



## Modern Workplaces

# Summary of Chwarae Teg's Consultation Response

August 2011

### *Introduction*

The UK Government has recently consulted with organisations and other stakeholders on various aspects of employment practises. The aim of this consultation is to identify how the Government can best support employers to develop modern working practises. The consultation covered four areas. These were:

- Flexible parental leave
- Flexible working
- Working time regulations
- Equal pay

Chwarae Teg gathered opinions from staff and stakeholders on each of these areas through a series of online surveys. Responses were then collated and analysed to form a general opinion which was presented in Chwarae Teg's final response.

This paper summarises Chwarae Teg's response to the UK Government's 'Modern Workplaces' consultation.

## **Consultation Response**

### **Part 1: Flexible Parental Leave**

Chwarae Teg believes that the current parental leave system is too complex and contributes to the disadvantages women face in the labour market. Furthermore, current arrangements entrench gender inequality within the family by supporting the mother-caregiver/father-breadwinner dichotomy.

Chwarae Teg recommends:

- 6 weeks maternity leave reserved for the birth mother
- 4 weeks paternity leave, paid at 90% average gross weekly earnings with no upper limit
- 46 weeks classified as 'parental leave' for the parents to share as they wish
- Fathers should have a new 'right' to attend antenatal appointments.

### **Part 2: Flexible Working**

Chwarae Teg supports the Government's proposal to extend the 'right to request' flexible working to *all* employees with a 26 week qualifying period. This right should apply to all workplaces with no restriction on the number of requests an employee can make in a 12 month period.

Flexible working benefits both the employee and employer. It can:

- Enable everyone with the potential to be economically active to engage with the labour market
- Encourage diversity in the workplace
- Build stronger families, happier communities and contributes to work-life balance and the health and wellbeing of the general population
- Minimise unnecessary overtime and reduce stress and sickness absence
- Contribute to the environmental sustainability agenda by reducing travel to work and peak-flow congestion

To encourage flexibility, employers should:

- Justify any requirements for a job to be conventional full-time and fixed location only
- Automatically offer flexibly unless there is a strong business case for the job not to be performed in this way

### **Part 3: Working Time Directive**

Chwarae Teg did not respond to this part of the consultation.

### **Part 4: Equal Pay**

Chwarae Teg supports the use of pay audits to increase transparency in situations where employers have breached the law regarding equal pay. Clear guidance and toolkits for different size employers would assist in removing the misconceptions regarding costs particularly for small employers. Audits should apply to all organisations. They should be published so that stakeholders can hold directors and managers to account. If an organisation does not comply with an audit requirement, they should receive a civil financial penalty.

An audit should require the collection and analysis of the following data:

#### **Pay, performance and reward information**

- Basic salary
- Performance pay
- Performance assessment
- Bonuses
- Overtime (paid)
- Allowances including recruitment and retention allowances
- Leave allowances
- Other benefits
- Starting salary to current grade or pay band

#### **Personal/other characteristics**

- Gender
- Working pattern (e.g. full-time, part-time or job share)
- Length of service in grade
- Grade or pay band

- Temporary promotion indicator
- Job Type
- Specialism
- Location
- Loan status
- Length of service
- Mode of entry to current grade

**Potential issues:**

- Pay audits may cause wages to be lowered to become equal instead of raised
- Equal Pay audits without the mandatory requirement of an action plan to address the causes of any gap may not result in any change

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If you would like to read the entire consultation response, please contact [christine.o'byrne@chwaraeteg.com](mailto:christine.o'byrne@chwaraeteg.com) or call 01554 785973 / 07837 284677

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