

## Sex Discrimination Law Review

On 23 January 2018, The Fawcett Society released a [ground-breaking report](#) into Sex Discrimination Law. An event was held at Portcullis House in Westminster with an esteemed panel:

- Sam Smethers, CEO of the Fawcett Society
- Dame Laura Cox DBE QC – Chair of the Sex Discrimination Review
- Rt Hon Maria Miller MP – Chair of the Women and Equalities Select Committee
- Dawn Butler – Shadow Equalities Minister
- Neil Carberry – Managing Director of people & Infrastructure – Confederation of British Industry

At the event, views on the report were discussed and questions taken from the floor in relation to the key areas found where there are gaps in the law:

- **Brexit** – protection of equality rights, positive action and cross border protections
- **Women in the Workplace** – pay, maternity/paternity/flexible working rights, workplace harassment and dress codes
- **Violence against women and girls** – the need for a dedicated commissioner for services, movement away from victim only testimony, criminal offences and training for judiciary in relation to domestic violence, criminal offences in relation to sexual violence and the right to anonymity, right to legal representation
- **Hate Crime and Misogyny** - Misogyny to be recognised as a hate crime, legislation for buffer zones around abortion clinics, action by social media platforms to reduce risk of abusers locating victims
- **Promoting Equality** – funding for and extension of the Public Sector Equality Duty to ensure women’s rights are protected, funding for Judicial Review, “socio-economic status” as a protected characteristic, duties to report monitoring data, sanctions for public sector contractors who have equal pay judgments against them
- **Access to Justice** – Legal Aid for family law, asylum support, clinical negligence, compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority, education, employment, housing, immigration and welfare benefits
- **Multiple Discrimination** – discrimination based on multiple characteristics, rather than one at a time
- **Sex Equality in Northern Ireland** – no parallel provisions to the Equality Act 2010, illegality of abortion

The Fawcett Society takes its name from Millicent Fawcett, a tireless suffragist, intellectual and union leader who was primarily known for her work as a feminist campaigner. Due to her work and others, the Representation of the People Act 1918 was enacted giving women the vote for the first time, albeit that they still needed to be over 30 and meet a property qualification. The report was compiled with assistance from solicitors and barristers as well as academics and representatives from the End Violence Against Women Coalition and the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

If you are a business grappling with equality requirements, or have been the subject of discrimination and require further information and guidance, please contact Elaine O'Connor on 0207 940 4000 or at [eoc@anthonygold.co.uk](mailto:eoc@anthonygold.co.uk).