

PRESS RELEASE

Global Training Providers, OSR, step into Westminster

Olive Strachan, Founder and CEO of OSR Ltd joined a delegation of over 40 female business owners to the House of Parliament.



During the visit they discussed a drive for increased female & diverse representation on new Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).

The event was organised by Elaine Owen and Wirral West MP Esther McVey, pictured here with fellow panel member Dr Nighat Awan OBE

Jo Somerset, Director of Infastruct, spoke at an event, pressing for recognition of women at senior level, and in particular as members of the new Local Enterprise Partnership Boards. A participant reported that half of the emerging LEP boards had no female representation. As Infastructs work in the North West in the past year, culminating in the report The Case for Strong and Diverse Leadership Teams demonstrates, there is no shortage of evidence showing recruiters and chairs why they need to make the effort to ensure a balanced board.

Sue Street, a strategic advisor to Deloitte, exhorted women to confront their fundamental confidence issues in November's issue of Management Today. She put forward three DON'Ts:

"DON'T reject big roles in the public and private sectors. DON'T.....assume top jobs will destroy your personal life. And DON'T stop having children."

Olive Strachan from OSR Ltd pictured here discussing the day's events over lunch at Westminster with other female business owners, commented "I had the privilege of joining my peers at the House of Parliament, it was an interesting and thought provoking meeting where there was a heated discussion regarding the lack of women at senior level at the new Local



Enterprise Partnership Boards. As previously mentioned one participant pointed out that half of the emerging LEP boards had no female representation. As a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and a woman

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who has run her own training consultancy for 12 years I feel that the emerging LEP boards doing themselves a disservice by not including more women on their boards. In an article by CIPD in March 2007 called 'Want a difficult job done? Then ask a woman' research by Exeter University concludes that 'In crisis situations business leaders are more inclined to open up job opportunities to women'. The growth in successful businesses established by women means that the emerging LEP boards are missing out on this pool of talent." Olive added "many thanks to Carol Ann Whitehead of The Zebra Partnership for inviting me, there is a lot to do and Esther and Elaine have my full support"

Olive is pictured here on the left with Olayinka Seriki, Managing Director, UK Together and Carol Ann Whitehead, Managing Director, The Zebra Partnership.



Esther McVey MP concluded "I was delighted to host this very important event. As a businesswoman myself I believe it is absolutely paramount that women play a greater role in the business world. It was fantastic to see that North West businesswomen are leading the way in business best practice for the rest of the country, and I will continue to champion the cause in Parliament"

END

Notes to Editors

1. The North West Women and Work Task Force report can be downloaded at <http://www.nwda.co.uk/pdf/Report%20case%20for%20strong%20and%20diverse%20leadership3.PDF>
2. Chaired by Vanda Murray, OBE, the Task Force comprised leading women and men from manufacturing, media and service industries; public sector; social enterprise and business support organisations.
3. The event on 15th December is organised by Task Force member Elaine Owen, MD of Designated Associates. Elaine.Owen@designatedassociates.com Tel: 01 51 653 3338
4. Manchester-based company Infrastruct Ltd supported the work of the Task Force through research, consultation and writing up findings and recommendations. For more information visit www.infrastruct.co.uk or tel 0161 231 5011
5. Carol Ann Whitehead, MD, The Zebra Partnership and Enterprise UK Ambassador has consulted for the NWDA and supported this initiative with PR and Communications. Email carol@thezebrapartnership.co.uk or call 07702 541 884