**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: 6**

**Part C Submission Response**

The challenges I faced were mostly around returning to work. I had let my line manager know well in advance that I was intending to return and was seeking to come back on a part-time basis. At this point he basically washed his hands of me (wasn't interested in taking me back part-time) and left me with HR to try and find a role in another part of the business that could accommodate my flexible working request (I had adhered to the company policy and completed all the required paperwork on this front).

For various reasons, HR made no progress on this front over the 3 months notice I gave them so I again made contact with my line manager to find out whether there would be any appetite to take me back to my old job or another within his team on a part-time basis whilst I tried to progress things with HR, thinking it would be an easier process if I was back in the business rather than being remote, and he said he'd consider it.

My contact in HR then asked me in for a coffee and general meet and greet, this was two weeks before I was due to return to work. When I arrived for our coffee catch up I was surprised to find not only my HR representative but two of my managers, I was then told that there were no part-time roles available, there were none expected to come up, I could return to my old role but on a full-time basis only and that I would be expected to work significant unpaid overtime.

I was given the weekend to consider my 'options' and request an extension of my parental leave if necessary. When I requested an extension in leave to make daycare arrangements for the additional days, I was told there was nobody in the office that could approve this and I'd have to wait for a response. When the (verbal) response was finally received after much chasing on my part, it was approved for 6 months despite my having requested 12 months (having been told I could only request an extension once and knowing the waiting list at daycare was between 8 - 12months), and they couldn't give me any explanation or rationale for this being less than the 12 months requested.

A few months later there was yet another change in HR personnel and out of the blue I received a formal response to my flexible working request - 6 months after it was submitted, despite company policy (and probably legislation) requiring that written response be given within 21 days.

I ended up returning to work a few months later (5 months later than expected) on a full time basis and raised a grievance against my employer as I felt I hadn't been treated fairly and a number of aspects had been very poorly handled. The grievance process was even more appalling.

At no point had my employer shown any willingness to be flexible on a permanent or short-term basis in order to help me in my efforts to return to work, they didn't even adhere to their own internal people policies and things that I was told explicitly by HR personnel were incorrect (and denied when raised as evidence in grievance dispute).

I feel that my employer acted in the way it did as they didn't want me to return, I know that having a family has hurt my career and earnings progression with the organisation that I have worked exceptionally hard for over 7 years. Banking - the corporate side of it at least - is one big boys club.