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"Where inequalities intersect; data and interaction effects in employment opportunity

Global Equality and Diversity Conference
Redefining Equality and Diversity in the Information Age

- Prof Carol Woodhams
- Dept. of Organisation Studies, Business School

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Introduction

Is wage inequality growing as technological advances lead to workforce de-skilling?

Links to historic privilege and detriment in employment

Multiple/ combinations of profile characteristics

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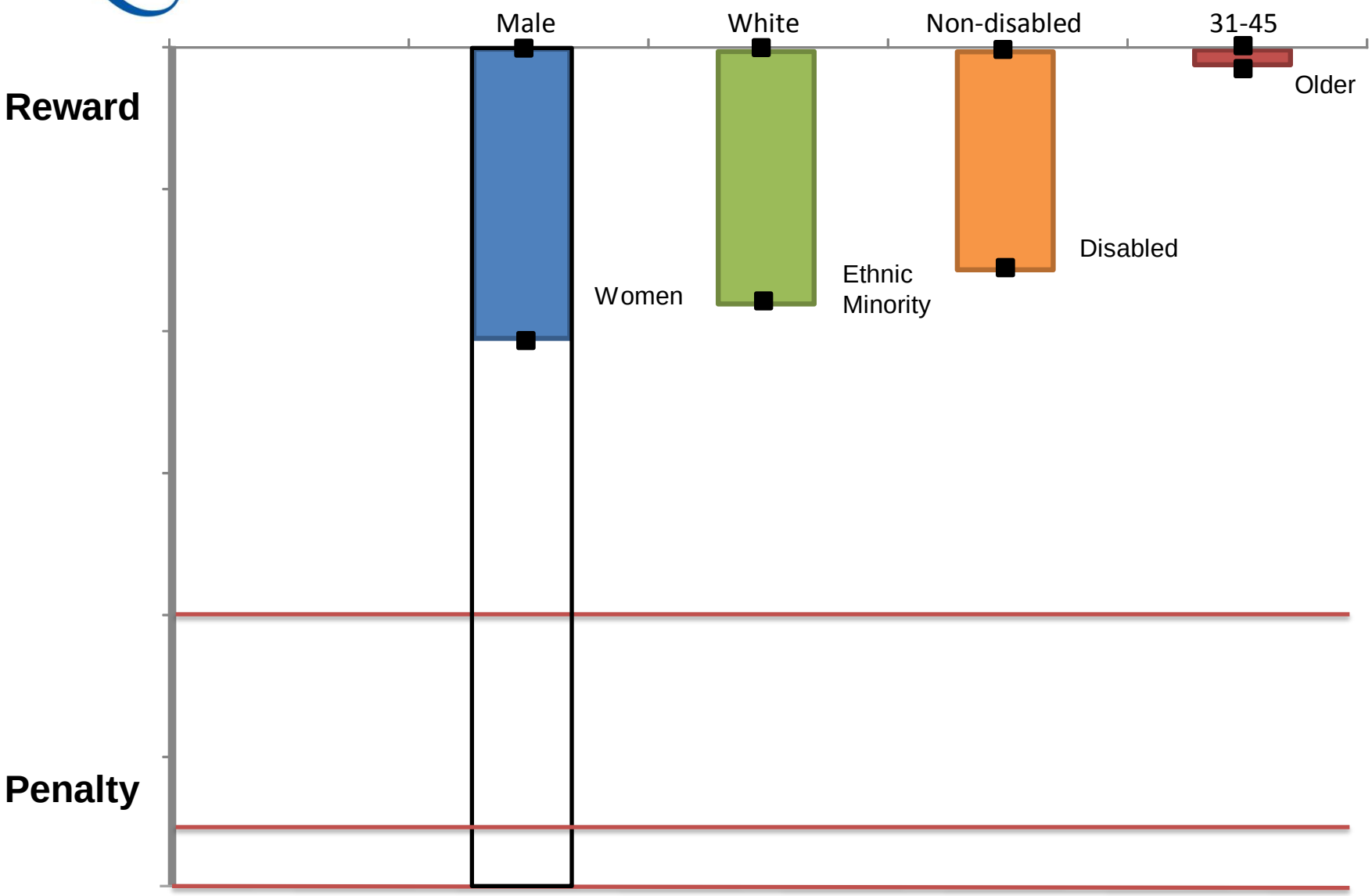

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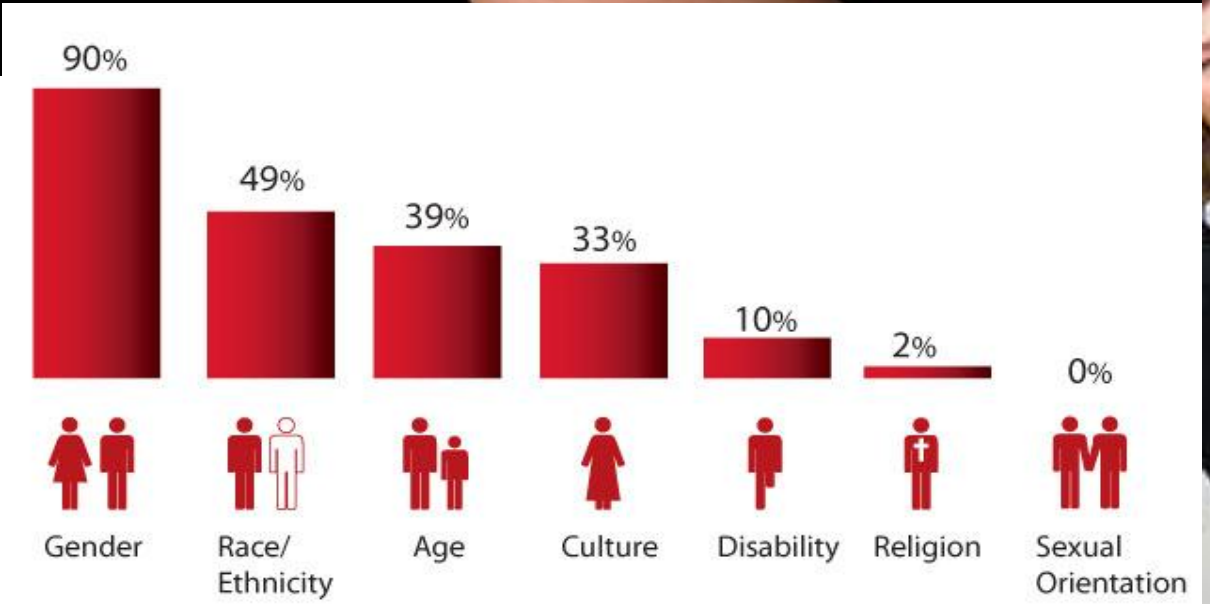
Context - Business

Diversity is more than gender



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Public and Organisation Equality Policy

- Additive understanding of contained in Equality Act 2010
- Organisation policy follows suit
- Advice on best practice also “Workforce monitoring data used to ‘profile’ staff, ‘appropriately disaggregated’ (EHRC, 2011 p.9), to uncover patterns of potential discrimination.

UK Parliamentary Debate

- “We have evidence of people experiencing discrimination because of a combination of two protected characteristics, but there is insufficient evidence of cases involving more than two for us to feel that further regulation is warranted…” Hansard (2009)
- Current findings do not investigate beyond the dual discriminatory level.

How does multiple detriment operate?

- “Insufficient evidence”. Why?
- Need samples that are large enough to provide robust findings at intersections
- But also findings need to be controlled for (protected from influence of) intervening effects.

Identity and Pay

- **2014: Gender** pay gap (UK) widening again
- People from most **ethnic minorities** paid less on average that those in “white British” category (Longhi and Platt, 2008)
- Pay varies with **age**, highest in 40-49 age group (Metcalf, 2009)
- **Disability** and lower pay (Metcalf, 2009)

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Dual/Multiple identities & Pay

- Some work on gender paired with other identities – mostly US, and mostly gender and ethnicity only
- Indicates that pay differences arising from gender are larger than those arising from other identities
- Almost nothing on other pairs or multiple disadvantage

Project 1: methods of Analysis

- Step 1 : Simple regression additive method – isolates a single variable from the effects of all others.
- Step 2: Multiplicative regression techniques look at the impact of combinations of variables.

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Research questions

- How does people's pay differ in relation to (in turn) gender, ethnicity, disability and age?
- What are the pay penalties associated with membership of two of more of these?
- What is the nature of the interaction between combined sources of disadvantage?

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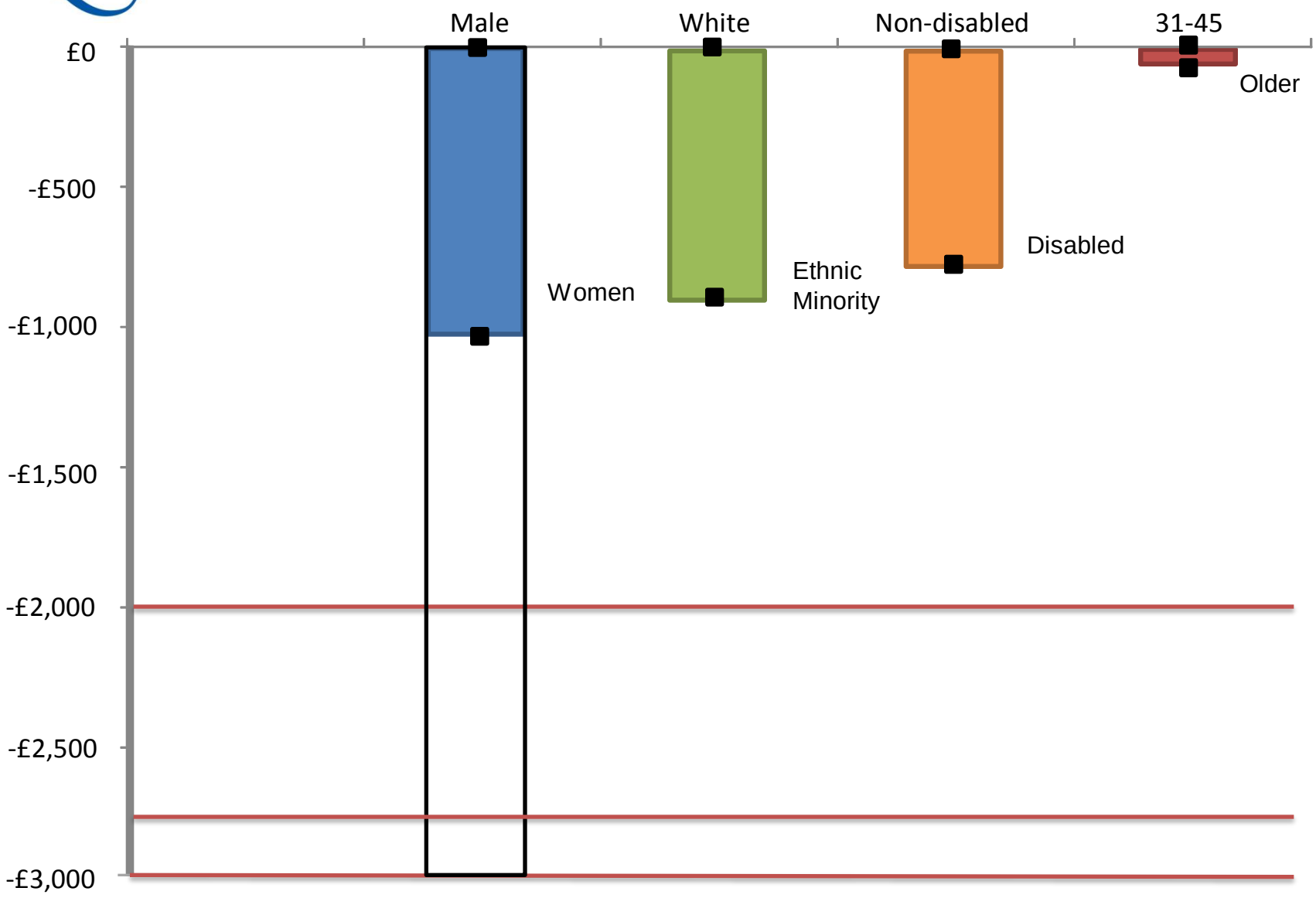
Intersectionality Illustrated (Pay)



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Data Collection

- Very large private sector organisation.
- Occupational profile: managerial, technical, professional, skilled and non-skilled.
- International presence, data is UK based
- Multiple years of data collection gives n = over 1,100,000
- Data pertains to personal characteristics and employment history

Variables in the study

- Ethnicity
- Disability status
- Length of service
- Age
- Sex
- Geographic location
- Grade
- Mode of work (Full time/ Part time)
- Year of data collection
- Pay

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- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Age

£

- ~~Grade / Seniority~~
- ~~Length of Service~~
- ~~Geographic Region~~
- Education / Qualifications
- ~~Part-time / Full-time~~
- ~~Race~~
- ~~Disability~~
- ~~Age~~

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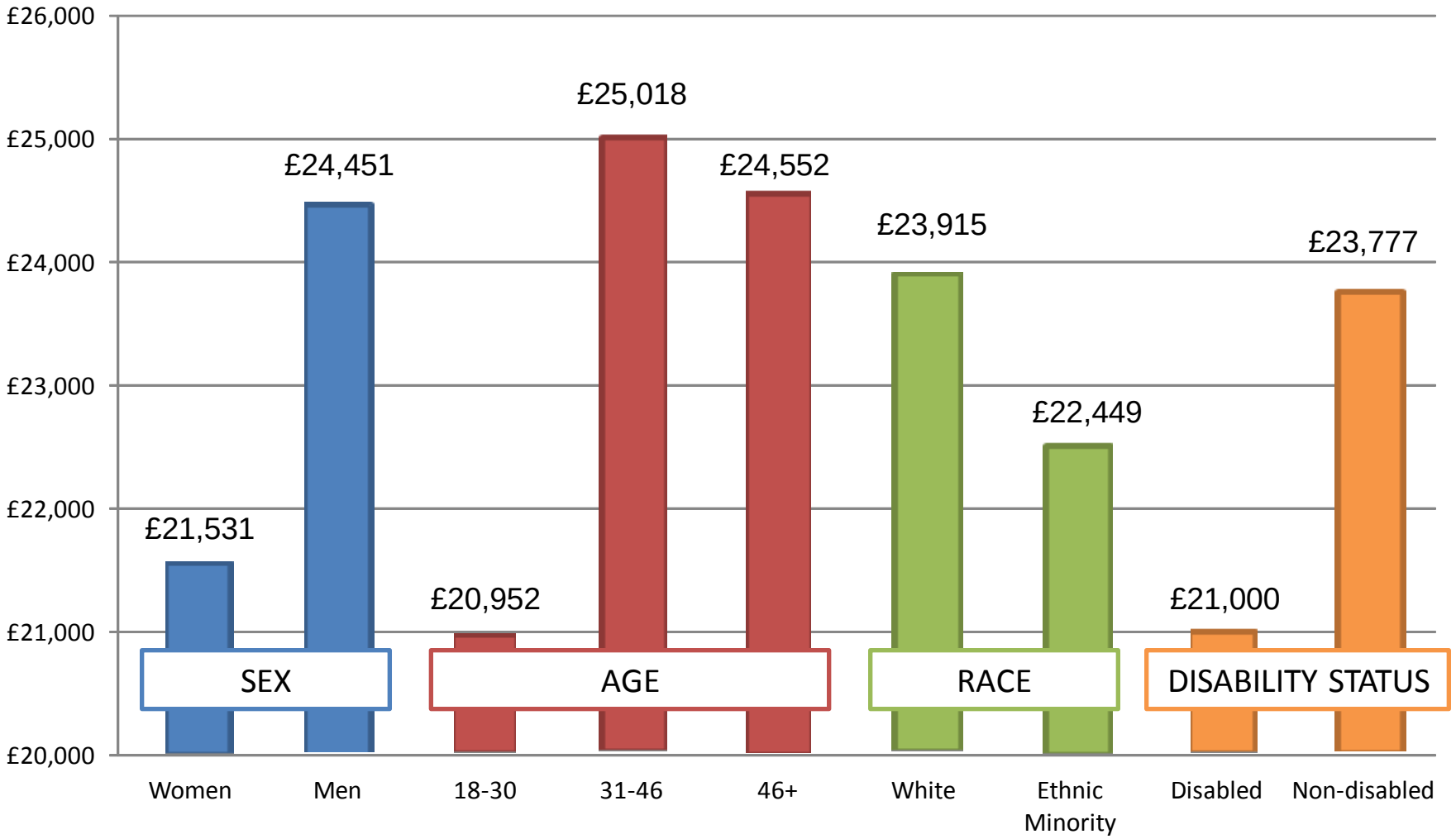
Findings: Unadjusted Headline Salary Comparisons



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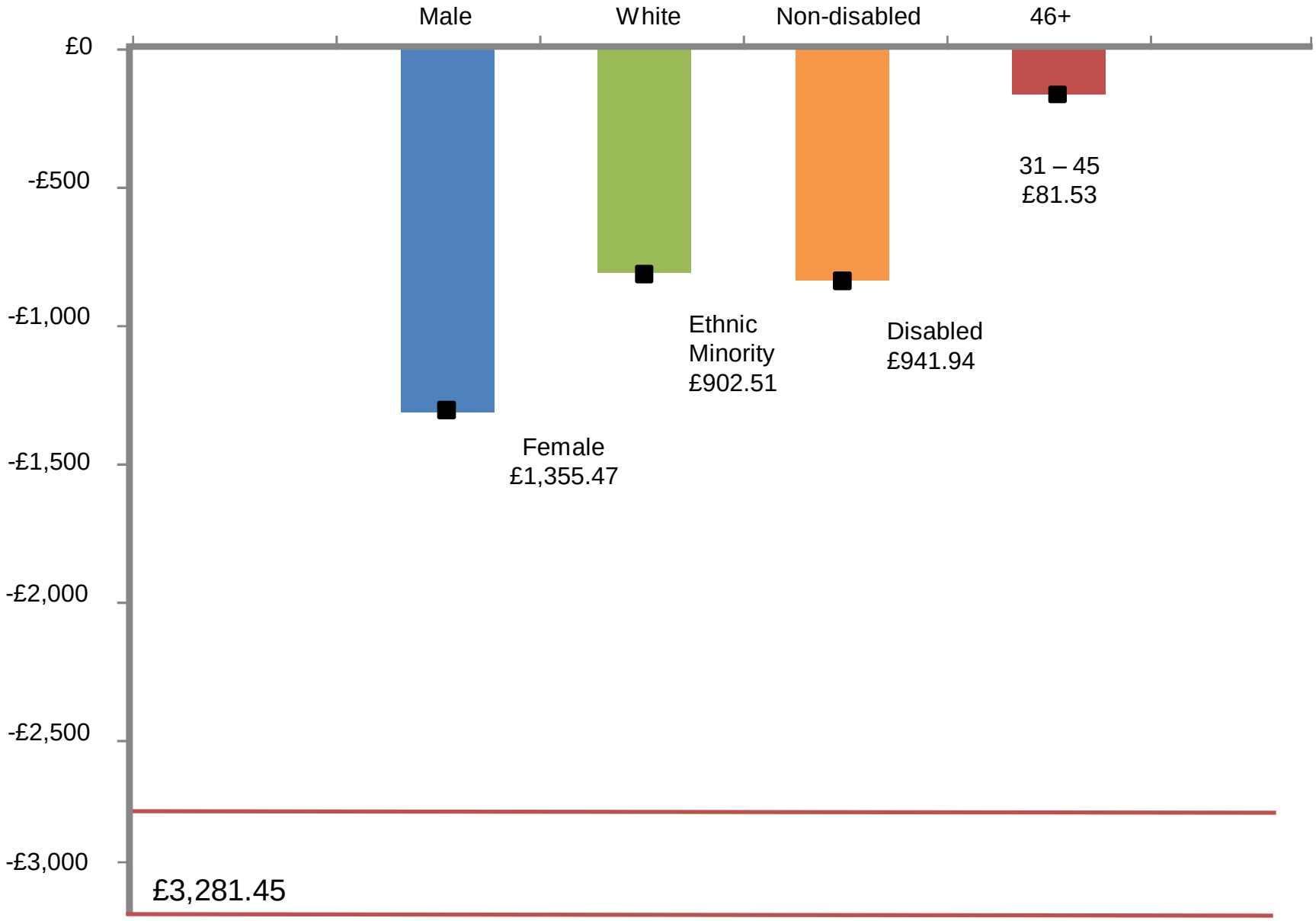

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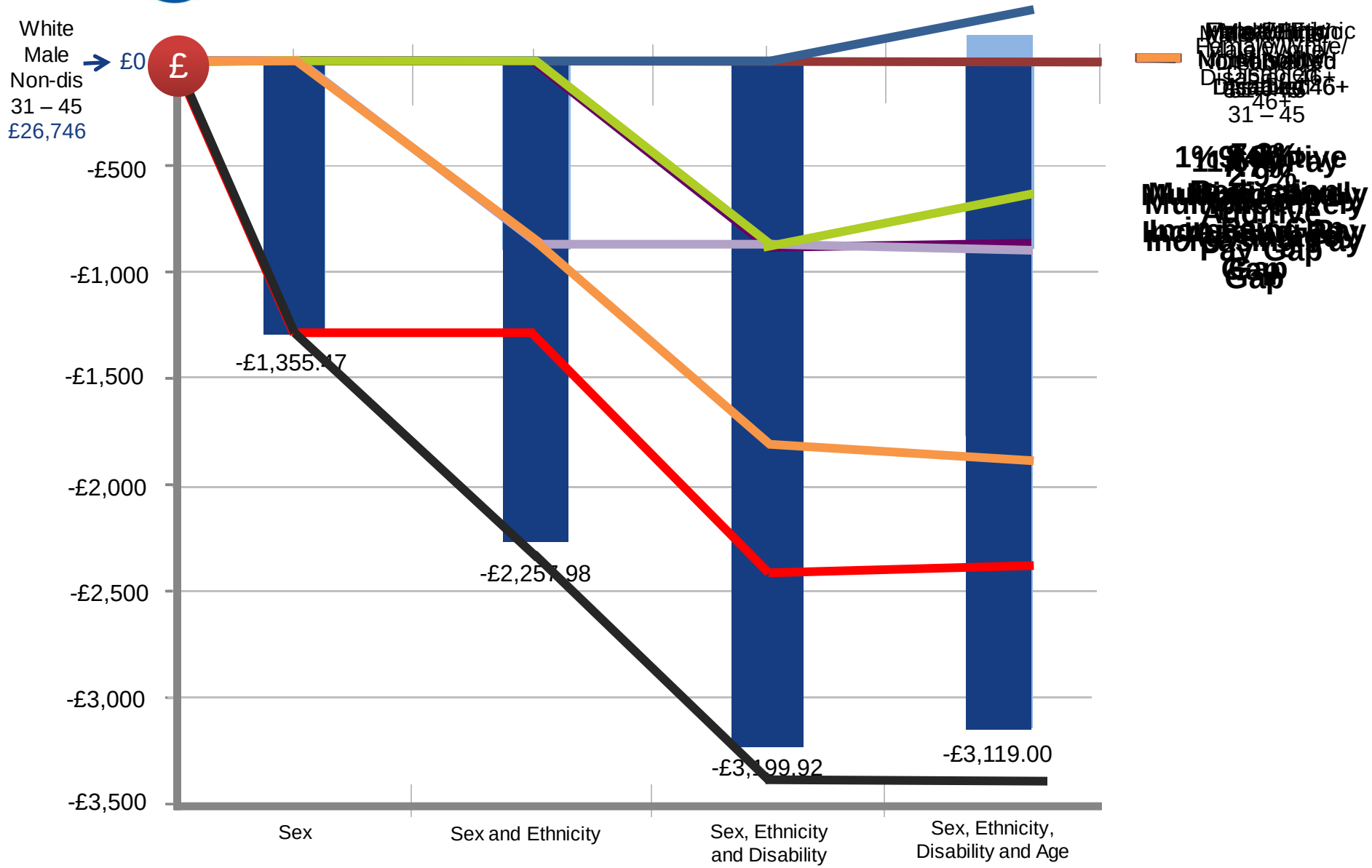
Anticipated vs Actual Pay Penalty



Academic Conclusions

- Organisation in high- technology sector is exemplar of inequality/ unequal pay
- “Gender plus” model is not linear –there is **interactional effect**.
- Women suffer greatest detriment, particularly age-related.
- ‘Other’ men also suffer intersectional detriment

UK policy conclusions

- Best practice equality initiatives that take an additive approach are insufficient.
- Organisations should monitor at a deeper level.
- Individuals seeking pay redress need to choose their comparators very carefully
- Equalities Act (2010) dual/ multiple discrimination provisions dropped by Coalition Government should be reinstated.

Conclusions for Business.

- The business case for diversity – as previously demonstrated, but on what grounds?
- Our conclusion - the more diverse you are, the better value you offer because the less you are paid.
- Diverse groups – like white, nondisabled, older men, only much much cheaper!