Management Skills Development for Women in the Black Country

The identification, exploration and quantification of barriers to women’s progression in management and enterprise in the Black Country.


Dr Kate Gilbert
Dr Gavin Jordan
Dr Cinzia Priola
Professor Les Worrall
Mike Greenland
Tag McEntegart
Safa Osman

University of Wolverhampton, December 2004
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In order to be competitive in the national and increasingly global marketplace, regions and sub-regions in the UK cannot afford to let the talent, ability and energy of any of its people go to waste. There is a growing awareness that areas and industries that fail to harness the diversity of their workforce are losing out on decreased competitiveness, lowered capacity to innovate, and depressed profitability. If women are being held back from entering the market as entrepreneurs, then less value is being created than should be.

The West Midlands in general, and specifically the Black Country, is experiencing skills shortages at a managerial level. This is intrinsically linked with the oversupply of people with no qualifications and an undersupply of people qualified to NVQ Level 4 or above compared to the regional and national averages. There are other ramifications. The Black Country has a high percentage of low knowledge jobs, and a low percentage of high knowledge jobs. Levels of economic activity are lower, and levels of unemployment higher, than the national average.¹

A high proportion of people are employed in manufacturing, much of it in industries that are forecast to decline. Other fundamentals indicate that the Black Country is lagging behind: productivity is 83% of the national average, per capita GDP is at 80% and weekly earnings are at 86%. Both business start-ups and levels of self-employment are below the national averages. The low levels indicate a lack of entrepreneurship. However, it is not all doom and gloom in the Black Country: there is a trend of more people achieving qualifications at Levels 2, 3 and 4, unemployment has been falling (although it is still above the West Midlands average) and the one-year survival rates of VAT-registered businesses is significantly above the national average.

¹ 23.3% of the working age population in the Black Country were classified as economically inactive, 2 percentage points higher than the West Midlands and England averages. 7.2% of the economically active population are defined as unemployed in the Black Country, compared with an England average of 5.1% (2002 Local Area Annual Labour Force Survey, ONS).
The skills shortage of well-qualified, knowledgeable and innovative managers in the Black Country is further exacerbated by the highly significant gender imbalance in the existing management workforce. This is, not surprisingly, most extreme within the construction sector, where women comprise approximately 9% of the construction industry management. However, with the exception of the health sector, a gender imbalance is present in the management workforce. Why is this, and what can be done to address the issue? Much work has examined the reasons underlying this problem. Most of it does not specifically relate to the current situation in the West Midlands, and virtually no work has looked specifically at the Black Country.

This report details the findings of a research exercise designed to identify the key issues affecting women’s capacity for self-employment and management progression in the Black Country, and to support the development of an appropriate strategy for addressing barriers to progress. It is designed to be easy to read, informative and thought provoking. It contains much anecdotal evidence, with key findings, conclusions and recommendations backed up by a detailed literature review and primary research.

The research commissioned by the LSC, as part of the ESF co-financed ‘Management skills development for women in the Black Country’ project, consulted with a wide range of stakeholders, both male and female, operating in or with a professional interest in management and management development in the Black Country. More than 700 questionnaire and interview responses were received as part of the research, making this one of the most detailed studies of its kind. From these questionnaires and interviews a rich and deep understanding of the Black Country-specific situation was gained, with some surprising and previously undocumented

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2 We attempt to avoid repetition of the statistics and background data presented in the detailed and comprehensive ‘Key Sector Research Reports’, prepared for the Black Country LSC in 2002 by PACEC. For general information regarding the sectors these reports should be consulted. They are available at http://www.lsc.gov.uk/blackcountry/Documents/SubjectListing/LocalSectorData/default.htm
findings. We allow the voices of people in management positions in the Black Country to be heard without too much filtering.

The central part of our report is based on questionnaire responses and a series of key informant interviews and focus group events with respondents in the Black Country. This research method enabled a rapid picture of the issues, barriers and multiple realities associated with women and management development issues in the Black Country to be built up. The naturalistic enquiry approach adopted in the research method allowed the issues to be viewed from the perspective of those being studied, and provides ‘real-world’, contextual data. We have been careful to ensure that findings, conclusions and recommendations are supported by data and study evidence, and have tried to ensure that the analysis and interpretation show how the researchers arrived at conclusions. A detailed literature review is also included, to provide background information, and also to support and refine research findings. We feel that the findings and conclusions have a coherent logic, and are resonant with other knowledge and experience.

This report provides insight into the issues, constraints, barriers and opportunities for management skills development, and the associated career progression and entrepreneurial opportunity for women. It contains conclusions and recommendations for key actors within the Black Country, which, if incorporated into sectoral strategic planning, should result in more women with enhanced management skills. We recommend methods of reducing and removing barriers to women’s entry and progression into management and/or entrepreneurial activities, and ways of making skills development more relevant and accessible to women.

Working for female bosses emerges as the most important factor. Businesses headed by women are approximately 30% more likely to employ female senior managers, more likely to provide a clear progression structure (50% versus 35%), have in place a clear appraisal process (55% vs. 46%) and be liP accredited (25% vs. 16%). Also more frequent in women-run businesses are the provision of maternity support over the statutory minimum (38% vs. 21%) and flexible working hours (51% vs. 46%).
The semi-structured interviews revealed a pervasive work culture in the Black Country that seems to owe more to early 20th century stereotypes of gender segregation in the workplace than to a dynamic and truly inclusive perspective on what women can contribute to the success of our organisations. Against key indicators of women’s economic participation and contribution, the Black Country is seen to be falling behind the country as a whole and, crucially, behind other parts of the West Midlands. Thus, recommendations for specific actions to support women to take up new opportunities have to be set against the context of the need to transform attitudes and values on a wider basis.

Higher management training amongst women (particularly at NVQ Levels 4 and 5) will not occur without a strategic approach and appropriate support, based on a thorough understanding of the barriers and triggers to learning and learning requirements. Women currently face significant barriers to acquiring formal management competencies, and this is a contributor to the significant shortage of available staff with management skills gaps (half of all employers recently surveyed reported management skill gaps in their current workforce – see section B). Until this is addressed the region's resulting growth in investment and output will not be realised. This project will help to increase the availability of skilled and qualified managers in the Black Country.

Discussion of these findings has resulted in 19 recommendations, presented in full in section 8:

a) Sector-specific measures to address the gaps between men and women in terms of levels of qualification and levels of participation in management and enterprise; these to include sectoral mentoring programmes for women (particularly in construction and retail);

b) Recommendations to expand and intensify learning opportunities for women; including support for women-only training programmes, and financial incentives for SMEs to provide management development for
women. The idea of a “one-stop shop” through a Women in Business portal is advanced;

c) Activities to promote a more women-friendly business and management culture within the Black Country, both within individual organisations and within society at large;

d) Approaches to encourage the Careers Service and other educational providers to take a more proactive approach to promoting management and enterprise as appropriate aspirations for young women, through exposure to local female role models, and positive images of local women in challenging roles.

There is evidence from the research that barriers are starting to break down, and women are becoming more confident, particularly as entrepreneurs, setting up and running their own businesses as an appropriate strategy for striking the right balance between work and the rest of their lives. For some, it is seen as the final solution to dealing with the culture of male management teams and an overly ‘bloke-ish’ culture that they have experienced in employment situations. In spite of recent measures to introduce flexibility into working practices, the region is still characterised by a long-hours ‘work comes first’ culture, which militates against women’s contribution at higher levels. Flexibility is not readily embraced by management for itself, and access to learning opportunities provided by colleges and universities remain resolutely inflexible; a situation which must change, and quickly.
PART 1: SETTING THE SCENE

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Structure
This report documents research work conducted from February to December 2004, to explore the barriers and issues associated with management skills development for women, and how they affect women’s capacity for self-employment and management progression within the Black Country. The authors have attempted to keep the feelings, attitudes and issues of respondents alive - the research has not been ‘airbrushed’, and we have tried to keep the views and multiple realities of the respondents intact. We intend this to give an in-depth insight into the issues, barriers and possible ways forward to help women to further develop their management skills and to progress in management and entrepreneurial activities.

The report is in two main parts. Part One provides the introduction, background context, overall method and approach, and issues. Part Two presents the research findings, discussion, conclusion and recommendations. The report is designed to be accessible and thought provoking. It contains a wealth of quantitative data analysis, with qualitative and anecdotal evidence providing a richer and deeper understanding of the underlying issues. It is hoped that this will help readers engage with the report and appreciate the real issues facing women managers and entrepreneurs in the Black Country.

1.2. Background
Half of all employers recently surveyed for West Midlands Labour Market & Skills Trends reported management skill gaps in their current workforce. A wide range of managerial development and leadership skills gaps have been identified by the Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA) group across all ten Business Clusters and in both the voluntary and public sectors. This is limiting growth, competitiveness, innovation and regional development. Local workforce surveys demonstrate that demand is increasing for jobs in the middle and senior management areas, particularly in response to continuing European intervention. Many West Midlands industry sectors are facing real problems in recruiting manager and senior manager level staff. An LSC priority for action is to ‘Raise the management skills level across the Black Country as a means of enhancing the competitiveness of the potential and existing workforce’.
Exacerbating the above is the difficulty of recruiting women into higher-level management positions. The reasons for this are complex and not fully understood. There has been strong evidence that within the Black Country there exist barriers to women who wish to develop the professional, entrepreneurial and management skills required for either successful self-employment or managerial career progress. This is supported by limited published research on this issue (Liff, Worall, and Cooper, 1997; 3 The datasets on which the analysis has been based have been lodged with the Black Country LSC.

3 The datasets on which the analysis has been based have been lodged with the Black Country LSC.
AMNA, 2003). However, the understanding and level of knowledge of barriers to self-employment and management progression was too low for effective strategic training provision planning. The barriers needed to be systematically identified, explored and quantified as far as possible.

Professional development and training in higher level management competencies is more likely to be provided for males from the majority community than for people from other groups (Open University Development Services, 1999). Previous research has shown that men have two training routes into higher-level management, either via academic or professional qualifications, whilst women are more likely to hold vocational qualifications that do not prepare them for a career in management. Even so, nationally, 23% of male compared to 15% of female managers have NVQ 3 or equivalent qualifications (Felstead, 1996). Women are more likely than men in the same occupations to have received recent job-related training, but this tends to be very short-term and task related. By contrast, they are less likely to have received higher level or management training.

A recent survey found that nearly one in three of responding companies did not have any female managers or owners. It is believed that may under represent the percentage of West Midlands firms who do not employ any women managers at all (Liff, Worall, and Cooper, 1997). This is significantly higher than for most other UK regions, and probably reflects the region’s traditional core sectors of engineering and manufacturing, particularly in the auto industry. As the Black Country is a focal point within the region for these sectors, it can be assumed that the situation is probably worse than the average for the West Midlands. Although the 2002 assessment of learning needs in the Black Country (LSC Black Country, 2002) did not specifically examine gender issues for management level training, it did identify that women in the Black Country do less learning and have more non-learners than men. 63% of women in the Black Country participate in some form of learning, compared with 68% in the West Midlands, and a national average of 71%. The LSC Black Country target is 74%.

The needs, requirements and barriers for Black Country higher-level management competencies per se have only just been fully investigated (AMNA, 2003). During this work, focused on SMEs, gender issues were examined, but not in any detail. The key initial findings were that:

- There are still very few women at Chairman/Director level
- Women generally do not want to increase their time at work/college/training centre, at the expense of family time
- There are strong cultural traditions of women ‘putting the family before career’
- Women have a strong desire for higher-level management training, and subsequent career progression, if the training is provided in an appropriate manner
- If women are to be encouraged to become involved in higher level management training, the provision needs to become more flexible.

From the above it can be seen that there appears to be a difference in the management progression and successful self-employment for women compared with
men within the West Midlands and Black Country, and that this is to some extent attributable to a gender-based difference in training and qualifications. Previous work had not identified the root causes of this gender difference, and what the barriers are, nor examined the management skills issues in any detail. This was a distinct gap in knowledge limiting strategic and policy approaches, and resulting in a gap in provision.

The priority of attracting more women into management varies from sector to sector. Four sectors were chosen for this research, designed to yield a wide range of situations and case studies. The sectors with the lowest and highest levels of women in management positions (construction and community and voluntary respectively) were chosen, along with the retail and health sectors. Attracting more women into the construction industry is necessary not just in terms of social inclusion, as indicated in the sector skills report, but to ensure that the industry can flourish and innovate. The industry is suffering from a lack of skills in many areas, and the low representation of women in, and entering, the industry exacerbates the situation. The situation is not so marked in the other sectors, and far less research had been carried out on gender-specific issues.

A general consensus exists that the Black Country is facing a potential problem in bridging management skills gaps, and this is limiting growth, competitiveness, innovation and regional development. One key requirement for addressing this (but not exclusively so) is attracting more women into management. To gain a deeper understanding of the underlying issues the Black Country LSC contracted the University of Wolverhampton to conduct research to identify, explore and quantify the issues and barriers, and identify ways of overcoming the barriers for the four key sectors, as part of an ESF co-financed ‘Management Skills Development for Women in the Black Country’ project.

The initial work involved a detailed literature review of the issues influencing women’s entry and progress in management and entrepreneurship, examining the sub-regional context and issues, and exploring the current thinking regarding barriers and ways forward. This summarised the results of research and implementation projects across the UK (and wider). From this it is clear that although there are still significant and serious barriers to entry and progression, there are (or should be) significant ‘pull’ factors to attract women into management.

It became clear that there was a need to identify how these barriers and attractors operated and were perceived in the Black Country, whether there were other barriers and attractors, and how best to minimise barriers and maximise attractors. The best way of doing this was to gain a rapid overview of the situation with a large questionnaire survey, and then gain a deeper understanding through conducting interviews and structured sessions with key informants.

1.3. Method and Approach
The primary research, conducted by a team of academic staff from the University of Wolverhampton between February and December 2004, consisted of two distinct phases:
Phase 1 – Desk research, to establish the national and local context; and to identify to what extent the Black Country is typical of the UK generally, and to what extent it exhibits particular issues and problems for women in management. This phase included a study of locally available statistics and information, including the most recent census data, plus a comprehensive review of the most influential and relevant literature worldwide. This set a context for the data gathering and analysis of Phase 2. A key finding is that the gap between women and men is wider in the Black Country than nationally, and even in relation to other areas in the West Midlands.

Phase 2 – Research into Black Country businesses and Black Country women in management and business. This took place in two stages:

1. A survey to businesses to establish baseline information about the proportions of local businesses with female owners, directors, or senior managers, and an analysis of the correlation of senior women’s presence on such factors as flexible working practices, staff development, and ‘family-friendly’ policies. This survey established a number of interesting positive correlations. The survey yielded over 600 responses, which is a large data set for the sub-region.

2. A series of semi-structured interviews using an innovative biographical technique to develop understanding, from women’s own accounts of their working lives, of the key factors which have helped and hindered them in finding a route into management or business, and their needs for further development.

The two research phases led to a consideration of the kinds of responses that would be most likely to encourage more women into management and enterprise in the Black Country. These range from relatively informal arrangements such as mentoring schemes, to formal provision of women-friendly “blended” learning solutions. All require a concerted and focused policy framework for their implementation and dissemination.
SECTION 2: THE REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction
This chapter builds up a picture of the economic and social context for the study of women's progression in management and enterprise. It pulls together key information about the relative position of the Black Country vis-à-vis the rest of the West Midlands region, as we believe that local comparisons will place the challenge facing the Black Country in its true perspective. There is already a wealth of data in the public domain, published in a range of reports and policy documents: the objective here is not to duplicate it, but to use it selectively to illuminate the focus of this study.

We begin with an overview of the West Midlands region as a whole, and proceed to focus on the Black Country, made up of the boroughs of Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and Sandwell. This leads to a consideration of the economic and social regeneration challenge facing the Black Country over the next 25 years. One of the key success factors will be the capability of its people to drive forward innovative and competitive business solutions. Thus attention progresses to what we know of the role of women in the local workforce, demonstrating some evidence that women play a less than proportionate role locally, both in management, leading organisations, and in enterprise, setting up and growing their own businesses. We conduct an analysis of the respective levels of vocational and professional qualifications of women and men in our four key sectors, and compare and contrast this with census data revealing the incidence of women and men in higher status occupations within those sectors.

2.2 Overview of the West Midlands
The West Midlands region is situated in the heart of England spanning an area from Stoke-on-Trent in the north down to Hereford and Evesham in the south, from Shrewsbury in the west to Rugby and Burton-on-Trent in the East. The big cities and towns, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Coventry and Walsall, occupy a central position within the region. The population of the region is about 3 million, accounting for 9% of the national population. Just under a million live in Birmingham, at the centre of a conurbation of 2.5 million people also covering the Black Country, Solihull and Coventry.

There are 38 local authorities in the West Midlands, of which 7 are classified as metropolitan districts (Walsall, Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Sandwell, Solihull, Coventry and Dudley). Within these, Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton are included in a list of deprived areas that are eligible for Neighbourhood Renewal Funding.

2.2.1. Economy
The region has a wide and varied economy. In 2001, it contributed £68.8 billion to the UK’s Gross Value Added (GVA), 7.8% of the total. This share has changed little since 1990, The largest sector continues to be the Manufacturing sector with 24.9% of the region’s GVA (UK = 18.8%). The Real Estate & Business Services sector is
the next largest at 19.8%, although this is lower than the UK share (23.8%). The Wholesale and Retail sector continues to grow and now represents 13.1% (UK=12.5%) of the region’s GVA.

The rate of economic growth in the West Midlands was broadly in line with the national average during the three years up to 2001. Across the region as a whole, GVA per head stood at 90% of the UK average in 2001. Of the seven metropolitan districts, one is well above the UK average (Coventry 111%), two others exceed the average (Birmingham and Solihull), while four are significantly below the UK average – Sandwell and Dudley (83%) and Wolverhampton and Walsall (87%); i.e. all the Black Country boroughs.

2.2.2. Employment

The number of people employed in the West Midlands currently stands at 2.43 million. The manufacturing sector accounts for 21.1% of total employment (the second highest regional share in the UK), which is 6% down from 1995. In the same period, the service sector’s percentage share has increased to 69.1% with an extra 220,000 people in employment. The total employed in this sector is now over the 1.7 million mark.

Average gross weekly wages in the region are below the national average; the New Earnings Survey 2002 reported an average wage of £443.39 per week for males and £260.44 per week for females. The differential between males and females is very marked, women’s average wage only being 59% that of men.

The number of people unemployed and claiming benefit in October 2003 stood at 91,483, a rate of 2.8% (UK 2.7%). However, there are significant differences across the region, with relatively high levels of unemployment in much of the main conurbation, in particular Birmingham (5.1%), Wolverhampton (4.4%) and Sandwell (4.4%), and lower rates found in the shire counties, typically around 1.5%.

2.2.3 Education

The region has eight universities, four other Higher Education establishments and 50 Further Education colleges. Its educational performance is patchy. In terms of progress towards the Government’s national learning targets, the region has succeeded in 49% of young people getting 5 higher grades (A*-C) at GCSE, as against a target of 50%. Eighty-eight per cent get at least one GCSE, against a target of 95%. The target of 85% of 19-year-olds having a Level 2 qualification is currently being missed by a margin of ten percent (at 75%). For adult attainments, the region

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5 (Source: New Earnings Survey 2003)

6 (Source: NomisWeb claimant count October 2003)
is succeeding in having 40% of adults with Level 3 qualification or above (against a target of 50%), and 21% of adults achieve a Level 4 qualification or above (against a target of 28%)\(^7\). It has been reported (PACEC, 2003) that local employers (the majority of which are SMEs) do not have a strong commitment to training their staff, despite recognising skills gaps within their workforce. Commitment is strongly influenced by the size of the organisation and the financial resources available, not only to cover the cost of training but also to release staff for training.

2.2.4 Regional Development
Advantage West Midlands, the RDA, has identified the following “four pillars” of the development strategy for the region:

\(^7\) DfES Education and Training Statistics for the United Kingdom
Marked with an asterisk are all those areas of the strategy for which the current study has a direct relevance. A diverse and dynamic business base needs the full engagement of all the innovation and competitive potential of local people, regardless of gender, ethnic background or educational attainment. A learning and skilful region cannot afford to be excluding any section of the population from opportunities to grow and progress. And regenerated communities depend very much on harnessing the talent and commitment of local women to improve the quality of life for everyone living and working in those areas. Thus, the question of women’s participation in management and enterprise in the West Midlands generally, and the Black Country in particular, has more than a simply economic significance.

### 2.3. The Black Country
The key economic and social indices of the West Midlands region indicate that the Black Country is experiencing more marked challenges than other areas of the region. With high level of poverty, the Black Country suffers from poor education attainment, ill-health and over-dependence on traditional low value-added industries (Beevers Consulting LTD, 2001). The Black Country is characterised by high dependence on manufacturing (especially metals and engineering), with low tier suppliers and low levels of investment, innovation and R&D. This makes it more vulnerable to the crisis experienced by the manufacturing sector and by the recent and current problems within the Rover Group, the largest player in the region’s automotive sector. An overall decline in manufacturing has affected the affluence of

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8 31% of local GDP, the highest proportion of any region in the UK (Beevers Consulting LTD, 2001).
the sub-region. Across the West Midlands, as in the rest of the UK, losses in manufacturing jobs are expected to account for the largest absolute number of job losses up to 2010, with an anticipated 2% p.a. rate of job losses in the production industries (Black Country Employer Survey 2001, 2002). Despite this, the West Midlands Regional Group of Chambers of Commerce Quarterly Economic Survey suggests that the performance of organisations in the West Midlands and Black Country is encouraging.

2.3.1. Key labour market features
Factors most relevant to the current study are that:

- New work for Advantage West Midlands has segmented jobs into sectors based on how knowledge-intensive they are. The Black Country is very high on ‘low knowledge’ jobs and low on ‘high knowledge’ jobs.
- Unemployment claimant rates are substantially higher in the Black Country than elsewhere (4% for the Black Country against 3% for the West Midlands and 2.6% nationally).
- A high proportion of economically active people are employed in manufacturing (27% for the Black Country against 25% for the West Midlands, and only 15% nationally), with the implication that the services sector is proportionately under-developed.
- Much of this manufacturing employment is in industries that are forecast to decline due to global competition, structural decline and/or technological obsolescence.
- On a number of other economic indices, the Black Country is seen to be falling behind the rest of the country. Productivity is at 83% of the national average, and per capita GDP is at 80% of the national average. In addition, average weekly earnings are relatively low, at 86% of the national average.
- The Black Country is a net ‘exporter’ of labour, with many inhabitants travelling outside the area to work, in particular to central Birmingham and Solihull. Those who go outside the area to work are more likely to have higher qualifications (NVQ Level 4 and above); and ‘knowledge workers’ are more likely to live around the fringes of the Black Country than in the heart of it.\(^9\)
- Of those Black Country students who graduated from the University of Wolverhampton in 2002, only 47% stayed to work in the Black Country.
- Business start-ups, expressed as new VAT registrations per 1000 of the population, stand at 83% of the national average.

On a positive note, the one-year survival rates of VAT-registered businesses improved by 8.5% in the Black Country between 1993 and 2000, compared with a national rate of just 5.9%. Also, the proportion of the population gaining qualifications at NVQ Levels 2, 3 and 4 is rising,

Figure 2 below shows the structure of the Black Country workforce in comparison with the national and regional distribution of the nine major occupational categories as identified in the 2000 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC 2000).
2.3.2 A qualified workforce?

Turning to consider available data on the composition of the working population of the Black Country, we can discern certain aspects of the situation that impact on the ability of the region to profit from the potential of its female workforce. First, we present the detail of general levels of qualification compared with West Midlands and England as a whole. Second, we consider the employment destinations of 16 year olds in the Black Country in 2003; then third, we consider the incidence of self-employment within the sub-region.

The Black Country Barometer review of qualifications shows that, while numbers of people gaining qualifications are rising, there exists a gap between the Black Country and the rest of England. This is shown in Figure 1, illustrating the percentages of the population having qualifications at NVQ Levels 1 to 4. It also shows those with no qualifications, and the final set of columns shows the proportion of people with trade apprenticeships. The figure demonstrates clearly that the Black Country is over-supplied with people with no, or relatively low level, qualifications, and under-supplied with people with higher-level qualifications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATIONS</th>
<th>BLACK COUNTRY %</th>
<th>WEST MIDLANDS %</th>
<th>UK %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary staff</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine Operatives</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales/customer service</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Service</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled trades</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative/clerical</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate professionals</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3.4. Progression – differences between males and females

In 2003, female 16-year olds were slightly more likely to remain in full-time education than males (representing 33.5% of the full age-group cohort, against 31% male, although this represents a slight drop in the proportion of females staying on compared to 2002). So in total, 65% of Black Country 16-year-olds opted to continue their education. The proportion going into full-time work was 10.4%. This figure was made up of 7.1% male and 3.3% female, indicating that young men are twice as likely as young women to go straight into a job after the statutory school-leaving age. A further 7.5%, 4.5% males and 3% females, went into work-based training. An analysis of the destinations of these two categories (into employment and into work-based training) reveals marked differences in work destinations, and suggests that school education in the Black Country has done little to break down ‘traditional’ gender-based perspectives on ‘suitable’ types of work for males and females. Figure 3, extracted from a more detailed table in the report Black Country Employment Destinations 2003, shows the occupational areas which are relevant to the industrial sectors to which the study is focusing attention; i.e. construction, health and social care, voluntary and community, and retailing, in addition to manufacturing.
2.3.5 Incidence of self-employment

For both men and women, the incidence of self-employment, as a percentage of the adult population as a whole\(^{10}\), is lower in the Black Country than generally in England and Wales. This is illustrated in Figure 2 below. The West Midlands region falls behind the national level slightly, at 11.15%. However, the Black Country shows a markedly lower incidence of self-employment for both men and women, dropping for men from 10.28% in Dudley to 7.33% in Sandwell. Thus, the proportion of self-employed men in Sandwell is only just over half of that for England and Wales as a whole. This contrasts with a figure of 12% in Solihull.

\(^{10}\) All adults aged 16-74.
Clearly, on both a national and regional basis, women are far less likely than men to have self-employed status. The figure drops from 4.4% for England and Wales as a whole to 3.72% for the West Midlands region. Again, looking at the Black Country, there are fewer women in self-employment than in the region as a whole (note the difference between Sandwell, where less than two in a hundred women are self-employed, and Solihull). Furthermore, when we analyse the difference in percentages between men and women, by taking the male values as 100, we see that, in the Black Country, the gap between men and women widens. In England and Wales, approximately 35% as many women as men are self-employed. In the Black Country, this figure ranges between 28% for Walsall, and 25% for Sandwell. This indicates that, in the Black Country, there may be factors operating to make it less likely that women will venture into self-employment.

2.4 The Challenge facing the Black Country
The Black Country needs to move its economic base away from traditional manufacturing industries that are set to continue their contraction in the UK, and towards modern knowledge-based industries that are set to expand. It needs to do this in spite of its relative lack of skills, and to accelerate the pace of change. The challenge to the area is summed up in the following three basic imperatives:

1. Nurturing growth in expanding industry sectors
2. Modernising and increasing productivity to improve competitiveness in certain key industries (labelled ‘adjusters’)

Source: Census 2001: Key statistics for local authorities
3. Managing shrinkage in certain traditional basic industries\textsuperscript{11}.

According to the Institute for Employment Research at the University of Warwick, using the Local Economy Forecasting Model (LEFM) the loss of jobs in adjusting and shrinking industries will number as many as 40,000 by 2011. Although industrial output is forecast to rise by 20\% (a massive increase in productivity), the diversification and modernisation strategy report forecasts an overall contraction of jobs by 1\% in the Black Country, during the first decade of the century.

This throws into sharp relief the extent of the challenge facing the Black Country, if expanding and new industrial sectors are to make up this shortfall in employment. The ‘expanders’ category is made up of 17 sectors, which include retailing, health and social services, business services, and education. Together the expanders as a whole are forecast to increase output by 30\%, and employment by 11\%. These projections are based on the assumption that other regions in competition for industries and jobs will continue to develop at their current rates. Should the attractiveness of these alternatives improve at a faster rate than the Black Country, the recovery will be more difficult.

\textbf{2.5. Employment in key industries}

Key sectors include manufacturing and engineering, construction, retail and distribution, business and professional services, health care, voluntary and community. Between 1995 and 2000 the number of jobs in healthcare grew by 25\%; and retail and distribution, business and professional services and the voluntary and community sectors each grew by approximately 9\%.

Below is the distribution of the workforce within four key sectors in the Black Country, the West Midlands and Great Britain.

\textsuperscript{11} A Diversification and Modernisation Strategy for the Black Country, page 7.
Figure 6: Employees in key sectors in 2000 in the Black Country, West Midlands and G.B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY SECTORS</th>
<th>BLACK COUNTRY</th>
<th>WEST MIDLANDS</th>
<th>GREAT BRITAIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>18,700</td>
<td>90,800</td>
<td>1,126,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>29,600</td>
<td>150,100</td>
<td>1,688,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail and Distribution</td>
<td>68,800</td>
<td>342,000</td>
<td>3,727,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary and Community</td>
<td>14,800</td>
<td>80,800</td>
<td>920,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted by PACEC (2003), Key Sector Research, Learning and Skills Council - Black Country.

In the Black Country, the retail and distribution sector is proportionately bigger than in the national economy. The other priority sectors indicated above are smaller in the Black Country compared to the national picture (PACEC, 2003).

The following subsections take each sector in turn and present key information about them in employment terms. Figures, extracted from data from the 2001 census, show the distribution of men and women at various levels and in various roles across a range of industrial sectors. The first set of data considered relates to the overall national distribution of men and women across the workforces of a range of key industrial sectors, including manufacturing, health and social services, wholesale and retail, construction, and personal services.

The second set of data relates to the respective qualification levels of men and women in these industries. In all cases, for simplification, the categories ‘Professional’ and ‘Associate Professional and Technical’ have been aggregated to a single category ‘Professional and Technical’ and the categories ‘Personal service’ and ‘Sales and Customer Service’ have been aggregated to a single category ‘Sales and Service’. The values represent absolute numbers in employment during the week before the 2001 census. The categories have been ordered hierarchically in status (though not necessarily in pay), from ‘elementary’ occupations on the left to managerial on the right, and for each set of values, a linear trend line has been produced.

---

12 Data is presented on the basis of aggregate figures for England and Wales.
2.5.1 Manufacturing
Figure 7 shows that, in manufacturing and energy industries (the census category), women outnumber men by over two to one in administrative roles, but the situation is reversed both in professional and technical, and managerial roles. Even when the proportion of male operatives is taken into account, the dominance of men in skilled occupations is particularly striking. The trend line indicates a slight widening of the gap between men and women as status of the job increases.
On the other hand, in Figure 8, the gap in levels of education and training narrows markedly as qualifications get more advanced. This suggests that the occupational gap between men and women cannot be entirely attributed to women lagging behind men in their qualification levels.
2.5.2 Construction
A huge range of construction companies operates in the region. There are a few large national companies headquartered in the area and numerous small companies operating locally. Similar to engineering and manufacturing, the construction sector locally lacks management skills and is finding it difficult to attract new recruits. Considering the great importance of engineering and construction in the Black Country.
Country and the West Midlands and the skills gaps existing among employees\textsuperscript{13}, the industry needs to improve its image and attract non-traditional workers such as women and people from ethnic minorities, capable of progression to demanding jobs at craft, technician, management and professional level (PACEC, 2003).

The distribution figure for the construction industry emphasises above all the overwhelming dominance of males in the skilled workforce, compared to which, skilled females in construction are all but non-existent. However, there is some presence of women in sales and service roles, administration, professional and technical positions, and management, and this is evident in the trend line. This challenges the commonly held view that ‘there are no women in construction’, although their numbers may be small, and indicates that women who do go into construction may do so at higher status levels.

\textbf{Figure 9: Sex and Role by Industry: Construction}

The distribution of qualification levels in the construction industry (Figure 10) reveals a small proportion of the workforce with a degree-level (Level 4) qualification, although the number rises, for both men and women, at Level 5, which may reflect the higher qualifications of architects and surveyors. It is interesting to note the incidence of Level 3 qualifications for both men and women, explained by skilled male workers having Level 3 qualifications in construction trades, while more women tend to have Level 3 qualifications in secretarial and administrative occupations. Also worthy of note is the fact that, proportionately, more women have Level 3 qualifications.

\textsuperscript{13} Higher-level employees lack managerial and supervisory skills and craft workers lack general work skills (PACEC, 2003).
qualifications than Level 2, although this is reversed for men. Given that many of these women will be qualified in administrative roles, it is pertinent to consider whether they could be facilitated to progress into managerial roles, roles which depend more on high level people and communication skills than technical skills\textsuperscript{14}.

![Figure 10: Gender and Qualification by Industry: Construction](image)

2.5.3 Retail
Within the West Midlands and the Black Country, retail employment has increased since 1995 due to the significant developments of retail parks such as the Birmingham Bull Ring and Merry Hill in Dudley. The sector workforce is generally not highly qualified and attracts women mainly because of its work practices such as the use of part-time labour. Retail is also characterised by high staff turnover, tendency to work longer hours and ‘non-standard’ hours. This may prevent women with family responsibilities from progressing from a part-time position to a more responsible role (which are generally offered on a full time basis). In the wholesale and retail sector, the ‘sales and service’ category may be linked to the ‘operative’ category, given the nature of the sector. Here, women are overwhelmingly dominant in terms of numbers. However, this presence is not maintained in professional and technical roles, nor in management. The trend lines in Figure 11 are interesting, showing a

\textsuperscript{14} See, for example, the framework for Advanced Management Skills for the Black Country (Worrall et al., 2003)
slight decline for women and a rise for men as the categories move up the status scale.
This is mirrored in the situation regarding qualification levels, where, as Figure 12 shows, it is fairly level pegging until the higher levels, where men appear to have a qualifications advantage.
2.5.4. Health
The health sector is the fastest growing Black Country sector in employment terms. One of the major local employers, it delivers vital public services to the local community. Traditionally, health attracts a high proportion of women in both the professional and the non-clinical areas, and provides good training opportunities. This is reflected in Figure 13, as women make up most of the professional and technical workforce (represented largely by the nursing profession), and are also represented in proportionately high numbers in management. This may represent a direct link in this sector between professional experience and movement into management positions.
Women outnumber men in the proportionate distribution of qualification levels in the health and social services sector, as can be seen in Figure 14.
Interestingly, women’s predominance in nursing is reflected in the figures for workers with NVQ Level 4 (degree level) qualifications. More surprising is the gap between women and men in the numbers with NVQs at Level 5, indicating senior professional or managerial qualifications equivalent to postgraduate level. Here, the qualification levels do not appear to be proportionately reflected in the numbers of women in the most senior management posts.

2.5.5. The Voluntary Sector
According to research carried out by PACEC for the Black Country LSC (2003) the voluntary and community sector is growing fast and does not appear to be suffering from the recruitment difficulties and the skills gaps faced by the other sectors. Despite the limited resources available, voluntary organisations are generally committed to employee training and development. More information is required on women’s participation in paid roles, as volunteers, and in management and trustee roles within the sector.

As the voluntary sector is not identified in the census, the final figures in this series illustrate the industrial category ‘Other’. This refers to a group including other community, social and personal service activities. Here, the distribution of men and women across the categories shows a marked numerical dominance of women in sales, service and administrative roles, but again shows women strongly outnumbered by men in professional and managerial roles. As with wholesale and retail, the trend lines in Figure 15 show men becoming more predominant in higher status occupations.
Figure 16 shows differences from health in the higher qualifications categories. Here, men are both in greater numbers in more senior roles, and overtake women when it comes to numbers with postgraduate or senior professional qualifications. The trend line does, however, suggest that females in the sector, taken as a group, have a higher qualifications profile than borne out by the numbers in senior management positions.
2.6. Conclusion
This chapter has focused on the economic and social context of the West Midlands in general, and the Black Country in particular, in order to establish the background to the challenges faced by the Black Country sub-region in maintaining its economic base, regenerating its economy to meet the challenges of national and global competition, and improving its infrastructure to enhance quality of life for its inhabitants. We have drawn on a range of data sources to identify the scope and the complexity of the challenges faced.

From the analysis of qualification levels and occupational grouping for men and women in the sectors featured in this study, it is clear that, with the exception of the health sector, women are under-represented in management, especially at the higher levels, irrespective of the fact that they may be proportionately better qualified than men in the same occupational groupings. Gender can therefore be regarded as a greater barrier to advancement than lack of qualifications.

On a range of indicators the Black Country is clearly lagging behind the rest of the country, and is something of a ‘poor cousin’ in the family of West Midlands towns and districts. Given this, it is not unreasonable to assume that the relationship we have identified between occupational status and qualification within the key sectors of construction, health, retail and community, will be at least as marked in the Black Country as elsewhere, and possibly more so. The overall conclusion is that concerted, energetic and accelerated change is required, and that that change has to be generated from within, harnessing the skills, talents and energies of local people.
Drivers for change

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The quality of public sector leadership</td>
<td>• The quality of public sector leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The quality of school education</td>
<td>• The quality of school education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The quality of HE/FE provision</td>
<td>• The quality of HE/FE provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support to businesses</td>
<td>• Support to businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supply of housing</td>
<td>• Supply of housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supply of premises for businesses</td>
<td>• Supply of premises for businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quality of retailing and leisure facilities, and the general</td>
<td>• Quality of retailing and leisure facilities, and the general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quality of the public realm.</td>
<td>quality of the public realm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Diversification and Modernisation of the Black Country, report)</td>
<td>(Diversification and Modernisation of the Black Country, report)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These drivers are relevant to the current study, in several ways. Firstly, they represent domains in which women often play a major part as employees, and in which women managers develop their careers. Secondly, they represent services that can directly and indirectly have an impact on women’s willingness and capacity to set up and run their own businesses, either because they are sectors in which women may establish businesses themselves, or because they offer services and support for local entrepreneurs.
SECTION 3: WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP – WHAT IS THE CURRENT THINKING?

3.1. Introduction
This chapter explores the main issues associated with women in management and entrepreneurship. It considers the environmental, cultural and business context of the West Midlands and the Black Country and it analyses research conducted in the UK and abroad. We report the statistics on women in management and entrepreneurship in the UK and the EU. We then examine the routes that women take to management and self-employment, including education, qualifications and career paths, and review the literature on women’s leadership style and the glass ceiling. The second part analyses women’s experience in the workplace, with the aim of identifying organisational and family factors that may influence women’s participation in management in the Black Country region. The analysis of these various perspectives of research highlights strategies for increasing women’s access into and participation in senior management and for managing successful careers in management and self-employment.

3.2. Overview of Women in Management and in Entrepreneurship

3.2.1. Women in management
In large part, women have failed to achieve leading positions in private and public organisations, in spite of more than 20 years of equal opportunity legislation. Ten years ago, it was estimated that women held approximately 26% of all managerial posts in Britain (Davidson and Cooper, 1993) - these figures have not improved much. Adams (2002) reports that within the largest 100 listed companies the number of women in executive positions is very low. “Out of 600-plus senior executive jobs in Britain’s boardroom, only 10 are filled by women” (less than 2%) and 42 of the 100 FTSE companies have no women on their boards. The Institute of Management (1998) reveals that only 3.6% of UK company directors are women. In the EU, less than 5% of women are in senior management positions (Davidson and Burke, 2000). The true picture may be worse, as studies often combine “managers” and “administrators” (Steven, 2000). In addition, managers and senior managers vary significantly depending on size of organisation. A senior manager in a small company may have limited responsibilities compared to a senior manager within a large corporation (or vice versa).

There are some pockets of progress. In 2003 women held an estimated 23.9% of top management posts in the public sector, a rise from 12.7% in 1998 (Carvel, 2004). In 2003, Singh and Vinnicombe published the results of their 2002 monitoring exercise of the boards of the FTSE 100 companies, and reported that the marginal decreases in the numbers of women on the boards of these top companies had shown a small reverse. 61 had women directors on the board, compared with 57 the previous year. However, only 12 had female executive directors, and only six had three or more female directors. Only one company in the list, Pearson Publishing, has both a female CEO and a female director of finance.
3.2.2. Distribution of women managers
Sector segregation and managerial segregation by gender still persist and has barely changed over the last ten years. Women workers are concentrated in sectors such as:

- public administration,
- health and education (4.788.000 women compared to 2.141.000 men)
- distribution, hotels and restaurants (2.811.000 women compared to 2.637.000 men) (The Women’s Unit, 2001)

Sectors that continue to be male-dominated are:
- manufacturing (1.228.000 women compared to 3.511.000 men),
- construction (189.000 women compared to 1.807.000 men) and
- transport and communication (477.000 women compared to 1.428.000 men).

The most popular jobs for women managers are in human resources/personnel and marketing, in which women make up approximately 35% of managers. In contrast, in research and development, physical distribution, manufacturing and production and purchasing and contracting, fewer than 6% of managers are women (Institute of Management and Remuneration Economics, 1998).

In the UK the types of businesses that women run reflect women’s typical occupations and employment. This is not surprising as most people start businesses in sectors where they have experience. Figure 17 shows the distribution of women and men across the industrial sectors in the UK.
### Figure 17: Self-employment by industrial sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTORS</th>
<th>WOMEN (%)</th>
<th>MEN (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Fishing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration, education and health</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport and communication</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution, hotels and restaurants</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and business services</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from: The Women’s Unit, 2001

#### 3.2.3. Women entrepreneurs

While the proportion of women in management has barely changed over the last 10 years, there has been an increasing trend for women to start their own business. In the UK, women currently start 35% of all small businesses and over a quarter of people registered as self-employed are women, a proportion that has doubled since 1980 (Equal Opportunities Commission, 1998, in Davidson and Burke, 2000). In 2000, 3.1 million people were self-employed (11% of the workforce), and 27% of these were women.

The highest female entrepreneurial activity is in London (6.6%), the South West (4.6%) and the South East (4.2%). However, London and the South East have the widest gap between male and female entrepreneurship with female entrepreneurship 50% and 36% respectively of male entrepreneurship. The North East has the narrowest gap, with female entrepreneurship at over 60% of male entrepreneurship (Harding, Cowling and Ream, 2003). Figure 18 shows regional levels of female entrepreneurship in 2002 and 2003.
### Figure 18: Female Entrepreneurial Activity in the UK regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UK Regions</th>
<th>Percentages-2002</th>
<th>Percentages-2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire and the Humber</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East of England</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It has been widely reported that the increase in female entrepreneurship can be explained by the greater flexibility and control provided by owning one’s business, which can be seen as affording more flexibility, and therefore being more compatible with the care of the family (Catalyst, 1998 in Brumit Kropf, 1999). Figure 19 shows the reasons given by women and men for becoming self-employed (Women’s Unit of the Cabinet Office, 2001). Notable differences between the two groups are the greater proportion of women (21%) than men (2%) who become self-employed because of family commitments and more than twice as many men (15%) than women (7%) did so to make more money.
Figure 19: Reasons for starting a business

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>WOMEN (%)</th>
<th>MEN (%)</th>
<th>ALL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To be independent</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted more money</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For better conditions of work</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family commitments</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital, space, equipment opportunities</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saw the demand</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joined family business</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of occupation</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No job available locally</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made redundant</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reason given</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All who gave a valid response</td>
<td>2960000</td>
<td>2156000</td>
<td>8034000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents could give up to four reasons

3.2.4. SMEs; The European perspective

In the UK, 99% of businesses are small and employ 50% of the workforce (The Women’s Unit, 2001). The West Midlands and the Black Country sub-region reflect the national situation. An investigation into women managers in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Europe\(^\text{15}\) (Thornton, in Winnicombe, 2000) reveals an overall low participation of women. In 50% of European companies there are no women in management positions. The ‘best performer’ countries are the UK and Spain where 37% and 38% of companies respectively have no women in management. The Netherlands and Sweden have the highest percentages of companies with no

\(^{15}\) Over 5000 SMEs were surveyed in the then 15 EU countries, Switzerland and Malta.
women in management positions, with 70% and 64% respectively (Winnicombe, 2000). It is likely that the costs associated with periods of maternity leave and provision of childcare in these countries may act as a deterrent to SMEs to employ women at management level. It has to be noted that in 2000 in the UK maternity leave consisted of 3 month with a minimum payment of £75 per week\textsuperscript{16}; in other north European countries maternity rights could be extended to up to two years with generous payment often corresponding to the full salary. In the UK, the impact of the Employment Bill 2003, extending maternity rights to give women the option of taking a total of 52 weeks in maternity leave, has yet to be assessed.

3.2.5. The pay gap
The above statistics reveal inequalities in the proportion of women in management and entrepreneurship compared to men. However, literature has focused on various other aspects of inequalities existing between women and men at work. Among these are the pay gap existing between women and men and the horizontal gender segregation.

An examination of women’s and men’s remuneration reveals that UK women earn approximately 75% of men’s gross earnings; this situation is similar to the rest of the EU. In the UK, the highest paid women earn approximately 30% less than their male counterparts (Winnicombe and Sturges, 1995). In Denmark and in Italy, in contrast, women earn around 85% of men’s salary.

3.2.6. Part time working
Another interesting trend in the distribution of labour is the gender polarisation in the part-time versus full-time job market. In Europe over 80% of those working part-time are women. In the UK this proportion is 86% (Powell and Graves, 2003); 43% of women work part-time compared to 8% of men. For women who become mothers it is becoming increasingly popular to renegotiate their full-time position into a part-time position. Part-time work offers them a better balance with their family responsibilities. However, this has many drawbacks. Part-time work often means putting in many more hours than formally negotiated for no extra money (Winnicombe, 2000). Working part-time is perceived to give employees lower status and often to provide fewer benefits and limited career prospects. This phenomenon has been dubbed “the mommy track”. While most employers are currently allowing and often encouraging part-time work or job sharing, this practice is diffuse for lower-grade jobs and is not extended to managerial jobs (Winnicombe and Sturges, 1995).

Self-employed women are more likely than men to work 30 hours or less per week (38% of women compared to 9.8% of men) and they are more likely to use their home or same ground/building as their business base (35% of women compared to 12% of men). This fits in with the premise that many women start their own business in order to gain the independence and the flexibility needed to cope with family commitments. Because employment patters have not fully accommodated the

\textsuperscript{16} The employment contract could specify a higher amount.
flexible working arrangements that people with caring responsibilities need, women choose to develop their own conditions of work in terms of time and space (The Women’s Unit, 2001).

3.2.7 Black and ethnic minority women managers

Studies on women in management have generally avoided any reference to race or ethnicity. As Bhavnani and Coyle (2000) suggested, black and ethnic minority women fall into the gap between ‘race’ and ‘gender’. They are invisible in texts and articles on ‘race’ and employment and on ‘gender’ and employment. The limited research focusing on black and ethnic minority women found that, relative to white women, black and ethnic minority women continue to be under-represented in higher-grade employment (Bhavnani, 1994, 1996; Bhavnani and Coyle, 2000). Davidson (1997) reports that according to a British Labour Force Survey data 9% of ethnic minority females in the UK are found in the category ‘Professional, Manager, Employer, Employees and Managers in large establishments’ compared to 11% of white females. Nelson (2004: 13) states that “Women in more urban areas of the UK (for example within parts of the West Midlands region), particularly BME women, have an additional barrier of racism to face. Many of these women experience the “sticky floor” syndrome and are unable to progress in their careers as hoped, resulting in individuals not having the full set of business skills, as they have not been given the opportunity to progress up the managerial ladder, and subsequently need extra support in developing specific business skills.”

Bhavnani and Coyle (2000: 225) put the issue succinctly: ‘black women on the whole are disadvantaged compared to white women in the labour market. They are less likely to become managers, are on lower grades within the same occupations, are more likely to do shift work, are more likely to be unemployed’. Black and ethnic minority women are more likely to work in the public sector than other groups and as managers, they are more likely to be self-employed owner-managers and to work in small firms where the label ‘manager’ may refer to different status and responsibility than in a large organisation (Bhavnani and Coyle, 2000). The women’s unit report (2001) shows that self-employed women across all ethnic groups are under-represented as compared with men17, however the groups that appear to be disproportionately under-represented are self-employed women from the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities. Within these groups over 95% of self-employed are men. A study recently produced by Kajan’s (2005) in the Midlands provides more localised information on black and ethnic minority women in the local labour market.

3.2.8. Black, female and entrepreneurial

Among ethnic minority communities, the GEM data suggest that, on several indicators of entrepreneurial activity and attitude, women from ethnic minorities are more entrepreneurial than the white population. For example, African women are the most likely to see good business opportunities in their immediate environment, while fear of failure, which hampers many would-be women entrepreneurs, is lowest among African-Caribbean women. Asian businesswomen cite the importance of

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17 Percentages are between 24 and 34 among the various ethnic groups.
extended family networks and family support in the sharing of information and knowledge about setting up a business.

3.3. Routes to Management

3.3.1. Education

There is evidence that in Europe women are educated as well, if not better, than men. In the UK, approximately three-fifths of further and higher-education students are female. In France and in Italy 50% of the university student population is female. However, only a quarter of MBA graduates are women (Vinnicombe and Colwill, 1995). It appears that women do achieve higher and further education qualifications in the same proportion as men, but do not seem to choose business and management as an area of study in the same proportion as men. Girls do not seem to look for a career in management from early on. This can be explained by the lack of role models of women in management, by the lack of self-confidence and encouragement to apply for management positions.

There is a "chicken-and-egg" situation in that the proportion of women taking up business education (30%) is significantly lower than that taking up education in law (44%) or medicine (44%). This raises the question why relatively few young women aspire to success in business. According to one study carried out by the University of Michigan and the US organisation Catalyst, a majority of women have negative perceptions both of business and business education, possibly perceiving both to be too aggressive and self-serving for their tastes and self-image (Quacquarelli, 2002). So business may have an image problem when it comes to competing with law and medicine for the aspirations of young women choosing their careers, as they are more likely to gravitate towards careers that demonstrate a more obvious and immediate benefit to society and the common good.

Regarding the educational levels of female entrepreneurs, the GEM survey found that 22.6% of female start-ups are made by women with O Levels or GCSEs, 19.4% by women with A Levels, and 22.1% with degrees. Self-employed women are more likely than men to have academic qualifications, while men tend to have more practical or vocational qualifications (15% of self-employed men have a first or higher degree). This suggests that level of education is not of itself an inhibiting factor in leading women into entrepreneurship activity, at least to the extent that level of confidence is.

3.3.2. Experience

The second main route to management is progression from low-grade jobs that do not require formal qualifications, through the ranks following various levels of training (formal and on the job) and responsibility. Steven’s (2000) study of pub managers in Scotland identified a relatively high proportion of female licensed house managers. As many as 56% of managers in the Scottish division of Bass Taverns were women, 

18 The Women’s Unit, 2001
which is remarkable considering that the proportion of Scottish businesses having a female manager, at 22%, is lower than that of the UK as a whole, at 26%. Other pub chains in Scotland were closer to the UK average. Steven examines the nature of the managerial role in pub management, and the possible routes to management roles, which were threefold:

1. Gradual promotion through the levels of training and responsibility, with no additional qualifications being required. This encompasses those who start as part-time bar staff and progress to full-time work until they get promotion to assistant manager.
2. The “vocational graduate” route for those with HNDs, who are taken on with the specific intention that they will run pubs.
3. The “high-flier” graduate route for honours graduates whom the company expects to be divisional group resources within ten years. For them, time spent as a pub manager is a short period on their route to their final senior management destination.

What is particularly interesting about this study is that 83.6% of the female LHMs 19 in Scotland, and 72% of LHMs in England started as part-time bar staff. Steven points out that people who require part-time work are usually “limited in their choice of occupation by what is obtainable to fit in with the specific hours for which they are available” (Steven, 2000: 23). The implication is that they may find themselves in jobs for which the qualifications they may possess are not an entry requirement. In other words, they may be over-qualified for the job. For those previously in work (e.g. women who have taken a break to fulfil caring responsibilities), their part-time job may be of lower status than their previous employment. In an industry where routes to management are clearly delineated, and where the majority of part-time workers are likely to be women (as in pub retail), women are more likely to have their previous achievements discounted and be overlooked for career progression.

3.4. Routes to Self-Employment

3.4.1. A vicious cycle?
According to successive UK reports by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) for the last three years, there is a persistent gap between men and women in the UK when it comes to entrepreneurship, and this gap remains one of the widest in the world (Harding, 2002). Women tend to have a poor personal perception of their ability to set up a business, and are therefore more likely to allow fear of failure to stop them at the starting blocks. Women from all walks of life are less likely than men to spot business opportunities, are less likely to know an entrepreneur who could offer them advice and support, and thus have weaker networks. Thus a vicious

19 Licensed House Managers
cycle persists, in which women lack confidence, few women become role models for other women, and so confidence is not raised.

Women are more cautious, and less likely than men either to invest their own resources, or seek bank finance to support a business idea. When women do apply for external finance, there are more likely to succeed in gaining funding from all sources except individual investors, and non-bank unsecured loans. GEM statistics suggest that women are more likely than men to approach government agencies for funding and other support for business start-up; which suggests that women may prove to be receptive to publicly sponsored initiatives to develop women-owned businesses.

On the positive side, there is evidence over the last three years that more women’s start-up and owner-managed businesses are innovative, and likely to be based on new technologies. Harding, Cowling and Ream (2003), in a report based on 60 case studies of female-owned businesses, estimate that the social capital contained in growing female business networks is likely to lead to sustained growth trajectories in the coming years, and generate more high-growth companies.

3.4.2. Policy initiatives
More women should be encouraged to become entrepreneurs by setting up their own businesses, through the DTI’s Small Business Service strategic framework for female entrepreneurship (DTI, 2003). It has the following objectives: that by 2006:

- Women will make up 40% of the people making use of government sponsored business support;
- 18-20% of all business stock in the UK will be female-owned (the current figure is 12-14%);
- Ethnic minority women’s use of business support will be proportionate to the demographic make-up in a particular community.

Linked to the framework’s quantitative targets, the Government plans to reduce financial and childcare barriers and develop schemes to enhance women’s levels of confidence in the business arena. The British Chambers of Commerce has published a report: Achieving the Vision, which represents an overview on female entrepreneurship in the UK (Harding, Cowling and Ream, 2004). It is addressed to policy makers in government but also to industry, trade associations, Learning and Skills Councils and business support providers.
Policy and practice measures to promote women-owned businesses:

- Promotion of female entrepreneurs as role models
- Placing more emphasis on networks, and on collecting and disseminating best practice information on how women use networks
- Promote best practice women-only business support
- Improving attitudes and confidence among young women
- Provide pilot schemes in investor ready training with gender in mind
- Strengthening the evidence base on female business ownership and self-employment
- Promotion of strategies to increase women entrepreneurs’ access to markets
- Innovative childcare solutions
- Renewing the emphasis on implementation of the Strategic Framework for Women’s Enterprise (DTI, 2003)
- Obtaining government commitment at the highest level.

3.5. Leadership

3.5.1. Management style
Numerous studies have attempted to investigate whether or not there exist gendered aspects of leadership, management, or entrepreneurial style (Valentine and Godkin, 2000; Glover et al., 2002; McGregor and Tweed, 2001; Rajan and Krishnan, 2002; Manning, 2002. They tend to fall into two categories; those that focus on the differences between men and women and those that focus on the similarities. A popular view drawn from qualitative research suggests that women adopt a more democratic and participative management style, while men tend to adopt a more autocratic and directive style (Eagly and Johnson, 1990; Rosener, 1990; Rodgers-Healey, 2003). It seems that women’s style tends towards open and cooperative relationships, development, nurturing and caring of staff (Kanter, 1989; Helgesin, 1996). Men’s styles are seen to be more competitive, controlling, analytical, unemotional and hierarchical. These differences are consistent with popular beliefs and stereotypes and are generally confirmed by women managers themselves (see Fondas, 1990, Priola, 2004). While on a more abstract and general level this may be the case, it is important to consider the behaviour of managers in the real day-to-day
interactions with people and tasks in organisations and how these relationships influence the acts of performing their daily functions.

In terms of management behaviours, Oshagbemi and Gill (2003) discovered that women managers in the UK tend to delegate less than their male counterparts. Also, their study found that on one dimension of leadership behaviour, there was a significant difference between men and women, in that men were more likely to use “inspirational motivation”. This is described as “articulating exciting possibilities….. [using] appealing words to communicate a rational vision of the future and align individual and organisational goals so that individuals should strive to attain them because they are personally interested” (Oshagbemi and Gill, 2003: 295).

In the corporate setting, Kabacoff (1998) investigated possible gender differences in organisational leadership behaviours using over 17,000 assessment questionnaires. He found that women tended to score higher than men on scales measuring orientation towards production, and people-oriented leadership skills. Men tended to be rated higher on business-oriented leadership skills. In terms of general effectiveness, however, bosses saw men and women as equal, while peers and direct reports rated women as slightly higher than men. However, later Kabacoff (2000) found that bosses tended to vary their ratings according to the gender of the manager being rated, while direct reports did not. Unfortunately, there have not been sufficient repeat studies to validate the suggestion that there are distinct differences in leadership or management styles between men and women. The only main difference noted as a result of a meta-analysis of studies is that, although women and men are relatively similar in behaviour and effectiveness, women leaders tend to be more participative and less autocratic.

The overall results of these studies are still inconclusive. Also, the results of the studies are used in different ways. Sometimes they are used to explain why there are not more female top managers (because of a tendency to promote and appoint according to macho stereotypes of “good” management). Sometimes (and increasingly) they are used as a justification for bringing more women into senior roles, in order to address shortages of particular “softer” skills and qualities in the management repertoire. In either case, there is both an opportunity and a danger that a “female” management style might become a new stereotype.

3.5.2. Entrepreneurial drive
Few differences have been highlighted between women and men in terms of entrepreneurial drive. As the OECD study on the West Midlands expressed it; “It is as normal for a woman as for a man to be an entrepreneur, even if it is not as common for women as it is for men.” (Holmquist, 2004). A study in Brazil (Jones, 2000) suggests that women entrepreneurs and male entrepreneurs differ little in their wants

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20 Indeed, Northouse (2001) suggests that meta-analyses indicate that assuming differences in behaviours between male and female leaders would lead researchers to erroneous conclusions.
for business opportunities; but do exhibit some small differences in their attitudes to affiliation in the workplace, suggesting that women may be more inclined to incorporate a more holistic and team-oriented operating style within their enterprises. On the whole though, differences were small, and this in itself may be significant when one takes into account the location of this study, Brazil being perceived as a distinctly macho culture, one in which males and females are expected to demonstrate distinct social roles and behaviours.

3.6. Barriers to Women in Management: the Glass Ceiling

3.6.1. What is the glass ceiling?
Gender and leadership studies have often focused on barriers faced by women seeking management positions (e.g. Wilson, 2003; Cubillo and Brown, 2003). The “glass ceiling” concept refers to invisible, artificial barriers preventing individuals from advancing within their organisations despite their qualifications and experiences (Smith, 2000). It is defined as ‘a barrier so subtle that it is transparent, yet so strong that it prevents women and minorities from moving up in the management hierarchy’ (Morrison and von Glinow, 1990: 200). Although women constitute over 50% of the UK workforce (Equal Opportunities Commission, 1998, in Davidson and Burke, 2000), gender segregation persists, regardless of equal opportunities legislation, current debates and research on the issue. It will be more than just a matter of time before the gap closes. Powell and Graves (2003) suggest that when women believe that they are disadvantaged by the glass ceiling, they may be less likely to express an interest in open top management jobs than equally qualified men. The frustration experienced by women seems to motivate some of them to quit their organisation and start their own business.
Why are there more women in management these days?

- More women earning university degrees in all disciplines.
- Higher demand for labour due to economic expansion.
- Global shift from a manufacturing-based to an information and service-based economy valuing highly educated workers over manual skills.
- Decrease in the supply of available labour since 1957.
- Legislation on equal opportunities.
- Women’s increased educational attainment accompanying greater commitment to professional and managerial careers.
- The presence of women in higher managerial levels having an effect on the proportion of women in lower managerial levels. (Powell, 2000)

... and why aren’t there more women in management? (Powell, 2000)

- A social system perpetuating male power and authority
- Stereotypes of effective leaders based on masculine traits,
- Decision-makers’ use “gender-based schemata” when selecting people for management
- Top managers’ prefer to work with people similar to themselves;
- Unstructured and unscrutinised organisational practices for making promotions
- Gender differences favouring men in developmental experiences e.g. men get more coaching, mentoring, and more challenging assignments
- Gender differences in the desire to hold top jobs
- Women quit organisations and the corporate world when faced with a lack of career opportunities. (Powell, 2000)

3.6.2. Male attitudes
The attitudes of male managers remain an issue that is brought up repeatedly in research globally (Coburn, 1991; Kerfoot and Knights, 1993; Liff et al., 1997). For example, a study carried out in Mauritius, a rapidly-expanding manufacturing economy and an example of rapid economic development (Mauritius now being on a
par economically with South Africa), showed that while a majority of male top managers professed to being “in favour” of increasing proportions of women managers, they simultaneously expressed the view that “most employees” would feel uncomfortable working for a female boss (Ramgutty-Wong, 2000). This is little different from the situation uncovered by Liff et al. (1997) in a survey of West Midlands businesses.

On the subject of selection and assessment, Alimo-Metcalfe (1995) suggests that the importance of scrutinising selection and assessment procedures (both formal and informal) is crucial because they could harbour possible biases and potential discrimination. The nature of possible biases becomes more difficult to notice and to be demonstrated as organisations are using more sophisticated methods of selection and assessment.

3.6.3. Cracking the glass ceiling
Van Vianen and Keizer (1996) examined whether women’s own career behaviour or other factors would explain the relatively low numbers of women achieving senior management positions. They found that an organisation’s culture could affect women’s intention and motivation to become managers, holding them back from seeking managerial careers. They found this effect in a large multinational company, but not in a service organisation, and suggested that organisations should provide specific support to women, such as mentoring, and developing the talent of female employees. For Mallon and Cassell (1999) it was important to note that a gender imbalance in a company or industry could in itself be enough to put women off putting themselves forward. This is potentially a relevant factor in the study of certain Black Country industries, such as construction.

3.7. Specific Barriers to Women in the West Midlands and Black Country

3.7.1. Does size matter?
Businesses in the Midlands have a fairly poor record when it comes to employing women in management positions, when compared with other parts of the country (Birmingham Post, 9 May, 2002). A survey by Grant Thornton financial advisors estimated that 36% of West Midlands businesses employed no women in management positions, whereas the figure in the North of England was 15%. Furthermore, the survey found that the bigger the company, the less likely it would be that there would be any women on the board. Where there was a small management team of between two to five people, there would be a 51% chance of the team including at least one woman, but when the management team grew beyond six people there would only be a 25% chance of a woman being involved. There is no clear or obvious explanation for this phenomenon, but it does point to the possibility of the existence of strongly male-oriented norms in the boardrooms of larger companies.

The Black Country Employment Survey 2001 (2002) has reported that fewer than one in five organisations (19%) have a female as the head of business, which is lower than that observed in the 2000 Employment Survey (23%).
organisation (with 250 or more employees) only 3% of women are head of business. These large organisations are also less likely to employ women at any level (34% of the workforce being women). 38% of the employed workforce in the Black Country are women and 23% of local organisations do not employ any women staff at all compared to 9% that do not employ men.

3.7.2. The glass ceiling in the Black Country
There is very little clear-cut empirical evidence about whether the glass ceiling operates to a greater or lesser extent in the West Midlands and Black Country as compared with other parts of the United Kingdom, and similarly there is a dearth of data about how barriers to women entering the boardrooms of large and small enterprises operate. In 1997 Liff et al. published the results of a survey of West Midlands businesses that aimed to identify senior management attitudes to the employment of women managers. Although a majority of men in the West Midlands were revealed to hold positive attitudes to women in management, the research identified a core of male senior management who believe that workers may feel less comfortable working for a woman, and that women should not combine a management role with family responsibilities. As these are managers who will tend to have a significant influence on their organisations’ cultures and recruitment and promotion practices, it may go some way to explaining why women remain significantly under-represented at senior management levels in the West Midlands.

Of particular relevance to the West Midlands and Black Country, given the rapid decline in manufacturing jobs and the waves of restructurings and acquisitions and mergers that took place during the 1990s, are the findings of a study into organisational change and its impacts on women managers’ careers (Edwards et al. 1996). This study asked why, despite the equal opportunities initiatives designed to increase the number of women managers in the UK, numbers of women in senior management should be decreasing. From a case study of a public service utility, the study found that the overall effect of organisational re-structuring, with its de-layering and reduction of middle management, was to introduce new barriers for women, which mitigated the potential effects of the so-called “feminisation” of management, with its increasing emphasis on people management skills.

3.7.3. Feminisation of management
It has been suggested (e.g. Lee, 1994; Fondas, 1997) that recent management practices such as employee participation, teamwork and flexibility encourage the process of feminisation of management, i.e. the spread of traits and qualities traditionally associated with women. These new systems of management generally emphasise behaviours such as nurturing and caring, interpersonal sensitivity, preference for open and cooperative relationships. They have been advocated as the more effective response to changes in organisations’ economic, demographic and competitive environment (Kanter, 1989). Some argue that these new management practices (and equal opportunities and demographic shifts) have questioned some of the traditional modes of managing thus creating space for women and different ways of managing.
Research into management styles and practices, in fact, has highlighted that women managers indeed tend to show behaviours such as influencing, nurturing, and collaborating and that they emphasise persuasion, cooperation and collectivism as opposed to planning, organising and directing (e.g. Lee, 1994; Fondas, 1997). These feminine qualities and styles tend to bring women into conflict with organisational norms and culture. Often ‘women who choose to lead in a consultative, collaborative, non-confrontational style, find themselves “invisible” in meetings where “combat, aggression and political machinations” are the dominant styles’ (Joyner and Preston, 1998: 36). Hearn (1998, cited in Brooks, 2001) suggested that women do management in different ways without fundamentally challenging the long established masculine culture. Women managers at all hierarchical levels will only survive if they follow the example of most of their male counterparts.
We question to what extent the process of “feminisation” of management values and practices has taken hold in the companies of the West Midlands, particularly in sectors such as manufacturing, engineering and construction which are traditionally male dominated and associated with a ‘macho image’.

3.8. Organisational and Business Factors Influencing Women’s participation in Management

3.8.1. On the inside
Individuals’ career patterns are influenced by the external environment (e.g. business context), the internal work environment provided by the employers and by the nature of one’s family life. We have discussed the barriers that women encounter in accessing management positions and the regional context and the specific barriers that women encounter in entering managerial roles within the Black Country business environment. We also need to consider what happens to women once they are inside organisations.

Research on gendering management has acknowledged the centrality of the gender substructure in organisations (e.g. Mills and Tancred, 1992; Gherardi, 1995; Alvesson and Billing 1997; Alvesson, 1998). The gender dimension of organisations is seen as fundamental in influencing organisational activities (e.g. Kanter, 1989; Calas and Smircich, 1992). In order to identify the conditions in which women can progress it is hugely important to consider whether managers in organisations are men or women; also, ‘it matters a great deal whether organisational employees are female or male’ (Mills and Tancred, 1992: 1). Gender imbalance creates an organisational culture that is hostile or resistant to women (Simpson, 2000). On the other hand, the gender of both managers and employees influences the organisational environment and may determine whether a specific organisation (or sector) is a place where women want to work.

3.8.2. Women in the minority
Where the majority of managers are men, women managers face particular issues. These are characterised by the need for women to occupy and adapt roles traditionally occupied by men, thus women often find themselves fighting a traditional and masculine culture. The persistence of a masculine culture in most organisations
may explain some of the difficulties women face in gaining top positions (Priola, 2002).

Collinson and Hearn (1996) suggest that reflecting the numerical dominance of men is a masculine imagery that often pervades the managerial function and the perception of it. One of the most obvious features of the management of organisations is not only the dominance of men but also the dominance of masculine styles. The gender proportion may evolve but it is the dominant culture that determines the conditions for the ways in which organisations are managed, also for the ways in which women manage.

Various studies (e.g. Alvesson, 1998; Kerfoot and Knights, 1993, 1996) have reported that contemporary organisations reinforce forms of masculine management such as competitive enterprise, paternalism, careerism and informalism which often marginalise or exclude women’s contributions to management (Collinson and Hearn, 1994 and Benschop and Doorewaard, 1998). In some masculine organisations managers disengage, denying their emotions in order to obtain control over themselves, the others and the environment (Collinson and Hearn, 1996). Within such environment women in management ‘must be perceived as tough enough to overcome female stereotypes, but at the same time they are penalised if they appear too masculine’ (Lee, 1994:26).

The gendered nature of organisational life also results in the assessments of ‘fit’ which are based on a male rather than a female profile, with negative consequences for perceptions of women’s suitability for managerial positions (Harris, 1998). ‘Women ‘fail’ to gain inclusion because they are judged in systems set up by men reflecting male standards and criteria’ (Oakley, 2001: xii).

3.8.3. Bias and discrimination

Kanter (1977) refers to different systems of bias and discrimination that serve to marginalize and exclude members of a minority group. She stated that when women are present in organisations in low numbers, their presence creates ambiguities in the organisational culture which is determined and controlled by men, who constituted the majority. Men respond to the ambiguity by exaggerating the differences between the two groups. This reinforces a culture that perpetuates male traditions, values and customs. If the retaliation costs of succeeding in a masculine culture are seen as too high, or if the stereotypes of inferiority have been partly internalised due to earlier experiences, women can develop a fear of success and limit their aspirations (Kanter, 1977 and Davidson and Cooper, 1992 in Simpson 2000).

Public organisations in the United Kingdom have long adopted and spearheaded an Equal Opportunities stance. However, recent studies suggest that, even in local government organisations, male managerial cultures predominate, and this is perceived by women to have an impact on their career development and progression. Mallon and Cassell (1999) found that a large proportion of the women they interviewed in a UK local authority cited organisational values, culture and practices as being major barriers to their careers. Veale and Gold (1998) similarly
found a perception of the glass ceiling in a local authority, and considered that a lack of career guidance and counselling, coupled with a heavily male organisational culture, were important factors contributing to it. It is important to emphasise here that what these studies uncovered was a perception rather than an objective measurement of a glass ceiling. However, the key implication is that the very perception of the existence of the invisible barrier is enough to suppress women’s aspirations to higher management positions.
3.9. Family Factors that influence Women's participation in Management

3.9.1. Women as carers
Davidson and Cooper (1992) suggested that women should seek to manage a more equal division of labour at home so that they could progress at work and that organisations should develop more flexible practices and flexible working hours. Vinnicombe and Singh (200?) interviewed a group of women and men directors in a British company. They found that the women interviewed felt that the main issue was not gender barriers at the top (this organisation had a relatively large number of female directors – six), but problems with energy for those with family responsibilities. The care of children and sometimes of other relatives is a factor that affects women’s careers whether they choose to remain in full time positions, choose to change to part-time posts or take a career break.

Personal and family issues

- Women are more likely than men to have been absent from work or have worked part-time in the interest of children or family.
- Women are more likely than men to accept the major share of the household and family responsibility.
- Husbands (or male partners) are more likely than wives (or female partners) to be engaged in careers which, by virtue of their greater earning potential, take precedence over those of their partners, further widening the gap in their earning potential. Vinnicombe and Colwill (1995: 75)

Burke (1997) suggests that women might be more likely to be affected by family issues than are men. Often women are driven to choose to care for their family over an unrewarding job, slow career progression, limited opportunities and low earnings (Smith, 2000). In the UK, the high cost of childcare\(^{21}\) often is the factor that determines the choice, in particular for those families who have more than one child and with average salaries. Childcare provision provided by organisations is still limited and often only slightly cheaper than external provision.

3.9.2. Partners
Burke (1999) conducted a survey on 792 managers and professional women (the average age was about 30). He found that married women seemed to be at a moderate career disadvantage compared to single women. Married women were also more satisfied with their lives than single women. Managerial and professional women with children seemed to face major career disadvantages. They showed less career commitment, less upward mobility and less job satisfaction. It is possible that because they spend more hours per week in household responsibilities, devote fewer

\(^{21}\) Parents in Britain pay the biggest childcare bills in Europe, spending 1.8 billion a year. The average cost of nurseries and nannies is between £100 and £150 per week. Child minders are generally slightly cheaper.
hours to work and do not have their career as their main priority, as a result they may be less able to meet the demands of the organisation.

Burke (1999) also suggests that organisations have their own expectation, biases and perceptions of managers (male and female). Women may face increasing obstacles to career advancement, the more they deviate from the male norm of complete availability to the organisation. It is still the norm, in fact, for men to devote themselves single-mindedly to satisfying organisational requirements with the support of a ‘back-up’ person. Burke (1999) reported that men with housewife partners earn higher incomes than do men with partners working outside the home.

### 3.9.3. Flexibility

Since the 1980s there has been a call for more flexibility initiatives in organisations. In fact, one of the main barriers to women’s advancement was considered the lack of flexible work schedules. In the 1990s and early 2000 the labour government raised the public profile of the ‘family-friendly’ agenda by introducing equal rights for part-time workers, parental leave and enhancing maternity rights. The ‘work-life balance’ agenda promoted by the government determined an increased response by organisations that introduced family-friendly policies. While individually negotiated conditions of employment involving adjustments to the timing, scope and place of work have met the needs of many employees and improved recruitment and retention, family-friendly policies have recently highlighted many limitations. Wise and Bond (2003) reported that female parents were, overall, less impressed by the supportiveness of their organisation’s culture, experienced problems in the access and implementation of the policies and saw little prospect for career development. Identified by Wise and Bond (2003) are:

**Barriers to the effective implementation of work-life policies**

- Awareness and understanding of the policies by managers and employees;
- The resource pressures which often affect line managers’ ability to translate the policies into supportive practices.
- The lack of a ‘give and take’ rhetoric in the relationship between employer and employee.
- Lack of inclusive access to work-life policies.

Organisations’ expectations make it difficult to work part-time or have long periods of time off work. Organisational cultures usually value long hours and high availability and ‘reward those who arrive early and work late’ (Brumit Kropf, 1999). In general, flexibility initiatives are still surrounded by stereotypes and a representation linked to lack of commitment from professionals with alternative working schedules. This effectively precludes women managers or professionals, who do not want to be degraded, from opting for a flexible contract. The Equal Opportunity Commission (2004) has recently reported that one in five women who returned to work for the same employer after maternity leave came back to a lower grade or level job. The
skills of women are not being used to the full across the labour market because of the lack of opportunities for flexible working in higher paid work. High levels of responsibility should not be a justification for not allowing more flexible working practices. Different ways of implementing flexible contracts should be found and put into practice.

Paradoxically, there is increasing evidence that the negative organisational factors that mitigate against women reaching levels of seniority commensurate with their skills and knowledge in larger organisations, may be a “push” factor encouraging more women into starting their own businesses. There is mounting evidence that women’s decisions to “go it alone” are often a response to hitting glass ceilings in their previous workplace, or finding it impossible to achieve the work-life balance that their family responsibilities demand (Naqvi, 2002).

3.10. Summary and Conclusions
We have highlighted important aspects that need to be considered before exploring the issues to be investigated by the primary research involving regional businesses. The glass ceiling is a complex phenomenon, stretching beyond the sphere of employment into society as a whole and women’s experiences in society. It is arguable that our organisations are merely representations of wider cultural norms, cultures and behaviours. Thus the long-term strategies for dealing with the wastage of human talent that women’s exclusion from decision-making and managerial positions entails, must be thought through and developed on a societal as well as an organisational level.

This review of the literature suggests that within the region of the West Midlands, and specifically the sub-regional areas of the Black Country and the Wolverhampton-Telford corridor, the development of more competitive industrial sectors will be aided by more participation by women, only if initiatives are taken at all levels, in education, in communication and the media, and in public organisations. There is a pressing need to raise awareness among young women, currently still at school, to the possibilities for them to advance in management, or by setting up their own businesses, and educate them to be ready to take advantage of the networks and supports that are already in place.

**Key aspects for further investigation:**

- A statistical overview of the situation of women in management and entrepreneurship in the Black Country is needed to assess possible relations between the nature of the organisation (public vs private), the business sector, the size of the organisation and the proportion of women employed at various managerial levels.
- What types of barriers (cultural, organisational, family-related) exist locally for women to access managerial positions and/or to start their own business?
• What are the crucial stages in women’s careers that makes them choose between employment and self-employment?
• What are the key factors that facilitate a woman’s career in management and entrepreneurship?
• What are the strategies that should be implemented at local level to increase women’s participation in management and self-employment?
PART 2: VOICES FROM THE BLACK COUNTRY

SECTION 4: BASELINE ANALYSIS OF SUB-REGIONAL BUSINESSES

4.1. Approach
The strategy for the research phase has been detailed in the Introduction. It aimed to develop a deeper understanding of the issues, barriers and ways of overcoming the barriers for key sectors within the Black Country. Although it may seem that this information is available there has been very little work conducted locally (the barriers identified on p.45 are from a general UK-wide review), and none on management-level barriers. This lack of detailed understanding has been acknowledged by the Black Country LSC focussing on the skills needs of women and ethnic minority managers and on commissioning research investigating issues relating to skills, participation and learning (P. 28 and 48 respectively of the Black Country LSC Local Strategic Plan 2002-05).

4.2. Choice of sectors for investigation
Four sectors were chosen from the nine key business sectors, to provide both adequate coverage of all issues likely to emerge from the study, and to highlight issues that may be specific to certain sectors or sector groupings. Thus criteria were established to inform the selection of sectors to be included in the study. These included:

a) Size of the sector in terms of numbers employed and numbers of workers
b) Actual and potential growth of the sector
c) Traditional nature of the sector in terms of whether it has traditionally been perceived as a primarily female or a primarily male domain.
d) Geographical clustering (especially in one borough) or geographical spread across the Black Country.

This resulted in a choice of four sectors for examination:
- Construction
- Retail
- Health care
- Community and voluntary work

---

4.4. Questionnaire survey of organisations

4.4.1. Sampling frame
Initial research identified the chosen sectors as having the following numbers of organisations respectively in the Black Country:

- Construction: 3000
- Retail: 8000
- Healthcare: 700
- Community and Voluntary: 760 (employing organisations)

This yielded an overall total of approximately 12,500 organisations. A sample of 5% of these organisations from each sector was chosen for a questionnaire and telephone survey, providing a sample of 650 respondents. This sample was chosen at random from a series of databases held by Black Country Business Link.

The questionnaire was developed, trialled and applied, and a pro-forma for telephone interviewing and face-to-face interviews was drawn up with space for additional notes of comments, issues and contacts that emerged during or immediately after the interview conversation. Questionnaires (Appendix 1) were distributed by post and email and were completed on the telephone and face-to-face. This blend of approaches was designed to ensure a significant response rate and helped with the accuracy of the data collected. Questions aimed to identify whether a male or female heads the company or organisation in question, whether there are any female directors and/or senior managers, and the numbers of women in supervisory positions (i.e. at levels 2/3 who might have potential to progress to 3/4). Other, more open, questions asked whether companies have any internal training or development schemes, any recognised career structures (either promotion or job enlargement) or whether there was an established system of performance management such as an appraisal process.

The survey responses were analysed for quantitative data using an appropriate statistical package, i.e. SPSS, to provide rankings and correlations etc. The correlations demonstrated are not intended to imply any straightforward causal relationship between variables; rather, they are highlighted to provide evidence of patterns in the data.

4.5. Questionnaire Results

4.5.1. Response rates
The combination of post, email, telephone and face-to-face questionnaire data collection yielded 650 responses, an important data set from the Black Country. The figures below describe the response rate by sector and company size.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 20: Questionnaire respondents by Sector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>650</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 21: Questionnaire respondents by Company Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>63.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11- 50</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 +</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>650</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The findings suggest that for these sectors small businesses make up the majority of businesses in the Black Country. Retail is an important employer in the sub-region, as borne out by the numbers of responses and the overall business numbers, referred to above. This is likely to have an impact on the opportunities and options for women.

Figure 22: Questionnaire respondents by structural and management features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of businesses</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Retail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headed by women</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With female directors</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With female senior managers</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That offer formal staff training</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear, formalised staff progression structure</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With performance appraisal system</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering parental benefits above the statutory minimum</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5.2 Leadership of companies
The breakdown of business ownership is somewhat determined by both sector and company size. The questionnaire asked whether the business was headed by a woman or a man. Unsurprisingly, construction businesses had only 2% headed by women. The other sectors were well represented with over 44% of retail, 31% of health and 55% of community/voluntary businesses headed by women. By size, 38% of micro businesses are headed by women, falling to 32% in the 11-50 size band and just 15% in the 51+ band.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>22</th>
<th>&lt;1</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offering crèche facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Investors in People’ accredited</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That offer flexible working hours</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Businesses headed by women are approximately 30% more likely to employ senior female managers. Equally, women owned businesses are more likely to provide a clear progression structure, (50% versus 35%), have in place a clear appraisal process (55% vs. 46%) and be liP accredited (25% vs. 16%). The analysis also revealed some strong correlations between the sex of the business owner and the availability of staff training. 63% of businesses headed by a woman have staff training policies, compared to 48% for men.

96% of community businesses provide staff training, whilst the figure in health is 87%, in retail 48% and in construction 44%.

Evidently, women employers tend to provide greater flexibility, more opportunity for progression and greater pastoral support than do male employers. This is significant and could point to the need for business start-up support to be targeted at women entrepreneurs as, once they are successful, they are likely to provide greater opportunities of advancement for women.

Approximately half of all the respondents identified women directors at the business. This equates to 74% in the community/voluntary sector, 50% in retail, 48% in health and 42% in construction. Businesses employing women in senior management...
breaks down as 88% in community/voluntary sector, 60% in health, 50% in retail and 36% in construction.
4.5.3. Training and development
The questionnaire highlights clear correlations between those businesses having formal staff training and appraisal, and those with senior female staff (including directors, senior managers, middle managers and supervisory staff). This suggests that the presence of women throughout the management chain may be a precursor to staff training and appraisal.

Formal staff training is also closely correlated with clear progression structures, Investors in People accreditation and improved maternity/paternity conditions and flexible working hours. Businesses concerned with training their staff also provide a range of other supportive mechanisms which aim to bring out the best in employees and engender loyalty.

Investors in People (IiP) accreditation requires businesses to support their staff and put in place structures to facilitate this. This is far more prevalent amongst larger companies, with only 12% of businesses with between 1-10 staff being IiP, rising to 43% of businesses with over 51 staff. It may be a useful for greater numbers of small businesses to be encouraged to seek IiP as a means to ensure improved working conditions for women.
A correlation exists between women directors, women senior managers, women middle managers and women supervisory staff. However, the data confirms that this is most relevant in the retail sector. Surprisingly, this does not apply in the health or community sector, nor in construction.

4.5.4. Flexible working
The provision of maternity support over the statutory minimum (38% vs. 21%) and flexible working hours (51% vs. 46%) were also more frequent in women-run businesses.

There is strong correlation between businesses in the retail sector and maternity/paternity support above the statutory minimum. Almost 50% of retailers offer this, perhaps reflecting the high percentage of women working in retail. In construction, this drops to only 10% of companies, and 24% of both health and community groups. Interestingly, the research showed little difference between company size and improved maternity/paternity conditions with 25% of companies in the 1-10 and 51+ range offering improved conditions, rising to 34% of businesses sized 11-50.
Flexible hours are important for women returning to work after having children. Encouragingly, regardless of sector or company size, a healthy proportion of businesses do provide flexible hours. Smaller businesses (1-10 employees) are less likely to offer this, though even with them the figure is 44%. Approximately 40% of both retail and construction staff have flexible hours, rising to 58% in the health sector and 67% in the community sector.

Figure 28: Percentage of businesses offering flexible working hours, by size
SECTION 5: CASE STUDIES AND KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

5.1. Introduction
The quantitative data secured through the questionnaires provides a range of useful information but is short on contextual detail. In order to get a deeper understanding of the issues facing women in self-employment or management positions, a semi-structured interview format was devised and used with women throughout the Black Country. During the interviews the women themselves completed a “career map”, identifying the various steps they had taken since leaving school up to where they were now, and where they were heading. In devising their maps, the interviewees were asked to think about some fundamental questions. These included:

1. When were the times and occasions…?
   - What were the ‘tools’ you used…
   - What were the ways…
   - Who were the people…
   - That **helped** you in your career so far?

2. What were the times and occasions…?
   - What were the ‘weapons’…?
   - What were the ways…?
   - Who were the people…?
   - That **hindered** you in your career so far?

3. Looking back now, **what/who** would have / could have made a difference?

4. **When** would it / could it have made a difference?

Altogether, 56 career maps and interviews were completed.

5.2. Career Paths
The figures below identify the common routes women’s career paths take. Figure 29 shows that the majority of women interviewed (ca 61%) on leaving school went into further or higher education, ca 35% went straight to work. This is somewhat more than today’s figures. One of the respondents went to part-time working and one identified day release and work combined.
Figure 29: First Stage of Women’s Career Paths

![Graph showing career paths]

Figure 30 represents the second step women made and shows that the majority were choosing work (51%), or family (20%), whilst only 6% went into education, 8% became self employed and the remainder travelled, volunteered or combined work with studying or family.

Figure 30: Second Stage of Women’s Career Paths

![Graph showing career paths]

Forty of the women interviewed (approx 70%) had taken a third change in direction through their careers to date. Figure 31 shows that families have become increasingly important. Many of the ‘other’ responses included a mixture of family and either part-time study or part-time working.

Forty of the women interviewed (approx 70%) had taken a third change in direction through their careers to date. Figure 31 shows that families have become increasingly important. Many of the ‘other’ responses included a mixture of family and either part-time study or part-time working.
For some women a fourth stage occurred, once children were grown and either left home or less dependent. Here, work opportunities themselves took precedence over other factors in women’s decisions about work (Figure 32).

Analysis of the semi structured interviews and career maps highlighted a number of fundamental issues that had helped women to achieve what they had.
Deborah’s story
“The first thing I can say about my career is that it’s been very varied, and a bit of a roller-coaster. It seems for years every time I’ve changed direction it has been like taking one step forward and two steps back.

When I was at University I was quite political, and I really believed in myself. Some of my teachers at Uni really inspired me and were great role models. I did a masters in a traditionally ‘male’ subject area. But when I went into work I got temporary jobs and was made to feel almost embarrassed about my qualifications. I really felt discriminated against for being educated. It was weird, and I lost all my self-confidence. I ended up getting a job in Africa and that was a chance to meet some wonderful people. But at the same time my relationship split up and I changed direction again. I was the only young female in a group of older men – that was very isolating. I got out of that and went into a job in the public sector – I felt valued there and regained my self-confidence. But the culture that seems very enabling in the public sector was actually threatening, even combative – there were lots of gender issues under the surface that were never resolved.

So after four years I changed again, staying in the same sector though, and I’ve been really satisfied. I’m still learning and developing skills in people management and strategic leadership but I’ve achieved respect from clients and colleagues. I’ve had a child as well, and I’ve become involved in my church and the local community – I can say that this has really enriched my life.

(Deborah is a project manager in a large public sector organisation. Issues: lack of mentors and career guidance)
5.3. Helping factors

5.3.1. Social capital

Most significant amongst these helping factors is ‘social capital’ i.e. connections among individuals and social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. For the most part this manifests itself as family networks, including parents, siblings, partners/husbands and other ‘non-work’ networks, ostensibly friends.

For many, parental support is an ongoing feature of women’s lives. Parents can inspire, motivate and encourage when the child is young, support financially through education, and then in later life, may take the role of unpaid baby sitter or child minder to allow women to work unsociable hours or just to put in ‘normal’ working days.

“I come from a family that has strong family values, and supportive parents who encouraged me and did not set limits on what I could achieve.”

“I had good advice from my parents.”

“Dad was supportive and encouraging.”

“I have a very supportive and proud mother.”

“Family support has been immensely important.”

“I could not have had my children and my career without the huge support of my family and husband with childcare.”

“My parents look after my kids.”

“Mother looks after the children.”

“Without the two salaries we could not have kept the mortgage – without my parents we could not have had the two salaries.”

Husbands/partners are also influential in helping women in their careers. There are monetary imperatives associated with two salaries but there is also the emotional support needed for women returning to work after having children. Husbands have also shown themselves to be supportive around childcare responsibilities and generally being encouraging.

“My husband is the biggest driving force in my life.”

“Part of my motivation comes from my husband.”
“With children, it is very difficult to achieve what I have without the support of my husband and nanny.”

“My husband has sacrificed his career to some extent for me to pursue mine.”

Another facet of social capital is that found around peer groups and friends and siblings. Peer group motivation can be a strongly influential, siblings can bring out the competitiveness inherent in many of us and friends are there to listen and support us.

“A lot of people believe in me, this gives me confidence to progress.”

“My peer group, friends and family have all supported me.”

“I have had support from my partner, family and friends.”

5.3.2. Mentoring

Another, and related, key source of help and inspiration is that of mentors, people to whom we can turn for advice and counsel, whether they be official, unofficial, or from a peer group.

“My regional manager was my mentor – we are now best friends and she still supports me in my career.”

Mentoring can take the form of a work-based programme, particularly for women in larger organisations. The individual is assigned a mentor with whom under normal circumstances no regular contact would occur – they may inhabit separate floors or buildings – but for the duration of the programme an open door policy operates. In this instance, the mentor is someone that can be turned to for advice or just a general letting off of steam. They should be as objective as possible and not intervene directly in a dispute or other circumstance, unless expressly asked or if there is no other possible solution. Interviewees also discussed unofficial mentors – a colleague, superior, teacher, lecturer, at school, college or work, who shows an interest and wants to support the individual into further progression.

“Encouragement from colleagues and bosses is a great help. Especially to get mentoring, networking and keep applying for training.”

“Strong pastoral support nurtures talent; ideally recognised through promotion.”

“I was encouraged to take the Inspector’s exam by my line manager.”
5.3.3. Role models
Sometimes mentoring occurs not out of any particular contact but because a role model inspires the individual. This can be a boss, college tutor, or perhaps a character from literature. In a couple of instances from the research, parents have been this role model. Peer groups are also important and a source of support and motivation, at work or from school or college/university days. Peer to peer mentoring is again usually unofficial but based around shared experiences.

“Mentors exist without knowing it – just good people who inspire and encourage; passionate role models.”

“Positive role models help.”

“My mother was a role model.”

“People like Heads of Department and Chief Executive Officers were role models.”

“I had an inspirational line manager.”

“I am lucky to have unofficial peer-to-peer mentoring – these guys are a great support and source of knowledge and understanding of what I am going through – they have become my friends.”

The research highlighted that mentoring is not something that occurs only once or only when you are young. Mentoring can be on-going, stretching over years, or may be relevant at specific times. The respondents’ implications being that you are never too old or experienced to have someone to talk to.

5.3.4. Training and Education
The next key support identified for career progression was education and training. This was recognised by interviewees in a range of different forms. School was mentioned by some, who stated that good, supportive teachers and peers are often enough to set a child up for life. The benefit stays with women over the long term. A poor school experience can play an equally determining role.

“Looking back, I would have worked harder at school to give myself more career options.”

“I went to a good school with an ambitious peer group.”

One interviewee had been through the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Scheme, aged 14:
“The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award was an accidental choice at school but laid the foundation for everything else. Systematizing this type of opportunity for teenagers would be the single thing that would make the difference – it develops leadership and management skills.”

University/College is also a key time and often provides women with greater direction and understanding of career paths and/or life needs.

“I had a fantastic experience at University – gained confidence and maturity living independently, developed the ability to think critically and autonomously.”

“I spent three years at the College – with the skills I learnt, I was set up for life.”

“The basic admin, personal and financial skills I learnt at College have been a great help.”

“My degree has opened doors.”

“You need IT skills in today’s work place – they have been invaluable.”

Training is also undertaken as part of work, whether in-house, external, part-time, or block release.

“The company has provided in-house training, and courses, internal and external which have been very helpful.”

“Day release sales training was vital early on in my career.”

“I was lucky enough to get City and Guilds, sponsored by work.”

“A flexible training programme through work has helped.”

“I really have enjoyed doing the MBA at Aston Business School, especially as it came out of company time.”

5.3.4. Good Management
Good management is an almost intangible mixture of elements that provide a nurturing environment at work. Interviewees talked about good management as something that encourages and facilitates opportunities for training and promotion,
whilst at the same time understanding the atomising pressures of modern life. Words used to describe managers or systems that delivered this ethos include helpful, supportive, encouraging, understanding, flexible, inspiring. In a real sense, good management manifests as a mixture of networks, mentoring and training.

“My boss is flexible – it’s not company policy but a flexible and trusting application of requests e.g. time off for the nativity play, is not penalised because there is an understanding that time will be made up.”

“I have had support and encouragement from my employer to get training and networking.”

“I work for a large, progressive and supportive business.”

“I have business partners who understand the needs of parents without penalising me.”
Gurvinder’s story

I’ve always worked – all through university I had a series of part-time jobs. Then before I was married I was a business analyst for a large national company. Then I had two babies and we were living in Kenya and Pakistan, so I wasn’t working. When we came back to the UK, though, I decided to set up my own consultancy company. I really think that being at a good school increased my self-confidence. And after the babies, a dear dear woman friend pushed me to go back to work. My mother was also a big inspiration in my life.

Being self-employed is good – I enjoy the flexibility and the financial rewards. I’m the main breadwinner, the organiser and I take care of the family, including my dad. I can’t go away for work because of that, and I’m tied to this area even though there is more work elsewhere. And just now my husband is working hard to develop his career. I can’t be too successful yet until he is really established.

Director of a consultancy company. Issues: Family commitments and aspects associated with own culture e.g. cannot be much more successful that her husband.
For one Black Country company an intimate mixture of work placements designed to stretch people, training and mentoring has provided the basis for a highly successful management fast track, producing people who are highly motivated, highly skilled, well networked and one of the company’s most prized assets.

“It is not easy to get on the fast track scheme but once there I had access to both internal and external mentors, a peer group who have become my friends and an important support network, opportunities to study on company time, and work which pushes me very hard – it has made me more ambitious than ever!”

5.3.5. Self Determination
Women’s capacity to be “do-it-all woman”, and determination to successfully juggle different aspects of their lives should not be underestimated. Many of the interviewees identified their own abilities, hard work, personal commitment, self-belief, determination and self-motivation as being fundamental to their successes. For some women, there has been a sacrifice of relationships in order to pursue career ambitions, for others, family support has enabled them to succeed, for others still, managing time for family, work and study is just ‘what I do’.

“Men can choose about housework and kids – women have to just get on with it.”

“You learn so much by going through difficult times it is not always clear whether these are good or bad experiences. At the time awful, in hindsight bad but they do provide you with inner strengths and commitment.”

“The struggle with working, bringing up a family and studying has made me a stronger person. I am able to be considerate towards others and help them gain the best out of their situation.”

“Management positions and children are hard to juggle – I have sacrificed relationships for a career.”

“I play multiple roles – wife, mother, daughter, cook and cleaner, family organiser and breadwinner.”
5.3.5. Part-time working

Part-time working is seen by many women as an apposite solution to the multiple demands on their time. It allows women to return to the job market or to study and at the same time maintain some work-life balance. However, whilst some women identified part-time work as beneficial to their family life, it does have a detrimental effect on career prospects. Clearly though, for some women, their priorities change once they have children.

*My career has paused; work fits in with school runs and other child focussed activities.*

*Being a mother and working part-time closes the doors to promotion.*

*It is difficult in a competitive environment to keep a balance and do better, which is why I pulled back from higher roles*

*Part time working helped a lot – gave me time for family commitments and to gain qualifications*

*My children have greatly influenced the type of work and working hours I am able to do*

*Part-time working provides flexibility*

5.3.6. Other helping factors

A number of other less mentioned though clearly beneficial factors for women’s career include networking ability, life experience in general, happenstance and serendipity.

*My career has been helped by looking at, listening to and learning from the world and its people*

*I was in the right place at the right time*

*An accidental choice laid the foundation for everything else.*

5.4. Hindering factors

5.4.1. Conditioning and low expectations

The factors identified by women as hindering their careers are very diverse. They include many opposites to the positive factors identified above and also some more surprising reactions. A considerable number of interviewees raised the issue of
gender conditioning in childhood and adolescence, and a lack of confidence as being significant factors in hindering career development. For example:

“As a female I was not encouraged to go to University.
“I suffered with a lack of self-belief.”
“When I was young, my parents thought of my brother as the clever one who was then supported through his education.”
“I had a lack of family support to continue with my education.”
“Perhaps personally I hindered myself because I was not confident enough for management when I was younger.”
“There is a traditional vision that women with children are not cut out for leadership.”
“There were low expectations of what could be expected of me as a woman and a general lack of support for women entrepreneurs.”
“Lack of belief in oneself or expectation from others is a major hindrance.”

5.4.1. Enduring stereotypes
Once women were in work, major barriers were stereotypical opinions amongst senior staff, male dominated workplaces and general attitudes in society.

Lack of support from other businesses – many view women as 2nd class citizens

Working in a male dominated industry forces you think like a man

A male culture dominated my chosen career in the early days

Banks and other financial institutions take a different attitude towards women and ethnic minorities

I continually asked to go on training and was only given the opportunity once I started to apply for other jobs.

Is society suspicious of ambitious women?
There are emotional and psychological impacts on the relationship/marriage of a woman progressing financially in career beyond her male partner

5.4.3. Lack of social capital
For women with children a whole range of issues becomes significant. A lack of social capital is a key determinant of getting back to work, particularly if women are not supported by their husbands/partners. In addition, a range of other factors around working hours, childcare provision and a lack of vision from employers, colleges or the government were also raised.

“Need for management shift to recognise part time workers as having management skills and potential.

“Employers should recognise that less hours does not necessarily mean less contribution – work smart!

“Inflexible work hours, inflexible working conditions.

“There is a need for practical, financial and psychological support for mothers returning to work.

“Colleges don’t seem to provide support for mothers.

“Tax relief on childcare would be a great help.

5.4.4 Working in the home
The role women/mothers play in the home is also a significant determining factor on their ability, and sometimes desire, to pursue their careers.

“I had to consult a colleague regarding wireless technology – he laughed at me during the explanation. I responded ‘can you work a bread maker or washing machine?’ It is difficult to keep up with technology as my life changes when I walk through the door.”

“It is difficult to have both a career and a family.”

“Careers get put on hold for children.”

“Management positions put a lot of pressure on family life.”
“Children are emotionally draining and finding good childcare is a constant battle.”

“Dependent comes first – family responsibility lies mainly with women; we juggle home, work and/or study, children, elderly relatives, extended family.”

“Having children and a job requires very good time management.”

“If I hadn’t had my children when I did (young), I would not be able to have them now, without compromising my career.”

5.4.5. Education
Poor careers advice from school, a lack of training and qualifications were also highlighted. Many women in work felt they were passed over for promotion because experience does not carry the same weight as qualifications, despite the obvious benefits associated with experience.

“Careers advice at school was useless.”

“Younger, more qualified but less experienced people getting promoted – lack of appreciation of experience.”

“Not having a degree, despite my experience, has always been looked down on.”

5.5. The Benefit of Hindsight
The interviewees were asked what and who would have/could have made a difference and when would/could this have happened. Again there was a range of responses, which have been summarised into the headings below and annotated, with the words of the interviewees.

5.5.1. Careers Advice
By far the most prevalent response from the interviewees was better, more relevant careers advice. This is applicable throughout a career, from school to senior management. For example:

“Careers advice given at school was poor, with unrealistic ideas and direction.”

“Careers advice at school should be given by people who work and who have careers outside of school.”
“Had I known then what I know now, I would have started my studies earlier.”

“I would have benefited from good careers advice all through my working life but especially at school.”

Several women expressed the desire for ongoing careers advice, perhaps in the form of women only networks. Some of the responses included:

- Early objective advice would have helped my career choices
- More support and advice should be given to graduates on which career path to take and which direction to go
- I found it difficult to decide which type of career path to take
- I would have liked more advice on skills build-up
- Careers advice should be available throughout your working life
- Better advice regarding professional qualifications and development
- Networking from women already running their own businesses
**Andrea’s Story**

*Doing the Duke of Edinburgh’s award at school was what really made the difference to me. I couldn’t go away to college, so that was the adventure in my life. It made me realise I could do anything if I put my mind to it. I think giving young people opportunities like that is the key to helping them be successful.*

I want to pass some of that on in my own life – I used to do youth work when I worked for the council, before I had a family. Then while I was at home with the children I decided to train as a teacher. So I did that and worked part-time as a teacher before I set up a business importing fashion. That really took off.

*Now the children are grown up and I can really devote myself to developing my business – I’ve changed direction again – I have a home care company now. My husband has always been very supportive, but he’s more cautious than me and stops me going off in all directions with the business. It’s important to have someone to be a mentor – someone you can really trust.*

Andrea runs a home care company. Issues – having a trusted mentor, strong entrepreneurial drive, rewarding experiences in early life
5.5.2 Better Work-Life Balance
Returning to work can be a difficult time for new mothers but often there is little choice. A wide range of factors are important at this time from emotional well-being, financial support and work culture. As mentioned above, emotional support from partners and family is essential at this time, recognised explicitly by both women who have that support and those that don’t. Assistance from government in the form of tax breaks on childcare and greater after or pre-school provision was also mentioned. In addition, part-time working and flexible hours were referred to, in a bid to improve the elusive work-life balance. Comments included:

- There needs to be better childcare provision
- Emotional support from the family
- Some kind of back-up childcare facility to assist when other arrangements fail
- Out of hours childcare
- Subsidised childcare costs to help me return to work full time
- Financial advice and childcare during university
- Tax relief on childcare at the crucial point of trying to continue family and career development
- A kind of ‘Princes Trust’ for older people would help
- It is difficult in a competitive environment to keep a balance and do better, which is why I pulled back from higher roles
- We need greater flexibility of working patterns

5.6. Training and Continuing Professional Development
Many of the interviewees expressed the view that training is a crucial factor in developing and progressing their careers. Some training should be job specific, say in the case of nursing or teaching, whilst other training is more soft skills based, like IT. Several women also expressed the need for business management skills, particularly those women who were in self employment or looking to that. A key point raised was that training organisations should be more aware of the needs of women.

- I needed more training but was not supported by my employer
- It would be good if there was continuity between employers and training providers for people returning to work
Good communication needed between employers and training providers

I would have benefited from business management skills, specifically aimed at women

Training in particular skills e.g. people management and supervision, financial and business set up

Continuing Professional Development and qualifications as a mature student would help in the work place

Mentors and management also need ongoing training

Qualifications were also seen by some women as a barriers to progression i.e. they had been passed over for promotion because their experience was seen as less relevant than the qualifications of younger, less experienced staff. Several of the interviewees called for a method of recognising experience, along the lines of Accredited Prior Learning (APL), as being as valuable as qualifications.

“Qualifications are deemed more important than experience and is a potential blockage to progression. There is a need to formally recognise experience.”
“There is a need to accredit experience as well as qualifications.”
“Accredited Prior Learning should be extended and recognised.”

5.7. Key Lessons
Here we have presented a body of evidence required to develop an appropriate strategy to address issues of women being under-represented, underpaid and lacking progression routes in management, and being less likely than men to enter self-employment or entrepreneurial activities. The strategy needs specifically to identify the role the LSC and partner organisations can have in addressing these issues and overcoming barriers. The focus is on practicable, deliverable mechanisms, activities and methods to maximise and widen impact.

- There is a sense that the environment that exists today in relation to women’s career opportunities is much improved
- Government or LSC could develop a one-stop shop for training and employment, linking training and Human Resource Development.
- Maternity leave rules apply to all employers. For SMEs, concerns over maternity may cause discrimination against women between their mid 20s and mid 30s because of potential financial implications. There is a need to address differential approaches to some company legislation depending on company size.
- Lesson learning from big businesses could be better disseminated to SMEs – perhaps a mentoring service.
- Mentoring and careers advice should be made available throughout women’s careers.
• Management should be given mentoring training to be able to recognise and assist new staff to become better staff.
• Working culture needs to continue to change over time to integrate working mothers, management positions, flexible work arrangements
• Training providers need to be more cognisant of women’s needs.
SECTION 6: INNOVATIVE WAYS TO DELIVER MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT TO WOMEN

6.1 Introduction
The analysis of the structured interviews with women has shown that there is not a single recognised pathway to learn how to be a manager or an entrepreneur, or to qualify for management as a profession. For every woman manager we could trace a different pathway to becoming one, and managers and entrepreneurs seeking sources of information about training and development opportunities are faced with a plethora of qualifications, courses, programmes and consultancy support. This section of the report reviews the different forms of management development available within the UK market. First, we discuss “traditional” forms of management development; subsequently, we explore more recent initiatives designed to counteract or complement some of the perceived disadvantages of the traditional forms. This review brings out issues of quality, relevance, access and flexibility, which we then apply to the situation facing women managers and women business owner.

Various strategies for increasing women’s participation in senior management have been published. The most common strategies are: women-only training, networking, mentoring protégés and the government’s and the EU’s interventions and initiatives.

6.2. Conventional forms of training and development

6.2.1. Women-Only Training
The advocates of women-only training assert that there are certain broad-based issues and conflicts that can be discussed and addressed in women-only groups. Often these issues are focused on organisational power and politics, sexuality, work/management styles, stress and career development. Women-only training offers an environment where women feel supported, can share similar (or different) experiences and learn from each other. The training focuses on general management topics (using materials which report women’s experiences) or on personal development (social-psychological issues) (Vinnicombe and Colwill, 1995; Mallon and Cassell, 1999).

One local example of a women-only business training programme is provided by the Women’s Business Development Agency, based in Coventry. The WMDA work primarily in the Warwickshire and South Birmingham areas of the West Midlands and the West of England, and offer a four-day programme called the Women’s Empowerment Programme (Nelson, 2004). This is distinct in offering gender-specific business start-up support training aimed at getting women “investor ready”, i.e. prepared with the business idea, plan and market strategies in place to attract

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23 For personal and family issues see section 10. In addition, in their working lives, women are more likely than men to suffer from sex discrimination, sex harassment and rarely have female role models in senior positions within their organisations.
external funding. What is gender-specific in this programme is that the first day is fully dedicated to tackling the issue of women’s perceived lack of assertiveness and self-confidence in moving their business ideas forward. The Women’s Empowerment Programme has been running successfully since 2001, with matched funding from each local Business Link in Devon and Cornwall, Coventry and Warwickshire, and Birmingham and Solihull.

Generally, some provision is offered by public and private services and agencies that also provide overall information and support. Examples of such services are SBS (Small Business Service), WEETU (Women’s Employment, Enterprise and Training Unit) and the Black Women in Business partnership in the West Midlands. This type of training focuses generally on providing knowledge and information rather than addressing women’s personal development and “soft” management skills.

Women-only training programmes can be developed for various levels of experience and education. Organisations may institute in-house programmes for women at various levels of responsibility (e.g. top-level managers or first-line managers) and these address a specific issue (e.g. an assertiveness course) or could be offered as several modules focusing on various topics. It is important that women-only training is seen as complementary to, rather than a substitute for, traditional educational, organisational and managerial training.

6.2.2. Management qualification courses for women
At the most “advanced” end of the management training continuum lies the MBA. The Michigan/Catalyst study carried out in 2002 (Quacquarelli, 2002a) found that women report very positive benefits from studying for an MBA, citing in particular enhanced career options. The MBA helps build their confidence and communication skills, as well as providing extensive alumni networks. In the early stages of a woman’s management career, an MBA can provide much-needed credibility at a time when her advancement might otherwise be blocked or she might be overlooked by more aggressive male colleagues.

In Canada, the University of Brunswick has a women-only mini MBA programme. The Spanish Instituto de Empresa, one of the top schools in Europe, has established a new “women in management” programme that, interestingly, is focused specifically on the Muslim world, and is offering women-only scholarships to allow take-up of the opportunity. Some higher education institutions in the UK offer women-only training. Cranfield School of Management runs personal development programmes for women managers and has an elective module ‘Women in Management’ for female students on the MBA. The University of Glamorgan offers a one-year Certificate in Management for women only, similarly the Open University Business School runs short courses, a professional certificate and a diploma for women in management. London Business School, Manchester School of Management and Lancaster University Management School have scholarships available for women applicants.

The Forte Foundation was established in 2001 by a group of 12 multinational corporations and 11 business schools to help educate women about the range of opportunities on offer. The aim of the foundation is to provide mentoring for women
through their secondary schooling and university, and in their early careers, to encourage them to think of a fast-track business career, which would probably include studying for an MBA (Quacquarelli, 2002).

6.2.3. Women’s Networks
These are a response to the ‘old boys network’ and an attempt by women to create the support that men generally have from their informal men’s groups. Most beneficial networks consist of people who hold powerful positions in the organisation. These positions are for the most occupied by men. A survey by the Institute of Management (2001) found that 41% of 1,500 women managers felt that old boys’ networks were a major obstacle for women. A specific type of formal network of particular relevance to this study with regard to clusters is the trade or industrial sector association. Unfortunately, there is very little information available on the role of women in such organisations. One study, carried out on the Australian sugarcane growing industry, found that of 115 elected positions in the growers’ association, not one was occupied by a woman, in spite of women being well-represented among the growers themselves (Pini, 2002). Women growers who responded to the survey reported lack of support, conduct, time and location of meetings, the masculine culture of the organisation, women’s multiple commitments, and a lack of interest as the main factors constraining their involvement in the association.

Status, opportunity and similarity affect the development of networks. All these three aspects see women disadvantaged from benefiting from an influential network (Fageson-Eland and Baugh, 2000). However, the creation of women’s networks is still an important tool for women to benefit from each other’s position. Vinnicombe and Colwill (1995) discuss three types of women’s network; professional and occupational networks (e.g. women in construction or women in management), in-company networks (could be formal or informal groupings within a particular organisation) and training networks (grown out of women’s training).

6.2.4. The added value of networking – performance, image and exposure
A report into more than 20 women’s networks carried out by the think tank Demos (McCarthy, 2004), found that more structured networks were particularly beneficial to women, particularly those that operated during working time with the endorsement of employing organisations. The potential for women-only networks to make a real difference to women’s access to managerial jobs is evidenced by the results of a network initiative in General Electric (Stern, 2004). When the network began in 1998 women held 6% of middle management posts in the company. In 2004, it had reached over 12%. The three key developmental aspects of the network are performance, image and exposure. Stern (2004) points out that the focus of the network is more on instrumental means to achieving corporate visibility than it is on campaigning for flexible working, or the elusive “work-life balance”.

Women in the Network (WIN) is a networking project that aims to facilitate the development of women’s enterprise. It started in Scotland in 1994 and provides workshops, exhibitions, training sessions, counselling and mentoring services for women starting and developing their own business. In 1998, the concept of WIN was
adopted in the North East of England and is based at the University of Durham (FSMED). In addition to the provision of programmes such as those provided by WIN in Scotland, its website support its members throughout the UK with business directories, newsletters, business guides and role models (The Women’s Unit, 2001).

6.3. Mentoring

6.3.1. What is mentoring?
Singh et al. (2002) describe mentoring as “a micro-level knowledge-producing community of practice”. ‘A boss teaches a subordinate what to do, but a mentor presents a protégé with a privileged view of what to be’ (Vinnicombe and Colwill, 1995: 83). The mentor is not normally one’s boss and should not be involved in assessing the protégé’s performance. The advantages in career development reported for protégés include higher salaries, greater career mobility and more promotions than non-protégés (Fageson-Eland and Baugh, 2000).

Researchers have confirmed that women who have a mentor do better, as they gain reflected power, feedback, and access to resources and senior managers through their mentor (Vinnecombe and Singh, 2003; Warren and Headlam-Wells, 2002). Where women have been successful, one of the contributory factors to their success has been access to mentoring (Headlam-Wells, 2004). Furthermore, mentoring success breeds commitment to broadening mentoring opportunities. In spite of difficulties sometimes experienced in finding a suitable mentor, a study by Lineham and Walsh (1999) highlighted enthusiasm for mentoring among female international managers in Europe, which generalised to being willing to act as mentors for other women managers.

6.3.2. Does a woman need a woman mentor?
Research has shown that similarity in the personalities of mentor and protégé are more important than their sex. While this seems encouraging on the one hand, on the other it presents a dilemma. Generally, mentors tend to be attracted by people similar to themselves. This will significantly reduce the possibility for women, non-white and ‘nontraditional’ people to be chosen as protégés. Also, the majority of male and female junior managers will be mentored by men. A disadvantage incurred by women who have a male mentor is the difficulty in viewing a male as a role model. A male mentor is less able to model successful strategies for coping with gender-based barriers in the workplace and with work/family conflict (Fageson-Eland and Baugh, 2000). Vinnicombe and Colwill (1995) have identified some of the ways in which the rapport between a male mentor and a female protégé may develop a problematic aspect: father-daughter relationship, sexuality, submissiveness, and tokenism. Ways in which organisations can reduce these problems are: (a) training for mentors and potential protégés; (b) increase the work opportunities for women to meet and interact with mentors and (c) increase the number of female mentors (Fageson-Eland and Baugh, 2000).
6.3.3. E-mentoring
An “E-mentoring” model developed in Hull, with the aid of ESF funding, may offer a way forward for providing mentoring opportunities to aspiring women managers or entrepreneurs. The EMPATHY project at the University of Hull aimed to develop e-mentoring as a tool for management development for professional women already in employment, and for women on career breaks who wanted to re-establish their management careers. The project created a “community of practice” in which 28 mentor pairs operated. These relationships, mediated by technology, were not bound by location or organisational boundaries, and so were able to break down the isolation that professional women often feel in their organisations (Headlam-Wells, 2004), and provided networking opportunities on a scale that would not otherwise have been possible. E-mentoring was seen as an efficient way of providing management development by saving on travel costs and time; and effective in increasing the flexibility inherent in the mentoring relationship “to those who would normally face barriers to being mentored because of their gender, ethnicity, disability or geographical location. The flexibility offered by its asynchronous communication methods also means that it does not have to interfere with other daily commitments, making it especially helpful for people with childcare responsibilities” (Headlam-Wells, 2004: 216).

6.4. Public role models
At a national level, there is clearly a shortage of female role models for women aspiring to senior positions in management and enterprise. Denise Kingsmill (2001), herself a high-profile female director, suggests that there needs to be a critical mass of women in management to encourage other women that they too can win promotion. The presence of women executive directors symbolises the idea that “women can achieve their full potential in this company” (Singh and Vinnicombe, 2003), although these authors are realistic about what has been achieved so far, stating that in the FTSE 100 index, women directors are moving from “token” to “minority” status. Where, as in the West Midlands, there are few senior women in boardrooms or female entrepreneurs making waves in local business life, the question arises as to how the profile and visibility of suitable female role models might be raised to encourage women to feel that their business aspirations are realistic.

6.5. Initiatives to promote Women in Management and Enterprise
The Small Business Service (SBS) is a government service that offers support and training for SMEs at start-up in England. Since 2001 the SBS, through a network of 45 Business Link partnerships, provides a range of support services at local level. These include general business planning, assistance with exporting, quality, employment issues, training and development, design and technology. An organisation which delivers its services specifically to women is the Women’s Employment, Enterprise and Training Unit (WEETU) based in Norwich, which works with women to enable them to improve their employment prospects or start a business. Another example is the Wellpark Enterprise Centre based in Glasgow. Wellpark is the UK’s only integrated women’s enterprise centre.
The most successful intervention of the British government for women managers has been Opportunity 2000 (Vinnicombe and Colwill, 1995). Opportunity 2000 is a government–funded and government supported initiative, which initially involved 61 employers in the UK (the campaign started in 1991). In 1996, the campaign involved more than 300 members among government departments and private and public organisations that, in total, employ more than 25% of the UK workforce. The research commissioned by the Opportunity 2000 team concluded that in order to bring women fully into the mainstream of organisational life a shift in organisational cultures was required. The culture change proposed by Opportunity 2000 is based around four elements:

- Demonstrating commitment;
- changing behaviour,
- building ownership and
- making the investment.

Alongside improved policies and practices, an encouraging result of the initiative is the improved representation of women in managerial roles within the organisations members (Vinnicombe, 2000).

- Pre Start-Up Advice and Counselling for those at the very early stages of setting up a business.
- Women’s Business Start-up Courses and Enterprise Training Programmes. These courses are funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and offer training for various levels of business development and management.
- Start-up Funds and Micro-credit which combines access to low cost loans with business training and group work support.

In addition to the national initiatives mentioned above, examples of other specialist networks and agencies in and around Birmingham and the Black Country, that focus on black and ethnic minority groups are:

- 3b (Black Business in Birmingham), a specifically African-Caribbean network of business people;
- the Black Women in Business partnership, made up of Advantage West Midlands, Business Link, Asian-e and the Chinese Society;
- DAWN (Dynamic Asian Women’s Network) and Minorities for Business, a web-based minority ethnic portal for the West Midlands. The network has additional sector-based portals for food and drink, fashion, and retail.

6.6 Competence approaches

The Management Charter Initiative was set up to tackle the perceived shortcomings of British management compared to its foreign competitors, and, by implication, to provide an alternative form of skills development to that traditionally provided through attendance at courses. By assessing observed management behaviours against
sets, or “units” of competence, it would be possible to accredit competence, and also to identify gaps or shortfalls, which could then be selectively addressed through focused and “just-in-time” training. An unsuccessful candidate for accreditation of competence is not labelled “incompetent”, but “not yet competent”; thus opening the door to ameliorative training, and introducing the idea of continuous improvement.

From the point of view of women in management the competence approach refers to managers in general and fails to include and address specific feminine skills (see section on leadership styles). The gender-neutral nature of the approach does not fit with the realities of women in management. Also, it is noteworthy that there is little in the existing or proposed management standards that would be immediately and specifically identifiable with the level of responsibility and accountability of the owner manager (whether a man or a woman). This may act as a disincentive for SME owner-managers to investigate the developmental possibilities of involvement with programmes based on a competency framework (Gibb, 1997, 1999).

6.7. Business advisers
The role of the business advisor or external expert can be seen as a form of coaching and/or mentoring relationship. The relationship itself, in terms of the broad support given, may be more significant to women managers and women (and men) small business owners than the simple transfer of information or advice. Mole (2002) points out that developing business acumen or managerial capability involves a transfer of knowledge over and above any advice given. However, one of the problems associated with the role of business adviser is that the majority of them are men and cannot relate to women’s issues and experiences in business and management. Mole also identifies a “dissonance” between the policy guidelines on SME from central government, the way that PBAs (Personal Business Advisors) actually deliver services and the wants of SME owners/managers. He also argues that PBAs do not often have deep sector/market/product specific knowledge that reduces their perceived effectiveness to SMEs.

6.8. Action learning
Action Learning refers to a specific management development technique developed by Reg Revans (1981) and popularised by a generation of management education professionals since. Action learning is broadly a system of group-based learning in which managers work on specific problems which they themselves (as individuals or collectively) have identified, and they use these “projects” for experiential learning. Pedler (1991) provides the following definition:

“Action learning is an approach to the development of people in organizations which takes the task as the vehicle for learning. It is based on the premise that there is no learning without action and no sober and deliberate action without learning . . . The method . . . has three main components-people, who accept the responsibility for taking action on a particular issue; problems, or the tasks that people set themselves; and a set of six or so colleagues who support and challenge each other to make progress on problems.” (Pedler, 1991 pp 22-23)
A professional management development expert who can "model" the behaviours and norms required for the group to function effectively generally facilitates Action Learning Sets, in their early stages. For example, the use of time, norms about trust, confidentiality, styles of questioning and giving feedback, are generally viewed as fundamental. But it is part of the philosophy of Action Learning, linked to the ideas of Argyris and Schon (1978) about “double loop learning”, that groups will become self-reflective and learn collectively about their own internal processes, thus eventually becoming autonomous and self-regulating.

Action Learning Sets are found in several contexts. The University of Wolverhampton Business School in the early 1990s was one of the first business schools to incorporate ALS into its part-time MBA programme. Elsewhere, the technique has been adopted in-house by corporate organisations attracted by its potential for supporting organisational development as well as the development of individual managers. Its proponents claim it has immense potential for developing those skills that are least amenable to delivery by means of more formal instructional methods, i.e. leadership, communication, insight, understanding of others, willingness to experiment and take risks (Marsick and O’Neill, 1999; Marquardt, 2000; Smith, 2001).

This type of learning would be of great benefit to women because it influences the development of self-confidence in business decision-making. A wide search of the literature has not revealed any cases of the use of action learning sets for women only. Whether they are women-only or mixed-gender, we suggest that local women managers and entrepreneurs could benefit greatly from participating in Action Learning Sets.

6.9. E-learning
The term e-learning refers to the application of internet-based technologies to learning processes. E-learning products or processes may be delivered through a commercial company (including training companies, and significantly, publishing companies, through an educational institution, or in-house through a corporate intranet system) (CIPD, 2001; Schofield and Rylance-Wilson, 2001). Some definitions take a wider perspective, regarding e-learning as any mode of delivery with a strongly electronic component, and therefore including such features as use of CD ROMs (e.g. Burgoyne, 2001).

Learning through electronic media is generally regarded as the future for business training (Fry, 2001; McConnell, 2000; Sloman, 2001; Schofield, 2001; Burgoyne, 2001). However, many of the e-learning experiences currently available simply host existing material in a new form of delivery. While the mode of delivery is new, the pedagogic paradigm that underpins the content and its delivery often is not; frequently existing material is digitised but not materially transformed before being uploaded into an electronic delivery vehicle.
Advocates of e-learning point out that, as well as increased flexibility, it also offers considerable economic advantages over traditional training\textsuperscript{24}. High quality e-learning can improve speed to capability by significantly reducing the amount of time it takes to train workers on new products and processes (Pantazis, 2002). It is also seen as a potential leveller in terms of equal opportunities, if the issues of access for those on the other side of “the digital divide” can be addressed (Fry, 2001). E-learning and e-training may open some opportunities for women. In fact, some women report the difficulties and often impossibilities of attending residential training made available by their organisations (e.g. a 3-5 day course away) due to family commitments. Some suggested that this has affected the perception of their commitment to their career and their opportunities for promotion. In addition, new research suggests that e-learning is becoming more learner focused taking into consideration the learning style of the learner (e.g. Burgoyne, 2001). Although becoming more widespread, companies report that e-learning still occupies only a small proportion of the time spent in training activities.

\textbf{6.10. Blended learning}

The concept of “blended” learning can be understood as the next stage in the development of e-learning. Designed to counteract some of the perceived limitations of “pure” e-learning outlined above, blended learning is described by Croft (2003) as

\begin{quote}
“the marriage of distance learning methods – computer-based teaching courses which people can complete in or out of the office, Internet-based material, written course work and classroom sessions according to the training needs of the company and the individuals concerned”.
\end{quote}

A more integrated and holistic definition of blended learning unites technology-enabled distance learning with face-to-face sessions (e.g. traditional courses, Group-based learning, experiential learning exercises, coaching and/or mentoring, a combination). The apparent limitations of electronic learning modes for softer skills development are being tackled on a number of fronts. In some cases, niche training agencies are developing the know-how to build greater interactivity and cultural sensitivity into e-learning packages, so that they can be used by global companies (Stewart, 2002). In another, a radical Swedish approach to blended learning, taking as its starting point the motivation of the employee (Bagshaw and Bagshaw, 2002), combines web-based learning with personal coaching.

Blended learning provides the most effective means of developing a suite of management development interventions in a single environment. Previous research has reported that:

- To SME owners and managers, time is precious and many have a distrust of formal learning environments.

\textsuperscript{24} The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) indicate a significant growth in the use of web-based technologies for delivering training: up 17\% in 2001 over the previous year.
• Managers expressed a need to access management knowledge and developmental material in bite-sized chunks which they can consume at their own pace.
• Managers have different learning styles, which can be accommodated with a blended learning environment.
• Managers need to be encouraged to make an initial engagement with learning and development - a blended environment if it is perceived to be useful and non-threatening is more likely to stimulate this initial engagement of managers with learning.

The challenge is to develop a mixed-mode framework for Just-in-Time Learning that is accessible both physically and linguistically and focused on providing guidance on the kinds of issues and problems that women managers face. A mix of managerial skills in general and women’s only topics should be achieved to provide women managers the optimal training situation. Below, we discuss an example of the emergence of a blended learning environment that is being pioneered by the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce.

6.10.1. The Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Learning Zone Model
The mission of the Birmingham Chamber management development function is "developing business through people". Here the approach is based on the notion of developing leading edge, innovative solutions to the problem of developing long-term relationships with businesses that have, in the past, proved difficult to reach. It has been recognised that it is essential to raise the level of demand for workforce and management development interventions particularly, though not exclusively, from SMEs. Improving the capability of businesses - particularly their senior managers - is seen as essential if those organisations are to become more productive and competitive and if workforce development is to be cascaded through those companies. The objective is to develop a targeted approach based on the use of various diagnostic tools such as MAP and the Business Toolbox25 and to link into other programmes that are running locally and nationally such as Accelerate26 and MUSTARD27. Sub-projects within the overall programme include the development of

25 The Business Toolbox is a self-administered diagnostic accessed through the Birmingham Chamber/Business link website.

26 Accelerate was established in 1996 to help improve automotive sector businesses in the West Midlands. The programme offers development grants, capital grants, supply chain improvement programmes and innovation networks.

27 MUSTARD is an initiative designed to help high growth potential, new and growing businesses see http://www.mustard.uk.com
an effective e-learning community and the development of effective learning networks (though the term "effective" is not precisely defined).

While the model is embryonic it does give a valuable insight into the type of model that could be developed for supporting women’s managerial career for delivery by the web and by more traditional modes of delivery. This model could be specifically developed for women or women-only issues could be explored within the general model for managers (men and women). Different elements could be developed separately for women managers (or aspiring managers) and women entrepreneurs (or aspiring entrepreneurs) that operate within the region. When similar issues are shared by both groups of managers and business-owners, opportunities for sharing learning should be provided.
SECTION 7: KEY FINDINGS AND POLICY ISSUES

7.1 Introduction
This section of the report pulls together the research results and discussions, and presents them as set of clear and concise findings and key issues, along with recommendations on how the LSC and other actors should address these. This information is drawn from the literature review and the research findings in sections 4 and 5 of the report. This section is designed to enable informed policy development, ensuring that actions taken by the LSC are based on sound research and are entirely needs based. This section first looks at the factors hindering women, and then draws together the factors helping women to enter and progress in management and entrepreneurship. It then examines ways forward, with suggestions for counteracting the obstructive factors and promoting the enabling factors, providing clear recommendations based on the research findings.

7.2 What factors hinder women from progressing in management and entrepreneurship?

7.3.1. Conditioning and low expectations.
In addition to the inverse of the enabling factors identified above, a number of other factors hindering women from progressing were identified by respondents, and are shown below. Within the Black Country an alarming picture of Victorian values emerged from the focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Many women spoke of a lack of family support when they talked about a career rather than a job, a wider lack of support and encouragement for female entrepreneurs, and a ‘traditional vision’ that women with children are not cut out for leadership. Some watched their brothers going to University while they were encouraged to ‘start a family’. It appears that this ‘traditionalist’ view with clearly defined gender roles is still prevalent in the Black Country, and probably more widespread than agencies, universities and the ‘learned’ realise or would admit. It is also not just prevalent amongst the ‘working class’, many middle class and relatively affluent families apparently holding these views.

There are powerful societal factors at play within the Black Country which effectively dampen down expectations and act to limit the roles that are seen as ‘acceptable’ for women. Gender conditioning in childhood and adolescence, parents’ attitudes, peer groups at school and careers advisors were all cited as factors that lower expectations and generally promote a lack of confidence. Low expectations may mean women do not achieve their potential: a number of respondents stated they did not study for HND or degree qualifications because they were led to believe, by family, peers, or perhaps most alarmingly teachers, that they were not capable enough, but later in their careers achieved these qualifications through part-time study. Many respondents stated that going to College to study through a part-time route as a mature student had been, or still was, a high priority and important for developing the skills and qualifications required for career progression and management development. This lack of qualifications was felt to be additionally
significant as the experience they had built up through practical work and management experience was often not valued without qualifications. **Enduring stereotypes** in the workplace and business community were also felt to be hindering factors. Respondents expressed the view that many workplaces in the Black Country are both male dominated and ‘male thinking’, and women had a difficult time progressing their careers even if they were qualified and had suitable (or better) skills. In these companies men were felt to be more likely to receive training. It was also felt there is a suspicion of ambitious women. It was also noted that banks appear to view women, and particularly BME women, entrepreneurs differently from their male counterparts and are less supportive. This is an important finding given that figures suggest that women are less likely than men to borrow to set up or support their business.

**Work-Home balance.** Women managers often have a demanding work role and also take the major role in parenting and household activities. Having children and a demanding career requires very good time management, juggling responsibilities and expending huge energy resources. At the same time, however, it needs to be recognised that, while being at home with the family may stall a woman’s management career, it has been the spur for some to set up their own business. How women with young families and other caring responsibilities may have access to information and support for their business ideas is a key issue for the LSC.

7.3 What helps women progress in management and entrepreneurship?

The following can be positively identified as being the key factors currently in existence to help women progress in the Black Country. The order we present them is indicative of the importance shown through questionnaire analysis, focus groups and semi-structured interviews, and the findings of the literature review analysis.

7.3.1. Women managers and enabling environments.

Although these are two separate factors, they are grouped together for discussion. There was a strong correlation from the questionnaire results between women heads of organisations and/or senior managers, and a number of enabling measures, specifically:

- Appraisal process
- Investors in People accreditation
- Formal staff training
- Clear career progression

There were also correlations between having women senior managers and enhanced maternity/paternity support, and flexi-time provision.

As there are correlations between having women in senior management provision and increased likelihood of these indicators of an enabling environment, but not causal linkages, it is not possible to say whether the women managers are **creating** an enabling environment, or whether an existing enabling environment is **attracting** women into organisations, or **facilitating** them once they are in organisations. The
focus group and semi-structured interview discussions with women and women managers indicated that all of these are factors: women are attracted to companies where they are likely to prosper and maximise their career potential, and once they are in management positions they try to create a more enabling environment. Women reported that formal appraisal processes and Investors in People were both very significant in creating an enabling environment for women: they dramatically reduced gender barriers and created a level playing field and meant that position and progress were based on ability and achievement rather than male networks and the ‘men’s club’ syndrome.

7.3.2. Helping young women aspire
A Positive school experience was viewed as essential, in terms of both qualifications and the support and encouragement received from parents, teachers and peers.

Being encouraged and supported to go to College. College was seen as providing not just qualifications but rapidly developing confidence, maturity, personal skills and networks.

Improved career advice was seen as important in both attracting women to management activities and giving them an early vision for their careers, and in helping them progress in their careers through career support networks for women.

7.3.3. In and around the workplace – key enabling factors
Mentors were repeatedly raised in focus group discussions as a key influence in progression, through building confidence, improved networking, identifying training needs and opportunities, and in being just generally supportive: a shoulder to cry on or a source of unbiased advice.

Role Models were regarded as important, for both attracting women into sectors and entrepreneurship, and for providing confidence and examples of successful progression: ‘if she can do it, so can I’. In sectors such as construction, with a very low level of women managers, this was seen as essential to raise the status of women.

Flexibility of employment. Flexible and/or part-time employment was regarded as important as it allowed women opportunities to balance work-life commitments, particularly when they had roles of carers or school children. It also allowed them the flexibility to build their skills through attending training centres, workshops and courses whilst still working and looking after family and home. Closely linked with this is a better work-life balance, particularly for mothers returning to work. Better childcare, tax incentives and more high-level part-time work would contribute to work-life balance. This entails employers extending flexibility beyond lower grades of the workforce into the management group itself.

Social capital was regarded as important in allowing personal networks to be developed and built up. These are often very complex and provide support,
reassurance and viewpoints from a wide range of different sources – colleagues, ex-
colleagues, family, friends, friends of friends.

‘Good’ management was defined by respondents as helpful, supportive, encouraging, understanding, flexible and inspiring. Not surprisingly good management was felt to be instrumental in creating an enabling environment for career and personal progression.

**Self determination** must not be underrated. To be successful, gain skills and progress requires a lot of effort and hard work from the individual. Respondents felt that individual character and determination of individuals was an important factor.

### 7.3.4. Skills development focused on women.

This was seen by respondents as being of critical importance in both developing and progressing careers. Having solid qualifications and skills was viewed as a prerequisite to both a successful managerial career and entrepreneurship. A number of specific areas were identified:

**Sector and role specific.** Training needs to be available that is sector and role specific, in cutting edge IT applications (not necessarily complex packages but in how they are being used), “soft skills” and in business, and management development, which was seen as particularly important for entrepreneurial routes.

**Learning in the workplace.** In the workplace, structured staff development, in-house training, continual professional development and sponsorship to gain membership of Institutes.

**Access to learning.** Learning provision needs to be geared more to women’s needs. Delivery must be flexible, it should come in ‘bite-size’ chunks (1 to 3 hours), and it should be blended with mentoring and include wider skills such as balancing work and wider life responsibilities.

**Accreditation.** Experiential learning needs to be better accredited in a way that is seen as credible. Many women stated that their extensive experience and knowledge was often overlooked because they did not have formal qualifications to demonstrate it.

### 7.4 Ways Forward

#### 7.4.1. Promoting a learning environment

To promote entrepreneurship and innovation, and therefore drive the Black Country towards a more competitive knowledge-based economy, it is essential that all the human resources of the Black Country are utilised to their full potential. The Black Country LSC declares its goal “remains to make the Black Country a place where people know that they will receive the best in learning and where employers know
they can find the skills they need to develop their business.’

At present women in the Black Country are NOT receiving the best in learning for management development purposes. Women still find it harder than men to access skills development, due not only to more demanding pressures (home and work) but also to a set of pervasive and obstructive societal values. Innovative mechanisms for delivery that better meet the needs of women in or wishing to enter management and entrepreneurship are essential to break through this. Any strategy for management development skills provision in the sub-region must incorporate different modes of delivery and different offerings, ranging from formal and traditional learning to e-learning and the creation of management knowledge that can be infused in "bite-sized chunks" (as small as half hour units in some cases). We have introduced the concept of a "blended learning environment" based on prototype model developed by Birmingham Chamber of Commerce (see section 6.10.1). This environment contains a flexible mix of formal modules with learning resources as wide-ranging as articles from trade journals through to chat-rooms to facilitate the free flow of information and to get managers to engage with a wider community of learning. The integration of this approach with the regional cluster strategy might also provide opportunities for the development and diffusion of the concept, using the cluster as the hub of a blended learning environment.

7.4.2. Sector specific women-friendly provision

The circumstances and needs of women vary greatly. It is essential to appreciate this and that it is not possible to design a one-size-fits-all approach to management skills delivery. Different approaches and modes of delivery will resonate differently with women at different times. Sectors also differ greatly. Although this report used four sectors as examples to develop generic lessons, the differences between the sectors illustrated in the results shows that the sectors reflect different issues and needs. Construction is probably the most extreme example: there are significant and real barriers to women entering and progressing in management that will by no means be addressed by learning and skills provision by itself. There are fundamental issues within the industry, and societal values outside of it, that need to be addressed in parallel.

We suggest that each sector should prioritise the establishment of a women’s network that could provide the basis for a structured mentoring scheme. Where there are so few women in management in a sector that it is unlikely to sustain a network, it might be appropriate for two or three related sectors to work in tandem.

7.4.3. A fresh approach to qualifications

Training providers, and associated agencies, need to change the way they operate and think. Respondents raised concerns about FE Colleges and the Learning and Skills Councils being too focused on low level skills (particularly Levels 2 and 3), which do not relate directly to advanced management competencies, and being

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somewhat obsessive about NVQs, which appear not to be highly regarded either among women managers or the business community. Higher Education institutions also received some criticism for not providing flexible learning approaches, and not responding to training needs for local management development. They also come under fire for failing to regard the delivery of services to local businesses as a core part of their business. Furthermore, there is limited provision for women-only training, although it has proved to be effective (for example, the Birmingham women’s empowerment programme). The LSC also received some criticism from respondents for not making it clearer what its role was, and making it easier for women to access the training they needed in a way they wanted. This included blended approaches. A criticism levelled was that Business Link and the LSC should be more ‘joined up’ and not be ‘competitive’. A ‘one-stop shop’ for training and business support was suggested a number of times in focus groups.

29 This is also borne out from research into Advanced Management Needs in the Black Country, AMNA, 2003.
SECTION 8: RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations 1 to 5 are related to the sectors featured in the research.

- **R1:** Sector Skills managers need to examine this report and apply the findings to their specific sectors in a way that is appropriate to their individual needs and requirements.

- **R2:** The LSC should fund and promote capacity building training programmes for careers officers, working in conjunction with trade and professional bodies from the sectors.

- **R3:** Mentoring and e-mentoring approaches should be designed and implemented that are both women-only and sector-specific. These should be seen by the LSC as a valid training mechanism in their own right, and not simply a business development tool. It is vital that these approaches are better integrated into learning and skills development through a blended learning approach. Role models should be used as mentors. Where few role models can be located within a sector, the Sector Skills managers should investigate the potential for setting up a cross-sectoral scheme with one or two related sectors.

- **R4:** There is a need to re-brand the construction industry to be more inclusive of women, rather than simply finding better ways of integrating women into a male industry (e.g. lobbying TV makeover programmes to have women trade workers to do the joinery, painting, plastering etc. rather than as presenters).

- **R5:** In retail serious issues with women’s lack of access to level 4/5 training need to be addressed.

Recommendations 6 to 10 relate to the provision of learning opportunities for women.

- **R6:** Flexible and blended learning must be promoted, including bite-sized learning, e-learning and mentoring components.

- **R7:** The LSC should develop a one-stop shop for training and learning for women across the West Midlands. This could be developed through a single unified web-based Black Country Women in Business portal.

- **R8:** Women’s only training programmes should be supported by the LSC.

- **R9:** The LSC/Business Link should offer small grant incentives to SMEs to provide management training opportunities to women.

- **R10:** Training providers must be supported to become more cognisant of women’s needs in delivering training.

Recommendations 11 to 14 relate to promoting women in management through societal change.

- **R11:** Best practice from large firms in meeting equal opportunities requirements and flexible working practices should be promoted to SMEs through mentoring & support linked to the supply chain.

- **R12:** The Black Country LSC should work with employers to change work culture and provide training and support to show the organisational benefits of these changes.
• R13: Women’s networks should be supported to provide women with greater support, role models and contacts. This could be facilitated through a Black Country Women in Business portal and/or a women’s network role in the LSC.

• R14: Providers should develop alternative ways of communicating with women and getting information to them in their daily lives while they are not active in the labour market, for example at nurseries and play groups to promote a range of training and learning opportunities. This could be instrumental in enabling women to begin a process of updating their skills or even pursuing a business idea while involved in caring for their children or other dependants.

Recommendations 15 to 19 relate to the role of the Careers Service and other educational services in promoting women’s participation in business in the key sectors.

• R15: Management and entrepreneurship as a viable, realistic and acceptable career needs to be promoted better. The industrial press (sector-specific and generic) should publish articles produced locally featuring case studies of successful women in SMEs.

• R16: The Career Service needs to grapple with the reality that people in general, and women in particular, no longer continue on a straight track through a life-long career. The research demonstrates how their directions change as a response to life events. Career advice and support needs to be available at the time of those life events and made accessible to women, who may be under considerable strain at the time.

• R17: Careers advisors need to be supported with initiatives to break gender stereotypes of appropriate destinations for school-leavers. This is as important for boys as for girls. The sectors should produce a range of attractive leaflets, with local content, backed up by internet-based resources, that careers advisors can direct young people to, and that schools can use in personal and social development education.

• R18: The LSC should sponsor taster days in construction and engineering for Year 9 girls in Black Country schools, at which they can specifically meet women in senior and professional roles. Similar taster days should be arranged for business studies students at local colleges and universities.

• R19: An annual Black Country Women in Business Roadshow to be held to get business and top management role models into schools and colleges.
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APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY
WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT: QUESTIONNAIRE
Please put a cross (x) next to any answers that apply (you can put crosses against more than one answer), and type in any additional text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Company Sector:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Number of employees: (If branch or franchise, for your branch/franchise)</td>
<td>a. 1-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. 11-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. 25-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. 51-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. &gt;100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does a male or female head your company or manage your branch or franchise?</td>
<td>a. Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are there any female directors in your company or at your branch or franchise?</td>
<td>a. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If yes, how many?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are there any female senior managers in the company, branch or franchise?</td>
<td>a. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If yes, how many?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What, roughly, is the % of women middle managers?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What, roughly, is the % of women supervisory managers?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Does your organisation have a formal staff development and/or training programme?</td>
<td>a. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Does your organisation have a clear and formalised career progression structure?</td>
<td>a. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Do you have an appraisal process that examines performance?</td>
<td>a. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Is your organisation ‘Investors In People’ accredited?</td>
<td>a. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Does your organisation provide crèche facilities?</td>
<td>a. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Does your organisation provide maternity/paternity support above the statutory requirements?</td>
<td>a. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As part of this research project we listen to stories of women’s careers. If you or any others in your organisation would be interested in further participation in this research please complete the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone number and email</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We greatly appreciate your time and assistance.
APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY RESULTS: GRAPHICAL OUTPUT

Women In Management Questionnaire Responses by Sector

### % of Businesses headed by Women, by Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### % of Businesses with Female Directors, by Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
% of Businesses with female senior managers, by Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of Businesses that offer formal staff training, by Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
% of Businesses with a clear and formalised staff progression structure, by Sector

% of Businesses with a performance appraisal process, by Sector
% of Businesses that offer maternity/paternity benefits above the statutory minimum, by Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>Community</td>
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% of Businesses offering creche facilities, by Sector

<table>
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<th>Percentage</th>
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Women In Management Questionnaire Responses by Size
% of Businesses headed by women, by Size

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<tr>
<td>11 - 50</td>
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<td>51+</td>
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% of Businesses with female directors, by Size

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% of Businesses employing female senior managers, by Size

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% of businesses that offer formal staff training, by Size

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% of businesses with a clear and formalised staff progression structure, by Size

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% of businesses with a performance appraisal process, by Size

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% of businesses that are 'Investors in People' accredited, by Size

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<th>Co Size</th>
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% of businesses offering creche facilities, by Size

% of businesses offering maternity/paternity benefits above the statutory minimum, by Size
% of businesses offering flexible working hours, by Size

Co Size

Percentage

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80

1 - 10 11 - 50 51+

44 52 72
### APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY RESULTS: SIGNIFICANT CORRELATIONS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations All</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Number of employees</th>
<th>Male or female head your company</th>
<th>Any female senior manager</th>
<th>% of women middle managers</th>
<th>% of women supervisory managers</th>
<th>Formal staff training</th>
<th>Clear career progression structure</th>
<th>An Appraisal process</th>
<th>Investors in People accredited</th>
<th>Are there crèche facilities</th>
<th>Maternity/paternity support</th>
<th>Do you offer flexi time</th>
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- Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.
- Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.
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<th>% of women middle managers</th>
<th>% of women supervisory managers</th>
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<td>Do you offer flexi time</td>
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*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.*
### Correlations Construction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of employees</th>
<th>Male or female head your company</th>
<th>Any female directors</th>
<th>Any female senior manager</th>
<th>% of women middle managers</th>
<th>% of women supervisory managers</th>
<th>Formal staff training</th>
<th>Clear career progression structure</th>
<th>An Appraisal process</th>
<th>Investors in People accredited</th>
<th>Are there crèche facilities</th>
<th>Maternity/paternity support</th>
<th>Do you offer flexi time</th>
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- Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.
- Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.