

CENTRE FOR DIVERSITY POLICY RESEARCH & PRACTICE

Lord Davies of Abersoch CBE and Helena Morrissey CBE in conversation – 21st October 2015

Lord Davies of Abersoch CBE and Helena Morrissey CBE and Founder of the 30% Club, were in discussion at an audience event at the Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice at Oxford Brookes University. The debate, held on 21 October, signalled a landmark in the campaign for gender equality in the workplace: 2015 is the year when the Davies Report intended to achieve 25% of women's representation on boards of FTSE 100 companies. The 30% Club, also, was founded with the goal of achieving 30% women on FTSE-100 boards by end 2015. The figure currently stands at 26%.



'What has been achieved since these targets were set, and what remains to be done to finally close the gender gap beyond the end of 2015', drove the conversation at Oxford Brookes.

Speaking at the discussion, Helena Morrissey said: "The milestone we have reached already demonstrates the desire for change. The power of a joined-up approach - the business-led stance of the 30% Club and the public policy of the Davies Committee, together with the efforts of the private sector - has contributed significantly to progress to date. There is still work to do however and, as we look towards the end of 2015 and beyond, the focus is now very much on ensuring sustainable progress at all organisational levels."

Another pertinent element of the discussion was the role of gender bias in the Higher Education sector in the UK. Professor Simonetta Manfredi, Director of the Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice at Oxford Brookes, who also co-ordinated the 30% Club-sponsored debate, commented:

"The work of Lord Davies, Helena Morrissey and the 30% Club to increase gender equality on company boards has brought into focus the significant under-

representation of women in leadership roles across different sectors, and has highlighted the need to close the gender gap within higher education and beyond.

“I believe that there are lessons that can be learned from the Davies’ Women on Boards initiative and 30% Club that will help universities remedy the current imbalance,” she added.

Helena Morrissey said: “Led by Anne Richards and Elizabeth Passey, the 30% Club's Higher Education group is working to accelerate change in the sector. The Think Future Study, piloted earlier this year as the Students' Aspiration Survey and now to be rolled out nationally, will help us identify the ways in which time spent at university shapes young women's aspirations for the future.”

Speaking on the broader progress achieved so far on gender equality, Lord Davies said: “It has been a tough journey, but we are getting there. There is still much to do. The focus has moved from Boards to Executive level, which marks a change in the business landscape of the UK.”

The fifth and final Davies Report on Women on Boards is published on 29th October 2015.



This event was sponsored by
the 30% Club