

Baroness Wilcox

Parliamentary Secretary for Business,
Innovation & Skills

Baroness Garden
House of Lords
London SW1A 0PW

15 June 2010

Dear Lady Garden,

QUEEN'S SPEECH DEBATE

Thank you for your continuing interest in what steps need to be taken to understand and tackle the barriers faced by women in entrepreneurship. Vince Cable has specifically asked me to address this issue, working with Mark Prisk.

I agree with your view that the starting point is within the education system. Our best means of influencing girls is through engagement in education and employment provision.

A key element of delivering the Prime Minister's challenge of creating a *decade of enterprise* will be to ensure enterprise learning and business skills are embedded at all stages of the education system.

It will be important that this takes into account the specific needs and requirements of girls through education, and then into careers advice and employment support - as part of the Government's Work Programme. This will ensure that girls and women perceive working for themselves as a viable and attainable career option.

Evidence shows that the main barriers faced by women are:

- failure in the education system to build aspiration and skills - leading to lack of confidence;
- insufficient prominence of suitable role models;
- media coverage; and
- issues relating to access to finance.

Addressing these issues will form the basis of the work I propose to undertake and I look forward to working closely with you on this important agenda.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the House of Lords library.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sincerely" followed by a stylized name.

BARONESS WILCOX