

# INSIGHTS REPORT 2025





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# INTRODUCTION

The Times Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality is the UK's most highly profiled and well-established listing of employers taking action to create workplaces where everyone, regardless of gender, can thrive. To be considered, key areas of an organisation's policies, practices and culture are assessed, with criteria updated annually to reflect leading practice in the ever-changing working world.

Arguably, the past 12 months have been more damaging for gender equality than any other time in recent memory. Executive orders by the Trump administration terminating all diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) activity of the US government created a chilling effect across the Atlantic, with global organisations – or those with US clients – dialling down and scaling back their DEI efforts.<sup>i</sup> Then came the UK Supreme Court ruling on the interpretation of Gender within the Equality Act, linking this to biological sex rather than identified gender.<sup>ii</sup> Despite the continued protection of trans people under the Equality Act, the shift in interpretation has shocked the community deeply and its ramifications are continuing to be felt. Against the backdrop of worsening global conflict, a shrinking UK economy and increasing civil unrest, it has been a hard 12 months for both businesses and individual rights.

Amidst this context, it is inspiring to see so many employers continue to focus on gender equality as a strategic priority, with data from this year's Top 50 cohort revealing their efforts are accelerating. In a difficult operating environment, staying true to organisational values and prioritising equality and inclusion becomes a key differentiator, with three in five UK employees saying they would consider quitting their job if key DEI commitments were rolled back.<sup>iii</sup>

To stay true to your values and commitment to gender inclusion, read on for the approaches leading UK organisations are taking, as showcased in this report.



<sup>i</sup> [Osuh, C. and Mohdin, A \(2025\) 'Firms rebranding diversity initiatives to avoid unwanted political attention', The Guardian, 26 May.](#)

<sup>ii</sup> [House of Commons Library \(2025\) Research Briefing: Supreme Court judgment on the meaning of "sex" in the Equality Act 2010: For Women Scotland, 31 July](#)

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk>

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## The Business Case for Gender Equality

Why gender equality and inclusion remain essential for commercial success.

- Organisations that adopt inclusive workplace cultures are eight times more likely to realise better business outcomes, such as increased sales revenue, an expanded customer base, and greater profit margins.
- Gender equality leads to better socioeconomic outcomes for all genders.
- 26% difference in return on capital for companies with higher female board representation
- A 5% increase in total number of women in employment could boost gross domestic product (GDP) by £125bn.

[BITC \(2025\) The Business Case for Gender Equity](#)







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# OVERALL TRENDS

Insights from organisations that applied to this year’s Times Top 50 reveal important information about where businesses are taking action to drive gender equality, and in what areas support for this agenda is lacking.

On a positive note, **overall performance trended higher in 2025**, with a 12% increase in average scores compared to 2024. Employer action to prevent and address **Sexual Harassment** also emerged as the highest-performing theme in this year’s cohort for the first time in the award’s history. Demonstrating the powerful and immediate impact of the Worker Protection Act, scores in this area increased by 25% taking it from ninth position in 2024 to first position in 2025. Consistent with trends observed over the past three years, **Strategy and Objectives** (ensuring dedicated strategies championing gender equity are in place with senior-level accountability) and **Inclusive Cultures** (cultivating inclusive workplaces that encourage employees to speak out and challenge poor behaviour) continue to be amongst the highest-performing issues assessed.

**Flexible working** was the lowest performing area assessed on this year’s application, with an average score drop of 5%. Whilst there were examples of good policies and internal working practices to support flexible working, there was little evidence of this being fully embedded across organisational processes (i.e. attraction, recruitment, performance management) and workplace culture. Consistent with 2024, **Policies to support Parents and Carers** remained as a low performing area, although scores in real terms increased by 10% from last year.







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Table 1: Overall trends, 2025 vs 2024

HIGHEST-PERFORMING 2025	HIGHEST-PERFORMING 2024
1. Sexual Harassment	1. Strategy and Objectives
2. Inclusive Cultures	2. Line Managers
3. Strategy and Objectives	3. Inclusive Cultures
LOWEST-PERFORMING 2025	LOWEST-PERFORMING 2024
10. Flexible Working	10. Policies to Support Parents and Carers
9. Policies to Support Parents and Carers	9. Sexual Harassment
8. Social Mobility	8. Social Mobility

Analysis from data monitoring questions revealed positive trends, with applicants considering how their use of AI was interacting with equality, paying the real living wage, offering paid leave for working carers and appointing an executive sponsor for flexible working. Hesitancy around transparency was still evident, with under half of applicants publishing their flexible working, parents and carers policies or transparent salary bands for roles advertised online, with intersectional diversity data gaps still evident.<sup>iv</sup>



<sup>iv</sup> Data gathered from submissions to The Times Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality award from 15 November 2024 to 16 February 2025. The submission requires evidence on ten areas evidence-based to increase gender equality in the workplace, with information about an organisation’s approach and impact collected across a mix of qualitative and quantitative questions.



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Table 2: Data Monitoring Responses 2025

QUESTION	RESPONDED YES 2025	DIFFERENCE 24 VS 25
Is your organisation considering the way that AI interacts with the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda?	90%	
Does your organisation pay the UK Real Living Wage nationally and in London?	89%	+2%
Do you have a senior sponsor or executive champion in place to support the adoption of flexible working?	63%	
Do you offer paid leave for working carers?	63%	+1%
Do you have a specific policy on sexual harassment at work?	49%	
Do you publish your flexible working policies in full externally?	47%	-3%
Do you publish your parental leave policies in full externally?	40%	-10%
Do you monitor the progression of employees who work flexibly for any discrepancies with colleagues who do not work in this way? For example, promotion rate, time to promotion, and project access.	39%	
Does your organisation combine data to provide a more comprehensive intersectional understanding of pay trends, for example, gender and ethnicity pay gaps?	35%	
Is your organisation considering introducing an equal or enhanced parental leave policy in the next 2 years?	31%	-17%
Do you publish salaries (or salary bandings) on all job descriptions both internally and externally?	21%	=

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# THE QUESTIONS AND BEST PRACTICE

## High Performing

### 1) Sexual Harassment

The most encouraging insight from this year's The Times Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality was employer action to address and prevent sexual harassment in their workplaces and by third parties. In line with the Worker Protection Act (2023), which came into force in October 2024, applicants evidenced a clear policy and zero-tolerance approach towards sexual harassment, supported by training and a more proactive approach taken to surfacing issues in line with the preventative legal duty.<sup>v</sup>

**49% of applicants** had a *specific* policy on sexual harassment at work, rather than including this as part of a wider anti-harassment policy, demonstrating a robust commitment to zero tolerance. **100% of entrants** this year have mental health and wellbeing support available to all employees — essential support for those who have been subjected to harassment and abuse.

Best practice looked like:

- A zero-tolerance approach outlined in a clear policy that is readily accessible and communicated to all employees, contractors and clients.
- Organisation-wide training on how to identify, report and prevent instances of sexual harassment,

supplemented by enhanced training for line managers and senior leaders that is refreshed annually, including linking training completion to bonus allocation where applicable.

- Having multiple channels available for employees to report instances of sexual harassment (formally or informally) with an anti-retaliation policy in place.
- Appointing sexual harassment champions or dedicated, trained colleagues at events that people can physically report to.
- Supporting individuals who report or witness sexual harassment through counselling and access to Employee Assistance Programmes. One organisation even ensured that pastoral care was also provided by a senior businessperson.
- The use of internal communications to facilitate employee understanding and action against sexual harassment, including the use of videos detailing real-life experiences and encouraging open discussion on this topic by senior leaders and line managers.
- Monitoring this issue via tracking of cases/ complaints, employee engagement surveys, and retention rates/exit interview material to understand if their approach is effective.

<sup>v</sup> [UK Government \(2023\) Worker Protection \(Amendment of Equality Act 2010\) Act 2023](#)





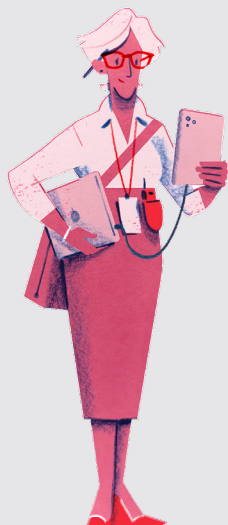
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- Embedding senior leader accountability to this issue in some way, for example through KPIs on psychological safety or inclusive culture or the formation of dedicated working groups/taskforces.
- Action to take a global and/or industry-wide approach, sharing knowledge and resources.

**BITC's recommendation:**

- Organisations take a more deliberate approach to address fear of reprisal that may lead people experiencing sexual harassment not to report, for example:
  - Sharing the number of incidents reported quarterly with your people, including information on how they were addressed.
  - Sharing case studies of previous incidents, including how they were addressed.
  - Creating a direct reporting line to senior leaders to help maintain accountability on this issue.
  - Ensuring an anti-retaliation policy is in place that includes proactive support for individuals who do report.
  - Ensuring any barriers to reporting are thought through and addressed, such as working from home or reporting into a

different team. Conducting internal focus groups with colleagues to understand this further.

- Making available and promoting independent legal support for people who report.
- In line with changes announced to be introduced under the Employee Rights Bill,<sup>vi</sup> not to use Non-Disclosure Agreements in cases where employees have been subjected to harassment, sexual harassment or discrimination in the workplace.



As a global organisation, **Emerald Publishing** has created bespoke sexual harassment policies, where additional cultural or legal nuances apply, to best protect its workforce. Further efforts to prevent sexual harassment are embedded into mitigative workplace design, safety in travel policies and updated guidance to cover remote working environments.

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ban-on-controversial-ndas-silencing-abuse>



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## 2) Inclusive Cultures

Efforts to embed more inclusive workplace cultures also performed well in this year's cohort, retaining its position as a top-performing category for the past three years. Considering themes such as engagement, accountability and intersectionality, applicants supported clear standards of behaviour with inclusive policies, bias-free systems and decision making, and multiple touchpoints to evaluate whether their approach was effective with colleagues. Furthermore, **90% of applicants** were actively considering how their organisation's use of Artificial Intelligence was impacting equality and inclusion in their workplaces, an area in which we recommend continued focus.

Best practice looked like:

- Zero-tolerance policies (e.g. anti bullying and harassment, sexual harassment, anti-retaliation), supported by annual mandatory training for all employees, accompanied by clear and accessible communications detailing the process to report an incident and following steps.
- Equipping employees with the knowledge and skills to speak up, intervene and report non-inclusive behaviour via training, toolkits and educational videos. Ensuring these mediums are applicable to today's working context (e.g. prevalence of online bullying).
- The use of an external, confidential helpline made available to staff, clients, and third parties.
- Tailored training for line managers or specific functions (e.g. frontline), to include role play scenarios based on relevant examples.
- Facilitating conversations in teams about non-inclusive behaviours.
- Commitment to allyship in firm-wide performance objectives.
- Inclusive and accessible policies, such as parental leave, carers passports, buddy schemes, wellbeing support, flexible bank holidays and male allyship.
- The use of storytelling and intersectional voices in raising awareness of non-inclusive behaviours.
- Measuring workplace culture through employee surveys, and creating additional frameworks of support through male allies, Respect and Inclusion ambassadors, Mental Health First Aiders and employee networks.
- The monitoring of complaints and queries by gender (and other intersectional groups) with trends and themes fed into interventions required in local action plans.
- Dedicated workstreams looking at issues of concern, such as women's safety.





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- The use of inclusive clothing or equipment (e.g. PPE).
- Working across sectors and/or with external organisations to raise awareness or offer further support surrounding areas of concern (e.g. domestic abuse).
- The expansion of this work to consider customers.

**BITC's recommendations:**

- Employee training on this issue that focuses on bystander intervention to identify, address and report incidents of non-inclusive behaviour – even when not directly involved.
- We encourage organisations to embed diversity into AI development through diverse leadership and development teams and ensure AI tools are trained on diverse datasets, with strategic workforce planning, and relevant upskilling, conducted before implementation.



Building a culture that is inclusive of all is a core commitment within the business strategy of **Worldline IT Services UK Limited**. Psychological safety and open dialogue are integral to its approach, with initiatives such as “ask-me-anything” with its CEO and employee network



A significant focus on creating an inclusive workplace ensures Tesco's colleagues feel safe, respected and a sense of belonging. Inclusivity underpins its leadership core capabilities, with a responsibility to challenge non-inclusive behaviour, promote psychological safety and take accountability for growing DEI knowledge. All colleagues at Tesco undertake mandatory anti-harassment training, which outlines the appropriate procedures for reporting any concerns.

Listening to colleague voices has been key to tailoring Tesco's DEI strategy, with executive-level sponsored listening sessions and engagement surveys helping to shape actions. Outcomes of this include a virtual safe space for trans and gender diverse colleagues and menopause-friendly uniforms made with breathable, lightweight fabric.

discussions on topics such as forced marriage, menstruation and body confidence. An emphasis on intersectionality has led to a rich EDI curriculum, with internal networks collaborating regularly to share how inequalities are experienced differently.





## Part 2 – Steady Progress

### 3) Strategy and Objectives

Strategy and Objectives continued to perform consistently within this year's assessment, although average scores did trend *down*. Organisations that did this well had clear, ambitious, time-bound objectives integrated into the overall strategy of their businesses and owned by senior leadership. Progress was regularly monitored by taskforces, working groups and internal dashboards, with applicants embedding greater intersectionality in their approach by reviewing data through multiple lenses and encouraging collaboration between networks to inform future decisions. **57%** of applicants **linked executive remuneration to DEI progression**. Whilst positive, this still leaves room for improvement.

Best practice looked like:

- The setting of organisation-wide, time-bound targets to address gender inequality, supplemented with tailored action plans for specific functions, divisions, regions or levels.
- Ensuring targets are evidence-based, addressing organisational gaps or linked to census data.

- Rooting focus on gender equality to organisational values and/or tangible business gain and communicating this clearly with employees.
- Having the strategy owned and driven at senior levels through the appointment of champions or sponsors.
- Senior-level accountability for progress linked to pay, with additional training and support for senior leaders to help engagement.
- Regular governance of targets and objectives through monthly/quarterly meetings and monitoring of progress through organisation-wide dashboards.
- The co-creation of strategies with employee feedback from different groups of women.
- Gender equality strategies that consider external partners, suppliers and customers.
- The use of social modelling to help forecast the impact of future actions.
- Data review to ensure women and other protected characteristics were not disproportionately impacted through organisational restructures, in line with the gender equality strategy.



	
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### BITC's recommendations:

- Strategies continue to be embedded and communicated in line with core business objectives.
- Strategies are created and monitored with intersectionality in mind, with targets, action plans and initiatives outlined for individual groups as necessary.
- Feedback from workplace interventions actively informs strategy development to capitalise on past learnings.
- Organisations continue to embed accountability by linking targets and objectives to senior leader remuneration, alongside line manager and employee objectives across all levels.
- Gender-related targets are published externally to drive transparency and further accountability.

**M**  
**M**  
MOTT  
MACDONALD

Operating in a sector historically underrepresented by women, **Mott Macdonald** addresses unique challenges by embedding gender equity organisation wide. Time-bound, measurable gender targets for workforce composition, promotion, recruitment and engagement have led to increased representation, including women in leadership roles.

Targets are informed by diversity dashboards, gender pay gap data and external benchmarking, with senior leaders regularly updated to ensure accountability and oversight. Data monitoring of the intersections of gender with ethnicity and other factors drives impact, such as the high representation of women from ethnically diverse backgrounds in the women in leadership talent development programme.

With action consistently shaped by its data insights, Mott Macdonald prioritises agile gender strategy and objectives. This agility is supported by a strong foundation of inclusive policies, cultural campaigns and open dialogue with its ERG networks.



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#### 4) Inclusive Recruitment

Beyond targeted action to create a gender-diverse workforce across different functions and levels, this question considers how organisations ensure a fair and inclusive recruitment process for all. Performance in this area was consistent with last year's cohort, with employers using a range of approaches to ensure a fair and unbiased approach.

Applicants' strategic efforts to recruit a gender diverse workforce were visible throughout the recruitment process, from the inclusive design of job descriptions through to recruitment training for hiring managers (see Figure 1). While strategic efforts in candidate sourcing, application, selection and interview processes were a key strength in applicant responses, there is room for employers to improve how they attract women to their organisation through greater transparency. Our research indicates 72% of women and 65% of men want external transparency of key workplace policies, yet only 47% of applicant organisations currently publish this information externally, along with only 40% for parental and care leave policies.<sup>vii</sup>

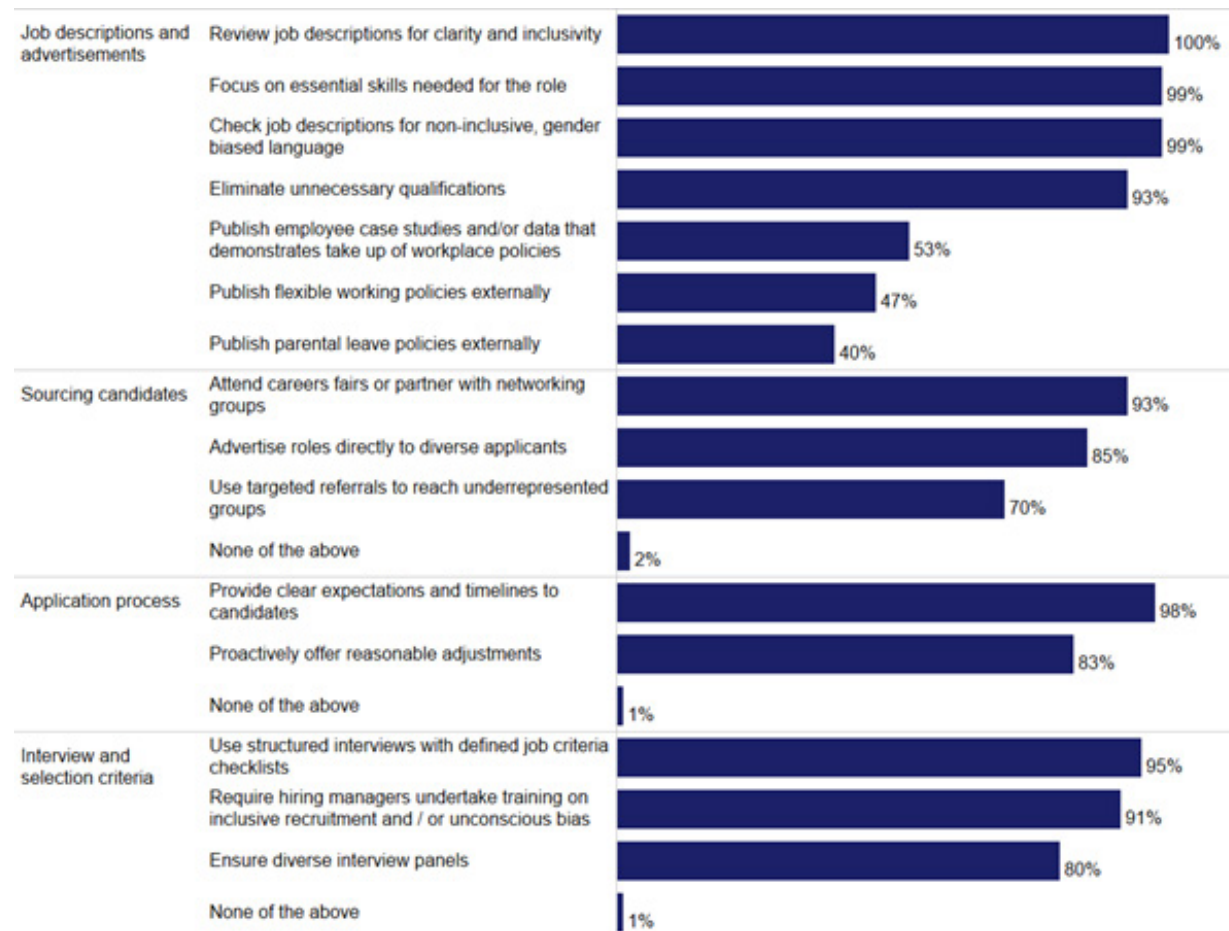
- Creating frameworks of additional support through male allies, Respect and Inclusion ambassadors and Mental Health First Aiders.
- The monitoring of complaints and queries by gender (and other intersectional groups) with trends and themes fed into interventions required.

vii [BITC \(2022\) Who Cares: Ipsos UK Survey Report](#)





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Equality 2025**Figure 1: Inclusive Recruitment action of Times Top 50 Applicants**



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Best practice looked like:

- Mandatory training for anyone involved in the recruitment process to address unconscious bias and privilege. Recruitment paused until training is complete.
- The use of de-biasing software for job adverts and removing gender-binary language. Appointing a diverse panel of employees to review and refine job postings.
- Providing enhanced candidate preparation resources, such as guidance or mock assessments.
- 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.
- Collecting feedback from candidates and hiring managers after the interview process and issuing voluntary surveys to obtain an aggregated view of the diversity of applicants.
- Adjusting the application process to the benefit of diverse candidates, for example:
  - Allowing for flexible interview times.
  - Extending the application window for senior appointments.
  - The use of coaching or ‘reasonable. adjustment managers’ to assist those from underrepresented groups.
  - The provision of childcare during interviews or a co-working space for those who might not have privacy or their own device.
- Providing candidates at offer stage the opportunity to speak to senior women within the business.
- Annual planning and targets to increase under-representation in specific roles and/or functions.
- The use of targeted recruitment programmes (internal or external), such as:
  - Return to work or experienced professional programmes.
  - Development programmes for certain roles or skills.



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- Development programmes for certain roles or skills.
- Scholarships and apprenticeships for applicants from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Referral programmes in partnership with employee networks.

- External promotion of inclusive policies such as caring leave, paid parental leave and Gender Identity, Expression and Transitioning policies.
- Participation in social inclusion recruitment schemes, such as those for refugees or ex-offenders.
- Advertising on job boards for part-time and/or flexible work.
- Monitoring recruitment data for equality and tracking real-time data on hiring patterns via internal dashboards.
- Setting clear expectations with recruitment suppliers, for example, balanced shortlists or quarterly measurement of performance against gender targets.

**BITC's recommendations:**

- The job design of all roles be evaluated to ensure they are accessible to all. For example, many working carers do not feel that they can access senior roles as this will not allow them to work flexibly.
- Employers publish salary information on job adverts and remove pay history from recruitment negotiations to address the gender pay gap.
- Employers publish key policies online for prospective applicants to review, such as flexible working or policies to support parents and carers, going beyond headline commitments to include details of current workforce patterns and relevant case studies illustrating how the policies are adopted in reality.







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Group

**NatWest** is prioritising gender equity in its resourcing strategy through a range of initiatives, including:

- NatWest's 'diversity in job design' toolkit is positioned to remove bias, ensuring gender decoded language and a clear competency framework. Campaigns in collaboration with its employee-led networks have further boosted diversity of talent referrals.
- Efforts to dismantle barriers faced by intersectional women has led to targeted recruitment programmes for internships.
- Line managers are equipped for inclusive recruitment through a recruitment checklist (The Recruitment YES Check) which ensures managers are keeping diversity front of mind at every stage of the recruitment process. They also complete mandatory training comprising two modules and practical steps to embed consistent inclusion throughout the recruitment process.
- Prioritisation of inclusion and empowering the exploration of flexible working options during recruitment processes are ensured by NatWest's 900+ Inclusive Interview Ambassadors. Inclusive Interview Ambassadors are trained assessors who bring different perspectives to interview panels, help candidates feel relaxed and challenge line manager thinking when needed.

Rigorous monitoring of recruitment data such as drop-out rates by gender and ethnicity, allows NatWest to identify barriers and ensures continual improvement of its inclusion strategy.





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nationalgrid

To address sectoral occupational segregation, **National Grid** is investing in STEM engagement activities to inspire younger generations, reaching 100,000 students in its school engagement programme. Furthermore, external recruitment partnerships with STEM returners supporting mid-life women uplifts its goal of unlocking diverse female talent pools.

Training: All Hiring Managers are required to attend an ‘Inclusive Hiring’ training module. All employees are also required to complete training on Unconscious Bias.

Technology: National Grid has implemented a best-in-class AI Sourcing tool called Beamery, which provides a more supportive and inclusive experience for all applicants and enables it to remove bias from the recruitment process.

Attraction: National Grid has launched a new careers site that champions diversity, representing the diverse communities it serves. It also runs various Attraction campaigns every year, including ‘Women in the Field’.





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## 5) Line Managers

Support for line managers once again performed well in this year's cohort, sustaining the strong performance evidenced over the past three years. Playing a powerful role in individual employee experiences at work, directly shaping team culture and implementing inclusive practices, we continue to see significant organisational efforts to provide enhanced training and support for line managers, which is essential to creating a workplace inclusive of all.

Best practice looked like:

- Organisations empowering line managers to lead inclusively, supported by enhanced training and support to reinforce this as a priority.
- Bespoke training sessions/programmes and resources for line managers based on real-life challenges and business needs, created with relevant data points such as employee lifecycle data and qualitative feedback via employee surveys, networks and focus groups. For example:
  - A guide to help line managers understand why achieving greater gender equality is an organisational priority.
  - Guidance on how to support women to access development and progression opportunities.
  - How to support employees through major life events (including pregnancy loss, parenthood, or menopause) and current societal challenges.
  - How to manage different working arrangements.
- Investment in wellbeing and mental health support for line managers.
- Embedding DEI objectives into line manager performance metrics, linking this to performance-related pay where possible. Monitoring team diversity, progression and recruitment rates to measure success.
- Providing line managers with formal and informal feedback facilitated through feedback surveys, employee engagement scores and 360-degree feedback.
- Providing a safe space through regular calls, emails or group discussions for line managers to ask questions and share best practice.
- Ensuring diverse representation in line manager roles and targeted recruitment to further drive inclusive leadership.





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- Issues identified as a concern (from networks and engagement surveys) are actively fed into line manager performance and development plans where relevant.
- Organisations employ smarter methods of job design to continue to empower and enable line managers to lead more inclusively, for example, ring-fenced time to dedicate to line management duties or limiting the number of direct reports to allow line managers to provide more targeted support and foster psychologically safe partnerships with team members.

**Linklaters**

**Linklaters** prepares its managers to effectively navigate the evolving world of work, training leaders to manage high performing multigenerational teams in a global, hybrid world and to actively manage work allocation to remove bias and ensure fairness of opportunity for all.



At **Hachette**, line managers are accountable for driving equality goals and leading inclusively. Equipping leaders to meet these objectives includes tailored training on topics such as flexible work, parents and carers, menopause and career development for diverse talent. To consider unique barriers faced by women at work, managers prompt a “Bigger Picture” section in their performance conversations, creating space to discuss challenges, values and priorities. 360-degree feedback is available and creates continual development for leaders’ inclusive practice, compounded by Hachette’s peer-to-peer manager initiative that encourages sharing of best practice.

After engagement with its gender balance network, Hachette’s working guidelines ensure managers only schedule meetings between 10am–4pm, preventing any adverse impact on inclusion.



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## 6) Pay and Reward

The gender pay gap remains one of the strongest indicators of structural inequality faced by women in the UK. Performance in this area has remained largely unchanged, with many applicants struggling to demonstrate a robust and sustained approach to monitoring their pay and reward policies and embed further transparency into their approach. With 81% of applicants conducting pay gap analysis on gender, 68% on ethnicity, and 21% on working pattern, only 28% of applicants could combine data to gain a greater intersectional understanding of their pay trends.

Best practice looked like:

- Setting and disclosing a timebound goal or target to reduce (or eradicate) an organisation's gender pay gap, supported by an action plan and governance structure to increase transparency and accountability.
- Ensuring 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.
- Adjusting annual pay reviews to account for individual circumstances (e.g. different working patterns or colleagues returning after a period of parental leave) and monitoring these for bias (e.g. moderated peer discussions with colleagues briefed to interrogate and challenge to ensure fairness and consistency).
  - Development of a guaranteed minimum bonus (3-year average) to support those returning from parental leave with greater security and assured income while rebuilding their sales pipeline.
- Sharing compensation levels/salary bands with employees to promote a culture of transparency.
- Externally publishing information on pay and reward policies, for example 'A fair pay handbook'.
- Conducting regular equal pay audits that cover both gender and ethnicity.







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- Increased monitoring and transparency of pay across the organisation via real time dashboards, including proactive alerts when the pay differential rises above a certain amount. The analysis of the aforementioned data by other intersectional characteristics, such as age and ethnic group.
- Gender Pay and Bonus Gap Calculators to allow managers and HR business partners to assess the impact of proposed salary and bonus decisions on the organisation's gender pay gap before finalising decisions and making adjustments if necessary.
- Gender and peer reviews implemented across all rates and processes, offering further objectiveness and fairness.
- Employee training on how pay is managed to raise awareness and drive an open approach.
- The development of initiatives to address the core drivers of the gender pay gap, for example, for recruitment, progression and performance management.
- Recognising individual contribution to issues of diversity, inclusion, community or sustainability through financial incentives.

**BITC's recommendations:**

- Employers, as standard, monitor and publicise their pay gaps through regular pay audits (gender and ethnicity), developing timebound targets and action plans to address these, with senior-level accountability for driving action, ideally linking progress to performance and reward for executive leadership.
- Employers take an explicitly intersectional approach to assessing pay and rewards, moving beyond using single lens assessments to combining multiple data sets.
- Pay and reward data and policies are made more transparent internally and externally, supported by internal communications, engagement with employee networks and extra support provided to line managers, if necessary.
- Whilst it was encouraging to see 68% of applicants conducting voluntary analysis on their ethnicity pay gap, the reporting and analysis of disability pay gaps requires further employer action should the Equality (Race and Disability) Bill come to fruition, with only 17% of applicants currently monitoring equal pay for this group.





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Transparency is at the core of **Skyscanner's** approach to pay and reward. Beginning at recruitment, candidates are not asked for salary history, instead indicating their expected salary within benchmarked ranges.

To support ongoing transparency, employees can view the salary range associated with their role—and their individual position within that range—directly via their personal profile. The People team reinforces understanding by hosting regular workshops and townhall sessions that demystify how pay structures work and how progression is rewarded. They also run recurring surveys to ensure benefits remain aligned with employees' evolving needs and expectations.

Skyscanner's gender strategy is informed by insights from its annual gender pay gap report, including changes to remuneration and benefit policies for fairer outcomes.



**Atos Group** follows a stringent pay review process, using internal and external benchmarking data and providing educational briefings on the gender pay gap to decision-makers. Evidence informing pay and reward allocation is monitored and reviewed with an intersectional lens, ensuring equitable outcomes for women and ethnic minority employees.





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7) Progression and Promotion

This question explores how employers are removing barriers to progression for women and creating opportunities for all employees to thrive. After a dip in performance last year, scores returned to typical levels, with employers demonstrating a range of initiatives aimed at tackling vertical segregation using gender-balance targets. **95% of applicants had gender balance targets** spanning one or more levels of their organisation, with the greatest proportion being for senior management level compared to significantly reduced targets for front-line managers (82% vs. 35%).

Table 3: Existence of gender balance targets by job level

JOB LEVEL	OCCURRENCE
Senior Management	82%
Executive/board level	75%
Mid-level management	54%
Entry level	41%
Front line managers	35%
We do not have gender balance targets	5%



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Best practice looked like:

- 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, needs-led).
- Education and support for employees and line managers on issues such as inclusive leadership, supporting employees through life stages and thriving when working in a hybrid way.
- Diverse representation and bias awareness built into promotion decisions, for example, through gender diverse shortlists, interview panels and bias interrupters.
- The use of gender-neutral performance metrics. Financial metrics, for example, can disadvantage those with caring responsibilities.
- Monitoring promotions and performance data, scrutinising inconsistencies and holding senior leaders and line managers accountable for results.
- The creation of a dedicated senior taskforce to monitor senior female progression.
- Cultivating opportunities for informal career discussions and networking to demystify senior roles and educate about different career paths.
- Sponsoring retraining opportunities to help address occupational segregation, e.g. into data/technology roles.
- Appointment of work allocation managers or the use of technology to ensure unbiased access to high-profile stretch projects.
- Internal Talent Marketplace, a global digital platform where individuals can create and search for opportunities, including job shadowing, mentoring, networking, open vacancies and LinkedIn learning courses.
- Measuring and adapting approach in line with employee sentiment via networks, focus groups and/or employee surveys.
- Actively engaging male allies through employee networks and sponsorship programmes to foster a more inclusive culture and leverage the support of men in promoting gender equality.
- The launch of a generational diversity initiative to promote knowledge transfer and mentorship for women across age groups.





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**BITC's recommendations:**

- Employers analyse workforce and employee experience data intersectionally to ensure no groups are being left behind in their progression efforts, including part-time workers or employees on the lowest pay.



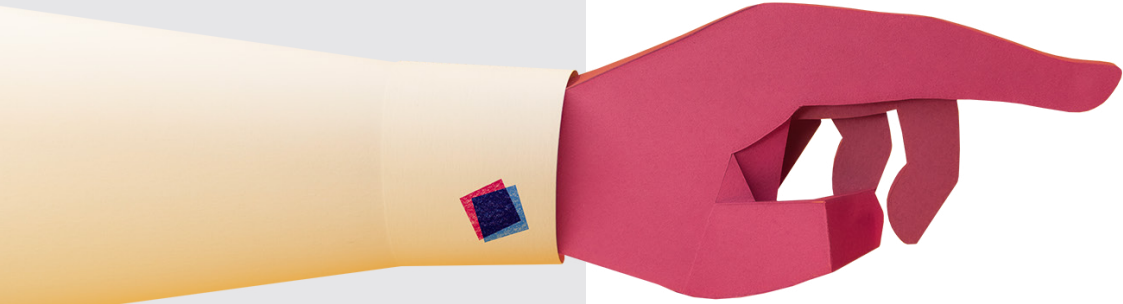
Grant Thornton

**Grant Thornton UK** is committed to ensuring gender-balanced progression across the firm. This work is led by its Gender Advisory Board and a dedicated board sponsor who drives conversations on progress and action at the highest levels.

Progression for women, non-binary and gender non-conforming colleagues is supported through tailored development and mentoring programmes designed to address intersectional barriers. The firm also takes a proactive approach to tackling the root causes of inequality, promoting a culture of gender allyship and encouraging open conversations on topics such as menopause.

To ensure lived experiences inform change, Grant Thornton runs focus groups with marginalised communities. One outcome of this work is its generational diversity initiative, which promotes collaboration across age groups. Further work is underway to explore the intersection between gender and age in more depth.

To measure progress, the firm uses gender-specific, real-time dashboards to monitor performance review outcomes, helping to identify and address occupational segregation and underrepresentation of marginalised genders.







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## In need of further focus

### 8) Social Mobility

Since its introduction in 2022, performance on the social mobility question – focused on employer action to support women in lower-paid roles – has continued to improve, although there is still room for further progress. While some applicants have introduced targeted initiatives for women in the lowest pay quartiles, these efforts often lack evidence-based foundations and senior-level ownership. With the growing impact of generative AI threatening the future of many low-paid roles, identifying, supporting, and reskilling women in these positions is more critical than ever.<sup>viii</sup>

Alternatively, it was positive to see 99% of applicants engaging with gender equality outside of their organisation – most commonly through work in education, with customers or clients or in the community. Despite this, 94% of applicants did not have targets to increase diversity and inclusion within their supply chains, representing a missed opportunity to stimulate economic growth and inclusion for underrepresented communities. Find out more about the benefits of diverse supply chains, including increased innovation, connection with customers and reputation in our report.<sup>ix</sup>

<sup>viii</sup> [BITC \(2025\) The Business Case for Gender Equity](#)

<sup>ix</sup> [BITC \(2024\) Diverse and Inclusive Supply Chain Insights Report](#)

Best practice looked like:

- Continually monitoring female representation in different job groups, experience levels, and working patterns to understand potential disparities.
- Expanding options for diversity data collection, to include, amongst other things adult/elder/child caregiver status, socio-economic background, neurodiversity and disability.
- Using data from pay reviews to identify low-paid women and under-represented genders and compare against male colleagues and market rates, recommending further action to ensure parity if required.
- Specifically targeting the recruitment and development of employees from lower socio-economic backgrounds, such as through the provision of internships, scholarships and summer programmes in UK economic cold spots, providing financial support to participants.
- Targeted skill development or mentoring programmes for women in lower salary groups.



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- The redefinition of secretarial roles to focus on specific specialisms to increase the diversity of applicants and to allow greater career progression opportunities.
- Taking an intersectional approach when setting targets (e.g. the number of women in entry-level technology roles), while monitoring and reporting these to senior leadership.
- Provision of resources to support women in lower pay grades, through live events, webinars, videos and financial toolkits.
- Establishing an Employee Resource Group dedicated to Social Mobility, including mutual mentoring opportunities for participants.
- Supporting the successful integration of employees from lower socioeconomic backgrounds by dedicated training around inclusive management.
- Raising awareness around mitigating potential microaggressions or biases related to social mobility.
- Proactive efforts to understand the experiences of employees from lower socioeconomic backgrounds via employee surveys and focus groups.
- Dedicated work with suppliers to address this issue, through:
  - Establishing a vendor code of conduct.
  - Requesting DEI statements and gender data from suppliers.
  - Establishing specific gender targets in collaboration with suppliers.
  - Increasing partnerships with diverse suppliers, committing a percentage of annual spend to diverse-owned suppliers.
  - Investing in this area through the appointment of specialist teams/headcount.
- External publication of flexible working and family-friendly policies.
- Incorporating flexibility into job design, a proven enabler to assist the progression of women.
- Providing support externally, for example, support packages to help assist vulnerable customers.





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- Employers pay the national living wage and only work with contractors and suppliers who also pay this.
- Employers set and monitor targets to increase the diversity of their supply chains.
- Employers recognise that across their workforce, including those working via contractors and suppliers, there will be women experiencing low pay; employers need to take action accordingly via targeted development, promotion and other career progression opportunities.
- Employers be as supportive as possible in working arrangements and development opportunities, and provide access to help and support (EAPs) to help retain and progress socially mobile employees.



Continual monitoring of the representation of women across **Sodexo's** workforce has led to a range of actions to support social mobility.

Starting at attraction, Sodexo provides employment opportunities and work experience for more than 30,000 people across the UK and Ireland. This includes under-represented individuals, such as those with criminal convictions, who are supported by Sodexo into its workforce. Recruitment campaigns use targeted marketing to tackle occupational segregation of women in lower-paid roles, with job adverts made inclusive by design through bias test tooling.

A range of programmes have been introduced to support the progression of all Sodexo's frontline workers, with women making up the majority of this workforce, including the "Grow with" apprenticeship programme and "Aspiring Frontline Manager Programme." Sodexo's commitment to social mobility and low paid women extends beyond its own workforce into its supply chain and local communities. The latter, in part, through its charitable foundation, Stop Hunger, which has operated in the UK and Ireland for 20 years.



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Senior leaders and employees from lower socioeconomic backgrounds at **PwC** can share experiences and develop together through the Mutual Mentoring scheme. This initiative is accompanied by a range of different research projects developed to understand the experiences of those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, which will include some of its lowest paid women, as well as being supported by the 2,000+ members in its Social Mobility employee network.



9) Support for Parents and Carers

This question examines how employers support staff in balancing work and care responsibilities, and whether they foster a workplace culture that enables this. Despite a slight rebound in performance last year, most applicants focused on individual support for working parents and carers, but few addressed the stigma these groups face.

Applicants are making steady progress towards supporting a rebalance of unequal caring responsibilities for parents through their policies, with 65% offering a form of enhanced maternity and paternity leave and 11% having equal parental leave. However, supporting carers with paid leave was an area of improvement, with 49% of applicants not currently providing this. Applicant responses highlighted a further need for improvement in support for parents and carers as a day-one right, with just over 50% of entrants ensuring universal accessibility.

The importance of reducing the gender imbalance in responsibility for care cannot be overstated: unequal parental leave is driving 70% of the Gender Pay Gap, with data suggesting an increase in the length of parental leave taken by fathers estimated

	
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to result in a potential £260 million a year cost saving for employers.<sup>x</sup>

Best practice looked like:

- Access to parental and carers leave entitlement from day one.
- Equalised or enhanced parental leave (covering maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave). The updating of policy language to be more inclusive.
- The provision of paid carers leave that can be taken in hourly chunks if necessary (applicants offered, on average, nine days of paid carers leave per year).
- Additional leave for life's moments that matter (such as the first day of school) available to all caregivers (parents, grandparents, stepparents).
- Supporting 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, parental buddies/mentors/networks and a phased return to work. Early conversations should be led by line managers around flexible working options.
- Support for Line Managers to educate and equip them to have positive conversations about parental leave, return to work, flexible work, caring responsibilities and reasonable adjustments.
- Sharing parent/carer stories featuring all parent types/grades to reduce stereotyping and improve role-modelling.
- Providing a safe space for parents and carers via networks inclusive of gender.
- Proactive efforts to understand the experiences of parents and carers in your organisation, through employee surveys, focus groups, network feedback or work with external consultants. Review of parents and carers policies with networks.

<sup>x</sup> [Management Today \(2023\) 'Equal parental leave policies key to addressing UK gender pay gap', 8 March](#)  
[PwC \(2023\) Women In Work 2023 Closing The Gender Pay Gap For Good: A Focus On The Motherhood Penalty](#)





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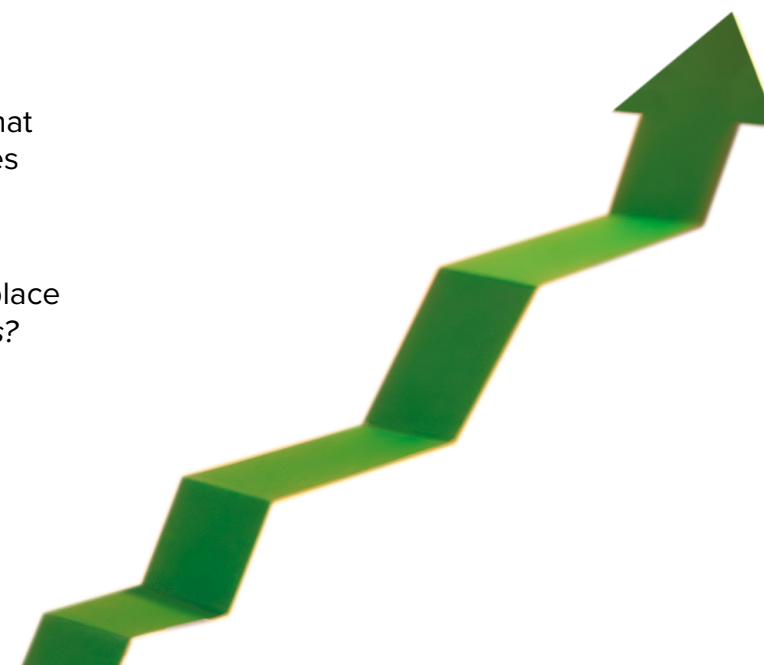
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- Support for employees and dependants undergoing IVF, or who have experienced miscarriage or baby loss.
- Workplace training to raise awareness on noticing and mitigating potential stereotypes and microaggressions around working carers.
- Systemic data collection and monitoring of caregiver responsibilities, and how this interacts with retention and promotion rates.
- Removing the 'claw back' of the enhanced pay should parents decide not to return to work, providing greater financial stability to new parents.

**BITC's recommendations:**

- Employers consider care, in all its facets, as a mainstream workplace issue, and recognise that the nature of employees' caring responsibilities can change throughout their career.
- Caring policies are made gender-equal and actionable steps are taken to facilitate a workplace culture that supports this (Read our *Who Cares?* report for more information on how to do this).
- Parental and carers leave policies are made available as a day one right if not already.

- Organisations monitor the uptake of policies to support parents and carers to better track their impact and to check for potential biases. For example, only 31% of applicants currently track promotion rates after periods of parental leave.
- Annual performance reviews, compensation and promotion recommendations are checked for any bias and stereotyping against parents and carers (including those on leave).
- Parental leave policies are published externally to demonstrate that supporting your people is a business priority (only 40% of applicants currently do this).





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Capgemini offers an enhanced primary parental leave policy. Qualifying employees (26 weeks of service) can take 26 weeks leave at full pay. A further 26 weeks can be taken at statutory rates.

Capgemini’s internal “family matters” portal includes employee and line manager guidance, pre, during and post-parental leave coaching opportunities, access to medical benefits and connection to community groups.

Capgemini offers several support networks for families and carers, including groups focused on adoption, fostering, and local family connections. Carers can also access dedicated resources like private communities, webinars, and online platforms for ongoing support and engagement.

Additionally, Capgemini builds awareness on intersectional caring experiences such as LGBTQIA+ parenting and hosts leadership role model sessions on breaking gendered parenting norms.

Measuring impact of its practice and policy, Capgemini monitors attrition and promotion data of those with caring responsibilities to ensure there are no disparities.

10) Flexible Working

Flexible working was the lowest performing question in this year’s cohort, with scores dropping by 11% compared to 2024 – one of only two areas to see a decline. Whilst applicants provided a good range of flexible-working options and demonstrated preliminary steps to foster a supportive culture – **63% appointing a senior sponsor** to support the adoption of flexibility, and **85% training managers on this area** – flexible working is not yet consistently embedded across key organisational processes like job design, recruitment, onboarding and performance management. For example, only 40% of applicants were actively monitoring outcomes such as promotion rates and project access across fixed vs. flexible working arrangements, suggesting flexible work stigma and affinity bias could continue to undermine women’s status at work.





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Best practice looked like:

- Making a wide range of flexible working options available, both formally and informally, and making sure employees know about and understand them. For example:
  - Retirement phase down
  - Phased absence returns
  - Sabbaticals
  - Enhanced career breaks
  - Compassionate/volunteering/study leave
  - Flexible bank holidays
  - 100% homeworking during school holidays
  - Paid 'Time-Off' policy (5 days per year) which covered attending school plays/sports days/first day of school and extended to grandparents
- Taking a listening-led approach, giving employees and managers autonomy to find ways of working that work best for them, their team and business requirements.
- Including details of flexible-working arrangements in job adverts, discussing it at the recruitment stage and making it available to all employees from day one.
- Support for recruiters and hiring managers on inclusive hiring.
- The expectation that line managers will role model these policies, with specific training and support offered to better equip them in implementing these within their team (training, conversation starters, flexible working helpline).
- Roles structured to prioritise outputs and deliverables over strict hours, reducing any stigma associated with non-standard working patterns.
- Ensuring performance management processes are focused on outcomes and are unbiased to individual working patterns.
- Starting at the point of 'yes' for formal requests, evaluating why the role might not be able to be performed in a more flexible way.
- Investment in homeworking infrastructure and virtual collaboration tools.
- Activity and social norms to support flexible ways of working, including email signatures to reinforce flexible working culture, hybrid working charters, team rituals and digital etiquette. Role modelling of flexible working policy by senior leaders.



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- Appointing an executive sponsor for flexible working.
- The use of job-share registers/networks to allow colleagues to meet people they may be able to job-share with.
- Additional benefits are considered as appropriate, such as flex from abroad, flexible bank holidays or 100% remote working in school holidays.
- Providing expert coaching to support return to work for employees on long-term leave (12+ weeks).
- A retirement project with managers and employees focusing on benefits of flexible working for retention, including sabbaticals, work pattern changes and role adjustments.
- Actively monitoring data points to detect potential 'proximity biases' where staff who are more present in shared work locations receive preferable performance reviews, work allocations, or more rapid promotion; this could include matching flexible working trends with wider demographics to identity data.
- Using anonymous metadata to understand the impact of flexible working – comparing

working patterns with outcomes including wellbeing, stress, client satisfaction and business performance – introducing targeted interventions as necessary.

### BITC's recommendations:

- More employers actively 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 on those using it, addressing 'flex stigma' requires ensuring more diverse uptake of different ways of working.
- More employers work to embed flexible working across relevant organisational processes, such as within job design and recruitment processes, and to challenge perceptions/bias regarding agility and performance.
- Employers challenge recruitment teams with the starting position of 'why not', supporting/ challenging hiring managers to design and advertise all roles as flexible.



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## Deloitte.

Recognising the benefits of flexibility and choice, enabling agile hybrid working at Deloitte is a strategic priority. On offer – from day one – are a range of both formal and informal options, including term-time working, flexible bank holidays, and working abroad (four weeks per rolling 12 months, for those with the relevant Right to Work status in that country). The firm’s commitment is steadfast: there is no mandated office attendance or monitoring of individual presence.

Deloitte’s Managing Partner for People & Purpose leads the firm’s hybrid approach, supporting its cultural integration. At a team level, the firm’s Ways of Working tool supports open, honest conversations about working preferences to foster inclusive, healthy work. It helps teams proactively shape how they work together, promotes personalised support, and encourages dialogue around individual and team needs from the start. Regularly sharing real-life stories from employees, at all levels, also helps raise awareness and challenge stereotypes.

Progress is measured through people experience surveys and other feedback channels, including monthly Inclusion Council meetings with representatives from Deloitte’s twelve diversity networks. Survey data shows that positive sentiment around flexibility is consistent across genders, with 82% of respondents feeling that their working choices are respected.







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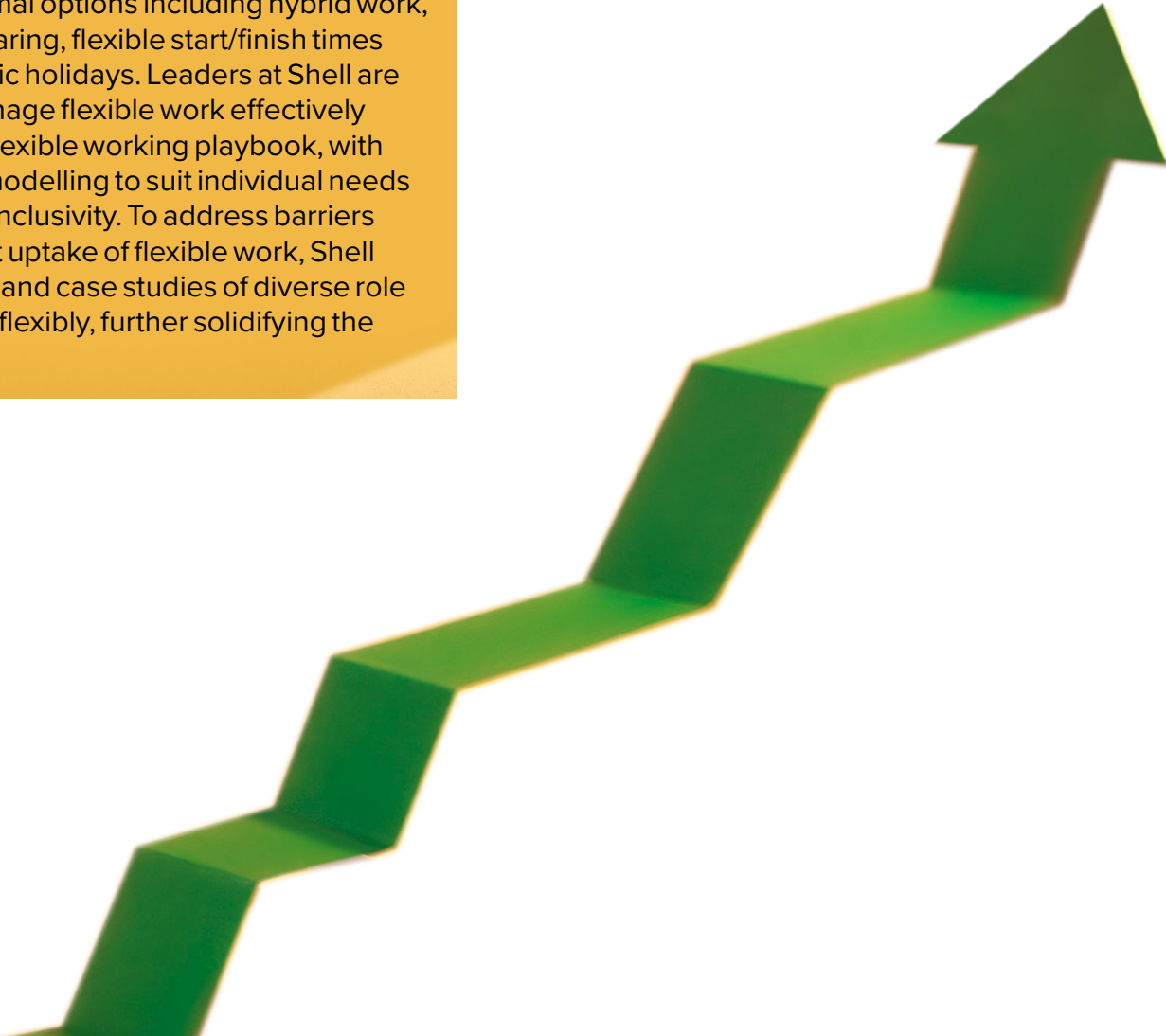
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Flexibility is embraced in **Shell's** organisational culture, with its policies encompassing both formal and informal options including hybrid work, part-time, job sharing, flexible start/finish times and flexible public holidays. Leaders at Shell are equipped to manage flexible work effectively through Shell's flexible working playbook, with guidance on remodelling to suit individual needs and to promote inclusivity. To address barriers that may prevent uptake of flexible work, Shell uses campaigns and case studies of diverse role models working flexibly, further solidifying the cultural norm.





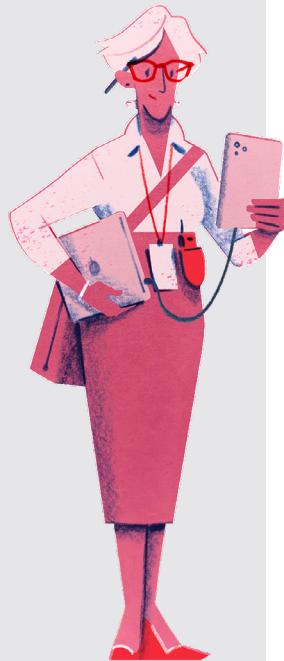
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## FUTURE-PROOFING PROGRESS

This year's The Times Top 50 for Gender Equality list arrives at a critical turning point for rebuilding momentum on gender equality. If we continue at the current rate of progress, we are an estimated 134 years away from closing the global gender inequity gap. Pace and scale in action for gender inclusion must be prioritised as we evolve into a new era of work, with rapid change providing opportunities to change the status quo for agile organisations.

Our applicants have demonstrated their commitment to accelerating a gender-equal future for today and an increasingly better tomorrow. Future-proofing gender equality demands innovative practice; from recruitment through to retirement, we've observed forward-thinking initiatives and the pivot of technology as a force for greater equality.

While the nuanced challenges of a gender-equal future are unwavering, strong foundations in enabling a fairer future have been of particular significance in this year's award cycle.

Empowered by the belief that gender should never act as a barrier to progression at work, employers are reenvisioning what best practice looks like in the contemporary workforce. Innovative interventions focused on inclusive lifecycle approaches,

redesigned ways of work and addressing shifts in attitudes and expectations of workforces. Some of the most innovative initiatives captured in this year's award process are listed below.

### Recruitment to retirement, reenvisioned

#### Examples include:

- Training line managers on how to manage multigenerational hybrid teams.
- Career conversation guides that include support around career pauses, pension education resources and retirement phase-down projects.
- Raising awareness on previously "taboo" topics, with increased educational sessions on endometriosis, pre-menstrual dysphoric disorder and fertility.
- Investing now for an inclusive future, with 84% of applicants engaging with primary and/or secondary schools.



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## Flexible futures:

### Examples include:

- Slow-down time during employees' menstrual cycles to support physical and emotional wellbeing.
- Appointment of a flexible-working helpline for line managers to ensure best practice approaches.
- New work-allocation technology to address bias with training sessions to support historically underrepresented groups.
- Person-led flexible working policies, outlining a colleague's ability to job craft in alignment with their own commitments outside of work.

## Agile attitudes

### Examples include:

- Numerous employers are now offering private neurodiversity diagnosis and support through their healthcare providers.
- Provision of gender-affirming healthcare options for transgender and non-binary employees.
- The monitoring of harassment in digital environments is being embedded into policies alongside advancements, such as tech-based tools to monitor signs of retaliation.
- Financial support for domestic abuse victims, extended to family members.
- Increasingly intersectional monitoring of pay with combined characteristics such as gender and race/disability ahead of potential upcoming legislative shifts under the Equality (Race and Disability) Bill.



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