



South West GENDER Equality Network



Women Making the Difference



Conference to mark the re-launch of a regional gender network

Fair Play South West (FPSW), re-launched the South West gender network in January 2005. Eighty delegates attended the event which was held in conjunction with the TUC Women's Committee and supported by Equality South West (ESW). There was, and has been since, an enthusiastic response to the aims of the event.

The aim of the event 'Women Making the Difference', was not only to think

about the position of women (at work, in government, in the community...) but to embark on developing a larger and more diverse gender network in the South West.

The event hosted a variety of workshops, information stalls and speakers, fuelled by energetic and interesting responses from those attending

Workshop sessions

At Work

Focus on case studies of discrimination against women in the work place;

How can a regional network help?

- Through knowledge sharing
“Our responsibility is to make sure legislation is recognised in all workplaces”

In the Community

Focus on community work being done in Cheltenham to help engage women in community, employment and educational life through learning skills and active participation.

How can a regional network help?

- Providing a collective voice:
“to raise expectations and lobby where an individual may be isolated, particularly raising the value of the Voluntary sector”.

In the region

Focus on issues affecting women in the South West and the potential benefits of a regional network.

How can a regional network help?

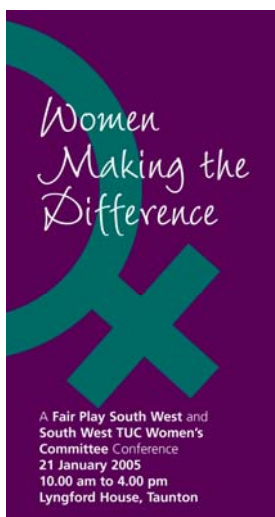
- Communication
“by passing on knowledge to others, exchanging and redirecting money pools, sharing events”.

Speakers included

- Rt Hon Dawn Primarolo - Paymaster General
- Kay Carberry - Assistant General Secretary, TUC
- Angela Clinch – Coordinator FPSW

Information stalls included

- Lantra – Women in Rural Isolation
- Equal Opportunity Commission
- Bristol Women’s Forum



Follow-up meeting

A meeting in February 2005, Taunton took place to reflect on Women Making the Difference event and to begin to find ways for taking a gender network forward in the South West.

A list of priorities were reached:

1. Developing a website (virtual network)

Vehicle of conversation between women / news page with national and regional equality developments / consultations and web-based discussion

2. Funding information

Putting those who need funds in touch with those who have them to dispose of

3. Mentoring, buddying and training

Offered within and between members of network

4. Membership development

Database management / outreach work to some groups of women

5. Debate

Impact of religious fundamentalism / Women and Multiculturalism / multiple identity and discrimination

6. Organisational structure

Network to have formal constitution / advisory steering group

7. Fun

Social events / dinners / garden parties / reading groups

For more information in the network and to get involved, please contact

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women's committee

