



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP  
Secretary of State  
Department for Business,  
Energy & Industrial Strategy  
1 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0ET

T +44 (0) 20 7215 5000  
E [enquiries@beis.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@beis.gov.uk)  
W [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Richard Pennycook  
Co-Chair Retail Sector Council  
via email  
[richard@pennycooks.net](mailto:richard@pennycooks.net)

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*Richard*

Thank you once again for taking up the position of Co-Chair for the Retail Sector Council and for your on-going work on this agenda. I am pleased to hear that progress is being made in preparation for the priorities and actions of the Council to be agreed at the upcoming meeting later this year.

I understand that you are meeting with Kelly Tolhurst, Retail Minister and Co-Chair of the Retail Sector Council, on 10 October to discuss this further and I look forward to hearing feedback from Kelly following that meeting.

As you may be aware, the Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP, Minister for Women and Equalities, is leading the Government's work on reducing the gender pay gap. Following the first year of reporting, data shows that the national gender pay gap remains at 18.4% and if it continues on its current trajectory, will not close until the 2050s at the earliest.

The gender pay gap in the retail sector is 17.9%, slightly below the national average. However, the sector is of significant interest to Government as 13% of all employed women work in retail, making it the third largest sector for women in employment.

I recognise that over the past few years retailers have been making significant strides to address their gender pay gap for example, Tesco, Sainsbury's, WM Morrison and M&S have all committed to achieving a minimum of 30% of women on their board and senior management by 2020.

I am now keen to see the retail sector build on this excellent work and make even greater progress. I am therefore writing to ask that within the Council's current work examining retail productivity, it also includes the gender pay gap and makes recommendations on how the sector can take further action in this important area.

I do hope this is something you can assist with and I have asked Kelly to discuss this further at your upcoming meeting.

*with best wishes*



**THE RT HON GREG CLARK MP**  
Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy