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BUPA WELLNESS BOSS LANDS EOC ROLE

BUPA's Catherine Brown has been appointed a commissioner for the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC). The announcement was made by the Minister for Women, Patricia Hewitt.

Ms Brown, the managing director of BUPA Wellness, the company's health assessment and occupational health business, said: "It is a great honour to have been appointed a commissioner and I look forward to working towards eliminating sex discrimination.

"I am sure that what I have learnt at BUPA will hold me in good stead for the EOC. As an organisation BUPA is hugely committed to women in the workplace - 83 percent of employees are women and hold key positions at every level of the business."

With around 40,000 employees, championing the development and careers of all staff in the workplace is key to BUPA's success. So is retaining employees. As a result BUPA employs a wide spectrum of initiatives that are family-friendly, with extensive childcare facilities and flexible working.

Catherine Brown (38) joined BUPA in 1997 after a spell in the NHS as deputy chief executive of a Community and Mental Health Trust in the East End of London. Her BUPA career began as a general manager in Reading and Clare Park Hospitals, then as a regional director of Hospitals in the Eastern Region. She was appointed the managing director of BUPA Wellness in 2001 and has also worked as a member of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Employers' Working Party on Disability.

The Equal Opportunities Commission is the statutory agency working to eliminate sex discrimination in 21st century Britain. An independent, non-departmental public body, the EOC is funded primarily by the government and sets the agenda on sex equality for decision makers across England, Scotland and Wales.

EOC Commissioners will play a key role in developing the EOC's strategy and ways of working, setting specific priorities and policies. Over the next two years the EOC will focus on the pay gap, pensions and support for parents and carers.

Taking up her post as an EOC Commissioner, Catherine Brown will be working alongside Kay Carberry, assistant general secretary at the TUC, Jeannie Drake, deputy general secretary of the Communication Workers' Union and Surinder Sharma, director of equality and human rights at the Department of Health.