

News Release



4 February 2002

Maximising Women's Untapped Potential

£10 million Objective 1 Funding available to unlock Women's Economic Potential

Women are under represented in well paid jobs throughout Britain but the situation is much worse in South Yorkshire. But, thanks to the Objective 1 Programme, money is available to address the problem. That is the clear message participants will hear at an Objective 1 funding workshop to be held at Magna, in Rotherham, on Friday 8 February.

150 representatives of women's groups and other statutory and voluntary organisations with a role or interest in developing women's potential will attend to learn how they can apply for a share of the £10 million to run projects to help women maximise their participation in the economic regeneration of South Yorkshire.

"If we going to achieve our vision of transforming the local economy then women must play a full and active part in the economic regeneration of South Yorkshire" says Cinnamon Bennett of Objective 1. "The Programme aims to create some 35,000 jobs and over 1,000 new businesses - this will be impossible to achieve unless we consider how to unlock the talents and opportunities for women to participate. Women's potential contribution is considerable; they are performing as well, if not better than boys at school, and make up over half of all students in higher education.."

"We are seeking to support projects that can tackle women's segregation, for example, by raising career aspirations of employees and school leavers, or projects that provide opportunities for fast track and tailored learning programmes. We are also seeking to support employers to transform the work patterns, culture or image of their workplaces so that the opportunities that they offer appeal to all sections of the community."

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"This funding workshop is the first of series planned over the next few weeks and will highlight the opportunities available through the Objective 1 programme. Objective 1 offers us a one-off opportunity to make a step change in the local labour market and to put in place a firm foundation on which economic prosperity can be re-built." Said Cinnamon Bennett.

Objective 1 Equalities Co-ordinator, Qurban Hussain, said "This workshop and the activities that will flow from it will make a real contribution to driving forward gender mainstreaming and equal opportunities which are fundamental themes of the Programme. We expect that projects developed through this action will showcase what can be achieved and help raise aspirations in other projects across South Yorkshire."

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Notes to Editors:

Some Statistics on Women in South Yorkshire

PAY and INCOME

- An average full time woman working in a non-manual job earns £299 per week (gross) compared to an average man who earns £428 per week (gross). The average woman earns 69.9% of an equivalent average man.
- An average full time woman working in a manual job earns £180 per week gross compared to an average man who earns £311. The average woman earns 57.9% of an average man. (*New Earnings Survey, South Yorkshire 1998*)
- There are more women earners than men in the lowest paid 10% of the working population (measured by hourly rate of pay). The introduction of the minimum wage in 1999 increased the hourly rate of pay of the lowest 10% by 4.6%. (*TEC Economic Assessment 2000*)

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY and INACTIVITY

- Women are more likely to work part time in South Yorkshire than nationally. Men are more likely to work full time in South Yorkshire than nationally. (*Annual Employment Survey, Bretton Hall 2001*)
- 30.8% of women are economically inactive compared to 22.8% of men. This may be explained by women's greater responsibility and involvement in caring for family dependants. (*Regional Labour Market Survey, September 2001 Yorkshire and the Humber*)
- Inactivity among women is highest in Doncaster and Rotherham. (*TEC Economic Assessment 2000*)
- 13% of the male working age population was receiving invalidity benefit in 1996, 50% higher than nationally. Rates were particularly high in Barnsley and Doncaster. (*TEC Economic Assessment 2000*)

UNEMPLOYMENT

- Male unemployment fell at a faster rate than for women in the 1990s. There was a 48% fall in male rates compared to only 8.3% for women. The national fall in men's unemployment was 42.65% and for women the rate was 30.1% (*South Yorkshire Learning Market Assessment 2000*)
- Male long-term unemployment is 2.3% of the economically active population, 1% higher than the national rate. For women the rate in South Yorkshire is only marginally higher than nationally. (*South Yorkshire Learning Market Assessment 2000*)

