

The Gender Pay Gap Nonsense Reappears

By **Alexander Baron** - Feb 17, 2015



7 SHARES

The gender pay gap is back in the news, in fact it is seldom out of it. If you are not familiar with this myth, it is a bit like that of the unicorn, but nowhere near as plausible. Earlier this month, the London *Evening Standard* reported that more than three quarters of the capital's big earners are men, and that men are three times as likely as women to earn at least £100,000 a year. Among those not happy with this and other claims is the Fawcett Society, which called for compulsory gender pay audits for large employers. Whatever that means.

The Fawcett Society is a grandly titled women's rights organisation, and like all such organisations it has never allowed facts to stand in the way of a good story anymore than it has been shy of cherry picking or even fabricating statistics. What are the facts about the gender pay gap?

Since the *Equal Pay Act* of 1970, it has been illegal in the UK for employers to pay women less than men for the same work. That last phrase is extremely important, because oftentimes men and women do not do the same work. There are well-documented socio-historical reasons for this. Although the main reasons are no longer relevant – the superior physical strength of many men, less opportunities of education for women – there are still big differences in the way men and women both think and work. Almost all the really physically demanding jobs are male bastions, while women have niches in education, nursing and certain types of office work.

If one allows for the different lifestyle choices of men and women, and for the fact that men do not bear children, there is not much difference in earnings where the two perform equal work, but as pointed out by the *Evening Standard*, almost all the really high earners are men. Whose fault is this? Partly women's! One of the most overpaid professions in the UK at the moment is that of professional footballer, some of whom are paid silly money. There are ladies professional football teams, though nowhere near as many. One would have thought that given the choice of watching either 22 blokes or 22 women running up and down trying to kick a ball into the back of a net, most red-blooded males would have preferred the latter, but this is not the case. Men's football is also patronised by women and girls far more than the women's game. Perhaps the Fawcett Society would like to pass a law against that as well?

The great tragedy of this sort of nonsense is that it is not the high earners who need help. A woman earning £80,000 a year may be aggrieved that many men working in the same sector are paid more, but it is women *and* men on minimum wage who struggle through life. What can be done to help them? The usual claim is to raise the minimum wage, but this is a folly as has been demonstrated countless times by free market economists. The only real solution is Basic Income. To find out more about that, check out [this video](#) or the website of the [Basic Income Network](#).