



Government Equalities Office

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Ms Jackie Longworth
Bristol, BS9 3NR

Our Ref: CMS 264834

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Dear Ms Longworth,

Thank you for your letter and petition to Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities Nicky Morgan, the contents of which have been noted.

Progress is being made in ensuring girls and women are able to realise their full potential. There are now more women in employment than ever before; since May 2010 there are 851,000 more women in employment and 163,000 fewer women unemployed. The gender pay gap (the difference between men and women's average hourly wages) is now at its lowest point in history at 19.1%. The right to request flexible working has been extended to all and shared parental leave was introduced in April 2015. Free early education hours for 3 and 4 year olds have increased to 15 hours a week and free early learning places have been extended to 40% of the most disadvantaged 2 year olds as of September 2014.

In working to end violence against women and girls (VAWG), the Government published a cross-government strategy, A Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls, and supporting action plan, which focuses on prevention, provision of services for victims, partnership working, and risk reduction and improved justice outcomes.

The number of women in Parliament has improved; 22.6% of MPs in the last Parliament were women, up from 19.5% in April 2010¹. There are eight women attending Cabinet, with a further 22 women in high profile roles across Government. Action has been taken to widen the talent pool from which candidates are elected. The Government implemented the provisions in the Equality Act 2010, enabling political parties to use positive action to encourage participation in politics among under-represented groups, whilst considering all prospective candidates on their merits.

In terms of healthcare, the Government has worked in several areas to help women. For example, two thirds of those suffering with dementia are women. The Dementia Challenge 2012-2015 aimed to improve health and care for people with dementia, creating dementia friendly communities and boosting dementia research.

Public Health England (PHE) is working with NHS England and the National LGBT Partnership to integrate sexual orientation monitoring alongside other demographic

1 Parliament website: <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lord-and-offices/mps/?sort=4&type=0>

data collection across the NHS. PHE is also working with the Lesbian and Gay Foundation to develop resources to support cervical and breast cancer screening for lesbian and bisexual women and has been providing specific support through the national screening programmes to ensure that trans women receive appropriate screening invitations, care and treatment.

In England, the number of inpatient Mother and Baby Units specialising in psychiatric care during the perinatal period increased from 10 units in 2010 to 17 units in 2014. An additional 4000 health visitors are in post with an additional 900 completing training. There are nearly 2200 more midwives than in 2010, with over 6000 in training. The Government has trained 600 perinatal mental health visitor champions who are supporting health visitors with the identification and management of anxiety, mild to moderate depression and other perinatal mental disorders.

Thank you once again for your letter.

Yours sincerely,

Ilana Myers
Government Equalities Office