



# Women and Work APPG Annual Report: Women Returners

**12**

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## Women fear CV gaps for career breaks alienate employers

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The belief employers don't want to hire someone with a gap in their CV is the biggest barrier to some women returning to work, a group of MPs has been told.

The All Party Parliamentary Group on women and work calls for companies with more than 250 staff to put better programmes in place for returners.

It says existing "returnship" schemes rarely help women on lower incomes.

The MPs were examining reasons why women find difficulties in returning to work after a career break.

They cited the cost of childcare and the lack of a clear way back as key obstacles to returning to work.

Their report called for employers to take more note of the caring responsibilities of employees and to give the "sandwich generation" more help.

"Spending time at home with children or looking after elderly parents does not make women or men less capable and it should not be a deterrent when wanting to go back to work at the appropriate time", said the committee's co-chair, Flick Drummond.

### 'Lost talent pool'

In recent years, a number of companies have started introducing schemes to support senior women returning to work after a break.

Returnship programmes may include a three to six month paid internship, mentoring and coaching to improve confidence.

Dominie Moss, who recently founded the Return Hub, which submitted evidence to the parliamentary report, believes the benefits to employers of such schemes are clear: "It's an opportunity to repopulate the talent pipeline at mid- and senior levels. And what you get is highly engaged and highly motivated people."

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## Women fear CV gaps for career breaks alienate employers - BBC News

JAN 23 2017

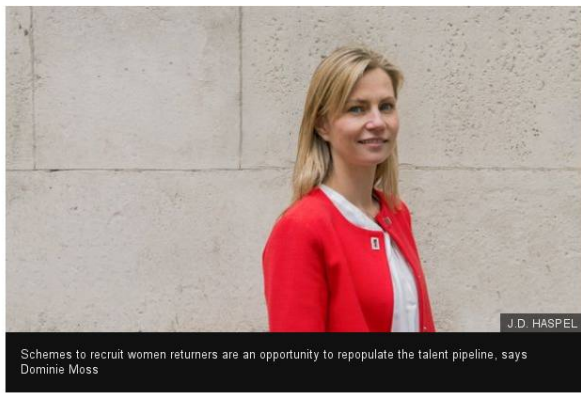
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(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **586M**

(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS: **24.8K**

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Ms Moss does have some enquiries from men, but the vast majority are from women, she says, as they are more likely to have taken time out of work to look after their family or to move abroad with a partner.

Despite these programmes being in their infancy, she says there is "significant demand" from employers for this "lost talent pool" of professional women who are looking for new positions.

The report from the parliamentary group on women and work recommended that all employers with a workforce of more than 250 people, across diverse sectors, should develop return to work policies for those coming back after an extended career break.

It also called on employers and the government to extend the geographical scope of returnship schemes, as most of them are currently based in London.

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# BACK TO WORK Mums trying to get back to work are unfairly penalised for having 'gaps' in their CVs, say MPs

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Women and Work called for maternity and parental leave pay to be "equalised" so parents don't miss out

BY LYNN DAVIDSON, WHITEHALL CORRESPONDENT  
23rd January 2017, 6:44 pm



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MUMS trying to get back to work are unfairly penalised because they have missing "gaps" in their CVs, MPs have said.

The cross-party Get Women Working report demanded firms provide more "return" schemes for mothers.



Mums are being penalised for having gaps in employment, MPs have said

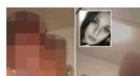
MPs looked at why women found it tough to go back to work after having kids, blaming expensive childcare and a loss of confidence.

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Women and Work called for maternity and parental leave pay to be "equalised" so parents don't miss out.

They also recommended statutory maternity pay for self-employed mums.



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# BACK TO WORK Mums trying to get back to work are unfairly penalised ..., The Sun

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1



ALAMY

3

MPs called for better schemes to help mums get back to work

Co-chair of the group, Tory MP Flick Drummond said parents were being put off taking shared parental leave because men ended up taking home less than the mums on maternity pay.

She said: "If we want to be a happier and more successful county, we must appreciate that some people take time out of the workplace for either caring responsibilities or to pursue other interests.

"But it is unacceptable that taking often unavoidable time out usually means forfeiting future earnings and economic success.

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"I would like to see a culture where we recognise that caring responsibilities have a positive impact on our ability to 'do the job' and that this is understood and valued by employers across the country".

Labour co-chair Jess Phillips said it was important for the economy – not just for social reasons – that women were supported by schemes that helped them get back in the workplace.

She said better paid paternity leave would help families.



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Jess Phillips called for more help to support getting mums back into work

She added: "I believe in equalising maternity and paternity pay and rights. If you both got nine months and took it one after another, you wouldn't need childcare for the first eighteen months."

The report recommended companies who employ more than 250 people develop "return to work" policies for staff coming back after an extended career break.

Studio: London New York

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Lifestyle Women Work

# Move over millenials: the rise of the 'returnship' for middle-aged mums



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In 'The Intern', Robert De Niro plays a widower who signs up to a senior citizen intern programme. CREDIT: FRANCOIS DUHAMEL/WAVELY FILM/REV/SHUTTERSTOCK

By Antonia Hoyle

23 JANUARY 2017 - 6:30PM

When Ines Faden started her work placement she was given a mentor to guide her through those tricky first weeks and sent to workshops to boost her confidence and brush up her technology skills. After three months, her enthusiasm and commitment was rewarded with a permanent position in the company.

Faden isn't a twentysomething taking her first step on the career ladder, however, but a middle-aged mother-of-two with a successful 20-year career in investment banking already under her belt. And her placement wasn't a graduate traineeship but a "returnship": a paid position aimed at bringing women like her - who were once senior in the workplace but have taken significant breaks to raise children or care for elderly relatives - back into employment.

Thanks to her placement Faden, 52, from Richmond, Surrey, is now enjoying a second career as a deputy treasurer, after taking six years out to look after her daughter Beatriz, 14, and son Xavier, 12. For her, the opportunity was invaluable. "I realised I wanted to be part of a company again," says Faden. "I missed office life, but a career gap is a mortal sin to have on your CV and I knew it would be difficult to find work."



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## Career break? You need a 'returnship' - The Telegraph

JAN 23 2017

(IMAGE 1 OF 7)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: 152M

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Ines Faden (CREDIT: (SUPPLIED))

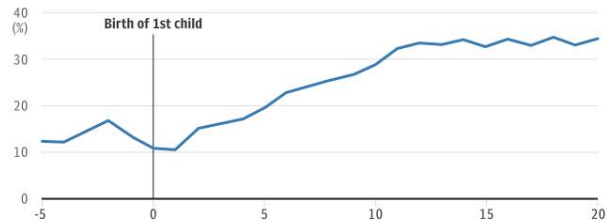
Most of us are familiar with the idea of work placements for graduate trainees, but the concept of “returnships” is altogether less commonplace. Yet the premise has been adopted by a cross-party group of MPs who yesterday urged the Government and employers to help more women who have had caring career breaks back into the workplace.

They say this will not only help bring a wealth of experience to employers, but boost the economy – research has found that increasing the number of women in work by just five per cent could create £750m extra in tax revenue.

“The UK has a massive productivity problem and I think that’s largely because we forget about half the population,” says Labour MP Jess Phillips, who launched the year-long inquiry with Conservative MP Flick Drummond.

“To the economy, a woman offers a massive boost to productivity. To an employer she offers a wealth of experience. We don’t think about how best to get women into work and we must be missing out on billions from women not working. There is a huge resource of people if employers could offer returnships to help women back into work.”

Gender wage gap  
Years since birth of 1st child



SOURCES: ONS, LFS

Returnships were first introduced in the States by Goldman Sachs in 2008, then brought to Britain in 2014 by fellow investment banks

# Career break? You need a ‘returnship’ - The Telegraph

JAN 23 2017

(IMAGE 2 OF 7)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **152M**

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Credit Suisse, Morgan Stanley and Deutsche Bank. Placements are typically between three and six months long and aim to brush up participants' technology skills, boost their confidence through coaching and reacclimatise them to the corporate landscape, often with the help of a mentor.

Twenty three companies offered returnships in the UK last year and around 90 per cent of those on placements are women. Often, the higher up the career ladder these women have climbed, the more of a lifeline they need after taking time off.

"There are significant practical challenges to getting back into work – it is very difficult to be hired into a senior role with a large gap on the CV," says Julianne Miles, managing director of [Women Returners](#), an organisation that champions returnships.



Planning a return to work can be daunting (posed by model) CREDIT: HERO IMAGES

"Returners tend to be ignored – there is a significant bias from employers against people who don't have recent experience. They are perceived to have lost skills and women themselves have diminished confidence. They're seen as too risky, effectively."

But in fact, experts argue, the opposite is the case – female returners offer significantly more value in terms of experience, efficiency and knowledge than millennials with fledgling careers.

Faden, having spent 20 years as a project financier for American bank City before embarking on her second career, is a case in point. "The hours were long and there was lots of travel," she says, of her first job. She took just four and six months maternity leave off after each baby before returning to manage two teams of 15 staff. It was only as her children became toddlers that she realised her family life was suffering.

"If I did manage to get home before the children went to sleep they'd be too tired to talk to me," says Faden, married to Paddy, 46, himself a project financier. "I missed school sports days, everyone thought the nanny was their mother and I was at risk of not knowing my children. Plus it was the middle of the financial crisis and my industry wasn't fun anymore."



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## Career break? You need a 'returnship' - The Telegraph

JAN 23 2017

(IMAGE 3 OF 7)

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So Faden took voluntary redundancy in October 2008, aged 44, to be a full-time mum to her children, then aged six and four. "I wanted my life back and it was great being with my children but after a few years I felt a loss of professional identity," she says. "I didn't want to go back into banking - the City was still depressed and there were no jobs - but I wanted to be part of a company." Still, like many returners, she admits to being "daunted" by the prospect of looking for work.

**“When women have career breaks they don’t lose their knowledge and skills – if anything they gain skills from working in a different way”**

Portia Hickey, work psychologist

“When women have career breaks they don’t lose their knowledge and skills – if anything they gain skills from working in a different way. After having children they learn to deal with pressure, multi-task in isolation, regulate their emotions and have someone completely dependent

on them,” says work psychologist Portia Hickey. “But there is a lack of appreciation for these skills and it is very common for women to lose their self-belief.”

Plus, says Mumsnet CEO Justine Roberts, who was consulted for the parliamentary inquiry, there are practical matters to consider: “The idea of returning to the workplace may be intimidating if you’ve been on leave for a long time, and there can be anxieties about whether skills have become rusty. Most mothers - quite rationally, given the motherhood penalty stats - will also be asking themselves a lot of worrying questions. Will they still get promotions and pay rises? Will their boss consider flexible working options? Employers’ attitudes are key here.”



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JAN 23 2017

(IMAGE 4 OF 7)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **152M**

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Yet Dominie Moss, who set up [The Return Hub](#), a recruitment consultancy dedicated to placing and supporting women re-entering the financial services industry at senior level, last October, stresses that these “highly educated women with established careers offer maturity and a fresh perspective. There is evidence that more diverse organisations have better profits and benefit from more diverse opinions.”

After a period as a freelance consultant, Faden contacted Women Returners in 2014, who told her about an impending opportunity at Tideway - a company delivering the Thames Tideway Tunnel to tackle sewage pollution in the River Thames - which [introduced a returnship programme for people who'd been out of work for two years of more](#) in April 2015; the first company outside the financial services industry to do so in the UK.

**“The idea of returning to the workplace may be intimidating if you've been on leave for a long time, and there can be anxieties about whether skills have become rusty”**

Justine Roberts, Mumsnet

Faden was accepted onto the programme in the role of junior corporate analyst, while given an induction into technology, one-to-one coaching sessions and workshops as part of her placement. “The pay was a lot less than I was being paid in banking but it was still a decent salary,” she says.

“There were seven of us on the placement - all women who'd had career breaks because of kids, who all knew how I felt,” and who are all now employed. [“It was strange being junior,” she concedes, though, recalling that her mentor and most of her colleagues were a good ten years younger.](#)

Feelings of self-doubt among returners are common, says Hickey: “It is easy for these women to overvalue the skills of youth and assume others will be better with technology.”

Fortunately, it was quickly recognised that Faden “was able to do more” - after three months she negotiated a permanent contract; within a year she was promoted to be the company's deputy treasurer. With her children now in secondary school, she is able to work full-time and espouses the benefits of the returnship. “They take away the riskiness of the career gap. There is no commitment on either side. It is like a three month interview. Other companies don't know what they're missing out on.”



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# Career break? You need a 'returnship' - The Telegraph

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(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **152M**

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## The forgotten army

Thousands of highly qualified women give up their jobs to raise their kids — then struggle to return to their careers. Finally, businesses are realising their value and setting up 'returnship' schemes to help them get back on track

Hilly Janes



The financier Lisa Unwin co-founded the She's Back network.  
ANNA BATCHELOR

The Sunday Times, February 5 2017, 12:01am

**I**t was a typical term-time afternoon. Lisa Unwin was sipping an americano in the cafe in Victoria Park, east London, after school pick-up. She'd been listening to Woman's Hour announce its Power List of the 100 most influential women. "Why aren't I on that list?" she asked herself, as indeed could many of the other women in the cafe, whom she knew only as somebody's mum or as someone who used to be something impressive. "This is ridiculous," she thought, "we are all kicking around, waiting for what exactly? I am 48, I have 20 years of working life ahead of me, but I feel as if my career is over."

Unwin, a former partner with Arthur Andersen and director of brand and

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## The forgotten army, The Times

FEB 7 2017

(IMAGE 1 OF 2)

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410



120

# "Returnships" will boost women in work, says cross-party MPs group

JAN 23 2017

(IMAGE 1 OF 3)

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Monday 23 January 2017 4:01pm

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## Big firms should roll out "returnships" to help women back from career breaks, says cross-party group of MPs

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Firms should offer returnships for those back from career breaks offering advice and support (Source: Getty)

Big firms should introduce paid returner programmes to help women **continue their careers after a break**, MPs have advised today.

A cross-party group of MPs on women and work has made recommendations from a year-long inquiry into "women returners"; to support those who take a career break and how to help them return.

Read more: [The gender pay gap has halved in a generation \(for this group of women\)](#)

Co-chair of the APPG. Conservative MP Flick Drummond. said:



(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS:

1.08M

(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS:

3.65K

DOMAIN AUTHORITY:

76



1



28

“ If we want to be a happier and more successful county, we must appreciate that some people take time out of the workplace for either caring responsibilities or to pursue other interests.

But it is unacceptable that taking often unavoidable time out usually means forfeiting future earnings and economic success. For example, on average, women earn more than men in their twenties, but when they turn 30 men begin to significantly outstrip their female counterparts.

Among the top recommendations from the group were:

- Equalise statutory maternity pay and statutory [shared parental leave](#) so couples aren't financially penalised for taking up the latter
- Employers with 250+ employees should consider putting in place paid returner programmes or returnships with guaranteed training, advice and support
- Government should enable mothers who are self-employed to claim a form of statutory maternity pay
- Businesses with 250+ employees should have a carers policy detailing organisation support available for those with caring responsibility

Some City firms already run returner programmes, but according to the Women and Equalities Committee, the number of women forced to leave their job because of fears about the safety of their child or pregnancy discrimination has doubled in the last decade.

Read more: [Trump could be a great job creator, if he backs working women](#)

The APPG inquiry heard from a range of organisations and individuals about the difficulties women regularly face when returning to work after a break of more than six months.

Kathryn Tyler, co-founder of digital skills training company Digital Mums, noted the "huge gap" left by mothers being unable to return to work because of lack of flexible working.

"To address this gap, we need to do more than give women the right to request flexible working in a meeting," Tyler said. "However, this is one area where a top down mandate isn't the answer. We must convince businesses of the benefits of flexible working if we are to create real change for women and workplace."

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# "Returnships" will boost women in work, says cross-party MPs group

JAN 23 2017

(IMAGE 2 OF 3)

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## 'Returns' boost to get women back into work

Sian Griffiths

January 22 2017, 12:01am.  
The Sunday Times



Drummond: change of culture  
DINENDRA HARIA/REX FEATURES

Forget internships, the new buzzword in employment circles is "returns" — work placements designed to help women resume their careers after having a baby or taking a break to care for elderly parents or sick relatives.

Now a cross-party group of MPs have seized on the trend and will tomorrow call on the government and employers to do more to help women re-enter the workforce.

One of the top recommendations from the year-long inquiry by the all-party parliamentary group on women and work is that firms should create paid returner programmes, or returns, with guaranteed training, advice and support.

Already in use by some City firms, the report highlights statistics that show that

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## Returns boost to get women back into work

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(IMAGE 1 OF 2)

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66



52



Lifestyle Women Life

# The rise of the midlife 'returnship': How adult internships are propelling women back to work



1 Comment



New 'returnship' schemes have been developed to reintegrate women who have taken a career break back into the workplace. CREDIT: GETTY

By Laura Silverman

5 FEBRUARY 2017 • 6:00AM

Sad, frustrating but true: women still find it harder to reach the boardroom than men. It's not so much a glass ceiling, as a concrete one, as women who have reached a senior level but then taken time off – to have children, care for elderly parents or live abroad – find it almost impossible to get back to work.

But there is hope in the form of the returnship, a paid programme of two to 12 weeks, intended to ease the transition. First introduced by Goldman Sachs in 2008, returnships have since trickled over here from the US, with scores of informal versions now on offer, including free online courses from the Open University.

And a fortnight ago, an All Party Parliamentary Group for Women and Work launched a report calling for more employers to offer returnships.

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03 Feb 2017, 9:44am
- 4** Peter Lawrence: My daughter Claudia has been missing for 8 years. Singing helps me cope  
02 Feb 2017, 10:30am
- 5** **PREMIUM** Inside the Secret Life of 5 Year Olds: Are gender differences fixed in nursery?  
01 Feb 2017, 2:00pm

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# The rise of the midlife 'returnship', The Telegraph

FEB 5 2017

(IMAGE 1 OF 8)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **119M**

(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS: **104K**

DOMAIN AUTHORITY: **94**

**350**
**1**
**2**
**220**

‘Without these schemes, employers fear these women won’t be committed and may assume their skills have vanished,’ says Julianne Miles, co-founder of networking organisation Women Returners. ‘It’s a real waste of talent and experience.’ So we asked three ‘returners’ how they really felt when plunging back into work.



Jacqueline Scott CREDIT: CHRIS MCANDREW

### Jacqueline Scott 45, business manager, O2

**Profession:**Telecoms

**Length of break:** 10 years (2006-2016)

**Reason for break:** To recover from burnout and have children

**Returnship:** O2 Career Returners, Slough (11 weeks)

I had two reactions from the mothers at the school gate when I announced I was returning to work. Some looked at me in horror, others wistfully. But even though I was also nervous, I was ready.

Before taking a break, I’d spent 13 years completely focused on my career in telecommunications, rising to head of a department at Kcom in London. My life was all about work. On an average day, I’d take phone calls at home from the Sydney or Asia teams at 6am, be in the office by 8am. I rarely arrived home before 8.30pm. By the time I left, in 2006, I was almost burnt out.

**“I posted my CV on a recruitment website but as soon as employers discovered the 10-year gap, they lost interest”**

Even so, quitting felt like jumping off a cliff. It took me a long time to adjust, even after having my two children, now aged six and eight. I didn’t consider returning to my old career until last year, when my children were settled in school.

In January, I posted my CV on a recruitment website but as soon as employers discovered the 10-year gap, they lost interest.

It wasn’t until I did an 11-week returnship that I finally got offered a job. I was thrilled – but returning to the workplace was admittedly a culture shock. I had to teach myself to concentrate for hours at a time, and there was the challenge of juggling a career with a family.

My husband, Richard, runs his own property business, and was always very involved with the children but he’s even more so now, so I’m quite calm about spending less time with them. At work I thought my colleagues would be younger but actually most of them are juggling family and career like me, so we have lots in common.



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220

family and career are me, so we have jobs in common.



London's finance district CREDIT: GETTY

One of the main surprises – other than getting to grips with new technology, which wasn't as tough as I'd envisaged – was the change in the dress code. Before my break everyone wore suits but now the men are in jeans and the women wear bright, patterned dresses.

The biggest change, though, is a more personal one. After having children, I started to think more about what matters to me. I want a career but I also want a social life and a family, so I've had to reinvent myself in the office in some ways. I'm more tolerant and have more perspective, but I'm also more direct with people, plus I value my job more than I did, even though it's no longer my sole focus. Then there's the salary, which I appreciate more than ever before.

Today my job is one or two levels beneath my previous role but that doesn't worry me as that will change in time and I didn't want to manage a team straight away. I see how far some of my peers have gone and often wonder where I might have been had I stayed, but I also know it's never too late. My manager is a grandmother, so there's still time.



Jenny Turner

### Jenny Turner 41, group account director, TeamSpirit

**Profession:** Advertising

**Length of break:** 10 years (2005-2015)

**Reason for break:** To move abroad

## The rise of the midlife 'returnship', The Telegraph

FEB 5 2017

(IMAGE 3 OF 8)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **119M**

(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS: **104K**

DOMAIN AUTHORITY: **94**



350



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220

**Returnship:** Golin & Fl Back2BusinessShip, London (six weeks)

I massively underestimated how hard it would be to return to work. I thought employers would welcome me back with open arms but, instead, they saw me as a risk. It was confusing as I used to be the typical ad agency girl, slogging away until 3am then flying to Prague or Edinburgh for a shoot the next morning.

I had assumed that I'd pick up where I left off. But it proved impossible. I emailed old colleagues, who all said how great it was to hear from me, but no one offered me any work. Potential employers kept saying, 'We're a bit concerned about your lack of digital experience'

**“Before the programme I'd felt undervalued, having had so many knockbacks, but it gave me a new confidence”**

I don't regret taking that time off - my husband Andy and I had been determined to experience a new culture and a different way of life, so we'd moved to a village in France, run a horseriding school and started an events company. But

it was also frustrating as I knew I had the skills to return to advertising.

I'd previously been in a senior position, so I had no intention of going back to the drawing board. A friend told me about a returnship programme and I thought I'd give it a go - it lasted six weeks and involved coaching and talks.

Advice from two of the women changed everything. The first, Sarah Bennison, chief marketing officer at Nationwide, taught us how to sell ourselves. The second, Bibi Hilton, managing director of PR company Golin, reassured me that everyone feels out of their comfort zone, so I wasn't alone.

Before the programme I'd felt undervalued, having had so many knockbacks, but it gave me a new confidence and I was offered a job at an ad agency soon after - and was given a promotion within months.

I was convinced that the industry would be practically unrecognisable, but it is much the same, other than the fact I'm 20 years older than most of my colleagues. They all expect me to know how to do things because I have 'life experience'. And reassuringly, I do.



## The rise of the midlife 'returnship', The Telegraph

FEB 5 2017

(IMAGE 4 OF 8)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **119M**

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Bernadette Ballard

### Bernadette Ballard 51, chief operating officer in compliance, Credit Suisse

**Profession:**Banking

**Length of break:** 16 years (1999-2015)

**Reason for break:** To have children

**Returnship:** Credit Suisse Real Returns, London (10 weeks)

When I returned to banking I was convinced that people would say, 'What's this old relic doing here?' I'd spent 16 years away, had two children (now aged 12 and 17), and I was 50 when I went back. I got my job at Credit Suisse after a 10-week returnship there.

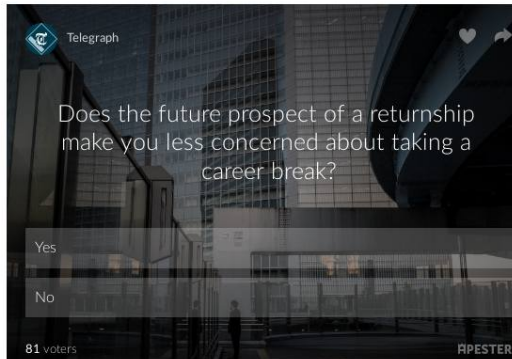
I was desperate to stay on afterwards, so I made myself known to as many people in senior management positions as I could, asking them about their roles. Returnships are as much about networking as they are about proving you can do a job.

**“Returnships are as much about networking as they are about proving you can do a job”**

It worked for me. I loved the buzz of the office, as I found having children and staying at home quite lonely. Going back, I got to reconnect with former colleagues and friends.

There are challenges, of course. These days I'm out of the house by 6.30am and usually return home at 8pm five days a week. I'd love to say I could juggle it all but it's impossible, so I have recruited a full-time nanny and housekeeper - something I'm not ashamed of in the slightest. It has taught my son to be more self-reliant and remember his own sports kit!

My children often say, 'You used to be a helicopter mother, now you're never here.' I don't regret taking that break to look after them though. If I'd stayed I'd be more senior but taking time out has allowed me to see them grow up and meant I'm closer to them than I would have been, something that no career could ever replace.



For more information, visit [corp.womenreturners.com](http://corp.womenreturners.com)

# The rise of the midlife 'returnship', The Telegraph

FEB 5 2017

(IMAGE 5 OF 8)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **119M**

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Letitia Davis 6 Feb 2017 2:17PM

The article needs some perspective. Recent research by the 30% Club, PwC and Women Returners estimated there are some 427,000 professionally qualified women who would wish to return to work following a career break. With around 100 women currently on returnships such as those in the article, it leaves the remaining 426,900 returners needing to find another route.

The article implies that joining a returnship is a matter of personal choice, however when these programmes with intake in single figures attract 1,000+ applications, they are a drop in the ocean and not something that one simply decides to do by one's own volition. The problem is much more with the deeply held biases among employers and recruiters, that taking some years out will reset one's skills to zero and that to return, requires the monocultural response of a returnship programme.

The world of work is changing rapidly and flexible work patterns are key for everyone, so women (and men) returning should be able to slot into roles at the right level, and apply their demonstrable skills to add value, through standard recruitment processes, provided those doing the recruiting have the skills to recognise the value of candidates returning. Returnships have undoubted value for those who can participate in them, but they are far from the solution for the vast majority.

Flag

# The rise of the midlife 'returnship', The Telegraph

FEB 5 2017

(IMAGE 8 OF 8)

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## MPs call for action on women returners

JAN 23 2017  
(IMAGE 1 OF 2)

### MPs call for action on women returners

Jenny Roper, JANUARY 23, 2017



A cross-party group of MPs is calling on the government and employers to do more to help women enter and re-enter the workforce.

Members of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Women and Work (APPG) have released a report entitled *Women Returners*, which makes a series of recommendations.

The APPG's inquiry, which was launched by Flick Drummond MP and Jess Phillips MP at the beginning of 2016, has heard from a range of organisations and individuals about the difficulties women experience when returning to work after a break of more than six months.

Evidence was received from organisations including The Return Hub, Young Women's Trust, 5Live, Mumsnet and CIPD.

The report's main recommendations are:

1. Equalise Statutory Maternity Pay and Statutory Shared Parental Leave Pay so that couples are not financially penalised if they choose to take up Shared Parental Leave.
2. Government to enable mothers who are self-employed to claim a form of 'Statutory Maternity Pay' and re-examine how the self-employed are treated for maternity and paternity related benefits.
3. Government to work across all departments, in consultation with disabled user groups, to help women with disabilities secure employment and progress in the workplace.
4. Government to consider offering more flexible, targeted support to a smaller number of parents for whom free childcare is most likely to make the biggest difference.
5. Every workplace with 250 or more employees should have a carer's policy detailing organisational support available.
6. Employers with 250 or more employees should consider putting in place paid returner programmes or returnships with guaranteed training, advice, and support.
7. Government to take further steps to diversify the apprenticeships sector by specifying that a percentage should be part-time or flexible.
8. Employers should launch a flexible working kitemark with official accreditation and assessment.
9. Schools should ensure that information about self-employment and entrepreneurship are on the curriculum at secondary and sixth form level.

Dominie Moss, founder of The Return Hub and a contributor to the report, explained what a returner programme typically looks like at the "30 or so larger employers" currently running such initiatives.

"It is typically a three to six month paid internship either full time or part time where participants work in a business area relevant to their skills and interest," she told *HR* magazine. "The best programmes have a mentoring or buddy system, offer some technical skills re-training and also coaching to help returners regain their professional confidence. There are lots of opportunities for networking and being part of a cohort means there is additional support from their peer group."

Regarding the report's first recommendation of equalising statutory maternity and parental leave pay, she said "the government needs to act."

"The current system is unfair on both mothers and fathers and it seems obvious they should be treated equally," she continued. "I think it is only a matter of time before employers will have to offer the same maternity and shared parental leave pay to mothers and fathers and the sooner the better."

Moss added that further steps to diversify apprenticeships should involve employers being able to "use funds from the apprenticeship levy for their returner programmes so that more firms are incentivised to offer them".

Speaking at the report launch, co-chair of the APPG, conservative MP Flick Drummond said: "If we want to be a happier and more successful county, we must appreciate that some people take time out of the workplace for



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2



14

either caring responsibilities or to pursue other interests."

She added: "I would like to see a culture where we recognise that caring responsibilities have a positive impact on our ability to 'do the job' and that this is understood and valued by employers across the country."


"There is huge economic 'carrot' for the government to do so – increasing overall maternal employment by up to 5% could generate around £750 million in increased tax revenue and decreased benefit spending for the country," added Moss.

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# MPs call for action on women returners

JAN 23 2017

(IMAGE 2 OF 2)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **82K**

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Professional women: Get involved and have your say on the issues that matter to you – Flick Drummond MP, Co-chair of the Women and Work All Party Parliamentary Group

on January 25, 2017 in Q&A Leave a comment



Flick Drummond was elected in 2015 as the Member of Parliament for Portsmouth, South, and she is interested in defence, foreign policy, education and health. She sits on the Women and Equalities Select Committee as well as various APPGs [all party parliamentary groups] covering her interests including co-chairing the Women and Work APPG and chairing the Cybersecurity APPG. Flick has a degree in South East Asian Studies from Hull University and a Masters in International Relations from Southampton University, having worked as an insurance broker, Ofsted lay school inspector and as a member of the Territorial Army Intelligence Corps.



Flick Drummond MP

“...We would like more women to contribute to our discussions and they are open to anyone to come and listen or ask questions...”

Flick, please can you tell us about your career to date and what made you want to become an MP?

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Professional women: Get involved and have your say on the issues that matter to you-Womanthology

JAN 25 2017

(IMAGE 1 OF 3)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: 8.15K

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DOMAIN AUTHORITY: 33

I became an MP in 2015 after a long time trying to get there – this was my third time of standing. I wanted to become an MP to change the education system. That was a long time ago but there is still plenty to do.

### What does your role involve on a day to day basis?

It is a mixture of working in committees and speaking in debates in the House of Commons' Chamber. There are also constituents' emails and letters to respond to.

### How did you get involved with the Women and Work APPG?

Jess Phillips MP and I are on the Women and Equalities Committee and we felt that there was a need for a group to look in more detail into some of the issues facing women in the workplace, so we set it up in January 2016.



### Please can you tell us more about the group and its remit?

We are looking at the barriers to women in the workplace and how to improve the lives of women working.

### What is the crossover between the role of the Women and Work APPG and the Women and Equalities Committee?

There is crossover in some of the issues but the Government does not have to respond to any inquiries that we might do in the APPG, they do have to respond with action points to any inquiries that the Women and Equalities Committee puts forward.

### A report has just been published about the work of the group – what topics does it cover?

This is our first report and we have concentrated on women returning to work and what the issues are in why women are finding it difficult to return to the workplace. You can read it [here](#).

### What are the greatest frustrations and opportunities for the group?



We haven't had any frustrations yet, we are very lucky that there are three women who help us run the

group. The opportunities are endless and we have so many ideas that it is going to take us years to get through them. We would like more women to contribute to our discussions and they are open to anyone to come and listen or ask questions.

### What are you working on for 2017?

We are looking at sectors where there are few women, especially in the technology sector, and also how automation affects jobs. We are also going to look further at apprenticeships.

<https://www.flickdrummond.com/>

<https://twitter.com/flickd>

<http://connectpa.co.uk/the-women-and-work-all-party-parliamentary-group/>

#DubaiLitFest @EmiratesLitFest team meeting talking about our 2017 favorite authors. They'll be tweeting their choices soon. Diversity!

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# Professional women: Get involved and have your say on the issues that matter to you-Womanthology

JAN 25 2017

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# Professional women: Get involved and have your say on the issues that matter to you-Womanthology

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**MNHQ here: webchat with MPs Jess Phillips and Flick Drummond** (313 Posts)

**BojanaMumsnet (MNHQ)** Fri 20-Jan-17 09:28:30 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)



Hello,

We're pleased to announce a webchat with Jess Phillips MP and Flick Drummond MP, co-chairs of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Women and Work, on Monday 23 January at 2pm.

Monday sees the release of the APPG's first annual report, which explores the broad theme of 'women returners.' It has considered 'a range of diverse issues which impact on the ability of women to return to the workplace, particularly after taking maternity leave or fulfilling caring responsibilities.'

**Jess Phillips** is the Labour MP for Birmingham Yardley. Before this, Jess spent five years working for Women's Aid, and served on Birmingham City Council, where she was appointed Birmingham's first ever Victims' Champion. Since being elected to Parliament in 2015, Jess has served on the Women and Equalities Select Committee and the Backbench Business Committee. Last year she authored a [guest post](#) on Mumsnet in support of the Reclaim the Internet campaign.

**Flick Drummond** is the Conservative MP for Portsmouth South. Prior to her election in 2015, she worked as an insurance broker, Ofsted lay school inspector and was a member of the TA Intelligence Corps. Flick now sits on the Women and Equalities Select Committee, where her work has included contributing to the Gender Pay Gap inquiry, in which she called for more flexible working conditions to be offered at the start of employment. Flick cites her own experience of re-entering the jobs market after raising her children as important in giving her a first-hand account of the unique difficulties that women face in the workplace.

So if you'd like to talk to Jess and Flick about women and employment, returning to work, their experience of being women MPs (or just plain MPs), sounding off on Twitter or anything else that takes your fancy, do please join us on Monday. As always, please do keep in mind our [webchat guidelines](#) - one question each (follow-ups if there's time) and please be polite!

Thanks  
MNHQ

**EmpressOfTheSpartacusOceans** Fri 20-Jan-17 18:06:45 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

Hello

Record numbers of girls are presenting at gender clinics and saying that they don't want to be women. I'd like to ask what you think the reason for this is and what you think should be done

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DOMAIN AUTHORITY: **73**

**300**

**1**

women. I'd like to ask what you think the reason for this is and what you think should be done to help them?

Thank you,

**ItsAllGoingToBeFine** Fri 20-Jan-17 18:56:05 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

I'm interested in **Empress** question,

Additionally I would like to ask, as women who campaign for women's rights, how do you define women? Is it based on sex, or do you feel traditionally-classified-male bodied individuals are also women if they feel that they are?

**dorade** Fri 20-Jan-17 21:07:24 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

I'd like to ask Jess, as a member of the Women and Equalities Committee, do you agree with the Committee's recommendation that anyone should be able to self-identify as a woman? Do you agree with the way that women's groups who made representations to the Transgender Inquiry were dismissed by Maria Miller MP as 'purported feminists'? Would you be happy with teenage girls sharing showers and changing rooms with male-bodied people who 'identify' as women?

**AskBasil** Fri 20-Jan-17 21:21:13 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

Could you please define what you mean by woman.

Is [this person](#) a woman? If you don't think he is (I don't) then you are a transphobic bigot, according to transdoctrin. If you do, then what is a woman, please?

Maria Miller believes he should be allowed to self-define as a woman and go and shower in the same showers as my teenage daughter in a public gym - because he self-defines as a woman. She believes I'm a bigot because I don't agree that men who look like this should be able to simply define as a woman and then go and share spaces where women are vulnerable, like changing rooms and rape crisis centres.

Do you agree with her?

**RobDykeWatcher** Fri 20-Jan-17 21:48:22 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

I'd like to ask what if anything will ever be done to bring child care provision out of the dark ages. Unless you're lucky enough to have a nine-to-five or relatives to help it's all but impossible to go back to work

**TresDesolee** Fri 20-Jan-17 22:16:45 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

How did you two come to work together on this? I've read that legislatures with more women tend to display higher levels of cross-party cooperation and are more efficient at getting reaching consensus and (ya know) getting stuff done. Do you think that's true?

**Kennington** Sat 21-Jan-17 06:57:25 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

Nursery childcare is too expensive. Will there be subsidies for all? Many women I know just give up work and then can only return to poorly paid employment.

**TammySwansonxx** Sat 21-Jan-17 08:33:38 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

Do you think the move to reclassify women and men along identity lines instead of biological sex has any impact on women in work? For example do we risk losing sex based protections if "men" can also get pregnant and breastfeed? Do we risk losing sight of the causes if the gender pay gap if men identifying as women are included in female pay rates - for example the "highest paid female CEO in America " was a man when appointed to the role. Do you think that male born people should count towards the number of women on boards, in STEM careers, etc?

**AssassinatedBeauty** Sat 21-Jan-17 09:02:09 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

Do you support the idea of increasing paid paternity leave and making it "use it or lose it basis", so that men can take a longer time off alongside their partners? I don't feel that shared parental leave as it is currently set up works for many people.

**bonfireheart** Sat 21-Jan-17 09:52:48 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

Jess, I live in Yardley. The area has become a mess since you took over. The rubbish strewn everywhere, businesses just dumping rubbish in the streets. We've stopped walking and instead take the car because I don't want to subject my child to walking across that stinking mess. Any chance you could do something about it please?

**DeviTheGaelat** Sat 21-Jan-17 10:30:29 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

I think key to encouraging women to return to work and make the most of employment potential is to encourage men to be more involved in child rearing so that "trying to have it all" isnt

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# MNHQ here: webchat with MPs Jess Phillips and Flick Drummond | Mumsnet Discussion

(IMAGE 2 OF 4)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **8.26M**

(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS: **31.4K**

DOMAIN AUTHORITY: **73**



**300**



**1**

seen as a criticism uniquely aimed at working women. What do you think the government should do to encourage greater take up of shared parental leave? What do you think about making paternity leave longer and "use it or lose it" with the aim of having as many men as women taking leave?

Datum Sat 21-Jan-17 10:34:22 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

Jess,

Could you explain how Maria Miller's report on transgenderism not only failed to address the issue of autogynephilia, but didn't even mention it.

Particularly in the light of Ray Blanchard's studies which stated that late transitioning males have an 80-100% chance of having the condition. Which is a male only fetish, women don't have it.

DevilTheGaelet Sat 21-Jan-17 10:47:49 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

Sorry **assassin** I didn't RTFT 😞

AssassinatedBeauty Sat 21-Jan-17 11:07:23 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)



CockacidalManiac Sat 21-Jan-17 11:20:44 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

No questions, but just to say that I think that Jess is fab 🍷🍷

Albadross Sat 21-Jan-17 11:51:44 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

I'm concerned that gender stereotypes women have worked so hard to break down are being reinforced by people appropriating gender for their own personal gain.

Media, schools, and other key organisations are being disproportionately influenced by a small minority of people with money and a platform into decisions around policy that negatively impact children and families, who are being let down by a lack of adequate support.

Can you offer any reassurance that MPs are not going back the spending of money urgently needed for mental health care on things like puberty blockers for children without proper consultation and consideration of all the factors involved?

user1475253854 Sat 21-Jan-17 12:11:21 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

Jess, how do you restrain yourself from punching Philip Davies?

illegitimateMortificadospawm Sat 21-Jan-17 12:16:54 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

We know that academic attainment is a key foundation for later career development and progress. What are your views on the recent [parliamentary report](#) into the high level of sexual harassment that girls are subjected to in schools? What should government and society be doing to address this issue? Also, what problems do you think this behaviour poses for the future workplace when these teenage boys are in the workforce? (As a point of reference, there are many threads on mumsnet where women are trying to support daughters in school who are being subjected to a level of assault or harassment which would constitute gross misconduct in most workplaces and is illegal too, but schools are minimising it & sweeping it under the carpet.)

Prawnofthepatriarchy Sat 21-Jan-17 13:20:28 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

Placemarking

BeyondCanSeeTheEmperorsBellend Sat 21-Jan-17 13:27:49 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

Also placemarking

lucydogz Sat 21-Jan-17 13:34:59 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

No questions, just to say I think Jess Phillips should make an apology about her comments about Cologne NYE before anything else

Namejustfornappies Sat 21-Jan-17 16:00:36 [Add message](#) | [Report](#)

As an ex secondary school teacher I have many ex colleagues who are also ex teachers. The majority are female and left teaching due to the insane workload and pressure being incompatible with a family - unless maybe you have huge amounts of family support, or are happy to have your children in wrap around care for 12 hours a day. I believe this is a similar situation in many areas of the NHS.

As these are two areas of employment that the government has huge control and impact on, can you tell me why the government cannot lead by example in making teaching and healthcare more family friendly?

There are many initiatives that could help - salary to recompense actual hours worked, stronger incentives to accept part time requests, etc.

(For example as a teacher with a 50% timetable between dc1&2 I was working a 45 hour week for a salary of £15k. And due to timetable pressure common in many schools my day off was different depending on whether it was week 1 or week 2 of the timetable - meaning a full weeks childcare was needed.)

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Jess, I follow you on Twitter and get quite upset at the level of abuse you get from random men generally but more so from Corbyn supporters. Do you think there is a problem with misogyny in the far left of our party?

Flick, I am one of your constituents and I have two questions.

1 Why did you vote against abolishing the tampon tax?

2 When is something going to be done about the Waverley Road situation? I have to take a detour on the walk to school as I don't feel safe walking my children there even in broad daylight.



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## Government urged to strengthen support for women returners

24 Jan 2017

Wow, 5,619 of you have read this.

**UK employers need to do more to help women enter and re-enter the workforce, a cross party group of MPs have urged.**

A year-long enquiry into 'women returners', by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Women and Work (APPG), has published its findings and recommendations for supporting women in the workplace and shared parental leave.

The APPG's inquiry was launched by Flick Drummond MP and Jess Phillips MP at the start of 2016. Evidence was received from a range of organisations, including The Return Hub, Young Women's Trust, 5Live, Mumsnet and CIPD.



Speaking at the launch, co-chair of the APPG, Conservative MP Flick Drummond MP said: "If we want to be a happier and more successful country, we must appreciate that some people take time out of the workplace for either caring responsibilities or to pursue other interests.

"But it is unacceptable that taking often unavoidable time out usually means forfeiting future earnings and economic success. For example, on average, women earn more than men in their twenties, but when they turn 30 men begin to significantly outstrip their female counterparts.

"I would like to see a culture where we recognise that caring responsibilities have a positive impact on our ability to 'do the job' and that this is understood and valued by employers across the country".

"Women Returners" makes a series of recommendations aimed at supporting women from the moment they take a career break, for example because of motherhood and caring responsibilities, to how best to support them to return to the workplace, for example through flexible working, self-employment and enterprise, and apprenticeships."

The Women and Work All Party Parliamentary Group was created to promote discussion around women and work. The group is supported by Centrica, the Shaw Trust, IPSE and RBS, the APPG.

Labour co-chair, Jess Phillips MP added: "Improving women's labour market participation is not just important for well-rehearsed social reasons, it matters to our economy.

"It is unsurprising that some of the best examples of schemes to support and encourage women back into work came from the private sector where the business case of recruiting and keeping the best talent is understood.

"This report and its recommendations begin a conversation about the importance of getting women working and we will continue to work with Government, the private and public sectors, and most

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JAN 24 2017

(IMAGE 1 OF 3)

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training, and the firm continues to train their executives, and private and public sectors, and most importantly women themselves to make sure that everyone is able to make a full contribution to our economy."

### The report made the following recommendations:

1. Equalise Statutory Maternity Pay and Statutory Shared Parental Leave Pay so that couples are not financially penalised if they choose to take up Shared Parental Leave.
1. Government to enable mothers who are self-employed to claim a form of 'Statutory Maternity Pay' and re-examine how the self-employed are treated for maternity and paternity related benefits.
2. Government to work across all departments, in consultation with disabled user groups, to map and better understand what is needed to help women with disabilities to secure employment and progress within the workplace.
3. Government to consider offering more flexible, targeted support to a smaller number of parents for whom free childcare is most likely to make the biggest difference.
4. Every workplace with 250 or more employees should have a carers policy detailing organisational support available for those with caring responsibilities.
5. Employers with 250 or more employees should consider putting in place paid returner programmes or returnships with guaranteed training, advice, and support.
6. Government to take further steps to diversify the apprenticeships sector by specifying that a percentage of apprenticeships should be part-time or flexible.
7. Employers should promote best practice through a flexible working kitemark with official accreditation and assessment to increase flexible working visibility and actively encourage the uptake of flexible working.
8. Schools should ensure that information about self-employment and entrepreneurship are on the curriculum at secondary and sixth form level.

[You can read the full report here.](#)

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**KAYLEIGH BATEMAN**

Kayleigh Bateman is the head of digital content and business development at WeAreTheCity. As a journalist there she covers stories about women in IT and looks after its women in



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technology community. She was previously the special projects editor for Computer Weekly and editor of CW Europe. Kayleigh attended the University of Hertfordshire, where she studied for her BA in English literature, journalism and media cultures. You can contact her at [kayleigh@wearethecity.com](mailto:kayleigh@wearethecity.com)

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- JAN 26** Thu 2017 **19:00** Women in IT Awards @ InterContinental
- JAN 31** Tue 2017 **09:30** The Social Media Masterclass 2017 @ Online
- 11:45** 'People like me' goes digital | ... @ CA Technologies
- 20:00** Dreaming to Doing | Free Live M...
- FEB 2** Thu 2017 **08:45** First Women Summit | The Waldorf... @ The Waldorf Hilton, London
- FEB 3** Fri 2017 **08:00** Success Talks Conference 2017 @ The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS)
- FEB 4** Sat 2017 **10:00** Happenista Retreat @ Down Hall Country House Hotel

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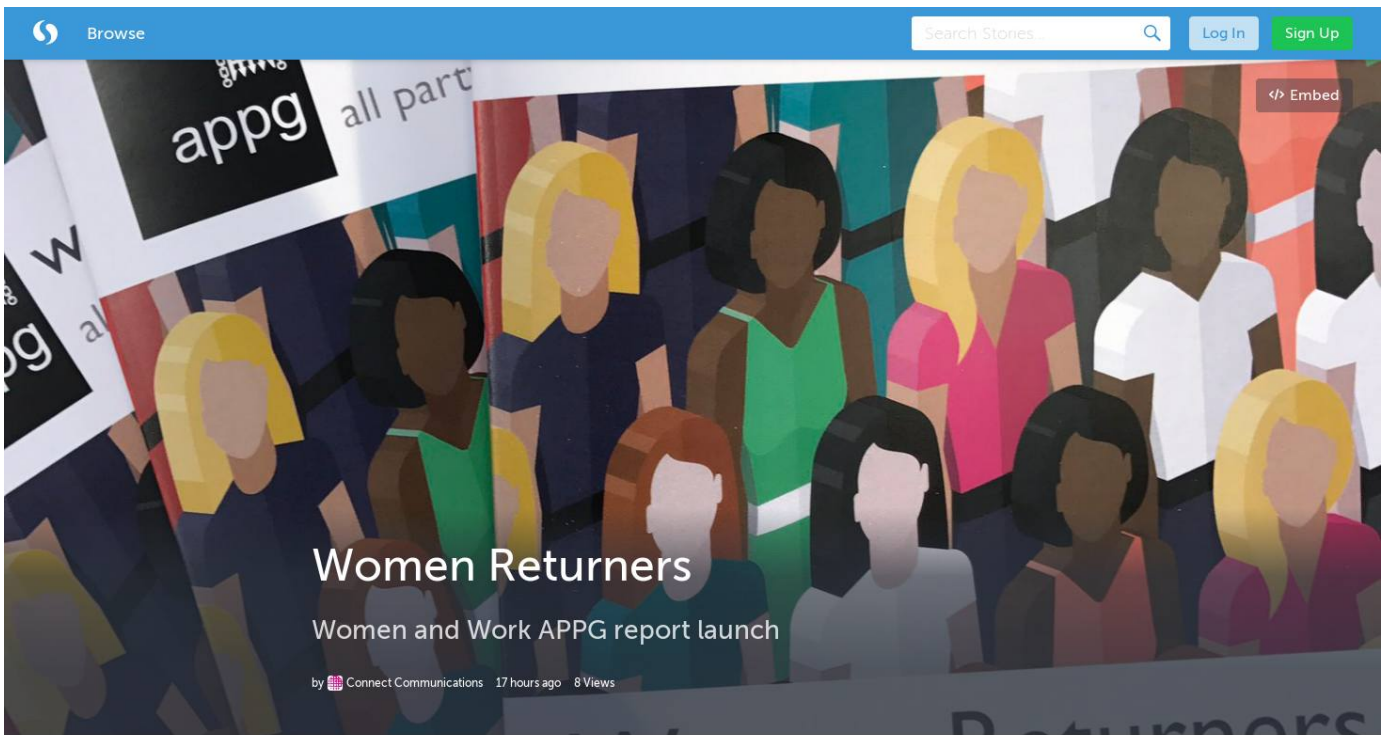
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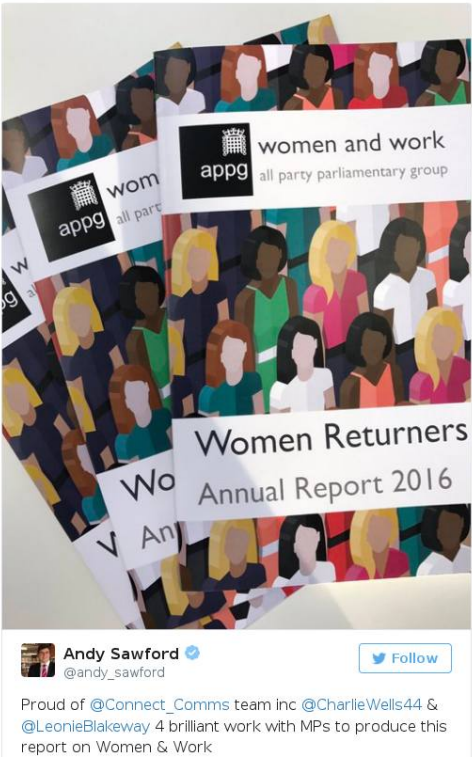
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@WomenEqualities

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.@cj\_dinenage: Today is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the work of the @womenworkappg.

#womenreturners

5:11 PM - 23 Jan 2017

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**Vicky Macadam**  
@VickyMacadam

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Great to see both @labour and @Conservatives agreeing more needs to be done for #women in #work

@womenworkappg @SarahChampionMP @cj\_dinenage

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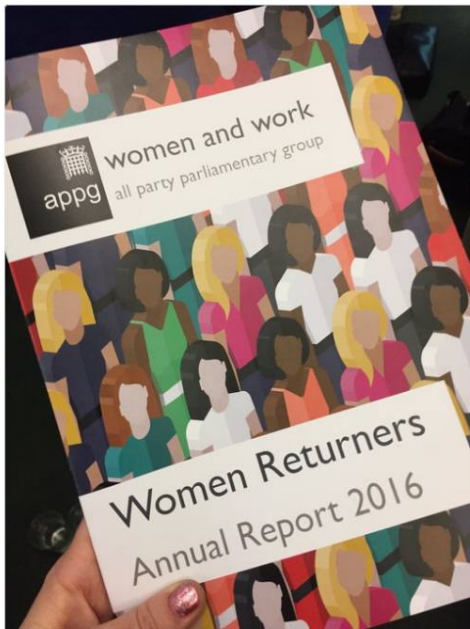
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@SarahChampionMP highlighting need to change cultural norms to address gender economic inequality  
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 **Beth Murray**  
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Great to rep @lets\_hatch and @Catch22 at today's @womenworkappg launch - highlighting the need for employers to help #womenreturners  
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We support @womenworkappg' call for more #returnships. Deloitte's programme helps us to reach the wealth of untapped talent #womenreturners [twitter.com/womenworkappg/...](https://twitter.com/womenworkappg/)

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Shadow Women and Equalities Minister @SarahChampionMP: I'm proud to be in a packed room and proud that people care #womenreturners

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Portcullis House launch of Women Returners report. Pay gap must close, agile working needed, affordable childcare essential. @womenworkappg

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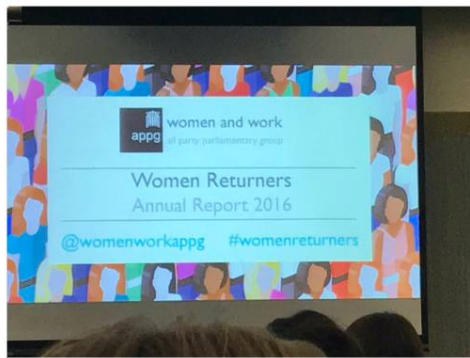
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.@cj\_dinenage: Massive congrats on this report. Particularly on women returners. @womenworkappg #womenreturners  
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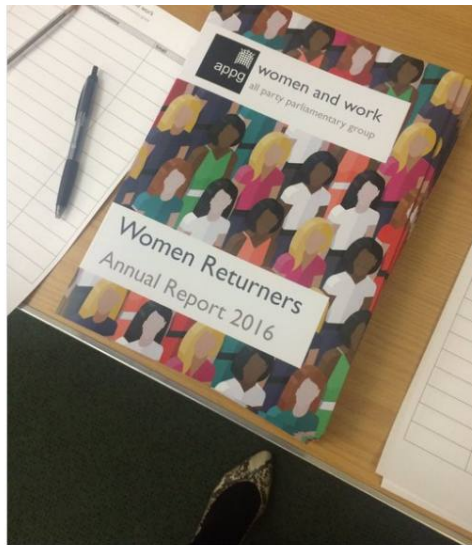
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@womenworkappg Gov to work across all parties to map out solutions to help disabled women secure quality employment  
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Great work from @womenworkappg, @FlickD & @jessphillips boosting #returnships! Sad to miss launch of report today. [thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/r...](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/r...)  
2:21 PM - 23 Jan 2017 · Camberwell, London

 **'Returnships' boost to get women ba...**  
Forget internships, the new buzzword in employment circles is "returnships" — work placements designed to help women  
[thetimes.co.uk](https://www.thetimes.co.uk)



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@GemmaHopePolicy

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Proud that @ShawTrust highlights the experiences of disabled women returners in the @womenworkappg report launched today.

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**TheReturnHub**  
@TheReturnHub

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Thank you @bbc5live & #WakeuptoMoney for talking to our founder @dominie this morning about #returnships @womenworkappg

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Join us tomorrow for a webchat with @FlickD and @jessphillips, @womenworkappg co-chairs - leave your question here: tiny.mn/2iIMkfd

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