

Focus group with three women exploring career choices and challenges.

Themes	Sub-themes	Supporting quotes
Status	Self-worth; stigma versus pride	"Anyway I was just a part-time barmaid" (Uvi) "I was, effectively, just a part time worker" (Delyth) "I'm going to hold my hands up and admit that I am proud of working full-time. Not because I want to spend all my time in work or because I love what I do that much – but because, again, it's sort of a status thing" (Abby)
	Support network	"I have nothing BUT work" (Abby) "I said that meeting <i>James</i> gave me that opportunity to go back to work and I still believe that. Not to be all like 'he was my knight in shining armour' [laughs], but having a stable relationship really allowed me to get back to me again. And ME is a woman who likes to work!" (Uvi)
	Change	"Life is too god damn short for me to be stuck working somewhere that I don't want to be." (Abby) "I did cut my hours and at the time it was, like, I'm doing this to be able to be a good mother, and spend time with <i>Jonah</i>" (Delyth)
Conflict	Sacrifice	"But then, like, I guess my over-commitment to my career has had an impact on me building relationships" (Abby) "Like what else could you possibly be doing that you can't work full-time? Anyway we argued A LOT about how I was the one who had given up hours at work, and therefore given up pay etc" (Delyth)

	Work-life balance	“It’s as if having other life commitments makes you less of a worker ... when really it’s a bloody hard thing to balance work AND a life” (Abby) “And then there’s this expectation that women should be the primary caregiver as well as rushing back to work to also contribute to the money in the house...” (Delyth)
Unequal opportunities	Gender influences	“Would that have been a story if it was a man? Do all male GP’s work full-time and only full-time? Like it’s beyond.” (Uvi) “It IS the woman who tends to end up being the one to lose out, you know?” (Delyth)
	Working hours	“I feel sometimes like I do get better training opportunities, or I’m the first one that gets asked if I need any development” (Abby) “I’ve been on a few training courses, been on a couple of trips abroad with work looking to secure new contracts – but I’m not top of the pecking order when it comes to that kind of stuff. I’d never really thought about it too much but you are right. It’s like when you are a ‘full-time’ worker you’re seen to be more committed? Maybe? And therefore you get offered more? I dunno....” (Uvi)