

Date:	8 May 2002
Time:	14.00 - 17.30
Venue :	Committee Room 1, National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay
Title:	“Ten Years On” - Women’s Role in the Welsh Workforce Surveys 1991 - 2001, Preliminary Research Findings

Paper from Chwarae Teg

INTRODUCTION

Chwarae Teg (Fairplay) was launched in South Wales in 1991 and North Wales in 1993. Its initial activity and rationale was underpinned by extensive research undertaken in 1991 and 1992 by the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) and a number of co-sponsors. Follow up research, using a review model, was undertaken in 1996 and again most recently in the last quarter of 2001.

The original 1991/2 research was conducted amongst a representative sample of 1,654 Welsh women aged 25-49 years old and a representative sample of 515 Welsh employers. The latest 2001 study utilised representative samples of 1,000 women and 500 employers.

This short summary document presents a preliminary view of significant comparative findings over the ten year period and where appropriate also makes reference to the 1996 study. To help the reader the findings are presented under a number of key topic headings.

1. Women's Attitudes to Employment

As can be seen below, in the past 10 years Welsh women have become more positive about employment and employers; they are less likely to think they will be seen as a risk by potential employers if they have children and disagree more strongly with the view that a woman with children should not go out to work.

However, whilst women are becoming more positive about their position in the workforce, they still feel that they are not taken as seriously as men at work and that men are more successful in their careers, albeit to a lesser extent than 10 years ago.

	1991/92 Net agree % *	2001 Net agree % *
Lack of childcare facilities make it very difficult for women with children to have a full-time job	86	72
Provision of adequate childcare facilities would be of benefit to both employers and women	94	93
A woman's career will not necessarily suffer if she takes time off to look after her children	-18	-8
A woman with children is seen as something of a risk by potential employers	75	53
Employers are generally more sympathetic to the needs of women with family	31	47
Women are just as likely to get promoted as men	-6	15
Women are not taken as seriously as men at work	39	27
Men are usually more successful in their careers than women	32	24
Women with children should not go out to work	-24	-55
A man's job is to earn the money, a woman's job is to look after family and home	-56	-43
A woman cannot really combine a career with children	-9	-14
There is no longer a view that a woman's place is in the home	36	44

* Net agree % - this is the sum of all those who agreed with the statement minus all those who disagreed.

2. Barriers to Employment

Unemployed women were asked which of a list of potential difficulties for unemployed women applied to them. The most commonly chosen reasons were that there were too few jobs in the area and those jobs available do not cover the cost of childcare, the latter having increased significantly over the 10 years of the study.

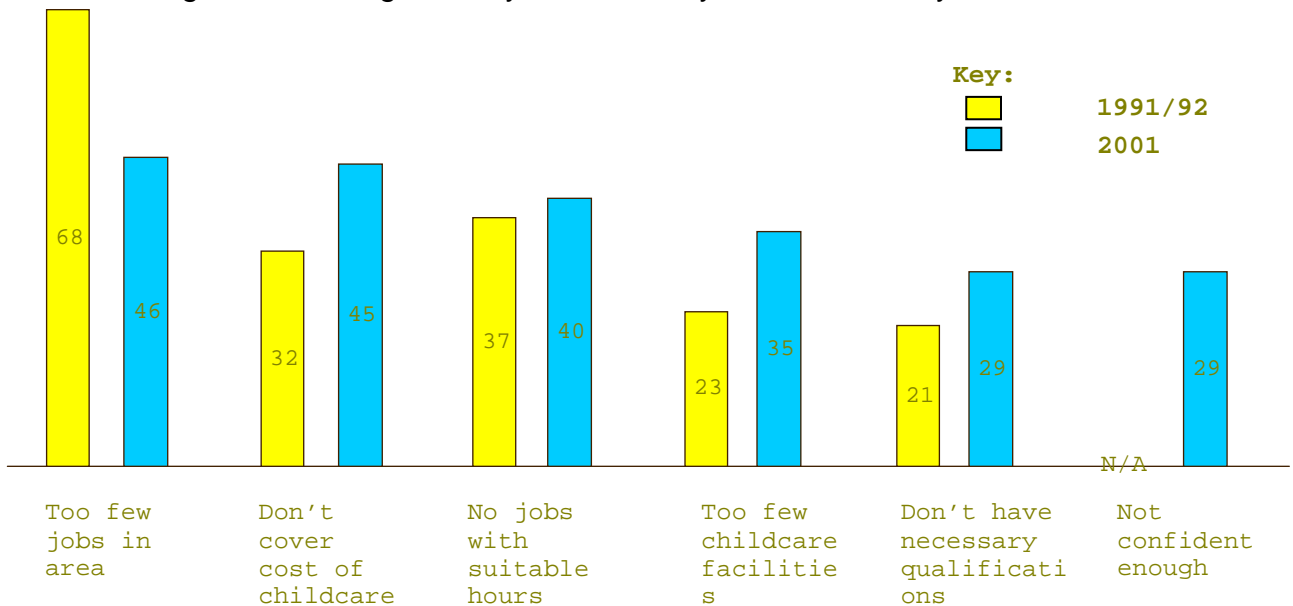


Figure 1: Main difficulties experienced by unemployed women in trying to find a job (%)

Amongst those women who were currently mainly occupied in the home the main reasons for not working were that it is too difficult to combine a job and children and that they want to be at home. However, there was also a noticeable growth in those who said they were unable to work due to sickness.

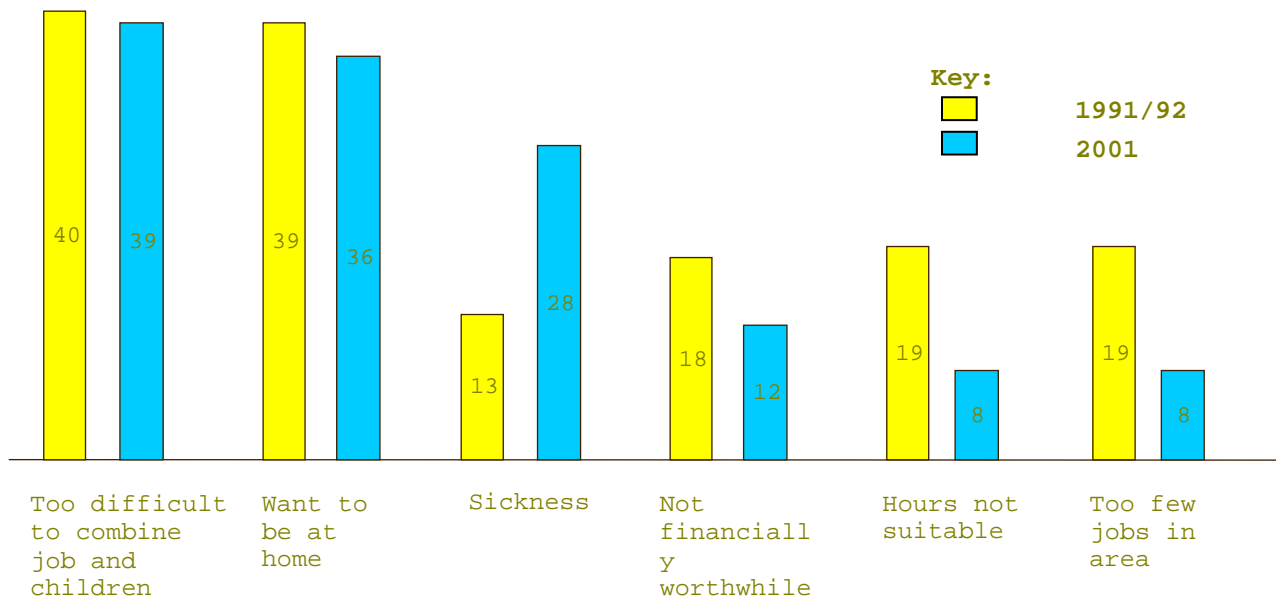


Figure 2: Main reasons given by women in the home for not working (prompted, %)

3. Motivations for Working

Those women in employment were asked to pick which of several reasons applied to why they work. The most commonly given reason was that they needed the income; however since 1991 women were more likely to agree that working was the normal thing to do and a higher percentage say they are the main wage earner than in 1996, when 20% of women in employment gave this response (in 1991/92 this was not a possible response in the survey questionnaire).

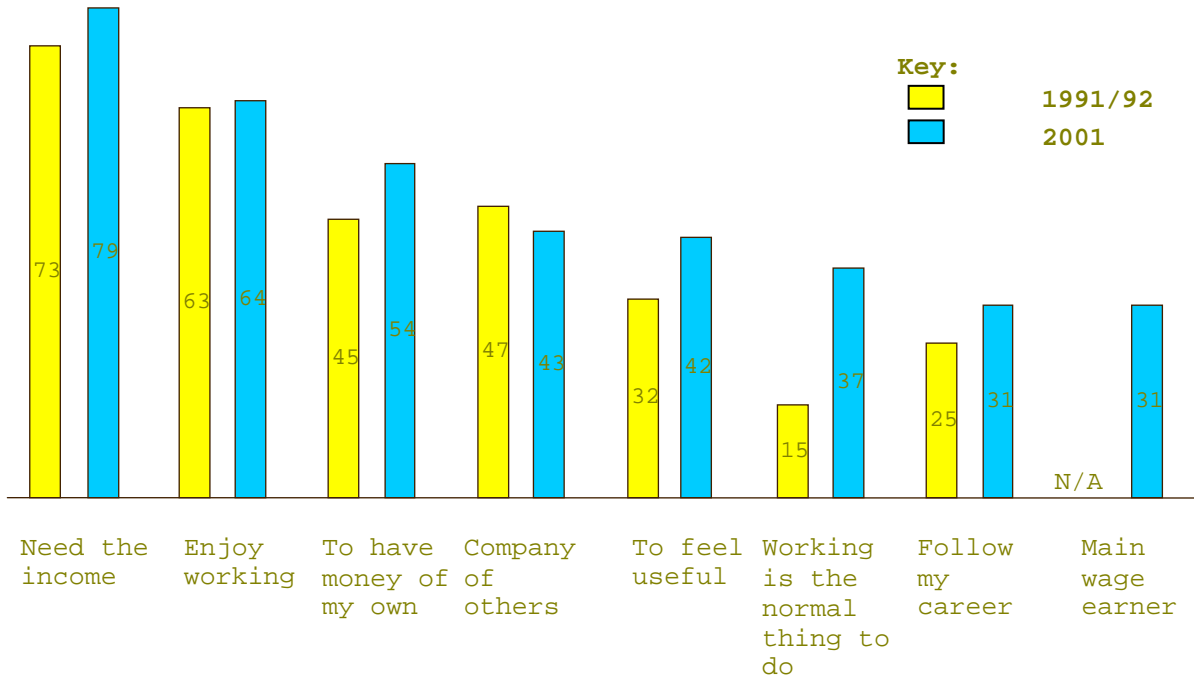


Figure 3: Reasons chosen for working (% of women in employment)

4. Knowledge of workforce measures offered by employers

Almost all employers now offer some measures for their employees, with large increases in many of the measures since 1996. However, women in employment do not necessarily seem to be aware that these measures are available to them, with almost half saying that their employer offers none of these measures to someone of their grade.

	<i>Employers 1996 (%)</i>	<i>Employers 2001 (%)</i>	<i>Women 2001 (%)</i>
An option for part-time working	58	77	22
Flexible working hours	39	71	33
Special leave for child sickness	19	62	17
Enhanced maternity leave	23	42	-
Paternity leave	13	42	-
Special leave for caring for an elderly, sick or disabled relative	10	39	6
Job sharing	17	36	9
Offer better pay and conditions	12	25	-
Working only in term time	10	19	8
Twilight shifts	12	17	8
Offer career breaks for women	9	16	-
Provision of transport facilities	6	13	1
Working from home all or part of the time	4	13	5
Positively target women for vacancies not traditionally filled by women	3	10	-
Financial assistance with childcare	2	6	2
Workplace nursery	2	4	3
None	25	7	43

5. The Effect of EC Legislation

Since 1996, new EC legislation has resulted in a noticeable improvement in conditions for part time workers. More of those employed part time now have a written contract of employment, receive sick pay and receive more paid holiday.

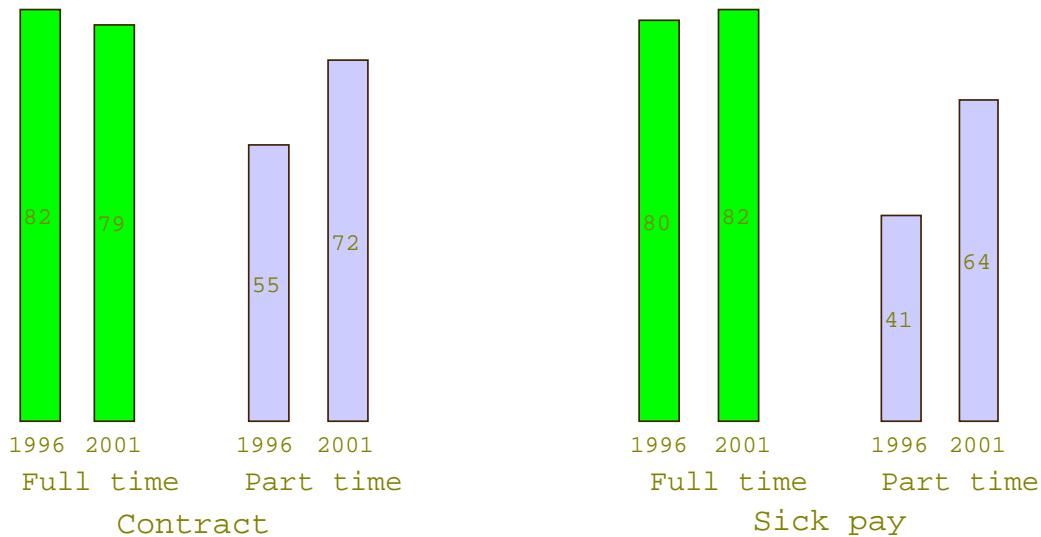


Figure 4: % of women in employment who have a written contract of employment and who receive sick pay

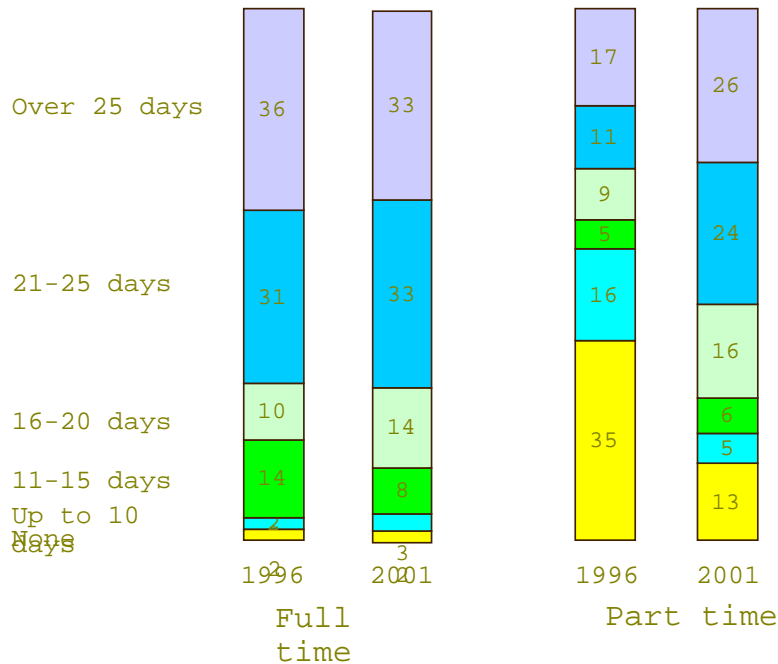


Figure 5: Number of days paid holiday per year (% of women in employment)

Legislation has also resulted in an increase in the provision of paternity leave. In 1996, just 13% of employers claimed to offer paternity leave compared with 42% in 2001. This is supported by findings from the survey of women. Those women who had a partner in

paid employment at the time of the birth of their youngest child were asked whether paternity leave was available to them. Only 5% of those whose youngest child was over 16 said that it was available, compared with 43% of those who had a child aged under 5.

However, one aspect of employment that has not noticeably improved is the provision of training. 50% of employed women said they had received training in how to do their job, only a 5% increase from 1991/92.

6. Childcare Provision for Women in Training

A positive change over time is the greater assistance that women studying full time in training institutions are receiving with childcare. Since the 1991/92 survey, more than twice the number of women receive financial support for childcare, and, childcare facilities were available to almost three quarters of the women with children aged under 16 living at home.

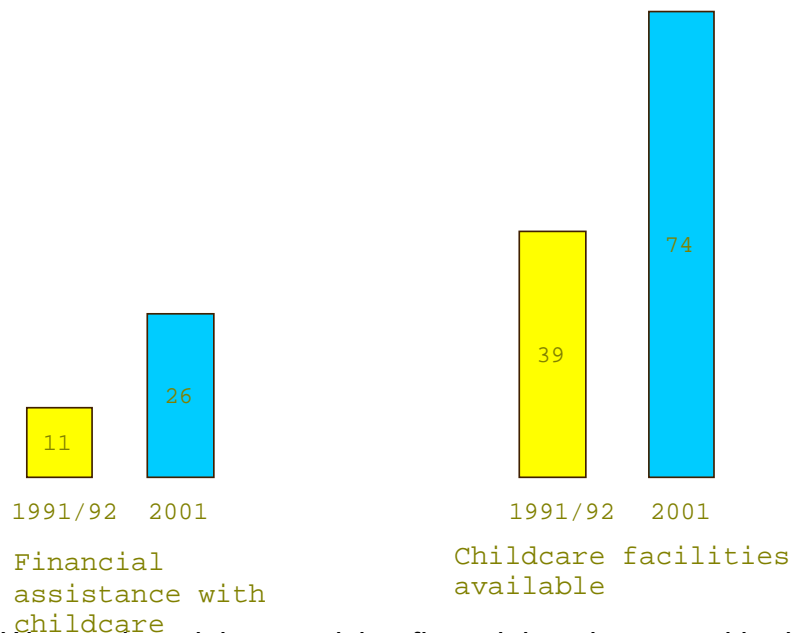


Figure 6: Women in training receiving financial assistance with childcare and who have childcare facilities available to them (% of women with children aged under 16 living with them)

SUMMARY

Over the past 10 years, women's role in the Welsh workplace has changed positively, with more women feeling that working is the "normal" thing to do and the increase in flexible working practices giving them more opportunities to balance work with other responsibilities. Legislation has also improved many of the working conditions for part time workers.

However, there is still work to be done as can be seen from the discrepancy between what women think is available to them in terms of flexible working measures and what employers say they offer. These measures need to be better communicated to both employees and those who are considering working. There is also still a lack of training for those who are in employment, with only half receiving any from their current employer.

Although their views are changing positively, women also still do not see themselves as being treated on an equal level to men. They continue to feel they are not taken as seriously and are not as successful in their careers.