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Just when you've beaten back one set of nonsense along comes another ignorant [1]

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Long term readers will recall that for some years now I've been saying that we've not really got a gender pay gap. We've a motherhood pay gap, that we do, but not a gender one. In this I am supported by all sorts of interesting evidence. Like this from the Telegraph [3], this from this here blog [4], and even this quite delightful piece [5]. Where the Statistics Authority chief rapped Harriet Harman over the knuckles for misleading people with bad statistics. You know, the crime of being a politician.

Now, the proof that we do not have a gender pay gap comes in the details of the (correct) statistics. Single no children women in their 40s earn more than their male age cohort. Women in their 20s on average make more than men in their 20s. There is indeed a pay gap though: one that opens up in the average pay for women as they enter their prime child rearing years. And we can even see that it really is child bearing years as well. A generation ago average age at first birth was in the low 20s. And that's where the pay gap started. Today it's around 30 years old and that's where the pay gap starts now.

And between all of us we've managed to get this basic fact across to the political classes. Shared parental leave might not be everyone's cup of tea but it is indeed an admission that since it is childcare that causes the pay gap then perhaps parents might want to share that pain? All of which is lovely. Then enters Viviane Reding [6]:

> 16.2%: that?s the size of the gender pay gap, or the average difference between women and men?s hourly earnings across the EU, according to the latest figures released today by the European Commission. The news comes ahead of the 2013 European Equal Pay Day on 28 February. The EU-wide event marks the extra number of days that women would need to work to match the amount earned by men: currently 59 days, meaning this year the day falls on 28 February.

Sigh. As we know domestically in Britain the pay gap is not a gender pay gap. It's a motherhood/child rearing one. Which, even assuming that you wanted to solve it means rather different policies to do so, no?

To make matters worse they also peg the UK pay gap as being at 19.6%. Which as we know from the Statistics Authority chief isn't actually the correct number at all.

This is the problem with multiple levels of government. You beat back ignorance and idiocy at one level and it just reappears at another.

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