



**9<sup>th</sup> November is Equal Pay Day - Women Work for Free From Today Until End of the Year  
- The Fawcett Society Urges People to Pledge to Close the Pay Gap-**

If somebody asked you to do your job for free from today until the end of the year, would you say yes? If you are a woman, your answer doesn't matter. As of today, thanks to the gender pay gap, you are effectively working for free\*. According to the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings by the Office for National Statistics, the pay gap for men and women working full-time is 14.2%. At the current rate of progress it will take over 50 years to close the gap\*\*.

The government recently pledged to do more to bring women's pay in line with men's, with David Cameron vowing to 'close the pay gap in a generation', but the UK's leading gender equality charity believes the Government will not achieve its aim without more being done to speed up the pace of change. As well as making recommendations of what the government and business can do to help bring about change, the Fawcett Society is also pointing out what individuals can do to make a difference.

Sam Smethers, Chief Executive, said: "There has never been a better opportunity to close the pay gap for good. Progress has stalled in recent years but with real commitment for government and employers, together with action from women and men at work, we could speed up progress towards the day when we can consign it to history.

"We welcome the inclusion of bonus payments and the extension of the new regulations to the public sector. But new regulations on pay should require an action plan alongside the pay gap with tough penalties for employers who do not comply.

"The message to women and men at work is – it's OK to talk about pay. How can we achieve pay equality if we don't even know what our colleagues earn? It is time to have the conversation and ask your employer if they are ready for the new pay gap reporting requirements."

**What can I do?**

It's OK to talk about pay. Here are some things you can do:

- Have a conversation at work about pay, find out what your colleagues earn
- Ask your employer whether they know about the new regulations which are due to come in to force next year, requiring organisations with over 250 employees to publish their gender pay gap figure and whether they are ready to implement this change
- Write to your MP and ask them what they and their party are doing to close the gender pay gap
- Make your own pledge for equal pay day using #paygappledge

As well as mobilising individuals to make a change, Fawcett is making the following key recommendations to businesses and the Government:

**For employers:**

- Advertise jobs at all levels in their organisation as flexible, part-time or a job share unless there is a strong business case not to
- Unblock the pipeline. Support women to progress to higher paid jobs. Tackle unconscious bias and use targets or quotas to measure progress and focus minds
- Over 60% of those earning less than the living wage are women – become a living wage employer.

#### **For government:**

- We welcome the government's announcement that employers will be required to publish their gender pay gap, but we believe they should also be required to show how they calculated it and commit to an action plan to put it right. Alongside this there must be meaningful penalties for those who do not comply
- Create targets for apprenticeships and aim for 50:50 recruitment. Apprenticeships are publicly funded but at the moment the ones in the highest paid sectors remain dominated by men. There is a £2,000 gender pay gap at apprenticeship level\*\*\*
- The introduction of shared parental leave is welcome but at the moment too few dads will be able to take it. There should be dedicated period of leave for dads paid closer to replacement earnings rate
- Build on the extension of free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds by investing in our childcare infrastructure so that we have affordable, flexible and high quality care for children of all ages, enabling more families to balance work and care
- Give women access to justice - remove harmful employment tribunal fees currently set at £1,200 which prevent women bringing equal pay claims and have resulted in a 80% drop in tribunal discrimination claims

For more information on the gender pay gap, please go to: [www.fawcettsociety.org.uk](http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk) or follow us on Twitter @fawcettsociety

- ENDS -

#### **Editors Notes :**

For interviews, images and additional information contact Abby Richardson or Lisa Sutherland at Fresh Communication:

[abby@freshcommunication.co.uk](mailto:abby@freshcommunication.co.uk) / 07876 378 733

[lisa@freshcommunication.co.uk](mailto:lisa@freshcommunication.co.uk) / 07801 979 987

**\* How is the pay gap calculated?** EPD is calculated using the mean full time hourly gender pay gap (calculated by dividing hourly female mean full time earnings by the male equivalent and subtracting the percentage difference from 100%), which at present is 14.2%. 14.2% of the year is 52 days – and 52 days from the end of the year is the 9<sup>th</sup> of November. These figures are based on the 2014 ONS statistics as 2015 figures are not yet available

\*\* This figure is based on the mean full time pay gap having declined 1.3% in the last 5 years. If it fell by 1.3% every 5 years it would take 54 years to reach zero.

\*\*\* Young Women's Trust 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015

[http://www.youngwomenstrust.org/what\\_we\\_do/media\\_centre/press\\_releases/319\\_apprenticeships\\_where\\_pay\\_gap\\_first\\_appears](http://www.youngwomenstrust.org/what_we_do/media_centre/press_releases/319_apprenticeships_where_pay_gap_first_appears)

#### **Equal Pay Day 2016**

Historically Equal Pay Day has marked the point in the year when the average woman effectively stops being paid compared to the average man. Next year, Fawcett and the TUC who organise equal pay day, have agreed to mark it when the average woman starts being paid (likely to fall sometime in February or March 2016 but we will send out an op note nearer the time). This will bring the UK into line with how Equal Pay Day is calculated in most other countries. It will also mean that Equal Pay Day does not fall just before the release of new official gender pay gap figures. The ONS will be publishing the 2015 gender pay gap on Wednesday 18 November.