive for managerial positions with the same determination as men. In contrast, the ambitious, aggressive genetic constitution of men ensures that they progress more quickly than women in business organisations. As many scholars have shown, including Whiting and Wright 2001 and Gammie *et al* 2007, such a biologically reductionist view is unsupported by empirical material.

Becker (1971) and Hakim (2000; 1995) are key proponents of human capital theories and their application to supply-side theories. Such theories seek to explain the differences in women's and men's work performance by reference to past investment choices in education and job training. Again, there is scant evidence for such claims. Indeed the data shows there are currently more women than men graduates from higher education institutions in the UK (HESA 2016). The central assumption of human capital theory, investment in education and training pays off equally, has been unsupported by many studies (Jackson and Hayday 1997; Morrison and Von Glinow 1990; Goldin 2002).

Critics of Attributes (supply-side) theories, such as Gottfried (2013) and Anderson-Gough *et al* (2006) argue they align with pervasive gender stereotypes and appear to support the observed behaviour of men and women. Nonetheless, it is the case that men tend to be in the workforce for more years than women and are more likely to work continuously in a full-time capacity. This might not be of choice but an artefact of continued adherence to the traditional household division of labour in which the male is the 'breadwinner' and women prioritise the work required to maintain the household, including (and increasingly) the burden of care for elderly dependents (Whiting and Wright 2001; Monks and Barker 1996). When women take on the burden of primary responsibility for a disproportionate amount of domestic labour (Whiting and Wright 2001; Gottfried 2013) it is inevitable that the time they can allot to work related activities is diminished which in turn reduces their opportunities for on the job experience or training. Also, their flexibility to respond to job opportunities by relocating to other regions is restricted as a female career is often regarded as secondary when compared to her male partner (Jackson and Hayday 1997). This group of theories fails to account for the formation of the different preferences developed by men and women and to suggest that women choose to assume the role of domestic dominance ignores the social structuring of preferences (Ciancanelli 1998).

The demand-side arguments regard employers' discriminatory policies and practices as the cause of gendering in the work place. The demand-side theories, collectively called the Attitudes group of theories (Morris and Von-Glinow 1990), refer to employers' bias or attitudes (Morrison and Von Glinow 1990) by the still dominant male majority in the workplace as a continuing source of discrimination against women. Many writers, including Ciancanelli *et al* (1990) Barker *et al* (1991) Fletcher *et al* (2007) and Jeacle (2011) emphasise the role of discrimination and bias in organizational practices which inhibit the achievements of women. The discrimination derives from complex organisational practices based upon stereotyped views of women and men and the nature of work. These organisational practices were developed by those members of society who carried the most cultural and economic power, using expectations and methods of work developed by the society in which they participated (Ridgeway and Correll 2004; Rumens 2013).

Organisational constraints as well as the belief that women can be treated as a homogenous group who are more attached to the home and family and are less well suited for management are the causes for continued discrimination according to this perspective. It recognizes how important organisations are in the creation and dissemination of gender, creating and ‘naturalising’ the persistent male stereotype (Wacjman 1998). The historical solution has been a change in formal and informal organisational structures, for example flexible working patterns. However, this has had the adverse effect of establishing a separate female work pattern, as predicted by Ciancanelli *et al* (1990).

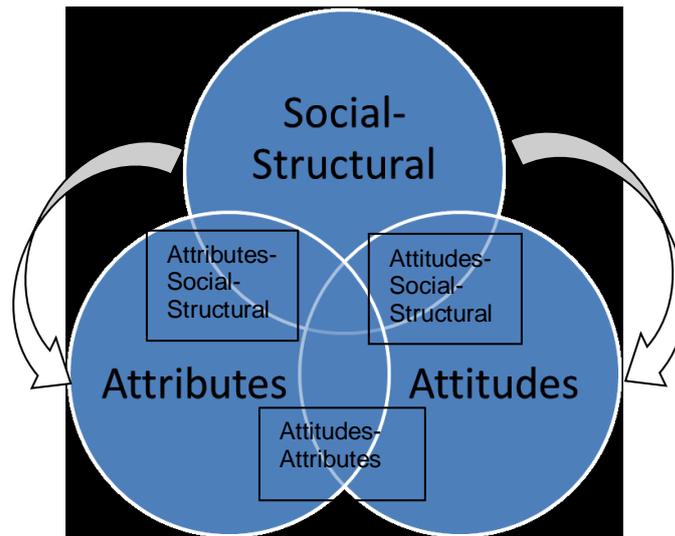
An extension of the Attitudes group of arguments considers that a more critical perspective is appropriate (Ciancanelli *et al* 1990). In this context, a broader analysis of organisational practices and the impact of social factors is important, allowing organisational behaviour to be viewed in relation to wider social structures, events and norms. The group named the Social-Structural theories (Morrison and Von Glinow 1990) calls for the socially-constructed nature of men and women to be recognized in relation to discrimination in the workplace. Thus sexist ideology in society shapes workplace behaviour. Widespread social practices and policies perpetuate discriminatory treatment of women in the patriarchal structure of modern organisations. It is not the actions or prejudices of the individual but rather a structural, universal discrimination society-wide. This patriarchalism is reflected in modern organizations and disadvantages women and minorities whilst reinforcing the dominant group (Kanter 1977). When organisational group membership reflects the pattern in society then it would be surprising if discriminatory evaluation of minorities or women were questioned in the organization.

According to the Social-Structural theories, women concentrate on the less visible, private sphere, whereas men focus more on the public stage. Women take on more responsibility for house and home responsibilities and are therefore regarded as inferior workers in the sense they are not as strongly attached to jobs and careers as men. This view of women leads to a type of *de facto* job segregation. This explanation implies that if organisations retain a patriarchal structure which mimics the household division of labour then Kanter’s (1977) theory of reproduction of similar types will ensure that women never reach the top unless they act and become similar to men.

The theories considered above have been allocated to Attitudes, Attributes or Social–Structural theory groups, depending upon the key characteristic of the cause of gendering. All three theory groups offer an insight into different elements of the gendering process, but individually remain too simplistic to embrace the whole process.

Modifying the basic theoretical framework (Gammie *et al* 2007; Evans 2016) allows an emphasis both of the integration of the perspectives as well as the overarching influence of Social-Structural (societal factors) on the Attributes and Attitudes group of theories. This is shown diagrammatically below:

Diagram 1: Intersection of theory groups to illustrate the direction they give to empirical research into gender and organisational behaviour.



The diagram shows that the barriers to female interaction and progression are created by overlaps between the three main theory groups, and emphasises the overarching influence of societal factors (Evans 2016).

The Attitudes-Social-Structural overlap reveals that social values interact with organisational bias and discrimination resulting in the patriarchal organisation of society being supported by stereotypes and discrimination in the organisation.

The Attributes-Social-Structural overlap emphasises systemic influence. The societal construction of the traditional household division of labour in which women prioritise the private home-life over the public work arena reinforces the nurturing and passive attributes of women over men. This results in jobs being constructed in an anthropomorphic way, with certain jobs being ascribed as typically feminine jobs which require female traits, whilst other roles are demarcated as male who is depicted as the Ideal Worker (Acker 1989).

The final overlap, the Attitudes-Attributes intersection is created when personal attributes interact with discriminatory and biased attitudes. Society constructs the roles of men and women therefore building the broadly expected traits and behaviour of each gender and hence influencing the measurement of the attributes of each person. Society sustains discriminatory behaviour if individuals attempt to push the boundaries of the roles predetermined for them.

The conceptual framework described above highlights the interaction of the individual, with organisational and societal behaviours. It provides a gender lens to view women's engagement with the work place, deciphering the underlying reasons for female in-work poverty rather than simply observing or calculating female poverty levels. The relationships between the interacting forces may alter over time and so relevant policy areas need to reflect this. Using this theoretical synthesis the gendered processes and procedures which affect women's interaction with the labour market can be explored, allowing a deconstruction of the differential poverty prevalence attributable to women.

Women and the labour market

While the number of male full-time employees in 2014 was at a similar level to that recorded prior to the 2008 recession, women's participation in the labour market has continued to rise resulting in increases in the number of both full-time and part-time female employees (Green *et al* 2016). Since the 1990s, the proportion of the female workforce that is part-time has stayed relatively constant at between 41 and 44%. Part-time work is overwhelmingly dominated by women, although by 2015 the

proportion of working men who were employed on a part-time basis had risen to 13% (Tinson *et al* 2016). Traditional male breadwinner families, with mothers mostly working part-time or not in paid employment, is the most common type of household with children in poverty in the UK (Lawton and Thompson 2013; Barnes and Lord 2013). This is caused by fathers' real earnings lagging behind the growth in (full-time) mothers' earnings for the fourteen year period to 2008 (Resolution Foundation 2013) necessitating dual-earner income to avoid household poverty.

90% of lone parents are women (TUC 2015b). Lone parents' employment, although it has increased, is still low compared to that of mothers in couples in the UK and of lone parents in other EU countries (Chzhen and Bradshaw 2012). As parenthood tends to interrupt study unmarried lone parents tend to be younger and less educated, which in itself reduces their employment opportunities and increases the chances of working and living in poverty. The UK has a high proportion in this category compared with other EU countries (Corlyon *et al.* 2013).

There is substantial evidence of continuing disadvantage for many women in employment, including discrimination (in, for example, rates of dismissal during pregnancy) and lower income for women amongst the growing group of self-employed workers, with an average annual income of under £10,000 (TUC 2014b). While they have the limitation of being based on the household, analyses have found women not just more likely to be in poverty but also more likely to stay there.

In-work poverty is not gender neutral and affects women disproportionately to men as evidence shows that the risks, causes and experiences of poverty are different according to gender. Yet policies in the UK have not explicitly been aimed at tackling gendered poverty, and policy evaluations seldom focus on or target the links between gender and poverty. The UK system of benefits and mainstream services for jobseekers appears largely gender neutral but a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is not appropriate as women and men have different experiences of the labour market (Mansour 2016; Pilcher 1999). Assessments of policy impact do not routinely examine the effects on individuals inside the household or people's trajectories across the life course.

Women may find it hard to engage in the way the system expects. This requires an identification of the three ways that women engage with the work place differently to men, namely;

- participation
- horizontal segregation
- vertical segregation.

Participation

The first difference is that most men are engaged in full time, continuous employment for most of their lives whereas most women are not. In 2016, 41% of women in the UK worked part-time compared to only 12% of men (Equal Pay Portal 2016). 80% of all part time jobs in Wales are held by women. 75% of these jobs are in administration, personal service, sales and elementary occupations such as cleaning (Parken *et al* 2014), the average earnings for which are under £8,000 per year (Parken *et al* 2014). The primary reason why women work part-time is because of their caring responsibilities, especially the balancing of childcare requirements.

Motherhood remains an obstacle to female participation in the work place. There is substantial evidence that mothers suffer a wage penalty over and above the penalty for being a woman, known as the motherhood penalty (Grimshaw and Rubery 2015). Studies show that women experience a fall in pay with childbirth, and that this penalty rises in line with the number of children. In the UK,

the wage penalty for motherhood is 21% according to Davies and Pierre (2005), that is, women without children can expect to earn 21% more than women who have children. This is one of the highest figures in developed countries and can be seen to be in stark contrast to the much lower rates experienced in other European countries. In addition, younger mothers experience a more severe motherhood penalty than mothers who delay the birth of their first child until a later age. OECD (2012) data shows that in the UK, the gender pay gap increases with age. The significance of this is that mothers may not be able to make up for lost ground in the pay hierarchy and moreover may become trapped in careers with limited pay promotion opportunities (Grimshaw and Rubery 2015).

Whilst it may be true that women who are also mothers have a particularly hard time conforming to supposedly traditional work patterns which characterize desirable jobs (Acker 1989), the motherhood wage penalty also appears to impose a persistent wage gender inequality over the duration of the mother's working life (Grimshaw and Rubery 2015). Fathers' earnings, by contrast, are unaffected by childbirth. In fact, studies such as Windsor and Auyeung (2006) indicate that fathers may enjoy a wage premium compared to men without children. A common explanation for mothers' disadvantaged workplace position is that mothers opt out for the good of their families. However, although women may choose to spend time with their family they do not choose the depressed wages, or the lack of benefits and advancement, that accompany that choice (Ciancanelli 1998). Devotion to family is used to justify economic marginalisation of women whereas devotion to family is a reason to promote an equally qualified man (TUC 2016a).

Part-time work correlates with dependent children for women but not for men. By 2015, close on 70% of men (in couples) with dependent children compared to 30% of women (in couples) with dependent children were working full-time (Tinson *et al* 2016). Women are more likely to provide informal care and form the majority of the paid care workforce as they tend to adjust their work commitment to allow them to prioritise family needs resulting in their saturation of the low-paid, part-time work market (Bennett and Daly 2014; ONS 2013a). But as Bennett and Daly (2014) emphasise, instead of women's resulting poverty being seen as caused by unequal responsibility for unpaid care and labour market disadvantages, it is instead be framed as a problem of women's economic inactivity.

In the UK although there have been some changes in gender role attitudes, gendered assumptions as to the sexual division of unpaid labour in the domestic sphere continue. Three-quarters of mothers believe that they have the main responsibility for childcare in their home and on average, women spend 3.3 times as much as men do on unpaid work (Green, D. 2016). In addition, since the 1990s a woman's caring role has been extended to include a disproportionate obligation for support for the elderly and sick due to an increasingly ageing population, combined with austerity measures which have reduced community spending. Carers UK (2013a cited in Bennett and Daly 2014) reports that 2.3 million people have given up work to care (costing them an estimated £1.3 billion per year (Carers UK 2013b cited in Bennett and Daly 2014), and almost three million have reduced their hours. Unpaid care responsibilities cost women more than 'just' time – they are also reflected in lower income and reduced access to resources over the life course (Green, D. 2015).

Part-time work causes marginalisation in organisations as well as segmentation of part-time workers to certain occupations which are underpaid and undervalued, such as caring and domestic services (Smithson *et al* 2004). Gendered roles are linked to the construction of women as primary care-givers. Female participation is stymied not just when involved in caring for their own children. There is growing evidence that inter-generational childcare adversely affects the income of some women

who have grandchildren. Over the past decade, an increase in informal childcare has been mainly accounted for by grandparents (Stock *et al* 2014), with grandmothers doing more of the intensive work. Research emphasises that inter-household, inter-generational support is of increased importance to those on low incomes and this support is inherently gendered (Stock *et al* 2014). In low-income communities in particular, grandmothers are more likely to live close at hand to their children, and to be younger. Thus labour resources are more likely to be supplied by women who are still expected to be earning a living (Ben-Galim and Silim 2013). As Bennett and Daly (2014) point out, families being supported in this way are more likely to have earners at the bottom end of the labour market, with part-time or temporary jobs with unsocial hours. Therefore informal childcare is essential to suit the untraditional work patterns increasingly associated with the flexible labour market. In fact Griggs (2010) reveals how the childcare provided by grandparents may increase their own risk of poverty, especially for working age, working class grandmothers on low incomes.

Horizontal segregation

The second difference between male and female employment engagement is caused by horizontal segregation of paid work by gender. As Chwarae Teg's (2015) *Women and the Economy: briefing paper* points out, women continue to be concentrated into a small number of occupations and industries. Using data derived from the UKCES' 2009 Quantitative Evaluation of the Women & Work Sector Pathways Initiative, Chwarae Teg (2015) find that women in the UK are typically crowded into a narrow range of lower-paying occupations, mainly those available part-time, that do not make the best use of their skills. More specifically, two thirds of women work in just 12 occupational areas – the '5 Cs': catering, cleaning, caring, clerical and cashiering, - compared to two-thirds of men who work in 26 occupational areas. Gender segregation is more persistent in Wales than in the rest of the UK (Felstead *et al* 2013) with workers in Wales more likely to report that their jobs are exclusively done by men than respondents based elsewhere in Britain.

Crompton and Sanderson (1990) emphasise that women's concentration in caring and nurturing occupations reinforces the cultural norms relating to 'women's work' and 'men's work'. This persistent gender stereotyping plays an important role in sustaining this segregation, as the theoretical synthesis point out. The significance of horizontal segregation being that there are pronounced sectoral differences in working conditions and low-pay, defined as workers with below two-thirds of gross median hourly pay. Those individuals who stay on the national Minimum Wage or just above it for a long time are largely women (D'Arcy and Hurrell 2013). This situation is attributed to an undervaluation of women's work, so that skill and experience in female-dominated occupations and workplaces tend to be rewarded unfairly (Grimshaw and Rubery 2015).

The majority of the sectors with higher than average proportions of workers in low-pay and temporary contracts are from the service sector. Women are significantly more likely to find themselves employed on casual contracts which pose particular problems for them in terms of the weaker maternity rights and the variable hours. Temporary contracts usually fail to provide a fixed working pattern which many women need in order to plan their childcare requirements. Mothers returning to work often underutilise their previous training and skills, with significant evidence of over-qualification of mothers returning to jobs in caring, sales and customer services (Tomlinson *et al* 2009). Female-dominated job areas are often less likely to offer an extensive career ladder (Rubery and Grimshaw 2014). Working in the caring and nurturing sectors means that hundreds of thousands of women are employed on contracts that offer little commitment to a decent wage, job security or job progression. However, this is a function of the sector rather than of the women themselves (Green *et al* 2016).

Using data from the pooled Labour Force Survey (2010-2015), Green *et al* (2016) finds that the accommodation and food services sector is prone to low-pay, with almost 60% of the workforce receiving a low rate of pay. Similarly residential care and wholesale and retail also have high rates of low-pay, with around 40% of workers in this category receiving it. By contrast, in public administration and defence and in the finance sector the share of workers on low-pay hovers around 5% or lower. A gendered occupational segregation is of particular concern in a Welsh context as some of the sectors that are forecast to create the largest numbers of new jobs in Wales are sectors where there are very high levels of low-pay – such as food and accommodation, retail and social care (UK CES 2016).

The top three sectors forecast to grow - wholesale and retail, accommodation and food services and health and social work (including residential care) represent 37,000 (49%) of the projected employment growth by 2024. Other growing sectors which are associated with comparatively higher pay, including construction and financial and business services, have demonstrated a high commitment to the recruitment and progression of people within the homogenous group (Green *et al* 2016). Parts of the economy associated with higher earnings, such as engineering are forecast to shrink in terms of numbers of jobs. Some areas, such as public administration, are expected to remain broadly static which will adversely impact women who have benefited from expansion of public sector employment.

The challenge for helping workers transition out of poverty is not only to facilitate transitions into work, but also to improve job quality and facilitate progression pathways. There are marked differences between sectors in the probability of a worker who is low-paid remaining low-paid a year later. 60% of workers in financial services and insurance on low-pay are not a year later; this is a markedly larger proportion than in any of the other sectors. At the opposite end of the spectrum, workers in accommodation and food services experience persistent low-pay and in order to escape in-work poverty, a higher than average percentage of workers left the sector (Green *et al* 2016).

Vertical segregation

The third difference between male and female employment is the presence of vertical segregation where more women remain at the bottom of an occupation's hierarchy whilst more men rise to the top. Women remain under-represented in leadership positions across all sectors of the labour market. They account for just 22.8% of FTSE 100 Board members in the UK, 4% of Chief Executives of the top 100 businesses in Wales and 31% of board members of major Welsh Government sponsored bodies (EHRC 2016b). The lack of role models and mentors not only affects younger women beginning their work-life, but also has financial-loss implications for those organisations which lack diversity. Organisations with a more diverse senior management team deliver better financial results; for every 10% increase in diversity, earnings before taxation and interest rise by 3.5% (McKinsey & Company 2015).

Once again, there are a variety of interrelated factors which contribute to vertical segregation, as highlighted by the theoretical synthesis (diagram 1). The majority of research on low paid women tends to focus on the factors collectively grouped under the Attribute umbrella. Chwarae Teg's (2014) report reveals that almost three quarters of women recognise that a multitude of gender barriers linked to women's primacy for caring prevent them from reaching the highest tier of management. Horizontal segregation also can be an inhibiting factor for women seeking a promotion, particularly within male dominated sectors. Another aspect is that gender stereotyping of roles dissuades progression by inhibiting women from gaining the necessary experience and therefore confidence to apply for more senior roles (Wales Women's Summit 2016). A lack of

personal confidence in the workplace tends to be a gendered characteristic (Wales Women's Summit 2016; Chwarae Teg 2014). Men are more inclined than women to apply for jobs if they feel that they only partially meet the job description (ILM 2013). A lack of confidence is a complex, subtle, and delicate issue that is more difficult to define and address but as Chwarae Teg (2014) notes, it is important to uncover the extent to which it prevents women from seeking promotion at work as it can have policy and training implications.

Gender barriers which inhibit female progression in the work place due to caring reasons are well established. Women now outperform men at every stage of education, and, once employed, participate more in training (Schuller 2011). But women are more likely to have their education interrupted by caring, and to find that when they can take it up again educational provision may be geared to young, single students with no dependants.

The disproportionate responsibility for caring for children or relatives, faced by women at work is a well-known hurdle and the resulting requirement for a non-traditional work pattern can compromise promotional prospects. 44% of working women in Wales hold part-time positions, compared to only 12% of men. As Chwarae Teg's (2013) *A Woman's Place* report uncovers, this may lead many women to feel that senior roles are not compatible with part-time working. It is also argued that the more senior the role, the less likely it is that flexible working practices will be available and the combining of non-work caring activities with increased responsibility at work becomes more difficult.

The evidence also shows that the progress of a woman's career is condensed into a shorter period of time than that of their male counterparts; linked to median age at childbirth and an impression that this can be so disruptive to career development that women need to achieve a senior position in advance of maternity. Consequently, the Chwarae Teg (2013) report suggests that the perceived need to adhere to this timetable can discourage women from pursuing career progression because they feel that the required trajectory is unrealistic. Mansour (2016) substantiates this point, using qualitative research to confirm that women assess a promotion and the associated benefits with the impact it will have on the stability of their working hours and level of commitment.

Working full-time does not protect women from gendered assumptions which result in them receiving lower rewards for their skills and capacities than do full-time male workers, resulting in the gender pay gap (Chzhen and Mumford 2011). Of concern is Rubery and Grimshaw's (2014) finding that the search for equal pay is never ending. The pattern they detect is that once a particular cause of unequal pay is identified and resolved, a change in context occurs revealing a new source of inequity that makes the goal of equal pay a constantly moving target. Rubery and Grimshaw (2014) use the example of the investment in education to illustrate their point; Becker (1985) attributes pay inequality to differences in educational investment but now that women's educational achievements surpass men's, the focus has changed to differences in underlying motivation or commitment between men and women. This idea is supported by Grimshaw and Rubery (2015) who contend that despite a rough equality in educational achievement between men and women the idea prevails that women's occupational choices are guided by expectations of motherhood. The concentration of women in female dominated occupations is often taken as a sign that women are happy with the lower pay as they derive other benefits from the job, such as allowing them to give their caring responsibilities primacy. However, this narrow view ignores other labour market obstacles that women encounter, such as compliance with a traditional work pattern or a higher risk of facing discrimination in hiring and promotion practices in a highly masculinised environment (Grimshaw and Rubery 2007).

Summary

Women's contribution to the UK economy is growing, but the disparity between men's and women's participation in the labour market remains. As the authors of *Women, Work and Wages in the UK* argue there is a strong case for more gender focused labour market policy to respond to recent negative developments in the workplace which disproportionately affect women (Tinson *et al* 2016). Women's voices are also often absent in decision-making roles in government and public bodies, resulting in gender-blind policies, leading to ineffective solutions that fail to address issues of gender in the workplace (Oxfam Cymru 2014).

To maximise women's contribution to the economy, action should be taken to address the barriers which are preventing women from making full use of their skills. However, work also needs to be placed in the context of women's lives which ensures that both poverty and worklessness are addressed simultaneously (Mansour 2016). The next section reviews both UK and global literature to uncover best practice in securing decent work for women which can be used to inform policy in Wales.

Section 4: Best practice

The narrative so far has shown that whilst employment in Wales, as in other countries, may be an essential factor in poverty reduction for women it is not sufficient in itself. Employment (and employment support) needs to be put in the wider context of an individual's life. It requires that interventions are designed, and measured, not just on the delivery of job outcomes but also whether they support a transition out of poverty. Those who are disadvantaged by the operation of the labour market, including women, need specialist support (Mansour 2016). Research on gender specific interventions and support is slowly emerging from the UK, Europe and world-wide as recognition that a gender neutral employment policy may have unintended negative consequences for women. A consideration of best practice is essential.

Employer commitment to fair employment practices

Relative to EU countries, the UK provides a low floor of statutory employment rights with limited employer-union bargaining in the private sector. There is a strong reliance on employers to do the 'right thing' such as adopting the voluntary Living Wage, provide job security and topping up statutory rights to maternity pay (Tinson and MacInnes 2016). In such an environment, employers are encouraged to embrace decent work conditions voluntarily rather than through legal obligation.

The first group of best practices incentivise the employer to improve the pay and working conditions of its workforce and are associated with the Nudge Theory (Thaler and Sunstein 2009). As Kusters and Heijden (2015) outline, the Nudge theory claims to offer a cheap solution to complicated governance issues which is always an attractive stance in a climate of fiscal restraint. Both the UK and US governments have used elements of the Nudge theory to influence behaviour to achieve desired collective ends without imposing mandatory obligations (Kusters and Heijden 2015).

Utilising the underlying principles of Nudge theory, Oxfam Scotland emphasises that it is essential to harness the power of business organisations to assist in the drive for decent work. This is achieved through securing businesses' commitment to fair employment practices through membership of decent work bodies. The organisations are rewarded for their behaviour by public recognition of their efforts.

Decent Work Bodies

There is widespread recognition that limited employment regulation, declining union membership and decreasing opportunities for ‘good work’ (Taylor Review 2017) negatively affects the labour market. It has been suggested (Hughes *et al* 2017) that voluntary employment charters can engage businesses and press for change in the labour market offering more people the chance to take part in rewarding, well-paid work, bringing both economic and social benefits. However, care must be taken that Decent Work initiatives are not seen as the main lever for raising employment standards, as there are limits to what they can achieve within the wider supply chain for example.

As Hughes *et al* (2017) point out the Living Wage Foundation accreditation scheme and the Scottish Living Wage Accreditation initiatives are notable exceptions as employers seeking accreditation have to ensure that the Living Wage is paid across their supply chain as well as to direct employees. The Good Jobs Toolkit produced by the Foundation draws on lessons from leading Living Wage employers about providing value for both customers and investors, while also creating jobs that are better paid, more stable and decent for employees (Lanning and Murphy 2016). Employers who pay the voluntary Living Wage are encouraged to become accredited to gain recognition for their actions. On becoming accredited, employers become licenced to use the Living Wage Employer mark which they can use to promote their business. The Living Wage Accreditation Initiatives have witnessed significant success in encouraging employers to agree to pay the voluntary Living Wage and Stuart *et al* (2016) view these institutions as another way of securing a decent wage for workers.

A second initiative which can be used to support decent work is the Fair Work Convention, established by the Scottish Government. The Fair Work Conventions led to a Framework designed to improve and enforce fair employment practices in the country. Stuart *et al* (2016) recommends that the Scottish Government should give the Fair Work Convention an explicit role in investigating and publicising poor employment practices which would result in the driving up of employment standards.

In a similar vein, the Scottish Business Pledge is a values-led partnership between the Scottish Government and businesses. The aims are to boost ‘productivity, competitiveness, sustainable employment, and workforce engagement and development’ (Scottish Business Pledge). So far 349 businesses have signed up to the pledge which involves them committing to support sustainable business growth and adopt a voluntary code of practice, some of which have direct benefits for its employees. The pledge is formed of 9 components (living wage, zero hours’ contracts, workforce engagement, balanced workforce, investment in youth, innovation, internationalisation, community and prompt payment). Once an employer has committed to the Pledge, it becomes eligible to display the relevant logo on any promotional material it wishes. The Oxfam Scotland report recommends that the Scottish government should enhance the Business Pledge, by placing a more robust and transparent accreditation process at its centre (Stuart *et al* 2016).

Oxfam Scotland also urges that companies should be encouraged to publicise their attempts to provide decent work. This could be enacted by employers providing an annual report on the number and percentage of temporary and irregular contracts in their business. Questions could then be raised as to why temporary and irregular contracts are being used and how the organisations are attempting to minimise them.

Procurement

Numerous sources (Stuart *et al* 2016; Chwarae Teg 2014; Welsh Women’s Summit 2016) recognise that national and devolved governments should use public procurement to incentivise and reward payment of the voluntary Living Wage, as well as other good employment practices, publicising

when this occurs. Procurement, as an antidote to poor work conditions, requires that government agencies and public bodies do not support companies involved in sub-standard employment practices and nudges private sector employers to encourage decent, flexible and well paid work. This is a theme taken up by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) which advocates that the billions of pounds spent each year by public authorities on buying goods, works or services should be used as a lever to advance equality and achieve wider social benefits, such as creating training or employment opportunities (EHRC 2013).

The EHRC published a report *The Invisible Workforce* on the employment practices in the cleaning sector in England, Scotland and Wales (EHRC 2014). It reveals outsourcing and contracting have a direct impact on employment practices and the working conditions of cleaning operatives. Cleaning firms are placed under enormous pressure to deliver a high quality service at the lowest cost possible in order to win a contract. This has implications for the employment conditions of the largely female and migrant workers in the cleaning sector.

The EHRC convened an industry-led taskforce to consider how working conditions could be improved through procurement principles. The taskforce identified that procurement processes directly impact on the employment practices and working conditions of the supplier's workers. Consequently, it developed the Responsible Procurement Principles (Making Fair Financial Decisions EHRC 2015) to be incorporated into a businesses' procurement and contract management practice to help ensure that suppliers comply with their legal obligations as employers and meet good practice standards. A summary of the principles is shown below:

1. A longer contract term, with the option of extension if justified by performance, is likely to encourage a supplier to invest in its workforce development and give greater job stability for its employees.
2. Value technical and professional competence and the quality of service in addition to cost. Selection criteria should also consider broader issues such as the fair treatment of contracted workers and compliance with any health and safety requirements.
3. The voluntary Living Wage should be incorporated into tender proposals, if feasible.
4. Audit of suppliers to ensure that the suppliers' workforce receives the correct remuneration, information and are accorded their legal employment rights. Where contractors offer only contracts without guaranteed hours, the supplier should be encouraged to adopt contracts which provide workers with more regular and certain full or part-time hours
5. As a part of the tender process, the suppliers' training and development plans for their workforce should be reviewed.
6. The conditions of the awarded contract should ensure that the suppliers avoid discrimination in the treatment of their workforce.
7. Suppliers should be made aware that a fair and legal sub-contracting policy is essential. Suppliers' obligations as an employer should not be avoided by the insistence that workers register as self-employed.
8. As a condition of the contract, suppliers should have equality, bullying and harassment, grievance and other appropriate workplace policies in place and comply with them.
9. The supplier should have appropriate grievance mechanisms in place.

10. An organisation should treat the suppliers' workers with dignity and respect when on its premises.

(EHRC 2015: Responsible Procurement Principles pp.3-5)

The principles go a long way in addressing the bad practices that characterise the outsourced provision of services. However, it is important to note that the principles are generated on a gender-neutral basis and has no considerations of the different implications that work has for women. Also, the principles have not required gender-disaggregated data to be provided by their suppliers, which is a fundamental step towards identifying the varying effect of different work practices on women.

Public spending

Stuart *et al* (2016) recommend that public money should be used to incentivise employers to provide decent work for their workforce. Scottish City deals and Scottish Enterprise are held up as two prime examples of this practice. The significant sums of money which flow through Scottish regions from City deals to stimulate economic growth could be used to promote decent work and connect economic development with wider efforts to reduce poverty. The City deals target infrastructure investment, job creation and other measures (City Deal 2014). Scottish Enterprise, as Scotland's main economic development agency, is urged to act as a benchmark in good employment practices by not providing public money for companies engaged in sub-standard employment procedures.

New business models

The literature indicates that there are alternatives to the traditional profit-maximising/cost-reducing business model that dominates the UK economy and thus these could provide decent work for women in Wales. The alternatives include cooperatives and a variant of the traditional model that builds considerations of decent work into the organisation rather than simply focusing on minimising costs. These are discussed below.

Worker cooperatives represent a very small proportion of all firms in most countries. However, they are more numerous in countries such as Italy (at least 25,000 employing some 210,000 people), about 17,000 in Spain (employing some 210,000 people) and 2,600 in France (employing 51,000 people). In comparison the UK has relatively few worker cooperative (about 500-600: Pérotin 2015). In the UK the John Lewis Partnership (JLP) is one of the most well-known public limited companies (a public limited company indicates a company with shares. It is not necessarily a public company with shares tradable on the stock market) that embraces many of the values and principles of the International Cooperatives Alliance (Paranque and Wilmott 2014). In common with many other cooperatives, the JLP does not meet the most demanding of criteria used to identify cooperatives. However, the JLP gifts employees (Partners) shares in the company, its financial surplus is distributed to its Partners through a common percentage increase in salary and JLP managers are accountable to the Partners. The JLP structures therefore elevate the interests of labour and human values above those of capital (Paranque and Wilmott 2014)

Pérotin's (2014) research indicates that worker cooperatives are larger than other firms and can be capital intensive, although they may be created more often than other firms in less capital intensive industries. Cooperatives are present in most industries, and international evidence suggests that they survive at least as well as other firms, even in capital-intensive industries. Labour-managed firms are probably more productive and may preserve jobs better in recessions than conventional firms, creating more sustainable jobs. On this basis, Pérotin (2015) argues that employee

cooperatives could therefore improve local communities' employment, and therefore health and social expenditure, and tax revenue (Pérotin 2015).

Corcoran and Wilson's (2010) work reveals that worker cooperatives tend to specialise in the provision of social services. Primarily due to dissatisfaction with government-delivered health care services and the deterioration of such services as they are increasingly provided by the private sector, cooperatives have emerged to provide more cost effective, innovative and flexible services. One of the most notable cooperatives, Mondragon, has outperformed most private business firms in Spain. However, in countries which have witnessed success in the development of cooperatives, public policy is seen as essential in their development and maintenance.

Corcoran and Wilson (2010) researched cooperatives in Italy, France and Spain and identified a number of factors important to the success of a cooperative; capital needs to be accessible to worker cooperatives both at point of start-up and at times of crises; supportive technical assistance to cooperatives is required in the start-up phase; a mandatory indivisible reserve in the financial statements and the requirement to share the rest of the profits with the workers and; finally structures which support, direct and educate worker cooperatives.

Alternative forms of business model are called for by Sissons *et al* (2016) who note that low-wage work is often associated with fewer opportunities for formal training. For some low-pay employers, better practices around career progression may not be economically convincing especially when they do not have difficulty in recruiting for low-paid posts (Philpott 2014 cited in Sissons *et al* 2016). Green *et al* (2016) also view the adoption of a new business model as essential if organisations are to be encouraged to modify their behaviour and to consider alternative factors other than simply cost when employing workers. Developed from a review of a case study of social care employers, a number of fundamental modifications are made to the existing cost-driven business model including; adopting the voluntary Living Wage; provision of non-pay benefits such as sick pay, holiday pay, staff discounts relating to the employer's products and services; moving workers from zero hours contracts to minimum hours contracts as well as making flexibility mutual; and; paying for all time worked, including travel time for domiciliary care workers. The results are found in an increased employee well-being plus associated business benefits such as reduced stress-related employee absences.

Similarly, Ton's (2014 cited in Green *et al* 2016) approach is that investment in workers' skills is key to creating jobs that provide decent work in cost sensitive market segments. This requires workers to receive cross-training to enable greater functional flexibility and opportunities for decision-making in their everyday roles. Consequently a greater investment in training supports better quality service provision.

Many of the factors identified in the new business model have economic implications for the employer. Green *et al* (2016) warn of variations across sectors in the relative ease with which policies relating to higher minimum wages and other decent employment costs can be applied. This can partially be addressed by the earlier procurement recommendations. However, as the Oxfam Scotland report suggests, government bodies, employers and consumers and society generally should value work, such as social care, and pay more for it to be done if necessary.

Sectoral employment

Some sectors are particularly prone to be socially under-valued with a corresponding lower hourly pay rate attached to the work, these tend to be occupations dominated by female workers. Elson and Pearson (1981) highlight how capitalist economies, if unrestricted, undervalue female skills

resulting in low-pay and poor conditions. Social care is a clear example of a sector in which low-pay and low productivity are endemic. It is also an occupation dominated by female workers. Felstead *et al* (2013) found that those in lower occupational groups and those working part-time (especially women) face a 'triple whammy'. They are less likely to receive training than their counterparts, when they do it tends to be shorter and its quality is often poorer. As a result, the appetite for future training and the expectation that it will be forthcoming are lower for these groups. Similarly, informal learning is also skewed towards those in higher level occupational groups and against women working part-time (Felstead *et al* 2013). Other sectors pay above average and are linked to longer hours of work and are male-dominated, such as the STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) sectors. In the following, innovative ways of alleviating poor working conditions are examined and consideration is given to how those sectors with above-average-pay and hours can assist other sectors.

The 5 C's

Women tend to be horizontally clustered in occupations that reflect their gendered characteristics, collectively known as the 5 C's; catering, cleaning, caring, clerical and cashiering. The Resolution Foundation's report *Care to Pay?* (Gardiner 2015) assesses the implications of the national Living Wage and the apprenticeship levy on the care sector, which is typically plagued by low-pay, poor working conditions and low levels of training. Cost reducing practices in the past have unfavourably affected both care recipients and workers. Yet, Gardiner (2015) anticipates further cost cutting in the sector, driven by additional expenditure associated with the national Living Wage and apprenticeship levy.

Gardiner (2015) notes that the option of cost recovery through raising productivity is not straightforward in the care sector. Care time for visits has already been reduced leading to claims of reductions in social care quality. However, the report recommends that, rather than shorter appointments, different ways of working and using technology in order to more effectively meet care recipient needs should be considered. By investing in upskilling the largely female workforce, the care sector could embrace technology to improve the return for the organisation and improve the in-work conditions for the employees.

One route suggested is a more ambitious look at the role of technology in providing or supporting care services, such as the extended use of smart monitoring systems. A more radical approach is the adoption of the Japanese approach in which billions of pounds of government investment and subsidy have led to the development of robotic caregivers.

Another recommendation of the *Care to Pay?* report is the utilisation of smarter commissioning practices to improve productivity. This may entail the movement towards an outcomes-based approach and away from time-and-task commissioning. This will allow greater flexibility in terms of when and how care is provided and would incentivise rehabilitation and user independence, rather than the current focus on the contact hours of the worker.

A final recommendation of the report is a better integration of health and social care services. It finds that expensive inefficiencies could be eradicated if services performing overlapping functions are aligned and outcomes are pursued in common.

STEM

The Bevan Foundation briefings (2016) recommends that to reduce poverty and increase prosperity, people who are disadvantaged should be recruited into growth sectors such as the sectors

incorporating STEM skills, which tend to be characterised by above average pay and above average hours. In these industries, only the least well paid 10% of employees earn less than the voluntary Living Wage in Wales. Research in other countries (Beede *et al* 2011) indicates that the gender pay gap is less in STEM occupations than in non-STEM occupations

Such a view is also supported by the OECD's (2012) report on *Closing the Gender Gap*. They view the STEM workforce as key to any modern nation's innovative capacity and ability to compete globally. Yet women are greatly under-represented in STEM jobs and STEM degree holders, despite women constituting approximately half of the workforce and more than half of university-educated graduates (Rapid Evidence 2015). In the UK more than four times the number of women enter health related degrees as undertake a computer science degree; and the situation is worsening (OECD 2012).

The OECD's (2011c) *Education at a Glance* attributes the lack of women in STEM to academic subject choices. Girls and boys might choose different fields of education because their personal preferences and expectations about labour-market outcomes are not the same (OECD 2011c) Women are more likely to consider future careers which allow them to fulfil caring responsibilities eventually leading to an intermittent withdrawal from the labour market. Consequently, they shun fields like the sciences that require high levels of on-the-job training, long hours of work and where time taken out of work can be costly in terms of career progression (OECD 2011b) and favour careers that allow more flexible working arrangements. Such choices partly explain the trend towards the 'feminisation' of the health and education sectors (OECD 2012).

The Fawcett Society (Fawcett 2012) warns that unless specific measures are taken to address the under-representation of women in the male dominated STEM sectors, actions to promote jobs and growth through investment in the UK's infrastructure will do little to help women in the labour market. A huge opportunity exists to expand female STEM employment in Wales as a result of planned investment in infrastructure and nuclear plant capabilities. This can be achieved by increased training and a focus on skills in new government programmes that support people into work (Bevan Foundation briefings 2016), specifically gearing the provision to STEM-related work experience.

Closing the Gender Gap's report recommends the use of apprenticeships to encourage women who have completed their STEM studies to work in scientific fields (OECD 2012). However, Mansour (2016) warns of the gendered nature of apprenticeships. Women are more likely to require flexible working hours yet apprenticeships do not offer the flexibility they require. In addition, qualifications that generate the highest returns are in male-dominated fields. Yet almost two-thirds of female apprenticeships are taken in mostly low-paid sectors, such as health and social care. There is also evidence of racial discrimination in the acceptance rate onto apprenticeship training programmes (Mansour 2016).

Women and the Economy urges that work with educators and careers support providers is required to ensure that girls are encouraged to consider non-traditional career and study options. This can help to raise aspirations and open pathways to better paid and more secure employment, reducing poverty in the long term (Chwarae Teg 2015). In tandem there needs to be an increased number of female role models and an effort to increase family friendly flexibility which would attract more women into STEM fields (Rapid Evidence 2015) or ensure that those unable to commit to the Ideal worker (Acker 1990) benchmark are not penalised. But as the Fawcett Society (2012) anticipates this may require increased funding initiatives to combat entrenched gender occupational segregation in the STEM sectors.

Entrepreneurs

Wales particularly is dominated by small businesses (estimated at over 200,000) and there have been an increasing number of people who have set up their own businesses in Wales. Self-employed jobs increased by 12,000 to 210,000 (6.3% to 14.7%) in contrast to the UK where self-employed jobs fell to 13.2% of workforce jobs (Skills SE Wales 2016). Employee numbers working in Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SME) vary from the self-employed (zero), micro (less than 12), small (less than 49) to the medium-sized establishments which employ less than 250 people. In total a third of Welsh employees (350,000 people) are in micro companies, with 95% of companies having an average of less than 2 employees per company. These micro companies produce 14% of Wales' annual turnover (Skills SE Wales 2016).

Women in the UK are half as likely as men to set up their own business and face a range of gender specific barriers such as lack of finance, lack of childcare and lack of confidence, according to Chwarae Teg's (2015) briefing paper. Tinson *et al* (2016: 30) drew attention to those 'discouraged workers' who are not looking for work because they face real challenges in finding decent quality work. Many women can be described as discouraged workers, who turn to self-employment which has produced mixed financial results. Some have achieved a good income and decent work through developing their entrepreneurial skills but, for others, it has resulted in low and insecure income. Mansour (2016: 9), using the Family Resources Survey, found that in 2013/14 income from self-employment was over 40% lower for women than men. Yet men are in the majority of those who own and invest in business and they therefore benefit disproportionately from the tax breaks and other incentives set up by the government to support investment in small and medium size businesses (Fawcett Society 2012).

The OECD (2012) notes a remarkable similarity between the countries surveyed regarding female entrepreneurs. They observe that women are less likely than men to borrow money to finance their business for a number of reasons. Women tend to be apprehensive about applying for finance because they are afraid of refusal or lack confidence in the growth potential of their business. The OECD attribute this reluctance to a history of women being charged higher interest rates and being asked for more guarantees to secure the loan due to their shorter credit histories and less collateral. Inequitable treatment of loan requests from male and female entrepreneurs by conventional financial institutions and banks is suggested, but not substantiated, due to a lack of solid, reliable gender-specific data.

Ideas and recommendations, materialising from the literature, which improve female performance in setting up their own business focus on supporting women to emerge from in-work poverty through the provision of financial guidance, mentoring and support.

SME policies are likely to have a large impact on female entrepreneurs, as the trend is for women to operate small businesses. Small and medium-sized companies require flexible finance but accessing finance lending for SMEs is difficult and illustrates the need for support for businesses of this size (Skills SE Wales 2016). Finance policies that foster female entrepreneurs include the provision of favourable lending ceilings and public credit guarantees. From a broader perspective, the OECD (2012) recommends a comprehensive support programmes that targets female-owned enterprises in high-tech sectors. Also, policies should focus on ensuring that small, female operated businesses are eligible and encouraged to participate in public procurement tendering processes (OECD 2012).

Women face a range of gender specific barriers such as a lack of childcare and lack of confidence, according to Chwarae Teg's (2015) briefing paper. The childcare barrier is addressed in 'Who Cares?'

in this section. The barrier created by the lack of confidence can be addressed by mentoring and support. Examples of these working in practice are drawn from the Fawcett Society's (2012) response to the Business, Innovation and Skills Committee Inquiry into Women in the Workplace. They applauded the UK Government's use of 5,000 volunteer mentors to support new and existing female entrepreneurs. They also praised the establishment of a Women's Business Council to provide advice to government on what it can do to maximise women's contribution to future economic growth (Fawcett Society 2012).

The OECD (2012) notes a paucity in the availability of reliable data for monitoring the trends in female entrepreneurship. This is disappointing, as if policies are to be adapted to encourage more women entrepreneurs, analysis of the factors encouraging or discouraging women into genuine self-employment needs to be performed. This point is echoed by Chwarae Teg (2015) who stress that there is an urgent requirement for gender disaggregated data to better track any imbalances in service delivery provided to self-employed workers. Enhanced statistical data will help remedy the gender start-up gap, and will enhance the provision of tailored business support and mentoring schemes.

Progression

Whilst it is undesirable for workers to earn a wage that results in in-work poverty, it is more palatable if the duration spent at the low rate is kept to a minimum through organisational promotion. However, a sizeable proportion of low-paid workers experience limited pay progression, even over extended periods of time. There is a gendered aspect to the lack of promotion as women are more likely to be impacted by under-employment and take on roles below their potential than men, particularly during an economic recession (Chwarae Teg 2014).

Women face a number of gendered barriers when attempting to progress out of lower wage employment. According to Chwarae Teg (2014) the most influential factors that prevent women from gaining a promotion can be either classified as; gendered stereotypes (persistent gender stereotypes and negative perceptions of flexible working) or; employer barriers (limited or inequitable allocation of training budgets and employer disinterest in career development and ineffective line management).

Example of best practice obtained from a review of the literature are grouped according to the gender barriers faced by women:

Gendered Stereotypes

Chwarae Teg (2014) find perceptions endure that leaders possess a certain set of innate skills that men are more likely to enjoy than women, and leads to women not experiencing similar rates of progression as men. As the theoretical synthesis in section 3 points out, stereotypes of leaders being male and women cast as family oriented hinder women from applying for leadership roles. Subtle differences in the treatment of men and women persist, such as organisational expectations that allow or encourage men to do one task and women to do others, depending upon their socially constructed roles. For example, negative associations with flexible working due to primacy in childcare are attached to women. This can result in a demarcation of skills and women may fail to acquire the necessary experience required for promotion or they may be overlooked for a job because their constructed attributes do not align with the requirements for promotion (Dye and Mills 2012).

Recent studies have suggested the best practice in this area is the use of targeted campaigns to encourage more women to apply for promotions. Also, developmental support through, for

example, mentoring schemes, could help to encourage more women to participate at a senior level (Chwarae Teg 2014). A more structured career plan that reflects the reality of family life could also help improve women's confidence. Similarly, Mansour (2016) finds that despite evidence showing that skill-training programmes are more effective for women than men, women can view an ensuing promotion that accompanies increased skills levels with apprehension. Both Mansour (2016) and a *Woman's Place* report find that caring responsibilities motivate women to assess a promotion in terms of a cost-benefit analysis; benefit being in monetary terms whereas the cost is measured in terms of impact upon ability to accommodate external commitments. However, if more senior positions were accompanied by a more flexible work pattern this would help address female concerns.

The *Women in Banking* report suggests that gender division and male homogeneity (the idea that men prefer to recruit and promote men) implies that as long as there are more senior men than women, women are unlikely to be promoted (Women in Banking 2012). In a similar vein, Grimshaw and Rubery (2015) identify several studies which support the adoption of affirmative action policies as a possible temporary measure to counter any employer discrimination, specifically with regard to hiring and promotion decisions. Quotas of women in senior positions would address this gender barrier.

Valian (2005) shows that due to women's socially constructed behaviour they have a lack of entitlement especially in a work context, an observation supported by the respondents in the *Women's Place* report. Similarly, a 2013 YouGov survey finds that only 39% of women would ask for a pay rise or promotion at work, if they felt they deserved it, compared to 52% of men (Chwarae Teg 2014). Numerous sources (Welsh Women's Summit 2016; Agile Nation's Ascent Programme internal report: *Soft outcomes' findings; The Pressures, Promotions, Payrises and Parity* report) identify confidence as being a major issue in preventing women from applying for a promotion or negotiating higher pay. According to the *Pressures, Promotions, Payrises and Parity* report, 76% of women recognise that a lack of confidence in their own abilities inhibits the achievement of their professional goals. This was a feeling echoed in a number of other arenas such as the Welsh Women's Summit 2016. Unlike their male counterparts, women themselves often feel that they do not have the right skills to advance. This appears more pronounced within male-dominated sectors (Chwarae Teg 2014).

To improve their confidence women would benefit from training courses, support to identify strengths and areas for improvement, the strengthening of communication and delegation skills as well as skills refresher courses (Chwarae Teg 2014).

The disproportionate impact of starting a family dictates that women's careers tend to be more disrupted and less linear than men's careers. Despite the potential for flexible working patterns to improve work-life balance, evidence also suggests that people who take advantage of flexible working practices, such as remote working, may be overlooked for further promotion within the workplace. Even men appear to be penalised for non-conformance with a full-time work pattern. Research indicates that only when a male becomes senior enough in the organisation, such that his career can withstand any negative fall-out due to perceived lack of commitment, can he follow a part-time route (Dambrin and Lambert 2012). Grimshaw and Rubery (2015) find this less than surprising as work penalises men more severely if their behaviour appears to indicate less than full commitment, as demonstrated by the concept of presenteeism. By unlocking more quality roles and more senior positions to a flexible work pattern, a more positive impact could result on earnings and career progression – especially for parents and carers (Green *et al* 2016).

The Wales Women's Summit (2016) find that visibility of role models in society, school, work and government encourages women to secure progression in the work place. Conversely, men should be encouraged into caring roles as well as women into STEM paths which will challenge the valuation of work according to whether it is associated with male or female gendered characteristics.

Employer barriers

There is evidence that training is associated with in-work progression but that workers on low-pay are less likely than those on higher pay to receive training. As Green *et al* (2016) highlight, the extent to which employers are predisposed to boost workers' skills and encourage progression rests in part on their product market strategy (higher value added product market strategies are positively correlated to demand for skills) and their competitiveness strategy within those markets. A worker's appetite for progression is partly shaped by their workplace context and the opportunities perceived to be available, and this can alter should opportunities become more visible (Green *et al* 2016). Policy should therefore respond to creating stimuli in the workplace to encourage progression.

Sector-specific interventions are attractive to policy makers in that different sectors are characterised by different employment conditions, skill levels and poverty rates (Green *et al* 2016). Addressing career progression through growth sectors is advocated by many, including Sissons *et al* (2016). Their report for the Public Policy Institute for Wales advocates career progression in growth sectors, such as financial and professional services, manufacturing, energy and environment, construction, social care and hospitality, as a means of lifting people out of poverty. Both Sissons *et al* (2016) and Green *et al* (2016) evaluate the benefits of harnessing growth sectors to support progression towards decent work. The social care and hospitality sectors are particularly prone to low-pay and irregular hours and therefore ways strategies to raise employment standards would help workers climb out of low-paid jobs.

In such sectors, Green *et al* (2016) advocate that employers address skills and progression issues by performing bite-sized learning during normal-working hours and implementing pay progression scales that represent skills development. Together this forms part of a strategy of developing various career pathways models. Sissons *et al* (2016) discovered a number of career pathways programmes, developed in the US, which provided positive results assessed using robust evaluation methods. These programmes tend to target low-income groups who are unemployed or currently working in low-paid jobs and provide training which is in industry specific module form. The modules are designed and developed to meet industry needs and to be associated with a 'clear career pathway' (Sissons *et al* 2016: 30) within a given occupation or industry. Career pathways models involve a cross agency task force to address career progression barriers. A collective action engages employers, sectoral bodies, local agencies and labour market intermediaries to harness growth sectors for poverty reduction. Those jobs and sectors targeted are those which offer better prospects in terms of higher initial pay and especially well-defined career paths (Green *et al* 2016). Of high importance to women, this training is designed to be flexible enough to fit around the circumstances of participants, specifically in this instance childcare.

Analysing the WorkAdvance project in the US (Tessler 2013), Green *et al* (2016) find a 'dual customer' approach to be a promising way forward as it addresses the needs of both the employer and the worker. The dual customer approach involves the identification of benefits to engage the employer, such as improved employee retention rates or addressing skill shortages. The benefits for those on low incomes are the development of strategies to improve career progression.

There has been an increasing interest in awarding a greater role to progression. Progression forms an important part of the UC system. In-work conditionality creates the expectation that very low earners will attempt to increase their hours and potentially their wages. Similarly progression has been linked to a number of English and Scottish City Deals (Plymouth and the South West and Glasgow). Progression from low-paid employment, focusing on retail and hospitality, is key to the UK Futures Programme which was run by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES).

However, *Sissons et al* (2016) find that whilst, in theory, progression should help to reduce in-work poverty, there is very little evidence – in the UK or internationally – about the best approaches to encouraging progression. They advocate the use of trials to determine what works and highlight the potential to integrate economic development strategies with initiatives which encourage career progression and could help to secure employer ‘buy-in’.

Who Cares?

The fourth group of practices that could best be used to improve the pay and working conditions of women in Wales are those that can be loosely grouped as unpaid caring work. The literature in this area agrees that women do a larger share of unpaid work than men, no matter what type of household they live in, and regardless of their employment status. It can take the form of childcare, caring for elders or disabled family members and household chores. Unpaid work impacts the way women engage with the workplace. Decisions to choose sectors, occupations or employment basis (part-time working) are often made by women when they have children, rather than before (*Grimshaw and Rubery 2015*) and their choices are influenced by the ability to combine work and family responsibilities. This is important as a reduction in women’s earnings can have negative implications on the well-being of children, as *Grimshaw and Rubery (2015)* highlight. More of women’s earnings than men’s are spent on children and for single parents - 90% of whom are women - tight budget constraints lead to child poverty (*Tinson and MacInnes 2016*). Women could increase the quantity and quality of their labour market participation by the provision of appropriate childcare or social care for adults as well as a change in social attitudes that currently view women as carers first and earners second.

Childcare

Protection against poverty depends on the quality of, and rewards for, employment, as well as the costs of engagement. Childcare is a cost which is key in assessing whether it is worth working and is a major factor affecting mothers’ labour supply regardless of their employment status. Working mothers devote about 50% more time to childcare than non-working fathers (*OECD 2014*). These costs are particularly important in the UK because childcare is very expensive (*OECD 2012*), representing 33% of average income in Great Britain compared to only 12% across the EU (*Sissons et al 2016*). *Shldrck et al (2012)* cite evidence from the Daycare Trust and Save the Children that one in four parents in severe poverty had given up work and one in three turned down a job because of high childcare costs, and that one in four are not in education or training because of childcare issues.

Both *Bennet and Daly (2014)* and *Grimshaw and Rubery (2015)* emphasise the need for high quality, affordable childcare provision to combat gendered poverty. *Bennet and Daly (2014)* use the example of the high take-up of free early years’ education for 3- and 4-year-olds in the UK to illustrate how essential childcare is. Also, they reveal a growing consensus among experts that uncoupling support for childcare from employment will also facilitate take-up of education and training by out of work parents, in particular mothers (*Bennett and Daly 2014*).

However, it is essential that childcare provision takes into account the more flexible forms of work which characterise the Welsh service sector, especially as the proportion of people working non-standard hours in Wales has increased to 25.4% of employed people in 2011 (Social Research 2014b). NatCen (National Centre for Social Research Welsh Childcare and Early Years Survey 2009) disclose that 67% of mothers work atypical hours. Patterns of atypical hours are more likely to be found in temporary forms of work, whether casual work, agency work, seasonal work or zero-hours contracts. Parents in a weak labour market position are more likely to be concentrated in jobs which require atypical hours, indicating that low-income groups form a large part of the demand for atypical hours' childcare (Singler 2011).

Yet there is insufficient childcare for those who work atypical hours (Rutter and Stocker 2014). Low income families tended to rely on shift parenting and informal provision (Rutter and Evans 2012) rather than the nanny that higher income parents can rely on. There are a number of common themes regarding childcare; insufficiency of joined up care (Social Research 2014b), inflexibility of provision (Chwarae Teg 2014), suitability of care (Tinson *et al* 2016) and financial barriers (Chwarae Teg 2014).

Formal childcare provision is geared to traditional working patterns resulting in insufficient formal childcare provision available at atypical hours particularly overnight and early mornings. When formal childcare is available the cost is prohibitive exacerbated by the strong link between jobs that require atypical working patterns and low-pay. The quality and suitability of childcare provision available at atypical hours is perceived to be inferior and inflexible. Childcare providers report difficulties in maintaining the financial viability of providing childcare at atypical hours given the irregular demand and increased cost of staffing associated with these times (Social Research 2014b).

The option of improving education levels is also compromised by childcare barriers as the Childcare in Further Education (Social Research 2016a) report uncovers. The cost and affordability of suitable options are often prohibitive for those parent learners engaged in Further Education (FE). Even where cost barriers are removed by the financial support available through the Financial Contingency Fund, the availability of suitable childcare can remain a barrier. Logistical challenges, such as the location of the provision, transport to and from the provider as well as coordinating childcare provision times with learning times, add further barriers for parent learners to access suitable childcare (Social Research 2016a). The literature suggests a number of solutions to these barriers.

On-site childcare facilities should be provided by FE institutions to meet the demand for childcare amongst FE learners. However, the Welsh Government Childcare in Further Education (Social Research 2016a) study finds that increased availability of childcare provision alone is unlikely to increase the demand for childcare and the take-up of FE courses unless other barriers such as accessibility to childcare are also addressed

From a Welsh perspective Chwarae Teg (Women and the Economy 2015) recommend investigating new models of child (and elder care), such as social enterprise and cooperatives. Worker cooperatives constitute a serious alternative to the prevailing business model which adopt a more short-term approach focusing on cost minimisation, profit maximisation and the distribution of excess funds to external shareholders. Research shows that worker cooperatives are a high-performing firm type suited to all or a very broad range of industries, and are considered to be more sustainable than conventional businesses. Studies of cooperatives in Spain and Italy have shown that the provision of social services in health care is the most prevalent type of worker cooperative. These cooperatives are seen as more cost effective, innovative and flexible than government or

private services. Whilst the UK has significantly less employee cooperatives than countries such as Spain and Italy, one of its most notable and successful cooperatives is the John Lewis Partnership (JLP) that embraces many of the worker cooperatives' values and principles.

Wales' economic backdrop has many similar features with areas of Italy and Spain and therefore a women's social cooperative to provide childcare or elder care would be eminently suitable to alleviate the problems associated with the current state or private provision outlined later in this report. However, in common with the Italian government, public policy in Wales would need to support cooperative development and maintenance, providing assistance from the country's regional skill partnerships.

By ensuring that childcare provision is driven by meeting both the parent's economic needs and the children's educational needs, families balancing work and care will feel supported. This view is endorsed by the Welsh Government's Rapid Evidence Assessment *The childcare needs of parents/carers who work atypical hours or have additional needs* (Social Research 2014b). The assessment advocates the use of childminder brokering networks and the co-ordination of childcare provision by large organisations whose staff have irregular work patterns. This action will result in a guaranteed level of demand and subsidised costs for the employee which makes work economically worthwhile (Rapid evidence 2015).

In OECD countries, the public sector facilitates childcare support for its employees in various ways, including providing on-site facilities or access to a facility in the community that is linked to the workplace (OECD 2011b). A country's wealth is no indicator of the support it offers its female workforce. Vietnam, despite its Lower Middle Income status, offers a number of labour market policies supporting care – including six months of maternity leave at 100% pay, paid paternity leave and paid breaks for both antenatal care and breastfeeding. On-site crèche facilities are also obligatory in Vietnam for companies with a larger female workforce (Green, D. 2015). Similarly the South African government has been particularly creative in the policies it has established to support children and has set up the Older Persons Grant, which recognises the role of many grandparents in child raising (Green, D. 2015).

Care for elders/disabled

Like childcare, the availability and cost of elderly care facilities impact women's labour market participation. However, developing rights to paid leave for carers for disabled or elderly people lags behind parental leave (Bennett and Daly 2014) despite findings that show combining work and care is seen as important for carer wellbeing (Fry *et al* 2011). For older carers, high quality social care services are needed for their economic activity rates to increase (Himmelweit and Land 2008; Pickard 2011). This has yet to be accorded the same priority as childcare services; but its urgency is increasing (Bennett and Daly 2014). The particular concern here is that, because of constraints on their employment opportunities, carers may take lower level jobs; and that even after their caring has come to an end, they can remain in such employment (Bevan Foundation 2016).

Carers first, earners second

Many (OECD 2012; OECD 2014; Bennett and Daly 2014) point out the need to address inequalities in the distribution of unpaid work. The current argument stands that as women are socially designated main care providers, high care costs imply that it is not economically worthwhile for women to work full-time or they may consider working part-time to accommodate their caring responsibilities. Policy solutions in the literature focus on challenging the general perception that women are carers first and earners second, as well as destroying the perception that women need a different work pattern

to men to accommodate their primary role of caring. Modern workplace practices are required as well as changing social messages in order to break down the perception that caring is solely a female responsibility. Both Chwarae Teg and the OECD (2012) emphasise that challenging the perception that women are primary care givers should take place in schools, places of employment and community services. The development of more flexible gender roles would encourage caring to be seen as a social, rather than just a private, responsibility.

Addressing the perception that mothers have primacy in caring can also take place through the extension of parental leave to fathers. *Women, Government and Policy Making in OECD Countries; Fostering Diversity for Inclusive Growth* report points out that recent policies in OECD countries have been oriented towards extending parental leave entitlements to fathers. Encouraging fathers to take on a more active role in childcare has been supported by research demonstrating the links between the time spent by fathers in early childcare and their later involvement with childcare (OECD 2014). Promoting the role of fathers in caring responsibilities makes it easier for women to balance career and family responsibilities and reduces often unconscious biases concerning women's attachment to work. Sharing parental leave provisions between men and women may also reduce penalties to women's careers (OECD 2014). The OECD (2012) agree that by encouraging more equal sharing of parental leave by, for example, reserving part of paid leave entitlements for the exclusive use of fathers would result in an increased male contribution. Bennet and Daly (2014) recommend that parental leave should be offered on a part-time basis for both parents. In an effort to achieve gender equality, Sweden allows each parent 240 of the 480 days of paid parental leave. Each parent has 90 days reserved exclusively for each parent. Should a father or a mother decide not to take them, they cannot be transferred to the partner (Sweden 2017).

However, current UK policies work against parents sharing family leave more equally, in that they are either not well-paid or not paid at all (Bennett and Daly 2014) or fathers are not encouraged to take it up. Increased pay during parental leave, and a 'use it or lose it' policy would encourage greater numbers of fathers to take parental leave. Grimshaw and Rubery's (2014) research advocates job protected parental leave with income related pay funded by social insurance or public funds for both men and women.

Addressing the separate work-pattern for primary carers requires an employer awareness of the value of offering senior part-time positions and challenging perceptions that part-time workers are not as committed to their job. Also if male staff are encouraged to work part-time in managerial roles it would reduce the gender association with part-time work and the presumption that working fewer hours demonstrates a lack of commitment clearly persists (Rubery and Grimshaw 2014).

Currently, part-time employment lasts for years with only a small proportion of part-time workers using it as a stepping stone to full-time work. The OECD (2012) recommends that part-time work should be promoted as a temporary rather than a permanent solution to work and care issues. The transition from part-time to full-time work should be facilitated by ensuring that full-time work is worthwhile even after childcare cost are deducted, and by expanding the provision of high quality childcare and out-of-school care services.

Enhanced gender data analysis and policy assessment

The responsibility of government agencies to address issues of gender inequality and to mainstream gender into policies and programmes was sanctioned by the United Nations over 20 years ago (OECD 2011a). Yet the process is far from complete. As a result of different positions in the home and the labour market, policies, programmes and budgets impact men and women differently. Gender mainstreaming

is a process of assessing the implications of policies, programmes and budgets for women and men. As a concept it offers the chance to change the way that mainstream policies are formulated, decided on, implemented and evaluated. Operating properly, gender mainstreaming should anticipate the potentially different impact of policy actions on women and men as well as being able to design policy actions that are not gender-blind but gender-sensitive (OECD 2011a: 38). A number of countries have embraced gender mainstreaming, such as Canada where the government has integrated gender analysis into policy making around immigration, divorce, education and pension reforms (OECD 2014; OECD 2012).

Gender inequality persists in the UK and gender mainstreaming of all planned actions remains an aspiration. According to the OECD's (2011a) *Survey on National Gender Frameworks*, three of the chief obstacles to eradicating the gender gap are; limited accountability mechanisms across public agencies to advance gender equality and mainstreaming; a lack of awareness within the public service of how various policy options may have different effects on men and women and; a lack of monitoring mechanisms to evaluate the effect of gender equality initiatives. According to the OECD (2012a: 38-39) these barriers can be minimised by strong public institutions which will provide accountability for fulfilling gender equality; tools that allow evidence on the gender-effect of policies to be measured and; reliable gender-disaggregated data for informing policy decisions.

Accountability Mechanisms

The OECD's (2012a) general findings in this area are pertinent to the UK and Wales. Gender inequality persists, according to the OECD if there is a lack of importance attached to the outcomes of the various processes and procedures which are set up to monitor inequality. Specific weaknesses which undermine the drive to achieve gender equality include a lack of institutional frameworks that report to parliament on the results of Gender-Impact Assessment (GIA), a lack of gender audits, a lack of implementation of gender relevant policies in management performance objectives and a lack of consequence for the failure to achieve gender targets. According to the OECD, until all these weaknesses are addressed, gender inequality will continue to be a feature of a country's social and economic landscape. In both Wales and the UK there is a lack of accountability.

Tools

Building awareness and understanding among policy makers of the potentially different effects of policy outcomes on women and men is key. A gender impact assessment (GIA) can help to provide detailed, systematic information about the potentially different effects on both genders of proposed laws or policies (OECD 2012). Gender-responsive budgeting is the most well-known form of GIA. It considers the gender perspective at all stages of the budget construction with the intention of avoiding gender-blind spending. Gender-responsive budgeting is viewed as a powerful instrument in achieving gender equality, highlighting the gender-differentiated impact of both public and private expenditure. In the private sector gender-responsive budgeting can be used to promote specific budgetary allocations targeted to address gender inequalities. However, according to the OECD (2012), whilst the UK has introduced the use of GIA's, the depth and extent of the application is sporadic. The successful implementation of a GIA is constrained by a lack of good quality sex-disaggregated statistical data.

A number of reports (*On our Radar: Chwarae Teg; Women, Government and Policy Making in OECD Countries; Fostering Diversity for Inclusive Growth 2014; The Welsh Women's Summit 2016*) support the use of gender responsive budgeting as an effective means of delivering on gender mainstreaming strategies. There has been criticism of the way in which the Welsh Government

assesses the gender impact of mainstream policies. According to Chwarae Teg, the current process has been driven through consultation, engagement events and importantly equality impact assessments. However, whilst this is progress in the right direction, policy assessment in Wales been performed on a retrospective basis. A more effective approach would be to adopt gender mainstreaming which works in advance of policy development rather than retrospectively. This has been implemented in Sweden with great success. A gender mainstreaming approach should deliver gender-sensitive policy and spending decisions across government as well as ensure that initiative and objectives with a focus on equality aren't undermined by policy making elsewhere.

Disaggregated data

Any effective strategy against poverty needs to have an analysis and measurement of gender issues at its heart. But as Bradshaw *et al* (2003) argue, the relationship between gender and poverty has been relatively neglected in research and statistical literature for the previous 15 years. There is a general consensus that increased gender-disaggregated statistical data enhances attempts to address the issue of women living in-work poverty. But, as the OECD (2011a; 2014) reveals, the majority of countries participating in their survey fail to systematically measure, evaluate and monitor gender relevant policies and procedures, citing a lack of disaggregated sex data as being the underlying cause. In the minority are the countries such as Israel and Sweden, who have legislated to ensure that all data collected must be gender-disaggregated. In countries such as Finland, France, Ireland and Portugal (OECD 2014) there are early signs of progress towards the collection and dissemination of gender statistics as national mechanisms for gender responsibility report close cooperation with national statistical offices. Yet, for the majority of countries there remains a need for better quality evidence as to what works best to move women and men out of poverty with Mansour (2016) pointing to the requirement for better measures of impact and funding.

There is an established body of knowledge about carrying out gender assessment of policies which is essential in order to systematically ensure a mainstreaming of gender considerations in drawing up and implementing policies. However the lack of availability of gender-disaggregated data hampers a government's ability to undertake robust analysis of the gender effects of policy decisions and make informed policy choices (OECD 2012). This is the case in the UK and in Wales.

In the UK, there are numerous examples of how a lack of gender-disaggregated data prevents an accurate depiction of female engagement with the workplace from being created. The true picture of female performance is obscured by their inclusion in household figures where the male income hides the extent of female low-pay (Bennett and Daly 2014). Chwarae Teg (2015) submits further evidence of the damage caused by a lack of gender disaggregated data in terms of how men and women encounter different barriers on starting up their own business and a lack of statistical data prevents detection of the imbalances in service delivery resulting in the gender start-up gap. Mansour (2016) also finds little analysis of the impact of gender on programme outcomes. Therefore when access to training is difficult for women whose caring responsibilities prohibit their involvement, a lack of disaggregated data means that this is not highlighted by the statistics (Mansour 2016).

Another example of inadequate data is presented by Bennet and Daly (2014) who reveal that whilst a gender breakdown is currently provided in the annual *Households Below Average Income* publication for the population as a whole, and for working age adults and pensioners (composition and rates), and time trends are given (DWP 2013) there are no breakdown of other statistics such as the economic status of families, or lone parent status. Bennett and Daly (2014) also emphasise that household income in official statistics is overstated largely due to the impact of childcare (and to a

lesser extent elder care) costs on incomes. Currently, disposable income is calculated to include the benefits or tax credits related to childcare costs but such costs are not deducted from income. Hence, income is overstated and poverty levels are understated. Childcare costs are relatively high in the UK, but are not deducted from income in low income statistics, meaning that those in work with childcare costs are worse off than they appear. This lack of consideration of childcare costs adversely affects women who tend to bear the cost of caring.

Given the recent developments regarding the devolved nature of power in Wales and the focus on economic development at a regional level, further gender analysis should include detailed spatial analysis of the Welsh labour market (Tinson *et al* 2016).

A voice for workers

Since the 1980s, the UK political stance has been one of supporting a neoliberal agenda with respect to labour markets based on minimal legal employment rights. Whilst the current Welsh Government has not adhered to the same agenda, as evidenced by the Trade Union Bill and its reinstatement of the Agricultural Wages Board, it is constrained by the limit of its devolved powers.

In the UK there has been an increasing drive to limit employee involvement and the introduction of employment tribunal fees has increased the power held by employers. Tinson and MacInnes (2016: 30) reveal a 70% drop in those claiming for non-payment of national Minimum Wage and an 85% drop in those pursuing the claims of non-payment of wages or holiday pay. This has far reaching consequences for women as cases of sexual discrimination and pregnancy discrimination are less likely to be pursued. Sectors that have traditionally employed women in low-paying roles are among the least unionised, according to Tinson and MacInnes (2016). This results in a growing trend towards less worker involvement in the running of companies in these sectors. By rebalancing power relationships in the workplace through a more collaborative working arrangement between employer and employee, improved terms and conditions for low paid workers would result.

Tinson and MacInnes (2016: 30) suggest that companies with over 100 employees should set up a 'work-life' forum, which fosters a collaborative work place. This action would specifically help sectors that have traditionally employed women in low-paying roles which are among the least unionised. The forum could act as a means to strengthen communication links between employees and employer in order to negotiate pay structures, sick pay arrangements and resolve fair pay disputes.

In a similar vein, the TUC's report *All Aboard* (TUC 2016b) makes a case for worker representation on company boards. It argues that, as workers have an interest in the long-term success of their company, their participation in company decision would encourage boards to take a long-term approach and improve the quality of decision making. Unlike most of Europe, the UK is one of a minority of European countries with no rights for workers' voices within a corporate governance setting. The benefits from such an involvement include lower rates of poverty and inequality and improved corporate performance.

The Oxfam *Even It Up* report (Oxfam Cymru 2014) finds that those people living in poverty are among the least likely to have their voices heard. This means that policies and services fail to address the real issues and barriers that people face. In other parts of the UK, including Scotland and Leeds, the creation of Poverty Truth Commissions bring together people who are experiencing poverty and civic and business leaders to address the causes and consequences of poverty. The Commissioner could ensure that the different concerns and issues affecting women in poverty shape government policy and practice.

Summary

A review of the literature in the UK and globally reveals substantial evidence of good practice in gender specific interventions in the labour market aimed at alleviating in-work poverty. Oxfam Scotland's report, *Decent Work for Scotland's Low Paid Workers: A job to be done*, concludes that by ensuring the priorities of low-paid workers significantly inform changes to policy and practice, Scotland can make major progress towards the delivery of decent work for all. This literature review extends this conclusion by arguing that the evidence generated to date forcibly suggests that Welsh government policy and practice need to move away from a uniform approach to labour market intervention and recognise that gender specific intervention is required. In the next section, both the devolved powers and commitment of the Welsh Government towards employability are examined.

Section 5: Welsh Government

Devolved powers

The devolution process began for Wales at the end of the twentieth century. Following an affirmative devolution referendum, the Government of Wales Act 1998 established the National Assembly for Wales. The Welsh devolution process progressed further by the passing of the Government of Wales Act 2006 which led to the creation of a separate legislature (the National Assembly for Wales) and executive (the Welsh Government). The Government of Wales Act 2006 increased the powers of the Assembly, which were further supplemented five years later. In 2011 the Assembly assumed additional law-making powers, enabling it to make laws in all 20 areas devolved to Wales (Gov 2013). Whilst the Assembly has no tax-raising powers - unlike the Scottish parliament - it can make regulations and set statutory guidance, and pass assembly measures.

The 20 areas in which the Assembly can legislate cover the delivery of local services (education and training, fire and rescue services, health services, highways and transport, housing, local government, social welfare, planning (except major energy infrastructure) and water supplies), agriculture, fisheries, forestry, culture, including the Welsh language and ancient monuments, economic development and the environment (Gov 2013). Any area not listed in Schedule 7 is non-devolved and are matters on which Parliament would legislate.

The latest instalment in the devolution process is the Wales Act 2017 which comes into force in 2018. Although Wales has emerged with increased powers, for the purpose of this literature review the policy area of employment is excluded (Milne 2017). In the context of devolution, the Welsh Government has powers in relation to skills but employment remains within the mandate of Westminster. Consequently there is greater responsibility at a local level for delivering improved labour market outcomes through skills and education.

The policy landscape provides an important backdrop to the consideration of the options available to Welsh Government to help support decent work. As in Europe and the UK, policy development in Wales recognises the role that sustainable employment and a skilled labour force can play in alleviating poverty. The Welsh policy context responsible for influencing decent work include:

- Well-being of Future Generations Act
- Policy Statement on Skills
- Anti-Poverty Action Plan

Well-being of Future Generations Act

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (Legislation 2015) commits Welsh Ministers to a goal of delivering a more equal Wales, enabling people to reach their full potential. It aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act's goals including working towards a more prosperous and equal Wales, of which decent work is a central part.

The Act puts in place seven well-being goals, namely; a prosperous Wales; a resilient Wales; a healthier Wales; a more equal Wales; a Wales of cohesive Communities; a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language and a globally responsible Wales. Tackling poverty is an element of all of these goals, particularly 'a more equal Wales', 'a healthier Wales' and 'a prosperous Wales'.

The Act requires the 44 public bodies in Wales to work towards achieving all of these goals and synthesises five ways of working – long term, prevention, integration, collaboration and involvement. These all have clear links with tackling poverty, particularly taking a preventative approach to try to tackle persistent, intergenerational poverty from occurring or getting worse (Building Resilient Communities 2015: 4-5).

In order to achieve these goals, the Welsh Government (Taking Wales Forward 2016: 9) has outlined fourteen well-being objectives. The ones most pertinent to alleviating the problem of in-work poverty amongst women in Wales being:

2. Improve education outcomes for all and reduce the gap in outcomes for different groups.
3. Help people live healthy and independent lives and support a healthy workforce.
4. Improve prosperity for all across Wales, helping people into employment and sustaining jobs.

One of the legal requirements included in the Well-being of Future Generations Act is the publishing of national indicators which will measure the achievement of the Well-being goals. The indicators which are relevant to the search for decent work for women living in-work poverty include:

8. Percentage of adults with qualifications at the different levels of the National Qualifications Framework.
16. Percentage of people in employment, who are on permanent contracts (or on temporary contract, and not seeking permanent employment) and who earn more than 2/3 of the UK median wage.
17. Gender pay difference.
18. Percentage of people living in households in income poverty relative to the UK median: measured for children, working age and those of pension age.
19. Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation.

(National Indicators 2016: 2)

Policy statement on skills

In 2014, the Welsh Government published its Policy statement on skills (Skills Policy 2014), a substantial policy area devolved to the Welsh Government. Acknowledging the impact skills have on both the economic and social well-being of Wales, the policy identifies skills as providing a strong

lever for tackling poverty. Specifically, the policy highlights a need to explore the role of skills in providing the support essential for aiding individuals into employment and workplace progression, both of which are identified as central to tackling poverty (Skills Policy 2014: 7).

This policy is relevant to the concept of decent work for low-paid women and men as it incorporates the work-based learning elements of adult community learning and future employment and skills support for employers and individuals. It focuses on vocational and academic programmes in conjunction with employers and the local community. The statement also defines its commitment to widen access by offering a blend of full and part time provision at varying levels, including continuing professional development.

The three Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs) covering the whole of Wales have been tasked with analysing economic challenges and likely growth areas to identify the skills needed in the workforce. They produced plans to analyse and influence the provision of skills based on regional economic need. The plans provide recommendations to Welsh Government to influence the prioritisation and deployment of skills funding (Skills SW and Mid Wales 2016; Skills SE Wales 2016; Skills N Wales 2016).

According to the RSP's Plans produced in 2016, there are a number of common themes across the whole of Wales. The first is the lack of qualifications held by some elements of the working population. They assessed that skills distribution in Wales as a whole presents challenges to productivity insofar as there are a large proportion of individuals with relatively few or no qualifications. They calculated that 10% of the Welsh working age population hold no qualifications (Skills SW and Mid Wales 2016). All the RSPs have identified a need for apprenticeships and vocational qualifications, which they envisage will be partially met by the UK government's development of apprenticeship levies.

A second theme is the over-reliance of considerable parts of Wales on elementary occupations. The foundational economy underpins the social infrastructure and environment of Wales and has a significant impact on the local population, services, quality of life and opportunity. For example about 50% of the workforce and 50% of the economy of South East Wales is in the foundational economy (Skills SE Wales 2016). Some areas demonstrate an above average employment level in elementary occupations. This is especially the case in caring or personal service occupations and leisure, travel and related service occupations. The whole of Wales has higher employment levels in these occupation at 10.8% compared to the UK average of 9.3% (Skills SW and Mid Wales 2016).

The health and social care sector is of particular relevance to Wales. For example 45,000 people are employed across the sector in North Wales, where it represents a major contributor to the regional economy. The RSP assessed the upskilling of employees to be essential as the increasingly ageing population requires ever more specialist needs (Skills N Wales 2016). The sector, especially residential care, is plagued by a deficit in skills, a high staff turnover, and active career paths not always being promoted. 81% of the residential care employees are female in the area covered by the North Wales regional partnership (Skills N Wales 2016).

The tourism sector in Wales is of importance both in terms of numbers employed as well as the ability to attract inward investment and expenditure. By 2020, the hospitality and tourism workforce in Wales is projected to grow by 4,700 people. Taking into account replacement demand, this means that 35,900 people will need to be recruited to the sector over the next seven years. The tourism workforce is deficient in its skills; 21% of employers reported skills gaps, compared to 13% for the whole economy (Skills SW and Mid Wales 2016). Whilst there is a growing recognition that there is a

need to promote and target sustainable career pathways there is also a substantial focus on young workers and school leavers rather than upskilling the existing workforce, especially in the North Wales skills plan (Skills SW and Mid Wales 2016; Skills N Wales 2016).

The third theme is the identification of priority sectors that have the potential to make a greater contribution to future growth and employment. These include advanced manufacturing, knowledge intensive traded services; and enabling sectors such as energy and construction (Industrial Strategy 2017). All the RSP's acknowledge the lack of women involved in STEM industries and emphasise the importance of Higher Apprenticeships to increase the skill levels of employees and to encourage women into the industries. Since 2001 foundation degrees have been supported as an additional route into higher-level skills development.

The RSP's highlight that the under-representation of women remains a priority for the construction sector in Wales. Currently women account for 11% of employment in the sector, compared with 13% for the UK as a whole. In Wales, 90% of women employed in construction work are in non-manual, off-site roles. The RSP's identify that specialised higher level FE provision within the construction sector is essential to meet the future skills needed by the sector. Increased skills levels are required for nuclear operational staff and is a key requirement identified by the North Wales region. The promotion of apprenticeships is envisaged will help meet the skills deficit anticipated (Skills N Wales 2016).

The IT and Telecoms sector is fast-paced and growing rapidly. Provider and employer consultations indicate that provision and qualifications in the area are not fit for purpose. Engagement within the sector is largely male-dominated therefore the RSP's consider that more needs to be done to ensure the sector becomes attractive to females both for learners and instructors or educators. An increased number of vocational work-based learner numbers at both graduate and post-graduate level within ICT and computing are seen as essential (Skills SW and Mid Wales 2016).

In their evaluation, the RSP's predict a high demand for financial and business services training amongst older workers looking for part-time programmes to improve their skills and employability. This is in response to Cardiff's dominance in the finance sector. The capital city in particular has a higher than UK national average level of financial and insurance companies (Skills SE Wales 2016).

Anti-Poverty Action Plan

The Welsh Government's drive to eradicate poverty, to the extent to which its devolved powers allow, is encapsulated in its Anti-poverty Action Plan. The Well-being of Future Generations Act, under the theme of a more prosperous Wales, emphasises employment and growth as an important component of wellbeing, a theme which is reflected in the Plan. It is essential that this theme is viewed through a gender lens to ensure that it results in the securing of decent work for women.

The Welsh Government in its Tackling Poverty Action Plan (2012-2016) recognises that it has a range of different policy levers which can contribute to addressing in-work poverty. The levers include supporting adults to access full-time employment opportunities, supporting second earners into work, childcare, supporting young people into employment through apprenticeships and traineeships, and increasing skills to enable people to secure in-work progression (Building Resilient Communities 2015).

Throughout the Action plan, the commitments of the Welsh Government are expressed in gender neutral terms, except in two particular cases. The first involves an investment in measures specifically aimed at improving the position of women in the workforce. The aim of the investment is to assist over 5,000 female workers to work towards qualifications and an improved labour market

situation (Building Resilient Communities 2015: 31). The second instance is in relation to childcare, the burden for which is largely borne by mothers. The Welsh Government's aim is the provision of accessible, affordable, quality childcare to enable parents into employment and training opportunities. Recognition of the importance of childcare for those who want to take on additional hours of work, enabling them to increase the amount of money they can earn, and thereby helping families to move out of poverty is the driver underlying this (Building Resilient Communities 2015). Whilst these two instances are a step in the right direction, more needs to be done. The literature to date has shown that gender-neutral policies and programmes can have unintended negative consequences for women.

Despite recent progress, gender imbalances remain evident across many areas of life in Wales and significantly impact women, their families and the wider economy. There is clear evidence that women are more vulnerable to poverty; they are the most affected by changes to the benefits system and are the most at risk from cuts to public services (Oxfam 2014). The Welsh policy context provides substantial opportunities to address the issue of Welsh poverty and inequality through the auspices of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The various policies and plans generated to achieve the aims and objectives enshrined in the Act are welcome and highly necessary, as currently the evidence shows that Wales falls short on providing decent work for women. However, whilst the Welsh Government has taken a step in the right direction, a lack of understanding of how various policies and actions interact with gender differently means that unintended gendered consequences can arise. It is important that devolved government in Wales embeds a gender focused approach in their economic development strategies and wider policy approaches relevant to the labour market and anti-poverty strategies.

Of concern is that despite the publication of the Tackling Poverty Action Plan (2012-2016), the Welsh Government has yet to make publically available a plan which addresses poverty from 2017 onwards. Similarly the latest annual report, which sets out progress made to date by the Welsh Government (against commitments made in Building Resilient Communities: Taking forward the Tackling Poverty Action), relates to the year ending 2015.

In the next section, best practice generated by the literature review in section 4 is discussed in relation to the Welsh policy context to determine the ways that the Welsh Government's energy to deliver a more equal Wales can be channelled into the most effective way.

Section 6: Policy Implications and Recommendations

A review of the literature on women working in low-paid jobs in Wales has found that despite increasing labour market participation, women living in Wales have an increased chances of in-work poverty than men. Women who are also mothers face a further struggle as they face a gender pay gap with men and a motherhood pay gap with women who have no children. A situation that has become entrenched as a result of what Rubery and Grimshaw (2014: 21) describe as 'constantly moving goalposts'. Opportunities are emerging to improve policy and practice through a focus on policy interventions at a devolved level and through the adoption of decent work practices by employers. Drawing on the evidence uncovered by the review, a number of recommendations can be made to guide the way the Welsh Government drives forward the decent work agenda for women working in Wales.

Business commitment to fair employment practice

1. Social Values

During the 20th century, capitalism developed at an unprecedented rate. It was particularly rapacious from the 1980s onwards supported by the expansion of neoliberal economics, the celebration of free-market capitalism as well as anti-labour legislation (Sikka 2015). Since then, as Rubery and Grimshaw (2014) note, successive governments have moved away from increased regulation of the labour market since the Equal Pay Act 1970. The main policy of UK government has been to continue to pursue a free market agenda with respect to labour based on minimal legal employment rights. It is important to note however that the devolved Welsh Government does not support free-market policy to the same extent as Westminster, as demonstrated by both Trade Union Bill introduced in 2017 (Welsh Government News 2017a) and its reinstatement of the Agricultural Wages Board. The aim of the Trade Union Bill is to reverse the impact of the UK government's Trade Union Act which enforces key restrictions on public-sector trade unions. The Welsh Government reinstated the Agricultural Wages Board to protect workers' wages, after it was abolished by the UK government (Welsh Government News 2017a).

Since the start of the twenty first century, corporate social responsibility (CSR), previously the preserve of consumer groups and rights organisations has become associated with advanced managerial systems in neo-liberal economies. CSR has developed into a form of corporate self-regulation and it is an important part of the business strategy for some organisations. It is held that CSR policies improve the reputation of the organisation, attracts investors and consumers, has a positive effect on employees and strengthens stakeholder relationships (Shamir 2011).

One way of evidencing CSR is through membership of a body which avows to improve the working conditions of low paid worker through a variety of measures. The literature has revealed a number of these bodies to be; the Fair Work Convention (Scotland); the independent Living Wage Foundation; the Living Wage Accreditation Initiative and Scottish Living Wage Accreditation Initiative; and the Scottish Business Pledge.

These organisations encourage employers to treat their worker fairly and provide decent work over and above the legal requirements through a variety of practices including; adopting the voluntary Living Wage; abandoning zero hours contracts; investing in its workforce; supporting progressive workforce engagement and many more. In return, the companies who become members of these bodies are allowed to display their accreditation through promotional materials which enhances their credibility with customers, a process which the Fawcett Society supports (2012). In the Tackling Poverty Action Plan (Building Resilient Communities 2015; 31) the Welsh Government has committed to integrate and promote the importance of responsible business activity into the Business Wales services and the First Minister has recently (March 2017) indicated his commitment to a Fair Work Commission (Welsh Labour 2017).

Recommendations

- The Welsh Government has indicated its support for a Fair Work Commission and this commitment should ensure that the organisation's stated aim is to improve the working conditions of low-paid workers
- The Welsh Government should make particular effort to encourage organisations in low-pay sectors to join the decent work organisations. In Wales sectors such as social care, retail and tourism and hospitality predominantly employ women and are plagued by low-pay. There should be particular focus on incentivising businesses in these sectors to commit to fair employment practices.

- Build in robust monitoring of the decent work organisation's goals. The commitments of the body should be clear, deliverable and measurable.

2. Government Values

The literature has revealed that outsourcing and contracting have a direct impact on employment practices and working conditions because procurement is often driven by the lowest price. This can lead to sub-contracted or outsourced organisations providing a high-quality service at a minimum cost which has negative implications for its workers. Procurement can be used as a lever to create better working conditions leading to decent work for low-paid women in Wales, who are more likely to be employed on a part-time basis or on an insecure contract than men and who dominate the sectors that are most likely to be outsourced.

There have been a number of attempts to address inadequate work conditions using procurement, however they all share the same weakness; they are prepared on a gender-neutral basis which disadvantages women. The Wales Procurement Policy statement consists of ten key principles which all Welsh public sector organisations should adhere to when delivering their procurement activity. This has been widely adopted by major public bodies in Wales. However, there is no specific focus within the framework which acknowledges the different barriers faced by women in the labour market. Similarly, the Community Benefits Policy approach measures the contribution to the community made by procurement without an identification of gender specific targets. Green *et al* (2016) recommend that procurement is used to motivate employer engagement in mutual growth policies with local anchor institutions supporting good practice within a local economy. The Welsh Government has flagged up its focus on anchor companies in its Annual Report on Tackling Poverty Action Plan (Building Resilient Communities 2015), but not in procurement terms.

The EHRC's Responsible Procurement Principles (EHRC 2014) were created in response to the poor work conditions experienced by operatives in outsourced cleaning work, an area which women typically are crowded into. Despite this, no gender lens is used to guide the Principles. Despite the lack of a gender lens, the Responsible Procurement Principles (EHRC 2015) (developed for incorporation into a businesses' procurement and contract management practice) are a good place to start improving the working conditions of low-paid women in Wales. A gender lens will require that a favourable weighting will be attributed to those elements of the tender bids which reflect the suppliers and contractors intentions to provide decent work for the women they employ. This will incorporate a movement away from temporary contracts and the use of permanent work contracts with a set pattern of working which allows childcare to be arranged more easily, a calculation and publication of the gender pay gap data, a demonstration of the provision of flexible working patterns as well as evidence of training and progression ladders in place for all levels of the organisation. In addition, developing model clauses and engagement mechanisms for use in tenders ensure that the demands of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are met. An obligatory clause of any procurement tender could be the supplier's membership of a decent work body referred to in section 4 and the acceptance of the decent work obligations that accompany membership of these bodies.

Recommendations

- The Welsh Government can play a role in harnessing growth sectors for poverty reduction through its procurement policy and use it to influence employer behaviour, including anchor institutions. The Welsh government should emulate the work of the Scottish Enterprise which seeks to influence City Deals. Welsh City Regions have significant spends associated

with them, which provide an opportunity to incorporate the Responsible Procurement Principles in the tender process, amended to incorporate gender-sensitive criteria.

- As a purchaser of goods and services and through its guidance role in relation to private and other public bodies, the Welsh Government has a substantial monetary and governance influence. In particular, the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan is likely to have a significant impact on employment in the regions. A review of the procurement model used on the individual projects would ensure that opportunities to support decent work (such as the voluntary Living Wage, minimal use of temporary contracts to name but a few) could be designed and developed into the tenders.
- The Sustainable and Ethical Procurement Panel for the Wales and Borders Rail Service and Metro project could address decent wage concerns by making the voluntary Living Wage a requirement of its tenders not only for the construction operatives but for other sectors involved through sub-contracting and out-sourcing.

Gender pay gap

One method of addressing the gender pay gap is to challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes that prevent women from achieving equal pay. Education is a key element of the approach, focusing on schools, the public and the commercial sector (Fawcett Society 2012). Publishing key gender statistics would increase awareness of the pay gap's existence as well as indicating progress being made towards equality in the workplace.

Recommendations

- Address and prevent misconceptions and stereotypes formed in children and young people from an early age by working with schools to incorporate gender equality education in the relevant aspects of the National Curriculum, including explicit discussions about the gender pay gap and its causes.
- Raise public awareness of gender inequality and tackle stereotyping through more public education work in order to challenge embedded and limited ideas of women and men's respective roles and abilities.
- The Welsh Government should incentivise indirect interventions by employers to tackle negative attitudes and beliefs and support to develop more positive, balanced ones.
- A Welsh Government requirement should be the publication of gender pay gap statistics for every public body and for all private businesses classified as small or medium-sized in Wales.

Innovative forms of work

Innovative business model require job designs to move away from insecure or exploitative work that impacts negatively on health, well-being and family life. Currently there is limited protection for those workers who have temporary contracts in respect of maternity pay, statutory sick pay and flexible working. Basic workplace protection for those on zero hours contracts is lost because workers fail to qualify as employees. The literature has shown that there are viable alternatives to the business model that currently dominates industrialised nations. The success of worker cooperatives in Spain, France and Italy as well as the John Lewis Partnership in the UK should be emulated and supported in Wales. Primarily due to dissatisfaction of government-delivered health care services and the deterioration of such services provided by the private sector, European cooperatives have emerged to provide more cost effective, innovative and flexible health care services.

Also, the 'dual customer' business model embraces arrangements and practices that benefit workers and businesses equally. Women benefit from the adoption of this model through; the provision of incremental paths of progression and training opportunities linked to increased pay levels; a withdrawal from zero hours contracts and embracing of permanent contracts offering a set number of hours each week; and; access to flexible working options. Despite the almost inevitable increase in costs that are associated with a new business model, financial gains can be realised too. Practices that professionalise the workforce through training and career development plans can raise the quality of output and reduce staff turnover rates, creating an increased competitive advantage, according to Tinson *et al* (2016).

Career pathway models are valuable tools to enhance career progression for those women earning a low income. The success of such models depends upon the development of a cross-agency partnership, in which the roles are clearly clarified (Sissons *et al* 2016). A collaborative approach involving a cross agency task force of educators, trainers, employers and government is the most effective. The task force programmes include a range of support and services; financial support to enable participation; case management, academic and vocational counselling, peer mentoring and other social support. Of high importance to women, this training is designed to be flexible enough to fit around the circumstances of participants, specifically in this instance childcare. Refining the career pathway models to successfully harness growth sectors for poverty reduction also requires a collective action engaging employers, sectoral bodies, local agencies and labour market intermediaries.

Recommendations

- The Welsh Government should support, encourage and fund employer cooperative enterprises.
- The Welsh Government to lead by example in the adoption of positive job designs that improve terms and conditions for staff. The Welsh Government could publicise the benefit of the dual customer approach and incentivise the adoption of such practices by employers in the private sector.

Employment

The literature has shown that fast growing sectors are more likely to experience skills shortages and high levels of staff turnover. The skill deficits and staff retention problems can encourage employers to seek to engage with publicly funded skills and training provision to aid progression opportunities which would make employment in the sector more attractive (Duke *et al* 2006; Sissons *et al* 2016). Incorporating policy in these areas into a wider gender focused employment strategy that explicitly aims to reduce the proportion of women in low paid jobs, close the gender pay gap, improve job security and increase opportunities for women to progress in work would help address poverty and inequality and boost living standards. Best practice in employment terms falls into two categories-- skills and progression techniques and apprenticeships.

1. Skills and progression

As demonstrated by Dorsett *et al's* (2011) research, education and training opportunities are particularly important for women, who may have focused previously on care work rather than on their own progression. Training programmes need to be viewed from a gender perspective rather than following the gender-neutral approach that has been adhered to in the past. A gender-sensitive approach to traditional skills programmes would enhance their appeal and applicability to women at the low-pay end of the labour market.

Progression paths in low-pay sectors are limited often offering small increases in pay for disproportionate increases in responsibility. In particular, low-paying sectors that employ large numbers of women (such as the retail and social care sectors) provide restricted opportunities for staff progression. To improve their situation, women can either move into other sectors or seek to enhance their skills and qualification to assist promotion in their existing sector.

In its Tackling Poverty Action Plan, the Welsh Government has pledged a number of investments which could be used to improve the position of women in the workforce. Measures include the provision of support for over 5,000 female workers to work towards qualifications and the funding to help over 180,000 employed adults to work towards job specific, technical or essential skills qualifications (Building Resilient Communities 2015: 31). However, care must be taken when supporting projects to upskill women for progression or inter-sectoral transfer.

To begin with, unless training opportunities are able to accommodate the external commitments of many women, take-up will be poor. Therefore, the training design should not follow a conventional path based on a full-time commitment, but should reflect practical considerations that can encourage low income women to participate. Practical considerations include the need to offer part-time training, training that provides good quality, cost-effective crèche facilities at the delivery point and paid travel costs.

Training opportunities, such as the Welsh Government's Flexible Skills Programme, should emphasise the development of transferable skills to develop workers' increased awareness of core skills which are valued in many sectors. This will allow women to change occupational sectors to secure higher-paid employment. Mentors and careers advisors should be part of the training programmes to encourage women to consider alternative career paths. Cross-disciplinary training teams from Welsh Government departments, Local Authorities, RSPs, FE and HE institutions and the private sector can align the outcomes of the training process with the sectoral skill shortages. In addition, a collaborative approach between Job Centre Plus and other organisations could be supported to expand the number of flexible part-time jobs. Enterprises such as the Timewise Foundation should be engaged with to grow and enrich the part-time labour market.

Recommendations

- Given that the RSP's have identified a lack of qualifications in elements of the workforce, incentives for businesses to invest and train their part-time staff could derive from the Welsh Government. The focus could be to help improve progression and skills for women who dominate part-time employment.
- Increase vocational work-based learner numbers at both graduate and post-graduate level in ICT and computing skills that encourage women into non-typical organisations and sectors. The design of training should take into consideration women's caring responsibilities which restricts their ability to engage. Practical considerations need to be borne in mind regarding the offering of part-time training or training that provides crèche facilities or supports a social cooperative for childcare.
- Training should be focused to enable women to update their skills when re-entering the labour market and equip workers with the skills to progress regardless of their labour market status. Foundation degrees should be made available to women in a format that is compatible with their external commitments.
- Training opportunities should emphasise transferable skills to ensure employees can better utilise their skills within other sectors. This will allow women to change occupational sectors

to secure employment in higher-paid sectors, such as the construction, IT and telecoms and nuclear fuel industries.

- To avoid the concentration of women into a small number of low-paid occupations, educators and careers support providers should be counselled to encourage girls to consider non-traditional career and study options to extend female aspirations and open pathways to better paid and more secure employment in STEM sectors.

2. Apprenticeships

The UK government has pledged to create three million new apprenticeships by 2020. The scheme will be financed through a levy on large companies, which they can then recover by taking on apprentices. The levy therefore incentivises large employers to be involved in training. Grimshaw and Rubery's (2015) review reveals that an important part of up-skilling and training employees to fill skill gaps or to progress out of low-pay are through apprenticeship schemes. Delegates at the Welsh Women's Summit (2016) agree and advocate the use of quality apprenticeships for women of all ages to mitigate in-work poverty.

However, apprenticeships are heavily gendered. They are often inaccessible to women as they are based on traditional work patterns that assume the employee has no caring responsibilities that constrain their working lives. Another consideration is that male apprentices get paid 21% more an hour than women (Tinson and MacInnes 2015). Male apprenticeships dominate typically high-pay STEM organisations, for example, only 4% of engineering apprentices are women (Tinson and MacInnes 2015). Whilst apprenticeships could be a huge opportunity to support women out of poverty the existing policy area of apprenticeships needs have a more explicit gender approach. Low income women can be supported by the provision of an equal gender quota level in apprenticeship programmes as well as the use of gender neutral language in the application process and subsequent training schedules.

Sectors which show a high degree of horizontal segregation display significantly different characteristics. Women are concentrated in a narrow range of occupations that are typically low-paid and under-valued by society. Areas such as health services, retail and cleaning are growing and yet require low levels of qualifications to gain entry. Conversely, STEM sectors require higher qualification levels at entry point, have clear progression paths and are male dominated.

To counteract horizontal segregation, JobCentre Plus, school and FE career advisors should guide women into non-traditional career and study options to extend female aspirations and consider career pathways which are normally categorised as 'male' jobs. Careers advisers should mentor and support either gender who are following a skills programme in gender atypical sectors and occupations.

Women are often defined by their primacy as care-giver and this affects the way they participate in the labour market throughout their career. Those women at the start of their careers, such as younger parents whose education has been interrupted or those mothers who have returned to Higher Education, find that the responsibility for care narrows the opportunities to improve their qualifications. This can be addressed by improving the flexibility, accessibility and affordability of education and childcare and by working with the participants to address the key concerns of parents and providers.

Apprenticeships are key to upskilling the work force of all ages. The Welsh Government's commitment to apprenticeships should be maximised by ensuring that flexible apprenticeships are available for younger parents whose education has been interrupted by having children. Flexible

apprenticeships can offer part-time training as well as providing good quality, cost-effective childcare near or at the place of work. Teaching assistant apprenticeships would provide a pathway for those women who are keen to enter the teaching profession but have insufficient qualifications.

A lack of role models and mentors can discourage women from aiming for senior positions in female dominated occupations or can deter them from applying to more male dominated sectors. Nurturing female long-term involvement in STEM sectors will ensure a higher retention rate. The Welsh Government needs to provide funding and encouragement to participants to enable them to develop their own networks, engaging with both buddy and mentorship schemes that involve current and alumni members of the scheme.

Education and training opportunities are particularly important for women, who may have focused previously on care work rather than on their own progression. It is essential that educators and careers support providers should be counselled to encourage girls to consider non-traditional career and study options to raise female aspirations and open pathways to better paid and more secure employment, rather than women simply taking a job because it is similar to the paid work their peers or female family members do. The approach needs to be balanced and so employers should be made aware of the advantages a diverse workforce will bring to their organisation as well as ensuring that women can access mentoring and sponsorship schemes and have relatable role models.

Recommendations

- Flexible apprenticeships are required and steps should be taken to address their current gendered nature. Women are better able to respond to apprenticeships that are offered on a part-time basis, that provide good quality, cost effective childcare near or at the place of work.
- The Welsh Government should sponsor apprenticeships for teaching assistants in schools and childcare operatives in worker cooperatives.
- Apprenticeship providers should mentor and support those who are following an apprenticeship in gender atypical sectors and occupations. Nurturing female long-term involvement in STEM sectors will ensure a higher retention rate.

Caring Work

The literature reveals the requirement for a gender focused employment strategy that aims to close the maternal pay gap and childcare support so that mothers are better able to keep in touch with the jobs market when their children are of pre-school age. Measures that challenge the assumption that caring is women's work are to be encouraged, whether through education or improved parental leave. Changes should come alongside commitments to invest in a social care infrastructure that supports carers into work and provides carers with the flexibility to uphold a work life balance. This infrastructure would also support families who are taking on the caring of older or disabled family members. Effective investment would allow carers to reduce the time spent out of work and minimise the impact this has on progression and wages. Change also needs to involve investing in highly feminised sectors to improve the quality of work for staff through progression routes with integrated pay increases.

A number of recommendations emerge from the literature, that in conjunction with the devolved power of the Welsh Government could be implemented to mitigate the workplace restrictions

imposed on women by the nature of their gender and these are categorised according to childcare, parental leave and part-time work.

1. Childcare

The continued perception that women are carers first and earners second means that the availability and the affordability of childcare are very important factors in decisions about their labour market participation and career choices. Affordable childcare for very young children tends to be critical in shaping work decisions among mothers with a relatively low level of education, for whom high childcare costs are more likely to be a barrier to re-entry. Evidence reveals a positive and linear relationship between the quality of mothers' paid employment and the volume of affordable childcare. Yet the UK's current free childcare state provision is considered complex and lacks the flexibility required in deprived areas (Grimshaw and Rubery 2015). The Welsh Government's commitment to 30 hours free childcare for working parents of three and four year olds, 48 weeks of the year (Building Resilient Communities 2015: 31) is a step in the right direction, but needs to be extended and made more flexible.

Women do a larger share of unpaid work than men, no matter what type of household they live in, and regardless of their employment status. Unpaid work impacts the way that low income women in particular engage with the workplace. Low income women have less options to pay for their domestic chores to be performed by another and do not have the option to use a nanny. Decisions to choose sectors, occupations or employment basis are often made according to which jobs allow women best to combine work and family responsibilities. Policy interventions include protection linked to childbirth and maternity leave as well as the provision of appropriate childcare.

Female labour market participation could increase in terms of both quantity and quality if protection against employment termination is afforded to mothers after childbirth. This can be facilitated by joining parental leave measures with job protection regulations.

Many women fail to progress in their working lives as they perform a simple cost-benefit analysis of progression opportunities available to them. A basic cost of working can be calculated in terms of childcare costs, travel costs and the non-monetary value of the loss of flexibility and increased work commitment that a promotion may entail. The benefit is generally represented in terms of increased income and other non-financial considerations linked to self-esteem and companionship. Policy interventions that allow more senior roles to be performed on a fractional basis in which the work load is fairly calculated would lift one of the many barriers women face.

Similarly, returns to work following childbirth can result in women assessing the compatibility of the job with their increased caring responsibilities and the associated costs. Transitions to new employers or new jobs within the previous workplace tend to be associated with wage reductions and a long-term negative cumulative effect on mothers' wages, especially when associated with reductions in hours. Returning mothers would therefore benefit from rules, set by legislation or negotiated in collective agreements, which provide the right to return to the same job with reduced hours. Whether this is a form of flexible working entitlement that can enable reduced hours in formerly full-time jobs, or proactive actions to upgrade part-time job opportunities traditionally associated with slow career tracks, job insecurity or low-pay. Whilst employment is outside of Welsh Government powers, it could incorporate recommendations regarding returning mothers in Decent Work bodies it endorses.

Recommendations

- New models of elder and childcare should be funded, such as social enterprise and cooperatives, and incorporated into the more traditional models.
- Increase the availability of affordable, good quality childcare which is located at the employers' place of work or Higher Education site.
- Increase affordable, good quality childcare which reflects the atypical hours that non-traditional work patterns impose on women. This includes overnight and weekend childcare to accommodate the growing service sector in Wales increasingly met by women.
- Extend the provision of free childcare to under 3 year olds for low income parents.

2. Parental leave

The stereotyping of women as primary caregiver adversely affects women in the workplace. The literature supports the use of government policy to reflect and foster changing attitudes towards caring responsibilities. It is important that schools and workplace education is used to challenge the assumption that women are the main caregivers.

Workplace attitude changes can be nurtured through the Swedish example of paid parental leave reserved exclusively for each parent. The leave should be non-transferrable (Grimshaw and Rubery 2015; Tinson and MacInnes 2015; Sweden 2017). Households make financial considerations when deciding to reduce hours and by equalising the rates of maternity and paternity pay and Shared Parental Leave (SPL), the sharing of caring responsibilities within couples would increase.

Grimshaw and Rubery (2015) emphasise that setting a suitable length of parental leave is also critical. Many studies confirm the negative consequences for women of very generous leave programmes that allow extended employment interruptions, especially when employers are fully and directly liable to cover the associated costs. Studies attribute a marginal wage penalty effect for each year of leave, with many marking 12 months as the turning point; any longer turns into a career break and is marked by a significant increase in wage penalty. There are also clear costs for mothers of very short leave provision, associated with a high risk of women dropping out of the labour market altogether.

Recommendations

- The Welsh Government should lead by example by encouraging its employees to take Shared Parental Leave.
- A non-transferrable element of parental leave should also be incorporated into the policy.
- Schools, colleges and public services should be utilised to challenge the assumption of gender stereotyped jobs and to support the idea that caring is not solely the preserve of women.
- Maternity leave programmes should be long enough to encourage women to remain in the workplace.

3. Part-time work

In Wales, as in many other countries mothers' wage opportunities are shaped by the labour market capacity to provide good quality part-time jobs. Women are more likely to adapt their working life around caring responsibilities, which often limits their ability to train and progress as a result. Due to the lack of well-paid flexible jobs available, women are more likely to be overqualified for the job they do. In their analysis of the skills and quality of work in Wales, Felstead *et al* (2013) finds that women in Wales are in more skilled jobs than their male counterparts. Yet the skill content of the jobs occupied by women working part-time in Wales is lower than in other parts of Britain.

Returning mothers would therefore benefit from rules, set by legislation or negotiated in collective agreements, which provide the right to return to the same job with reduced hours. According to Bennett and Daley (2014) this may involve a form of flexible working entitlement that permits reduced hours in formerly full-time jobs, or proactive actions to upgrade part-time job opportunities traditionally associated with slow career tracks, job insecurity or low-pay. Part-time work is a considerable contributor towards the gender pay gap therefore Tinson *et al* (2016) urge the widening of training opportunities to part-time workers as well as increased opportunities for part-time work within high paid jobs.

Care must be taken when creating part-time jobs that the role requirements reflect the fractional nature of the contract. The literature shows that the expectations of duties and responsibilities in a part-time job are closely related with those set for a full-time job. Consequently, individuals find it difficult to manage the workload accompanying a part-time job and, equally, line managers face conflicting expectations concerning the design of a reasonable set of tasks for a part-time job. Grimshaw and Rubery (2015) advocate a more holistic approach to working part-time time so that suitable workloads and performance expectations can be designed for reduced hours' jobs that fit with the caring demands faced by workers.

Tinson and MacInnes (2015) in their report for the NPI, drew attention to the work of Timewise. The Timewise Foundation is a Community Interest Company which runs three core businesses, Timewise Jobs, Timewise and Women Like Us. All three businesses aim to help women find flexible work that fits around family life or provides career advice to women with children who struggling to cope with the time demands of a full-time job. The businesses also promote the societal benefits of flexible hiring through research, public affairs, and media. While Tinson and MacInnes (2015) advocate the use of these organisations, care must be taken to ensure that other measures are adopted to prevent childcare being identified as a solely female responsibility which requires a separate work pattern to accommodate these needs.

Recommendations

- The Welsh Government should lead by example by setting the expectations and work loads of part-time employment as a realistic reflection of the fractional nature of the employment as well as supporting a holistic approach to work that reflects both home and workplace responsibilities.
- The Welsh Government should encourage employers to provide mothers with the right to return to the same job with reduced hours.
- Through procurement measures, the Welsh Government should ensure that job specifications for part-time jobs should be upskilled and that training programmes should be offered to all employees, including part-time workers.
- A collaborative approach between Job Centre Plus and other organisations should be adopted to expand the number of flexible, good-quality, part-time jobs. Enterprises such as the Timewise Foundation should be engaged with to expand and enrich the part-time labour market.

Data Analysis

The best practice in the literature reviewed supports the increased use of gender-segregated data analysis, the use of accountability mechanisms and relevant tools such as gender responsive budgeting.

In order to develop a clear strategy for improving the position of women in the labour market the Welsh Government's policy in the area of gender pay gap reporting has the potential to be improved. From April 2018 all large companies (with at least 250 employees) are required to report their overall mean and median gender pay gap. Whilst this is a step in the right direction, Timpson *et al* (2016) believe that this duty should be extended to smaller companies employing up to 50 people to ensure a larger proportion of employers are covered by the requirement. However given that 27% of Welsh employees (300,000 people) are in small and medium-sized companies averaging 30 per company (Skills SE Wales 2016) and the high proportion of women working in them, then this policy should be extended to include both small and medium-sized businesses in Wales.

There is no difference in the poverty rate for men and women in Wales, but this is because income poverty is measured at household level and does not reflect, for example, the distribution of resources within households (Tinson and MacInnes 2015). The Community Benefits Measurement Tool attempts to capture the full range of Community Benefits outcomes, not just those aspects that can be easily monetised, and to provide a consistent way of measuring Community Benefit objectives (Building Resilient Communities 2015). The Welsh Government provides a guide (Community Benefits 2014) to offer advice on how to incorporate community benefits in public spending. However, there is insufficient focus on the capture of data to be able to identify the attainment of gender specific targets, which is essential if progress is to be made on eradicating gendered poverty. If programmes and policies aimed at tackling poverty are to be effective they need to be based on robust evidence and gender-disaggregated data.

- Mandatory gender pay gap reporting should be extended to include both small and medium-sized businesses in Wales.
- The Welsh Government should increase the amount of data analysed by gender, such as longitudinal pay analysis and more detailed spatial analysis to better inform policy.
- Gender disaggregated data should be collated for all areas of the Welsh economy, including the service delivery to start-up enterprises.
- The Welsh Government should perform GIA's in advance of every significant planned expenditure. Gender-responsive budgeting would improve training programme outcomes.
- Audits of gender targets should be performed and the results publicised.
- Wales should benchmark its gender performance against international data.

Rebalancing power relationships within organisations

In the UK, less so in Wales, there has been an increasing drive to limit employee involvement in organisations. The introduction of employment tribunal fees has increased the levels of power held by employers and inhibited employees pursuing unfair employment claims. Sectors that have traditionally employed women in low-paying roles are among the least unionised, according to Tinson and MacInnes (2015). This results in a growing trend towards less worker involvement in the running of companies in these sectors. However, redressing the balance between workers and employers would improve terms and conditions for low paid workers and as the TUC (2016b) has pointed out, can improve company performance.

The literature has indicated a number of different ways to foster a collaborative work place. Tinson and MacInnes (2015) suggest that larger companies set up a 'work-life' forum to strengthen communication links between employees and employer in order to negotiate pay structures, sick pay arrangements and resolve fair pay disputes.

The TUC's report *All Aboard* (TUC 2016b) makes a case for worker representation on company boards, pointing out that the UK is one of a minority of European countries with no rights for workers' voice within a corporate governance setting. Worker representation on company boards was an idea promoted by Theresa May mid-2016, however, since then, the UK government has moved away from the mandate (Pratley 2017).

A lack of an employee voice in the company is reflected in the Oxfam *Even It Up* report (Oxfam Cymru 2014). Oxfam Cymru recommends that Wales emulates other parts of the UK, including Scotland and Leeds, through the creation of a Poverty Truth Commission which would bring together people who are experiencing poverty and civic and business leaders to address the causes and consequences of poverty. The Commissioner could ensure that the different concerns and issues affecting women in poverty shape government policy and practice.

Recommendations

- The Welsh Government should encourage public bodies and private organisations to maintain a work-life forum to foster collaborative employment that supports workers achieve decent work.
- The Welsh Government should support the development of a Welsh Poverty Truth Commission to listen directly to people living in poverty with a specific remit to address policy from a gender perspective.
- The Welsh Government should encourage companies to involve employees in board level decision-making.

Section 7: Conclusion

A review of the literature reveals the factors that interact and position women towards the bottom of the labour market generally, as well as from a specific Welsh perspective. A universal conclusion of the research investigated is the necessity of a clear gender focused strategy to inform a multi-faceted policy response which will contribute to efforts to reduce the number of women working in poverty in Wales.

In light of the findings set out in this literature review there is a strong case for a more gender focused employment strategy. This would involve policy giving greater attention to the position of women in low-paying jobs. For all these reasons, tackling economic inequality and poverty with a gender lens must be a top priority for Wales. Clearly, the causes and symptoms of these issues are complex and wide ranging. As the Oxfam (2014) report indicates, the Welsh Government's *Tackling Poverty Action Plan* is a step in the right direction, but far more needs to be done.

Appendix A: Terms of reference

Oxfam Cymru terms of reference: Key sources and people to be consulted

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