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**70% of Men Believe Gender Equality Better for the Economy
- But 'Barrier Bosses' Preventing Progress says Survey from Leading Feminist Charity -**

Men believe that equality between the sexes would be better for the UK economy and themselves, according to a survey of over 8,000 people commissioned by leading feminist campaigning charity, the **Fawcett Society**, to mark its **150th year**. However, despite showing a clear desire for equality, the forthcoming '*Sex Equality - State of the Nation*' report also reveals that there are still significant barriers to progress that need to be overcome.

Fawcett's biggest ever survey, carried out by Survation, found that **7 out of 10 men** believe a more equal society between women and men would be better for the UK economy. Significantly, more than **a third** (39%) of men surveyed believe it would be better for them personally. Only 7% of men think they would lose out if we had a more equal society.

Interestingly, it appears that men are now the biggest supporters of gender equality. Overall men are **more** likely to support equality of opportunity for women than women themselves, with 86% of men wanting this for women in their lives, compared to 81% of women wanting it for themselves.

Sam Smethers, Chief Executive said:

"We won't achieve equality without engaging and persuading men. There is now an overwhelming majority who believe it would be better for the economy, for the women in their lives and a significant number who also see it as better for themselves.

"We have never had a better opportunity to create a more equal society. But despite this stubborn barriers remain."

The survey identified two major barriers to progress – firstly a small but powerful group of **'barrier bosses'** responsible for recruitment decisions, and secondly the fact that most people believe that men at the top won't voluntarily move over for women.

The poll included 1,422 people who are recruitment decision-makers and the responses from them reveal some cause for concern.

This group, which includes women and men, is less likely to believe in equality of opportunity. Indeed this group is more than twice as likely (16%) as the overall population (7%) to be **against** equality of opportunity for the sexes and more likely to believe they would personally lose out if women and men were more equal. A quarter of this group believes that a more equal society would **not** be better for the economy, compared to just

13% UK wide. 14% believe they would lose out if men and women were more equal; that's more than three and a half times the proportion of those not involved in recruitment (4%).

Sam Smethers continued

"A significant minority of managers - the '**barrier bosses**' - are holding us back. They are the ones with the power over recruitment and their decisions are likely to be informed by their attitudes to equality. There are many progressive employers who are working hard to drive change, but if they are wondering what is holding up progress in their organisation this may explain why."

"Whether it is conscious or unconscious bias, this is discrimination in action. These are the people responsible for implementing equal opportunities policies yet 16% say they are opposed to the idea."

"This is bad for individual employers, because they are not recruiting or promoting the best people, and bad for the economy as they are holding women back, failing to use their skills and expertise."

Significantly the survey also found that 6 in 10 people believe that men in top jobs won't make room for women unless they have to, with 64% of women and over half (55%) of men stating this. Half (49%) of recruitment decision makers also shared this view.

"This is at the heart of it. Despite the fact that men are overwhelmingly pro-equality a majority of people clearly believe that when it comes to the crunch, men won't move over unless they have to. This is why we need positive action and why quotas would make a difference."

"The argument has been won. We all want a more equal society but we also see that it won't happen on its own. We have to make it happen."

The Fawcett Society is calling for:

- Employers to use the opportunity of new equal pay regulations in 2016 requiring the publication of their gender pay gap to take a detailed look at gender equality in their workplace. That includes assessing women's progression at every level of their business¹
- Unconscious bias training for managers
- Removal of harmful employment tribunal fees which are a barrier to women bringing sex discrimination claims
- Time-limited use of quotas to get more women on boards, together with targets to see more women in executive positions
- Move to '**flexibility by default**' '**flexibility first**' – requiring all jobs to be advertised on a flexible basis unless there is a good business reason not to

¹ In 2016 the Government plans to implement Section 78 of the 2010 Equality Act which will require all employers of over 250 people to publish their gender pay gap

The full '*Sex Equality – State of the Nation*' report will be published on Friday 15 January 2016 at www.fawcettsociety.org.uk.

Further findings will be released shortly and some regional data breakdowns are on request.

- ENDS -

For more information, a copy of the report, images or interviews contact Fresh Communication on 0845 0945 468:

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Editors Notes:

* Survation polled 8,165 UK residents aged 18+ between 30th November and 3rd December 2015. The survey was conducted via online panel. Differential response rates from different groups were taken into account. Data were analysed and weighted by Survation to the profile of all UK adults aged 18+. Data were weighted by age, sex, region, household income, education and past vote. Targets for the weighted data were derived from Office for National Statistics 2011 Census data and the results of the 2015 General Election.

Because only a sample of the full population were interviewed, all results are subject to a margin of error, meaning that not all differences are statistically significant. For the whole sample (8165 respondents) it is 95% certain that the "true" value will fall within the range of 1.1% from the sample result. Subsamples will be subject to higher margins of error.

Survation complies with the rules of the British Polling Association and the MRS Code of Conduct