

# 'Mind the Reward Gap!'

## ECC Annual Conference 22 November 2018

### Conference Report

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Video interviews with the conference speakers are available on [our website](#).



## Key themes and learning points: the two-minute summary

### **Today gender; tomorrow race and disability?**

Several speakers and contributors discussed the likelihood of pay gap reporting expanding beyond gender.

### **Job Evaluation remains key!**

One of the foundations of good pay practice remains a systematic, transparent job evaluation approach coupled with clear and fair role descriptions.

### **Pay is not the only gender issue**

We also need to look out for and address gender imbalances in performance assessment, and variable links between performance rating and annual bonuses.

### **Make the unconscious, conscious**

Unconscious bias is unintended and can affect key reward and management decisions; but the first step in tackling it is to recognise this.

### **You are not alone...**

As a member of ECC you are part of a network of 125 universities and colleges across the UK. Speak to our Consultant team to find out more about ECC networking groups, and to tap into the experience and knowledge of other members and the wider ECC team.



## Introduction



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The ECC Annual Conference 2018: **Mind the Reward Gap!** was held on 22 November.

Attended by over 70 delegates from 40 member organisations across the UK plus representatives of partner organisations, the conference focused on challenges and solutions in relation to the gender pay gap, and explored the growing interest in other pay and reward gaps such as race and disability.

Our keynote speakers shared insights to help HR professionals tackle those challenges, and we ran three practical workshops exploring key issues:

- Pay risks and reducing the gender pay gap
- Streamlining role analysis: avoiding the pitfalls
- Unconscious bias and reward decisions

All the speakers' presentations are available on the ECC website [here](#).

We have uploaded short video interviews with conference speakers to [our website](#), so you can hear the key points first hand. The minutes of the 2017/18 AGM which took place during the conference are available in the Members Area of our website.

As ever we are very grateful to speakers, members and conference attendees for their positive and helpful input. The discussions on the day will be invaluable as we further improve and develop the work of the consortium in the coming months.

December 2018

## Keynote 1: Gender pay reporting: the response of the sector, good practice and future challenges



### **Alison Johns Chief Executive Advance HE**

<http://www.advance-he.ac.uk/>

[@AlisonAdvanceHE](https://twitter.com/AlisonAdvanceHE)

In a wide-ranging presentation, Alison outlined the role of Advance HE, formed earlier in 2018. She spoke very openly about some of the issues in merging three established organisations to create an effective new sector body. These included a number of leadership and HR

challenges, including restructuring, equal pay and job evaluation.

Advance HE is involved in driving and supporting a number of initiatives designed to promote equality in pay. Alison described some of the findings of a survey of HEIs on gender pay gap reporting, and sought to explain some of the reasons for gaps in English HEIs.

She also discussed actions being taken to address the gender pay gap, and shared good practice examples including focusing on women returners, shared parental leave pay, and steps to tackle occupational segregation.

Future challenges include the possibility of ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting, as well as the difficulty of comparing pay gaps across organisations and sectors.

Alison's presentation slides and video interview are available on our website.

## Keynote 2: A fast-changing environment - supporting staff in HE to flourish



### **Professor Mary Stuart CBE Vice Chancellor University of Lincoln**

[www.lincoln.ac.uk/home/](http://www.lincoln.ac.uk/home/)

Professor Mary Stuart delivered a very engaging and down-to-earth presentation, describing the major changes and challenges that preoccupy a Vice Chancellor in HE.

Mary brought us right up to date, considering very topical issues such as the potential scenarios should an HEI face financial problems, the role of the Office for Students and inevitably, Brexit.

She discussed her view of the important role senior managers must take in delivering fair reward, working patterns and pay. She also considered issues such as recruitment, talent management and development.

Mary emphasised the importance of having sound frameworks for support, reward and fairness, underpinned by clear job roles and objectives.

Professor Stuart's presentation slides are available on our website.

## Keynote 3: Gender and equal pay in the private sector



**Sarah Ashcroft**  
**Employment Solicitor**  
**PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP**

[www.pwc.co.uk/services/legal-services.html](http://www.pwc.co.uk/services/legal-services.html)

[@SAhcroftLegal](https://twitter.com/SAhcroftLegal)

In a highly informative session, Sarah focused on gender and equal pay reporting in the private sector, highlighting ways in which some organisations have sought to explain the context for their percentage gap.

This included examples where companies have provided additional data for example to take account of pro rating bonus payments or including company partners excluded by the statutory requirements.

Sarah sees a growing risk of equal pay challenges, particularly with the rise in class action type claims.

Future considerations identified by Sarah include equal pay reviews, the importance of job evaluation schemes and the expansion of pay gap reporting into other protected characteristics.

Sarah's presentation slides and video interview are available on our website.

## **Workshop 1: Pay risks and reducing the gender pay gap** **Run by Chris Charman, Mercer**

This workshop was packed with references and insights from a range of sources.

Chris was able to draw in examples of efforts to reduce the gender pay gap from a range of organisations, comparing Higher Education with other sectors.



He clarified the difference between equal pay and gender pay, a distinction which two thirds of the general population are, according to one survey, unable to make.

And pay is not the full picture – Chris also explored gender imbalances in performance assessment, and variable links between performance rating and annual bonuses.

Chris's presentation slides and video interview are available on our website.

## Workshop 2: Streamlining role analysis: avoiding the pitfalls

Run by Trudy Stedman and Kerry Bullen, ECC

In a workshop designed in response to member queries about 'streamlining' the role analysis process, ECC Consultants Trudy and Kerry shared experience, tips and do's and don'ts around tackling this issue.

Attendees completed a short exercise looking at how gendered language can affect the evaluation of a role, using real examples of the same role described by a manager who had produced different person specifications with a male and female candidate in mind.

As well as sharing practice with each other, participants received a new Good Practice Guide on the issue, available on our website.



The key is to look at reducing time while protecting the integrity of the process. There is no point in streamlining the process but risk losing the analytical aspects of the HERA or FEDRA schemes.

The workshop also led participants through a range of customisation options within the ECC Online software.

These include tailoring screens to present users with key information, using the 'what if' function to test how different responses to role elements affect overall scores, and making best use of reporting functions within ECC Online.

Finally, the workshop contained a pragmatic and practical consideration of the use of generic role profiles. In summary, you can use these providing they relate to all HERA or FEDRA elements and any matching process considers all elements.

Trudy and Kerry's Good Practice Guide is available in the Members' Area of our website.

## **Workshop 3: Unconscious bias and reward decisions** **Run by Peter Allen, Enact Solutions**

To what extent do we allow someone's appearance, name or background to influence our reward decisions? Can we truly claim that reward and performance decisions are free of bias? What can we do to identify and overcome unconscious bias?

In an entertaining but challenging interactive workshop, Peter encouraged people to openly and honestly share assumptions and judgments.



Participants shared their own experience and practice, and reflected on how these might inadvertently work against fair and equal treatment.



Although a sensitive area, these are issues where the first step is recognising potential problems, and willingness to challenge yourself in order to have a positive effect. Participants left with food for thought, and some valuable insights into avoiding unconscious bias.

Peter's video interview is available on our website.