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Business Network



The Times Top 50 Employers for Women

TAKING ACTION ON GENDER EQUALITY

Insights Report 2022





REPORT

THE TIMES TOP 50 EMPLOYERS FOR WOMEN INSIGHTS REPORT 2022

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THE TIMES TOP 50 EMPLOYERS FOR WOMEN 2022

Accenture

Addleshaw Goddard LLP

Allen & Overy

Anglo American

Atos IT Services UK Ltd

Aviva

AXA UK

Bain & Company

Burges Salmon LLP

Capgemini UK

Centrica PLC

CityFibre

CMS

Deloitte

Department for Work and Pensions

Deutsche Bank

Diageo

DWF

Enterprise Rent-A-Car

Eversheds Sutherland

Fidelity International

Financial Conduct Authority

Fujitsu

GlaxoSmithKline

Goldman Sachs International

Grant Thornton UK LLP

Hachette UK

J.P. Morgan

Jacobs U.K Ltd

Kellogg's

KPMG UK LLP

Linklaters LLP

Lloyds Banking Group

Morgan Stanley

MI5

National Grid

NatWest Group

Network Rail

Norton Rose Fulbright

Ofcom

PepsiCo UK & Ireland

PwC LLP

Sainsbury's

Santander UK plc

Shell UK

Tesco Stores Ltd

TSB PLC

Vodafone UK

Wates Group

Willmott Dixon

Worldline IT Services UK Limited

Introduction

'The Times Top 50 Employers for Women 2022 – taking action on gender equality' is the UK's most high profile and well-established listing of employers taking action to drive gender equality at work.

Delivered in partnership with Business in the Community (BITC) since 2011, organisations of different sizes, sectors and industries are assessed by BITC gender equality experts. The assessment focusses on four key areas: an organisation's overall approach to driving progress; the role of data in shaping and tracking plans; specific policies on areas known to impact on gender equality at work e.g., parental leave; and the broader interrogation of organisational culture. This year, we have also included further probing of the lived experience of women employees within applicant's workplaces, asking what women say is working and what should improve.

Through the insights report we hope to continue to drive positive change and progress by sharing key learnings and best practice from applicant organisations. The Top 50 list can be regarded as a check-in on where the working landscape is in regard to gender equality and is a useful and meaningful thought-starter for all employers, and other decision- and policy-makers to start their journey.

We hope that this report will help to inspire more employers to be bolder, braver and faster in their actions to achieving gender equality.

A note on language: Throughout this document, we use the term women to include all people who identify as such and engage with their employers as women. When we use the term 'gender equality' we take this to mean the equality of all genders and for those who do not identify as a gender, i.e. are gender non-conforming.

2022: Current context and about the Top 50

2021 into 2022 has continued to be a challenging and disruptive time for employers. With nationwide isolation and Covid protocols in England removed in February, organisations have continued to adjust to new hybrid and flexible working practices, balancing 'business as usual' with new innovative ways of working introduced in response to the pandemic.

The 'Great Resignation' has seen the highest number of UK employees quit their jobs since 2009 as staff recontract and reconsider their work life. With record job vacancies in the UK and beyond, talent shortages were a significant issue in the second half of 2021, with the ability to attract and retain employees continuing to be a key challenge for businesses in 2022. Compounded by Brexit, this had led to further skills shortages in sectors dependant on unskilled or semi-skilled foreign labour and disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, for example, agriculture, logistics, construction, hospitality, retail and healthcare.

The cost of living crisis – with inflation reaching its highest record level in April 2022 – has seen 87% of UK adults impacted by rising energy, food and fuel prices.ⁱ This 'double bounce' from the pandemic to the cost of living crisis has seen women described as the 'shock absorbers of poverty', disproportionately impacted by higher living costs due to lower income, savings and earning levels (the gender pay gap), a higher likelihood of working in lower-paid or insecure work and more dependency on state support, which is often reduced.ⁱⁱ Women from certain ethnic minority groups are more likely to be living in poverty, and disabled women, single parents and victims/survivors of domestic abuse are the worse affected. But the actions employers take can make a real difference.

Despite the significant challenges faced by both employers and individuals over the last year, 'The Times Top 50 Employers for Women 2022 - taking action on gender equality' saw the highest number of applications in the awards history, with

applicants employing over 1.3 million people between them.

Given the challenges over the past 12 months, this year's questions and scoring criteria were also updated to reflect real-time best practice on gender equality. A new question was added on low paid women to explore employer action to support this group so heavily impacted by current events. The question on sexual harassment was also updated to recognise and encourage a more preventative approach to ensuring female safety following the steps we have seen employers make on this area in response to the murders of Sarah Everard, Bibaa Henry and Nicole Smallman, and increased instances of domestic abuse observed during lockdowns.

Finally, building on lessons from the pandemic, this year's case study focused on employee voice and how organisations were continuing to listen, learn and adapt to new circumstances based on what employees were telling them. This report is the cumulative outcome of those learnings and takes the form of a scorecard, showing the areas in which applicants performed well and those that need to develop further based on this year's assessments.

PART 1 – HIGH PERFORMING

This section highlights the high performing areas from this year's 'Times Top 50 Employers for Women' applications. Analysis refers to trends found across all applications unless explicitly stated otherwise, i.e., there was a significant difference between those who made the Top 50 and did not.

1. Policies and initiatives that support intersectionality

Consistently well performing policies and initiatives to support women's different intersectional identities emerged as the best performing area from this year's assessments. Capitalising on lessons learned during the pandemic, such as increased check ins and support for employees through networks, forums and pulse surveys, it is encouraging to see employers continue to

prioritise and introduce specific support for women from different backgrounds and through different life stages.

Examples of work in this area include:

- Awareness raising of different intersectional identities or issues through events, collaborative network activity and internal communications campaigns
- The introduction or expansion of workplace policies, for example on menopause or transgender inclusion
- A more focused approach to listening and stakeholder engagement through reverse mentoring
- Specific support for issues known to disproportionately impact certain groups, for example, additional mental health and wellbeing support available for women from Black, Asian, Mixed Race or other ethnically diverse groups.
- A broader approach to collecting employee diversity data, allowing it to be analysed and tracked in an intersectional way

To be faster, braver, bolder employers should:

- Act and respond to the issues raised in these spaces, for example, by adjusting or enhancing support available to specific intersectional groups
- Voluntarily report ethnicity pay gap data, with analysis showing only 46% applicants do this currently. This is critical for transparency, and to help measure and monitor the impact of initiatives and policies introduced.

[Vodafone](#) prioritise an intersectional approach, which has led to its commitment on the menopause, Return to Work programme, and youth programmes such as [#CodeLikeAGirl](#), to address occupational segregation.

[Trans and non-binary employees at PepsiCo UK and Ireland](#) are supported through a transgender policy created in 2020 including, guidance for managers, transition action plan and paid time off.

Enterprise Rent-A-Car take gender equality seriously. Its initiatives include regularly profiling employees in internal and external communications, often tackling the ‘intersectionality’ of biases, such as gender, race, religion, age, socio-economic backgrounds and much more. Enterprise employees work with other firms to share best practice. Among their best practices, Enterprise publishes details of their policies online, offers employees a ‘Wellness passport’ to discuss specific adjustments with line managers, they have installed menstruation stations in their European head office, and employee resource groups run lean-in circles and mentoring programmes to support future female leaders.

2. Data monitoring and measurement

Sound methods to measure and monitor people data are critical to ensure Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategies remain on track, and provide valuable insights into pinch points for employees that must be addressed. This is now more crucial than ever as employers continue to test and embed new working practices which, unchecked, could have the potential to negatively impact certain groups, i.e., through proximity bias. The long-term impacts of the pandemic continue to be felt too, i.e., poor mental health and financial wellbeing, greater levels of attrition.

Quantitative data our applicants regularly track include:

- Enhanced employee data, for example on race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, social mobility and carer status (information on gender and age can be held without employee permission)
- Promotion, performance and reward data
- Data on applications, recruitment and attrition
- Leave, including annual, parental and career breaks
- Sickness absence
- Flexible working requests and uptake
- Productivity, utilisation and work allocation

- Disciplinary, grievance information, including bullying and sexual harassment

This is supplemented through qualitative data collection, using methods such as:

- Annual engagement surveys and pulse surveys
- Listening circles and targeted focus groups
- Exit interview data
- Feedback from programmes, such as leadership development and parental coaching
- Sessions with network leads
- Safe space discussions
- Anonymous email addresses and digital suggestion boxes
- Sentiment analysis from discussion threads and activity from organisation wide or network calls

To be faster, braver, bolder employers should:

- Implement findings from quantitative and/or qualitative data collection into strategy and policy development
- Interrogate people data with an equality and intersectional lens

Morgan Stanley regularly overlay gender data with disability, social mobility, ethnicity, and sexual orientation data. This identified the need to increase the recruitment of ethnically diverse women, which the organisation achieved in 2021.

Focus group discussions at Wates Group led to a review of family leave to assess improvement. An enhanced paternity / partner leave announced in March 2020 led to 71% of new dads taking the full eight weeks in 2020, with 95% taking more than statutory leave.

For a comprehensive guide to data monitoring, see [the Workforce Data Quality Guide](#) produced by BITC and the Greater London Authority.

3. Recruitment

Beyond targeted action to create a gender diverse workforce across different functions and levels, this question considers how organisations can be as

inclusive as possible in their recruitment activity to create a level playing field for all.

Since the pandemic, it is one of the areas which has seen the biggest scope for change in relation to remote hiring and the hiring of more employees on home-based or flexible working contracts. Impressively, 97% of applicants said that they proactively discussed flexible working at recruitment stage, but only 67% published their flexible working policy online. Even fewer (64%) published their parental leave policies online for prospective applicants to see.

Examples of work in this area include:

- Mandatory training for resourcing and hiring managers to address unconscious bias
- The use of de-biasing software for job adverts
- Taking a skills-based approach to applications and assessment centres, with shortlisting and competency scoring systems established up-front and consistent interview questions asked to all
- Mandating gender balanced shortlists and diverse interview panels
- The use of targeted recruitment programmes (internal or external), for example:
 - Return to work or experienced professionals programmes
 - Development programmes for certain roles or skills
 - Scholarships and apprenticeships for applicants from lower socio-economic groups
 - Participation in social inclusion recruitment schemes, e.g. for refugees, ex-offenders

To be faster, braver, bolder employers should:

- Evaluate job design of all roles to ensure they are accessible to all. For example, many working carers do not feel that they can access senior roles because they cannot work flexibly

- Publish salary information on job adverts and remove pay history from recruitment negotiations to address the gender pay gap

[Ofcom monitor diversity outcomes at each stage of recruitment and adapt processes to ensure a fair, accessible and inclusive recruitment experience for all candidates. This has resulted in 47% gender diverse shortlists and 55% of offers being made to women in the last 12 months \(20-21\).](#)

[Santander UK regularly review its recruitment process to ensure bias is removed. This includes ensuring gender equal shortlists and female interviewers for all senior roles. In the last 12 months, 46% of senior starters at Santander UK have been female.](#)

4. Progression and promotion

This theme considers the action employers are taking to foster an inclusive organisational culture, that removes barriers to progression for all, and provides opportunities for women to learn and thrive. Despite great work taking place in this area, strong intersectional differences can impact women's ability to progress. Women, especially young women, or those from Black, Asian, Mixed Race or other ethnically diverse backgrounds are more likely to experience microaggressions in the workplace. Recent research from the Runnymede Trust and Fawcett Society found that 42% of ethnically diverse women felt that they had been passed over for promotion,ⁱⁱⁱ with 28% saying their manager actively blocked this.^{iv} Without understanding and addressing the lived experience of different groups, progress on gender equality, and by association the gender pay gap, will be limited.

Examples of work in this area include:

- Increased visibility of role models from different levels, functions and backgrounds, through shared stories
- Professional development programmes, including sponsorship, mentoring and reverse mentoring for different cohorts (leadership, mid-level, function-specific)

- Education and support for employees and line managers on:
 - Inclusive leadership, allyship and bystander intervention
 - Issues related to specific life stages (e.g. menopause, baby loss, returning from parental leave)
 - New realities, such as managing remote teams and thriving virtually
- Diverse representation and bias awareness built into promotion decisions
- Monitoring promotions and performance data, scrutinising inconsistencies and holding senior leaders accountable for results
- Cultivating opportunities for informal career discussions and networking, such as more frequent meetings with line managers or internal networking events

To be faster, braver, bolder employers should:

- Further interrogate everyday culture and the lived experience of women in their organisation to understand more fully what is good and what elements could be improved upon
- Analyse employee experience data intersectionally to ensure no groups are being left behind in your progression efforts, for example, part time workers or low paid women

In the past year, over 500 female colleagues have been promoted to the first level of management, and 50% to senior manager at Sainsbury's. All leadership cohorts are gender balanced and tracked and monitored for completion and successful appointment rates.

Deloitte collect gender data across all grades, and measure progress quarterly. 35% of its 2022 partner promotions, and 39% of director promotions, were women.

PART 2 – STEADY PERFORMANCE

This section reveals the areas in which applicants have shown consistent effort and progress and indicates where further improvement can be made.

5. Strategy and objectives

This section interrogates employers' strategy and objectives to achieve workplace gender equality, including the engagement and accountability of senior leaders in achieving this. Clear, ambitious and time bound gender related targets, owned by senior leadership and fully institutionalised within the business, are critical to ensure action is taken to address gender inequality at all levels, and that progress made is sustainable.

Examples of work in this area include:

- The setting of organisation-wide targets with senior-level accountability, supplemented with individual action plans for specific functions and/or divisions
- Senior level accountability to be linked to pay and performance
- The appointment of dedicated teams and taskforces to achieve these ambitions, with access to budget
- Regular governance of targets and objectives through monthly/quarterly monitoring meetings
- The co-creation of strategies with employee feedback from different groups of women
- The existence of intersectional targets and/or action plans, e.g., targets for ethnic minority female senior leadership representation
- Embedding this work with organisational core values and purpose
- Gender equality strategies that further consider partners, suppliers and customers

To be faster, braver, bolder employers should:

- Ensure their strategy takes an intersectional approach, with targets and objectives outlined for specific groups if necessary

- Consider suppliers, third parties and customers as part of their gender equality strategy

Willmott Dixon has committed to achieving gender balance within its workforce by 2030 (50%), considerably higher than construction sector averages. Aligned to the organisation's core values to enhance diversity, progress is monitored by its Gender Diversity Steering Group which submits monthly updates to the Board, with the female chair reporting directly to the CEO.

Inclusion and Diversity is a business fundamental captured in the Leadership Success Framework at **Accenture**, with the pay and reward of the Executive Management team linked to this and other outcomes. Its 2025 goal is to reach 50/50 gender parity, including 30% female MDs, broken down into yearly goals for the recruitment and retention of women in the UK.

6. Sexual harassment

The nature of workplace sexual harassment has shifted. Since the widespread shift to remote working ushered in by government lockdowns, 45% of women experiencing sexual harassment say that they have experienced this remotely, with 23% saying that this behaviour had escalated since the pandemic.^v Despite a new statutory code of practice, and employers legally liable for harassment in the workplace if they have not taken reasonable steps to prevent it, levels of formal reporting remain very low with only 15% reporting their experiences.^{vi} This makes it likely that not only are existing tools, training and policies to tackle sexual harassment outdated, but that employers are underestimating the amount of harassment occurring in the first place.

As such, this question interrogates employer action to not only identify, address, and support employees experiencing workplace sexual harassment, but also what can be done to prevent it.

Examples of work in this area include:

- Zero tolerance anti-harassment policy, supported by annual mandatory training for all staff
- Clear and accessible communications detailing process and procedures, broken down by whether the person reporting the incident is a victim, witness or confidant
- Use of an external, confidential helpline made available to staff, clients and third parties
- Tailored line manager training, to include role play scenarios, practice welfare conversations and how to follow up with customers
- Provision of onsite psychologists and occupational health specialists to offer confidential, expert advice and emotional support
- Frameworks of additional support through male allies, Respect and Inclusion ambassadors, Mental Health First Aiders
- Introduction of a third-party harassment policy and procedure where necessary
- The monitoring of complaints and queries by gender (and other intersectional groups), as well as data from anonymous bullying and harassment helplines, employee assistance programmes and employee opinion surveys
- The monitoring and reporting of sexual harassment cases at senior level

To be faster, braver, bolder employers should:

- Take more deliberate steps to support employees experiencing sexual harassment to report, making clear there will be no reprisal for them doing so. This can be achieved by enabling multiple reporting routes, making available and promoting the use of independent legal support, not using Non-Disclosure Agreements in such cases and explicitly labelling this.

[Fujitsu](#) had zero sexual harassment claims in 2020-2021. Preventive action includes line manager CPD training on discrimination, harassment, and bullying and the immediate review (and escalation if necessary) of any complaints, assisted by an external 24 hour, 365-day confidential anonymised helpline.

[PwC](#) reiterate its Speak Up culture through its news channels and via its Speak Up website, which includes stories and examples of sexual harassment and how colleagues can be supported. The Speak Up helpline and platform is available to all employees, clients and third parties.

7. Family friendly policies

Our [Who Cares?](#) survey shows that 44% of the workforce are currently combining paid work with caring responsibilities, be it for children, elderly or other dependant adults, with women continuing to do more than their fair share. Caring responsibilities mean that women are often less able than men to increase their hours of paid work and are limited in the kind of work they can undertake (i.e. roles that are closer in terms of location, or with more part time or flexible working options). 58% of women carers and 50% of carers from a Black, Asian, Mixed Race or other ethnically diverse backgrounds say that their responsibilities have prevented them from applying for a new job or promotion, with one in five women leaving a job because they do not feel able to manage their caring responsibilities.

With 43% of working mothers considering leaving their jobs, and 40% working fewer hours than they'd want due to the affordability of childcare,^{vii} the importance of reducing the gender imbalance in responsibility for care cannot be overstated.^{viii} Employers must do what they can to equalise access to parents and carers policies for all genders, instilling a workplace culture that facilitates and supports this.

Examples of work in this area include:

- Access to parental and carers leave entitlement from day one

- Equalised or enhanced maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave
- The provision of carers leave, that can be taken in hourly chunks when necessary
- Support the provision of childcare through interest-free nursery deposit loans, near-site nursery places and emergency backup care for children and elderly adults
- Initiatives to support employees when becoming parents and transitioning back to the workplace after leave, such as 1-2-1 and group coaching programmes and parental leave buddies/mentors
- Provision of private breastfeeding/lactation rooms.
- Sharing parent/carer stories featuring all parent types/grades to reduce stereotyping and improve role-modelling
- Support for employees and dependants undergoing IVF, or who have experienced miscarriage or baby loss

To be faster, braver, bolder employers should:

- **Consider** care, in all its facets, a mainstream workplace issue, and recognise that the nature of employees caring responsibilities can change throughout their career
- Provide gender equality in caring policies and take actionable steps to facilitate a workplace culture that supports this (Read our [Who Cares ? Report](#) for more information on how to do this)
- Better track the impact of parents and carers policies, with only 42% of applicants tracking promotion rates after periods of parental leave currently

[In 2021, Centrica](#) continued its world-class carers leave which gives carers up to six weeks paid leave when matched with annual leave.

[Parents employed by Diageo](#) in the UK are eligible for the same fully-paid 26 weeks, retaining benefits and bonuses regardless of gender, sexual orientation or whether they become parents biologically, via surrogacy or adopt.

8. Pay and Reward

The gender pay gap is one of the clearest examples of inequality in the workplace. Fair and transparent pay and reward processes underscore all other diversity and inclusion efforts and have the potential to positively impact women's lives now and in the future through establishing more secure savings and pension funds.

Employers should take a wide and expansive approach to understanding and interrogating patterns in their pay structures, thinking beyond gender but also applying an intersectional lens. It is often when identities combine that the largest pay gaps can be found. For example, the disability pay gap is significantly larger for women than men. Employers seeking to close their gap need to interrogate and develop clear actions plans to address its key drivers, including time bound targets to drive progress.

Examples of work in this area include:

- Setting and disclosing a goal or target to reduce (or eradicate) your organisation's gender pay gap, supported by an action plan to increase transparency and accountability
- Ensure remuneration policies are designed to mitigate the risk of bias when agreeing pay, such as using standardised (and non-negotiable) pay and salary ranges, based on a standardised method of performance assessment
- Sharing compensation levels/salary bands with employees to promote a culture of transparency
- Conducting regular equal pay audits that cover both gender and ethnicity
- Increased monitoring and transparency of pay across the organisation via real time dashboards, interrogated by specific steering/calibration groups trained in unconscious bias
- Include gender and peer reviews when making external offers

- Employer training on how pay is managed to raise awareness and drive an open approach
- The development of action plans and initiatives to address the core drivers of the Gender Pay Gap e.g. for recruitment, progression and performance management

To be bolder, braver, faster employers should:

- Make pay and reward policies more transparent, encouraging a culture of openness around this
- If not already, conduct regular pay audits by gender and other strands of diversity (i.e., ethnicity) to monitor, investigate and address unequal pay

Aviva conduct annual equal/gender pay audits and this year they have conducted their first ethnicity pay gap report. As data allows, social mobility is planned to be included. The reviews of these has led to focus on development programmes for women leaders. Pay and reward systems are transparent and free from bias by encouraging salary negotiation through clear visibility of salary ranges.

Bain & Company offer equal opportunities and rewards for all employees. As such, all base pay and bonus ranges are standardised and non-negotiable at each level. Bain & Company openly shares compensation levels with employees to promote a culture of transparency.

9. Case study – Employee Voice

Seeking out, listening and addressing issues raised by employee voice has never been more critical. With effort accelerated on this front during the pandemic, through more frequent pulse surveys, provision of check ins and safe spaces, and increased network activity, focus on employee voice and sentiment must continue as organisations adapt their working practices (or revert to existing ones) and the mental health toll of the pandemic and current cost of living pressures begins to surface.

In a new case study theme this year, we wanted to explore how employers engaged with, and used

feedback from their employees to innovate, test and learn new workplace policies and practices.

Examples of work in this area include:

- The use of a variety of forums and methods for employees to share their voice, such as surveys, listening sessions, leadership and network events, shadow boards/youth boards, bespoke data collection, targeted 1:1s, ad hoc or mentoring/reverse mentoring conversations
- Developing an employee engagement approach – rather than one off ad hoc activity – to capture data and insight to be directly fed back into gender equality strategy and action planning
- The introduction of initiatives, policies and processes based on direct feedback, especially in areas where women's experiences differ from men. Examples included the ability to speak up, female safety, action on menopause and inclusive language

To be bolder, braver, faster employers should:

- Make their listening and engagement activities sustainable, providing tangible insight on a more frequent basis

Following focus groups to understand the underrepresentation of women working offshore, [Shell UK made available new PPE options, improved the location and access to sanitary bins, and created a process to protect laundry bags. It also introduced a buddy system for new offshore employees. These changes led to a 50% increase in women working at one offshore plant.](#)

Through a number of focused listening activities and an annual inclusion survey, [AXA UK created an Ethnicity Action Plan, talent development programme and have reviewed their recruitment practices through this lens. They also refreshed their bullying and harassment policy, recomunicating this with a learning solution focused on identifying and reporting incidents and the additional support that is available. To further support and celebrate women, AXA UK developed](#)

[a Menopause Policy and guide and was awarded a Menopause Friendly Employer Accreditation for work in this area and showcased women working in transformation through a blog series and panel discussion](#)

PART 3- NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

10. Line managers

'People don't leave bad jobs, they leave bad bosses', the popular adage goes. Line managers play a powerful role in individual employees' everyday experiences at work, from their perception of workplace culture, the amount of autonomy they have over their working day and, of course, access to policies, support and development opportunities.

Support and encouragement for line managers to lead inclusively and embed gender equality strategy, including accountability for progress, emerged as one of the largest development areas from this year's process, with applicants' performance on this theme dropping by an average of 20%.

Examples of work in this area include:

- Bespoke training sessions/programmes for line managers based on real life challenges and business needs
- Employee input into and assessment of these programmes, for example, via engagement surveys or 360 feedback
- Feedback from these mechanisms to be sent to leaders directly, and data analysed by gender and other intersectional groups to inform strategy and action planning
- Embed specific EDI objectives into line manager performance, such as increasing or maintaining representation within their teams
- Provide a safe space, through regular calls, emails or group discussion for line managers to ask questions or share best practice

- Ensure representation in line manager roles and recruitment to further drive inclusive leadership

To be faster, braver, bolder employers should:

- Make line managers accountable to achieve progress in gender equality targets and/or action plans
- Collect direct data on line manager support and feed back on their performance against this agenda

National Grid creates bespoke training sessions for line managers and its teams based on specific challenges and business needs, such as hybrid working, banter and microaggressions, childcare and allyship.

55% of line managers at Ofcom are women, helping to ensure gender equality. Line manager representation is similar/above organisational demographics for disabled, LGB, part-time and older employees.

11. Low paid women

Women on low pay (in the bottom quartile of your pay distribution) are one of the intersectional groups most impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and current cost of living crisis.

30% of women were negatively impacted financially by the pandemic, with young women and those from Black, Asian, Mixed Race and other ethnically diverse backgrounds more likely to have been furloughed and lost their jobs.^{ix} One in four people with caring responsibilities fell behind on their bills, with a third of single parents (90% of whom are women) falling into financial difficulty.

The current cost of living crisis continues to hit the poorest hardest, with women having lower savings and wealth and more likely work in less secure, undervalued roles (such as caring, cashiering, catering, cleaning and clerical work), often due to unpaid caring responsibilities.^x Low paid workers can often find themselves locked out of progression opportunities, not able to access many of the workplace benefits more highly paid colleagues can experience.

In a new question for this year, we were interested to learn what action employers were taking to address this in:

- Attracting women at risk of low/no pay into your organisation
- Providing opportunities for them to flourish and progress
- Further support them with other issues they might be facing (e.g. financial wellbeing, mental health)

Examples of work in this area include:

- During the pandemic, the furlough of all contractors (cleaners, canteen staff) on topped up full pay
- Only working with contractors who pay the national living wage
- Recognising the disproportionate impact on those with lower incomes, increasing salaries of those earning below a certain threshold
- To address financial barriers to living and working in London, the opening up of more national offices, giving employees the opportunity to relocate on their existing salary
- Provision of free sanitary products and food when working in the office
- Specifically targeting women from lower socio-economic groups in recruitment practices, using gender-neutral language and displaying salary ranges in all job adverts, virtual interviewing and working with external organisations/charities
- Provision of internships, scholarships and summer programmes
- External publication of flexible working and family friendly policies
- Incorporating flexibility into job design

To be faster, braver, bolder employers should:

- Pay the national living wage, and only work with contractors and suppliers who also pay this

- Regularly review pay and reward against inflation to evaluate if there is any scope for improvement
- Be supportive as possible in working arrangements, development opportunities and access to help and support (EAPs)

Hachette UK provides free sanitary products in all bathrooms. All training and programmes are advertised to all staff, and this year they were virtual and recorded to enable flexible attendance. Recruitment practices specifically target women from lower socio-economic groups, and the salary range is included on all role advertisements. Subsidised apartments through a charity partner are advertised with all roles.

Tesco Stores Ltd plays an active role to attract women at risk of low pay into its workforce through supporting 1,000 six-month work placements for low-socio, long-term unemployed 16-24 year-olds to help them to build the skills they need to become work ready. 49% of these placements converted into roles permanent roles within the business.

12. Flexible working

The ability to work flexibly significantly impacts gender equality in the workplace. The European Institute for Gender Equality found a strong correlation between flexible working and more gender equal opportunities in the workplace.^{xi} Flexible working also supports employers EDI objectives by driving greater attraction and recruitment, employee engagement and productivity and mental health and wellbeing,^{xii} as well as supporting other intersectional groups, such as working carers, neurodiverse individuals and employees with a physical disability.

However, it is not just flexible working policies but the practices and culture around them that lead to these benefits.

Examples of work in this area include:

- Making a wide range of flexible working options available, both formally and

informally, and making sure employees know about and understand them

- Taking a 'Locate for Your Day' approach where possible, giving employees autonomy to choose their location of work
- Discussing flexible working at recruitment stage, making the policy available to all employees from day one
- Line manager support to understand and implement the policy and how to have sensitive conversations
- Monitor uptake and feedback of flexible working, interrogating for gender differences
- Working groups to consider new ways of working post-pandemic and how to best embed flexibility for all
- Investment in homeworking infrastructure and virtual collaboration tools
- Activity and social norms to support this way of working, i.e. email signatures to reinforce flexible working culture, hybrid working charters, team rituals and digital etiquette

To be faster, braver, bolder employers should:

- Embed flexible working across relevant organisational processes, for example regarding job design, communicating flexibility at recruitment stages and challenging perceptions/bias with regard to agility and performance
- Monitor the take up and impact of their flexible working policy, even if informal, to ensure equitable access to the policy and no disproportionate impact to those using it

Where the role allows, **Kellogg's** is shifting its culture to an employee choice approach. Alongside its Agile Working Policy, this has removed barriers to working for many of its employees, particularly those with caring responsibilities.

Network Rail considers requests from all employees from day one, regardless of grade, and no longer emphasises childcare as a main driver for flexible working. Flexible job design at Network

Rail has led to a high level of staff retention overall (95%), for part-time workers (99%), home-based employees (98%) and job-shares (100%).

At **GlaxoSmithKline**, UK recruiters and managers receive flexible-working training to understand process and mechanisms to increase flexible hires. Adverts highlight flexible opportunities, whilst recruitment strategy meetings discuss flexible options, including e.g. job sharing, hybrid working, and how to overcome barriers to access for specific groups.

FURTHER RESOURCES

BITC's [Gender Equality Campaign](#) is here to help your organisation achieve gender equality at work. We can offer support and guidance on a range of different areas, including digital resources, training, strategy and development and more.

Specific guidance and advisory sessions that may be of interest are linked below. Please email our [Advisory Services Team](#) for more information on how we can help, or [get in touch with](#) us to find out more about joining the largest and longest-established membership organisation dedicated to responsible business in the UK.

Reports

- [Who Cares? Transforming how we combine paid work with caring responsibilities \(2022\)](#)
- [Race at Work 2021: Scorecard report \(2021\)](#)
- [Route Map to a more Gender Equal Future \(2021\)](#)
- [Case Studies: Gender Equality Route Map \(2021\)](#)
- [The first step in creating Data Driven Diversity Strategies \(2021\)](#)

Toolkits

- [Who Cares? Discussion Guide \(2022\)](#)
- [How to Inspire, Hire and Grow Diverse Talent \(2022\)](#)

- [Menopause at work: best practice case studies \(2021\)](#)
- [Mental Health and Wellbeing for Ethnically Diverse Women \(2021\)](#)
- [Domestic abuse: A toolkit for employers \(2021\)](#)
- [Inclusive Remote Working Toolkit \(2021\)](#)
- [A guide for General Counsels: Ethnicity Pay Gap Reporting \(2021\)](#)

Factsheets

- [How to Ensure Online Recruitment is Accessible and Inclusive \(2022\)](#)
- [Supporting Carers in the Workplace \(2021\)](#)
- [Capturing Ethnicity Data: Ten reasons to monitor ethnicity \(2019\)](#)
- [Capturing Ethnicity Data: What should employers monitor \(2019\)](#)
- [Capturing Ethnicity Data: Five steps to successful monitoring \(2019\)](#)

Other

- [Gender Pay Gap Reporting Dashboard](#)

ENJOYED THIS CONTENT?

You might also like to:

- find out more about our [Gender](#) work
- [learn more about our advisory services](#)
- [join us for one of our upcoming events](#)



Talk to one of our expert team [today](#) to learn how membership of BITC can help you take your responsible business journey further, and drive lasting global change.

REFERENCES

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