

women and work: the facts



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Achieving gender equality and diversity within the workplace is good for business, good for women and good for society.

Good for business

Increasing women's participation in the labour market and reducing gender segregation in the workplace is estimated to be worth between £15 billion and £23 billion to the UK economy.¹

There are a number of studies that show a link between gender distribution in a company's management and its profitability. Research from Catalyst in the USA shows companies with the highest representation of women on their top management teams delivered 35.1% higher return on equity, and 34% higher total return to shareholders than companies with the lowest representation.²

Achievements

Women in the workforce

- 46.7% of the UK labour force is female³
- Out of the 27 European Union countries, the UK has the fourth highest employment rate for women, after The Netherlands, Finland, and Estonia⁴

Women have the skills employers need

- 63.4% of girls and 53.8% of boys achieve 5 or more GCSEs grades A*-C⁵
- 56.6% is the proportion of first degrees that are obtained by women⁶

Women are achieving the most senior positions

- 28% of all directors are women⁷
- 11% of FTSE 100 directorships are held by women⁸
- 27.5% of the civil service top management are women⁹
- 21.2% of local government chief executives are women¹⁰
- 18.7% of all judges are women¹¹
- 9% of police officers ranked as chief constable, deputy chief constable or assistant chief constable are women¹²
- 16% of vice-chancellors are women¹³

Taking action on gender diversity can increase customer base

- 80% is the proportion of consumer buying decisions made by women¹⁴
- £60 billion is the amount contributed to the UK economy by women-owned businesses¹⁵
- £100 billion is the annual spend of the public sector on procuring goods and services. All public authorities require that suppliers fulfil the obligations of the Gender Equality Duty¹⁶

1 Shaping a Fairer Future, Women and Work Commission, 2006

2 The Bottom Line: Connecting Corporate Performance and Gender Diversity, Catalyst USA 2004

3 Office National Statistics, Labour Force Survey, 2007

4 Labour Market Trends, Eurostat, 2007

5 Office National Statistics, Focus on Gender, 2007

6 Office National Statistics, Focus on Gender, 2007

7 Experian, Female Directors Report, 2007

8 Cranfield School of Management, Female FTSE Report, 2007

9 Cabinet Office, 2007

10 Local Government Employers, JNC's for Chief Executives & Chief Officers Annual Surveys, 2007

11 Judiciary of England and Wales, Annual Diversity Statistics, 2007

12 Office National Statistics Statbase

13 University UK, 2007

14 Business Week, 2005

15 Small Business Service DTI, Women's Business Ownership, 2006

16 Office of Government and Commerce

Women are diverse. Understanding the multiple layers of identity will enable employers to reach under-utilised pools of talent.

Diversity

Age

The labour force is aging. One in five people in the world will be over 60 by 2050, compared to one in 12 in 1950. But employers are still under-utilising older workers particularly women. The employment rate of men in the UK aged 50 and over was 44% in 2004; for women it was 31%. The European objective is to raise this to 50%¹⁷

Disability

Just 50% of the 3.5 million disabled women of working age in the UK are in employment¹⁸

Ethnicity

At 7.9% from a non-white ethnic group the UK population is becoming more diverse.¹⁹ Yet many ethnic minority women remain outside the labour market. The employment rate is highest for white British women at 73%; it is lowest for Pakistani women at just 28%²⁰

Mothers

At 71% the employment rate for mothers who are married or co-habiting is just slightly less than that of women without dependent children (73%).

The employment rate for lone mothers is considerably lower at 56%²¹

Mothers (who are married or co-habiting) are twice as likely to work part-time (41%) compared with women without dependent children, (22% work part-time)

Religion

Over 1.5 million women in the UK hold a religion other than Christianity; around half of these are Muslim²²

Economic inactivity is greatest amongst Muslim women at 69%²³

Sexual Orientation

6% of the population is gay²⁴

Transgender

It is estimated that rates of transexuality are 1 in 10,000 men and 1 in 40,000 women²⁵



17 The Business Case, Opportunity Now, 2007

18 Office National Statistics, Labour Force Survey, 2007

19 Office National Statistics, Census, 2001

20 Office National Statistics, Labour Force Survey, 2007

21 Office National Statistics, Labour Force Survey, 2006

22 Office National Statistics, Census, April 2001

23 Office National Statistics, Annual Population Survey, 2004

24 Stonewall

25 Gender Trust

Where women work

Six out of ten workers in the UK's private sector are male, while women dominate in the public sector (65%) research has found.

The *Economic & Labour Market Review*, published by the Office for National Statistics in 2007, found that the number of female workers in the public sector has only increased 2% from 63% in 1997, while in the private sector, the proportions of men and women has remained stable over the past decade.

According to the latest statistics, 31% of male private sector workers clocked up 45-hour weeks, against 22% of their counterparts in the public sector. For women, only 10% in the public sector and 9% of private sector women worked 45-hour weeks.

Female employment is concentrated within the services sector and within administrative and service occupations

Sectors with the highest proportion of jobs held by women²⁶

Education, health and public admin	70%
Distribution, hotels and catering	51%
Other services	50%

Sectors with the lowest proportion of jobs held by women²⁷

Energy and water	24%
Transport and communications	24%
Construction	10%

Occupations with the highest proportion of jobs held by women²⁸

Personal services*	83%
Admin and secretarial	78%
Sales and customer services	69%

Occupations with the lowest proportion of jobs held by women²⁹

Managers and senior officials	35%
Process plant and machine operatives	14%
Skilled trades	8%

*Personal Services represents occupations within health, child and animal care, leisure, travel, beauty, housekeeping, caretakers, undertakers and pest control

26 Office National Statistics, Labour Force Survey, 2007

27 Office National Statistics, Labour Force Survey, 2007

28 Office National Statistics, Labour Force Survey, 2007

29 Office National Statistics, Labour Force Survey, 2007



Challenges

Skills

The skills of many women are under-utilised

- 50% of women working in low-paid part-time jobs are working beneath their potential, i.e. they are not using their skills, experience or qualifications for their current job³⁰
- Two-thirds of the half a million women in the UK qualified in science, engineering or technology (SET) do not work in those sectors³¹
- In 2005 women represented 50% of rural employees. There is no single initiative to help rural women enter the labour market although 40% of rural women of working age not in paid employment have said they would like to do so³²

Pay

From the age of 18 women receive less pay than men in every occupational group³³

- 44,013 is the number of equal pay claims brought between April 2006 and April 2007³⁴
- £60 million is the estimated cost of the UK's largest equal pay award. North Cumbria NHS Trust paid an average of £40,000 to 1500 women who had been underpaid³⁵
- Out of the 27 European Union countries, the UK has the largest pay gap³⁶
- 82.8p is the amount a woman earns for every pound that a man earns, the equivalent to working in November and December every year for free!³⁷
- 64.4p is the amount a woman working part-time earns for every pound paid to the average man³⁸

Sex discrimination

Women experience discrimination at work

- 28,153 is the number of sex discrimination claims brought between April 2006 and April 2007³⁹
- £6,724 is the average award for sex discrimination⁴⁰
- 30,000 is the number of women in the UK leaving their jobs each year due to pregnancy discrimination⁴¹

30 Grant, Yendle and Buckner, Gender and Employment in Local Labour Markets, Sheffield Hallam University, 2006

31 UKRC, 2007

32 Natural England

33 Office National Statistics, Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings, 2007

34 Tribunals Service, 2007

35 UNISON

36 Eurostat, 2007

37 Office National Statistics, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2007

38 Office National Statistics, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2007

39 Tribunals Service, 2007

40 Tribunals Service, 2007

41 EOC, Great Expectations (2005) EOC: Manchester

Work-life Balance

In the past work-life balance was considered a women's issue. It is now recognised as a business imperative for attracting and retaining highly productive employees of both sexes

- Four out of five employees state that work-life balance considerations play a crucial role in deciding whether to stay with or leave their current employer⁴²
- 87% is the proportion of executive candidates rejecting a job due to work-life balance considerations⁴³
- 49% of employers have seen an increase in productivity following the implementation of work-life balance options⁴⁴
- One quarter of female employees and one tenth of male employees have some form of flexible working arrangement⁴⁵

Care

Understanding carers will increasingly become a significant consideration for employers

- Care is not a gender issue. Seven out of ten carers under 50 and 8 out of 10 carers aged 50 – 60 give up work to care⁴⁶
- Over the next 30 years, the number of carers in the UK will increase from 6 million to 9 million⁴⁷
- Three out of five is the number of people who will care for someone at some point in their life⁴⁸
- There are 3 million working carers in the UK. Of these 1.4 million are men and 1.7 million are women⁴⁹

Childcare

Considerations of childcare affect mothers and fathers

- 12.8 million is the number of working age parents with dependent children⁵⁰
- £152 is the typical cost per week for a nursery place for a child under two⁵¹
- 962 is the annual amount saved by each lower-rate tax-paying parent making use of an employer childcare voucher scheme⁵²
- Increasingly, fathers are taking a greater role in caring for children. In the UK, fathers in two-parent families carry out an average of one-quarter of the family's childcare-related activities during the week, and one-third at weekends⁵³
- Women currently spend twice as much time on housework and on childcare as men⁵⁴

42 Watson Wyatt, Work UK Survey, 2005

43 Association of Executive Search Consultants, survey of 1311 senior executives worldwide, 2006

44 DTI, 2003

45 Office National Statistics, Social Trends, 2007

46 Carers UK

47 Carers UK

48 Carers UK

49 Carers UK

50 Office National Statistics Labour Market Trends, 2005

51 Daycare Trust, Childcare Costs Survey, 2007

52 HM Revenue and Customs

53 EOC, 2003

54 Office National Statistics, Time Use Survey 2005

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