



When I grow up I want to be...

Does the reality match the fairytale, and why should employers care?

Today's children are full of ambition, vision and hope for tomorrow. But will they be able to achieve their potential? What will hinder them from doing so?

The fact is, it is less likely that little girls' dreams will come true than little boys. The male orientated design of work, which traditionally favoured a breadwinner supported in the background by a housewife mother bringing up the next generation, is woefully out of step with modern life.

We are now living in a dramatically different socio-economic environment with better female education, fluid family structures, higher mortgages costs, and women needing to provide for their own pensions. Women are now often the main breadwinner or part of a dual earner couple. They no longer work for pin money.

Thirty years ago, the workers of today had exactly the same aspirations as today's wide eyed expectant children. But thirty years after the implementation of the sex discrimination act what has changed?

Northern Ireland has to compete in a global economy against the emerging giants of China and India. We will not be able to do this if the talents and drive of half of our population continues to be ignored and under-utilised. There is a very real brain drain of women, either moving out of the labour market completely, or working part-time because of the lack of affordable childcare.

Northern Ireland companies are in a "war for talent". They need to implement policies which will attract applicants from this hidden pool of labour. They need to recognize that employer-supported childcare is an investment, not an expense.

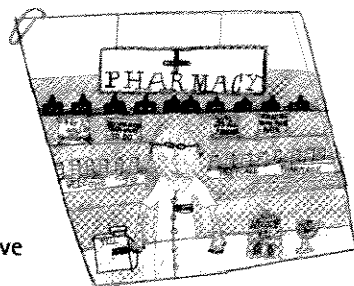
According to the latest DETI Labour Market statistics, 538,000 people in Northern Ireland are economically inactive. This is nearly a third of the population. Research shows that 67% of women surveyed in Job Centres across Northern Ireland said the lack of affordable, suitable childcare is the biggest barrier to securing employment.

Employers For Childcare provides the practical tools and assistance necessary for employers who wish to attract and retain talented staff, irrespective of size or sector.

The conference will cover:

This conference will examine and debate issues for Northern Ireland companies in relation to childcare policies and employer-supported childcare provision. It will present practical solutions to the difficulties associated with:

- Recruitment
- Absenteeism
- Return to work after maternity leave
- Retention

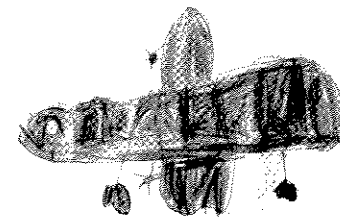


...a Pharmacist
Melanie Hamilton, Lame
age category 8-11

Who should attend:

- Managing Directors & Business Leaders
- Human Resources Professionals
- Employee Benefit Specialists
- Equal Opportunity Advisors
- Trade Unions and Employee Groups
- Employment Advisors

...a Pilot
Sam Hamilton, Dromore
age category 3-4



...a Policeman
Oisín McMullan, Bangor
age category 5-7



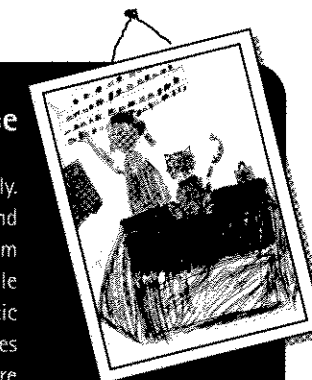
Programme

- 9.45 **Registration, Coffee and Art Gallery**
An opportunity to view the dreams & aspirations of your future employees, through their eyes.
- 10.15 **Chair's Welcome**
Wendy Austin, *Broadcaster, BBC NI*
- Opening Address - Morning**
VIP Guest
- 'The March of the Penguins'**
Beatrix Campbell, *Journalist, Author & Social Commentator*
- Recruitment issues for employers**
Una McKernan, *Director of Corporate Services, NICVA*
- Recruiting from a wider pool of labour**
Maura Muldoon, *Director of Equality and Diversity, PSNI*
- 11.30 **Coffee Break**
- 11.45 **Absenteeism issues for employers**
Una McKernan, *Director of Corporate Services, NICVA*
- Tackling absenteeism through summer schemes**
Heather Ellis, *Director of Human Resources
Armagh & Dungannon Health and Social Services Trust*
- Adults mentoring children**
Graeme McKimm, *Education Manager
Business in the Community*

- Childcare solutions – the way forward**
Marie Marin, *Director, Employers For Childcare*
- Panel Discussion**
- 12.45 **Networking Lunch**
- 1.45 **Opening Address - Afternoon
& Retention issues for employers**
Fionuala Devlin, *Head of Promotions & Education,
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland*
- Childcare vouchers and retention**
Wilson Caughers, *Bombardier Aerospace*
- Framework for family-friendly employment policies
Return to work after maternity leave**
Patricia McQuillan, *Employment Relations Manager,
Labour Relations Agency*
- Dealing with requests for flexible working**
Cathy Donnelly, *Head of HR, Botanic Inns*
- Launch of 'Flexible Working Arbitration Scheme'**
Penny Holloway, *Director of Conciliation and Arbitration,
Labour Relations Agency*
- Panel Discussion**
- 3.30 **Chair's Closing Remarks**

LAUNCH: Labour Relations Agency – Flexible Working Arbitration Scheme

Since 2003, employees who are parents and who meet certain criteria have had the right to apply to work flexibly. Employers have had a duty to consider these requests seriously. If the employer refuses to grant the request and the employee feels this is unreasonable, the employee may complain to an industrial tribunal. However, from the end of May 2006, as an alternative the parties may agree to use the Labour Relations Agency's Flexible Working Arbitration Scheme. The scheme is designed to be a speedy, informal, confidential and non-legalistic alternative to a tribunal hearing. Entry to the scheme is entirely voluntary. An arbitrator hears the case and makes a decision which is binding on both parties. The remedies and compensation which an arbitrator can award are the same as those which can be awarded by a tribunal.



...a Vet
Kate Spence, Carrmonee
age category 5-7



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