**Supporting Working Parents: Pregnancy and Return to Work National Review**

Submissions from women and men who have experienced discrimination at work while pregnant, or while on or on return to work after taking parental leave

**Submission Number 294**

**Part C Submission Response**

I took one year maternity leave. While I cannot say I experienced any issues while pregnant, following my maternity leave I am still experiencing challenges. I strongly believe that my decision to have a child was a career killer (at least so far and the future is not looking any better unfortunately)!

I returned to work part time. While my company and my manager officially support flexible working arrangements, in practice it does not work very well. Since my return from maternity leave (18 months now) 2 women have left the company primarily because it does not support women and the flexible working arrangements.

I am reminded every day of the limitations of working part time. I am being told that it is easier and more convenient for the project managers to give work to single people who work full time and can work long hours rather than someone who is not available all the time. I am expected to work long hours with lot of unpaid overtime. As almost all my colleagues are men and are not primarily carers for their children or do not have children, it does not create problems for them.

Consequently, I have been given not challenging work, well below my skills and qualifications reporting to graduates even though I had been working in the company for more than 7 years before going on maternity leave. My career has not progressed since I got pregnant.

I have been honest with my employer by letting them know well in advance of my plans. I am also flexible, can work on days when I am not officially working and I am willing to work reasonable overtime when required. I think I have done everything I can from my side but unfortunately it has not been enough so far. Unsustainable work practice at my organisation are simply not attractive for women.

We do not have any female role models in my company. Only women than can climb the ladder are those who chose not to have children. It is very much boys club where career progress is reserved for men and does not have much to do with merits unfortunately.

Consulting industry that I work in is currently going through a tough period with very competitive market which makes us (women) even more vulnerable. There is an increased competition for the jobs and so far I have been left waiting for the right project to be won so I can possibly be given an appropriate role which matches my qualifications and skills.

I am seriously considering to find another job but given the industry I work in and their practice towards women I have a little hope that I will find better job. I am even considering changing a career altogether even though I love my job (used to love it and enjoy what I was doing). However, I love my family more and I am not prepared to do anything that would be detrimental to my family. Unfortunately, if I want to be happy at my current work I would need to give up on my family which simply it is not an option for me.

I think that it is very important that we have the review to see how big this problem is actually. I would like to see specific measures that would support women in progressing in their career whilst looking after their family, e.g. introduction of a quota system (min number of women on board etc.) similar to Norway. I am afraid that if left unchanged the situation will only get worse and valuable talents and skills will be wasted.