

## Lessons from the UK

Aileen McColgan  
Professor of Human Rights Law  
King's College, London  
Barrister, Matrix Chambers

### **Abstract**

The UK is notable for having had equal pay legislation in place for almost thirty years, a legal entitlement to equal pay for work of equal value for over 20 years. This legislation is enforced through employment tribunals which are intended to be cheap, speedy and accessible, and it has given rise to many cases. Yet women in the UK languish far behind men in the earnings stakes. Worse, while the position of full-time women workers has improved (albeit gradually) over that time, that of part-time women workers (who account for half of all women workers) has barely changed. I will attempt to explore the reasons behind this apparent legislative failure and to consider what lessons it may hold for New Zealand.