



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Kelly Tolhurst MP

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Dear Richard,

Thank for your time at the Retail Sector Council meeting on 26 February. It was a positive discussion, with valuable input from members and I was pleased to hear the progress that has been made, particularly on the Costs to Business and Skills working groups. I encourage this work to continue and look forward to a further update in due course.

I would also like to thank you for your letter to the Secretary of State, following the Retail Sector Council meeting on 12 November 2018. I am replying in my capacity as Co-Chair and apologise for the delay to my reply.

I would like to thank Helen again for taking the time to prepare a paper on the gender pay gap in the retail sector and for presenting this at November's meeting. This facilitated a positive discussion and the Government Equalities Office was also grateful for the opportunity to discuss their work in more depth with the Council.

Reducing the gender pay gap remains a top priority for Government and we are grateful for the significant strides taken by the sector to address this. We are keen to see the retail sector build on their excellent work and to make even greater progress. We are therefore pleased that the British Retail Consortium will continue to engage with both my department and the Government Equalities Office on behalf of the Retail Sector Council. The Retail Team remain engaged on this issue and will continue to work closely with the British Retail Consortium. I look forward to hearing more about continued work and progress made at future meetings.

On your final point, I agree that we should build on the learning from the gender pay gap and the consultation invited views on the extent to which employers would like to mirror these with ethnicity pay reporting.

Over 100 employers have already signed up to the Race at Work Charter, which commits businesses to a bold set of principles and actions designed to drive forward a step-change in the recruitment and progression of ethnic minority employees.

Our Good Work Plan also sets out the important actions taken by Government to improve the quality of work in the UK labour market. I would encourage the BRC to consider both when preparing their practical support for retailers.

I look forward to the next meeting of the Council on 6 June.

yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelly', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

KELLY TOLHURST MP
Minister for Small Business, Consumers & Corporate Responsibility