



The Times Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality

INSIGHTS REPORT 2024



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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. The awards probe policies, practice and culture on key areas known to help or hinder gender equity and inclusion at work. The criteria updated each year to reflect best practice and the changing working world.

In recent times, applicants have between them employed millions of people, equivalent to some 4 – 8% of the country's workforce. Business in the Community has the privilege of looking 'under the hood' at the approach organisations are taking and distilling the insights for all to learn from, as showcased in this report.

This year's awards come at a pivotal time for gender equity at work; while much progress has been made, we have a way to go before we can claim a truly equal and equitable working world. Women and other marginalised genders continue to experience significantly lower wages, less access to positions of power, an increased risk of insecure work, and at points severe gender-based harassment and discrimination. Ongoing change and disruption – from technological acceleration (notably AI) to the shift towards a greener economy offer new risks and opportunities; the new UK government is also set to impact this agenda further.

If you are reading this looking for insights into what your organisation should do, please consider connecting directly with the wider [Business in the Community team](#), our experts offer informed, qualified guidance and support. Many organisations use the awards as a 'wayfaring' exercise which enables them to identify how their approach could improve, how it stacks up in comparison to others and map out a clear path forward.

Now, more than ever businesses and others must double down on this agenda. Success in a changing and volatile world demands diverse, inclusive organisations where all can contribute and thrive. Progress on this agenda isn't just 'good for women' and wider society, it's vital for businesses' bottom lines. Read on to find out the steps you can take to drive this agenda forward.





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Key indicators:

Some key indicators tell us gender equity remains far from the norm in the UK, as women and other marginalised genders are:

- **Typically paid less than men** with a nationwide gender pay gap of 14.3%.¹ That doubles for certain intersectional groups, women over 40 face a gender pay gap twice as large as those under this age.² Black African, Bangladeshi and Pakistani women are earning up to 30% less than the average male worker.³
- **Still underrepresented in positions of power**, with only 10 FTSE 100 companies led by women and 6 out of 10 leadership positions continuing to go to men⁴
- **Twice as likely to be employed in severely insecure work**, hampering career progression and mobility, keeping women in lower-paid and lower-valued roles for longer (further driving the Gender Pay Gap)⁵
- **Continue to face gender-based harassment and discrimination at work**, with 2 in 3 young women saying they have experienced this in the workplace⁶

¹ [TUC: Equal pay day 2024 – tackling the gender pay gap](#)

² [ONS: Gender pay gap in the UK 2023](#)

³ [The Guardian: Gender pay gap wider for minority ethnic women, Labour finds](#)

⁴ [FTSE Women Leaders Review](#)

⁵ [Work Foundation: The UK Insecure Work Index 2024](#)

⁶ [TUC Poll: New TUC poll: 2 in 3 young women have experienced sexual harassment, bullying or verbal abuse at work](#)



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Insights from this year's The Times Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality applicant pool reveal further trends around where businesses are taking action and where support to drive gender equity is lacking. The 2024 application assessed 10 areas across strategy, policies and culture for the action employers were taking and the impact this was having.

The question set is intersectional, asking how applicants were championing gender equity across different intersectional identities, including transgender and non-binary individuals. Most questions required evidence of a clearly intersectional approach to receive a high score.

In line with trends observed in 2023:

- **Strategy and Objectives** (ensuring dedicated strategies championing gender equity are in place with senior-level accountability)
- **Line Managers** (equipping and holding line managers accountable to lead inclusively)
- **Inclusive Cultures** (cultivating inclusive workplaces that encourage employees to speak out and challenge poor behaviour) continue to be the highest performing issue areas assessed

The biggest progress was seen in how employers identified and supported their **lowest paid women**, with evidence of more employers paying the National Living Wage (and ensuring their suppliers did this too), targeting social mobility cold spots with recruitment and development programmes⁷. Employers took a deliberate approach to retraining and reskilling within lower paid roles. It should be noted however, that this remains one of the lowest scoring areas since Business in the Community first introduced this question area.

Sexual Harassment and **Policies to support Parents and Carers** were the lowest performing areas assessed, with the latter seeing a dip in scores of almost 10%. Whilst 48% of applicants told us that they are looking to introduce equal parental leave within the next two years, there was not enough evidence of the work being done to promote these policies to all, ensure cultures support accessing them, and address the stereotypes faced by working parents and carers.

Analysis from data monitoring questions revealed that employers continued to be hesitant around transparency, with only half of applicants publishing their ethnicity pay gap, flexible working or parental and carers leave policies online in the public domain.

⁷ [The Social Mobility Index](#)





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QUESTION	PERCENTAGE OF ALL APPLICANTS ANSWERING YES IN 2024	DIFFERENCE 23 V 24
Do you offer leave for those experiencing miscarriage or birth loss?	98%	4%
Do you proactively discuss flexible working options at recruitment stage?	91%	-4%
Does your organisation pay the Voluntary Living Wage?	87%	-1%
Do you have a menopause policy?	77%	-2%
Do you have a trans inclusion policy?	74%	n/a
Do you calculate your ethnicity pay gap?	72%	n/a
Do you have unified pay bandings/systems in place that are transparent?	64%	n/a
Do you offer paid leave for working carers?	62%	4%
Do you publish your ethnicity pay gap?	53%	-5%
Do you publish your flexible working policies externally?	50%	-2%
Do you publish your parental leave policies externally?	50%	6%
Is your company considering introducing an equal and enhanced parental leave policy in the next two years?	48%	16%
Do you track promotion rates of those who have taken parental leave?	43%	5%
Do you publish salaries on all job descriptions both internally and externally?	21%	n/a



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THE QUESTIONS AND BEST PRACTICE

High Performing

1) Strategy and Objectives

In line with last year, Strategy and Objectives emerged as the highest performing area in this year's assessment with scores on this question increasing. Applicants set clear, ambitious and time-bound objectives to address gender inequality that are owned by senior leadership. Progress was regularly monitored via taskforces, working groups and internal dashboards. Applicants embedded greater intersectionality in their approach by reviewing data through multiple lenses and encouraging collaboration between networks to inform future strategy.

Best practice looked like:

- The setting of organisation-wide, time-bound targets to address gender inequality, supplemented with individual action plans for specific functions/ divisions and levels
- Ensuring targets are evidence based, addressing organisational gaps or linked to census data
- Senior level accountability for success linked to pay, with additional training and support for senior leaders to help engagement (e.g. reverse mentoring)

- 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 and embedding this work within the organisation's purpose and core values
- Gender equality strategies that considered 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 gender equality strategy

BITC recommends that:

- Strategies continue to be created and monitored intersectionally with targets, objectives and action plans outlined for specific groups as necessary
- Feedback from workplace interventions is actively fed back into strategy development, for example considering employee listening sessions and feedback from staff surveys alongside external benchmarking



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- 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

Deloitte set bespoke business-area gender and ethnicity targets for Partners, Directors, Senior Managers, Managers and graduate intakes. The targets are realistic but stretching, based on external (census) data and internal modelling, reflecting headcount, attrition, promotions, hires, retirements and societal diversity. Deloitte considers a balanced and intersectional view across demographics to continue to build gender balance within its organisation.

Deloitte.

centrica

Centrica's Chief Executive Officer champions and has ultimate accountability for achieving the company's EDI Strategy. Positive EDI Action Plans tailored to each business highlights where change needs to be made, with progress measured quarterly via dashboards. Leaders are responsible for cascading targets and action plans with direct reports, to ensure commitments are embedded company wide.

Performance is reviewed by the Centrica Leadership Team, Senior Leadership Team, and The Safety, Environment and Sustainability Committee as well as the Board. Together, these forums alongside targets embedded in annual objectives, hold leaders to account if progress isn't being made and challenges them to evolve plans.





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2) Line Managers

Support for line managers once again performed well in this year's cohort, sustaining the post-pandemic improvement in performance evidenced last year. Pivotal to creating inclusive workplace cultures, we continue to see huge organisational efforts being put into providing enhanced training and support for line managers to help benefit their people. Clear accountability for progress is embedded in performance metrics, with success measured through KPIs, individual feedback and engagement and wellbeing scores.

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 input from employees and networks. Key themes include managing remote teams, having challenging/courageous conversations, and supporting employees through major life events and current societal challenges (e.g. Israel-Gaza conflict, Cost of Living)

- Investment in wellbeing and mental health support for line managers
- Embedding EDI objectives into line manager performance metrics, such as increasing or maintaining representation within their teams, and providing cross organisational support to achieve this (e.g. support or training from HR)
- 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

BITC recommends that:

- Issues identified as a concern (from networks, engagement surveys) are actively fed into line manager performance and development plans where relevant





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- 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

At **Vodafone**, unconscious bias training is conducted with leaders and members of their recruitment team. This is alongside Diversity and Inclusion modules on topics such as microaggressions, intersectionality, allyship, power and privilege and inclusive vocabulary. Additionally, they have line manager training for sensitive conversations, on topics including fertility issues, menopause, pregnancy loss and miscarriage, domestic abuse, coming out, mental wellbeing and disability.



3) Inclusive Cultures

This question considers what employers are doing to create psychologically safe workplaces where people feel able to bring their authentic selves to work. It encompasses applicants' approaches to both prevent non-inclusive behaviour and promote more inclusive workplace cultures, through more equitable access to policies, bias free systems and decision making, reinforced through leadership, role modelling and storytelling. In line with last year, it remains one of the top performing areas in this year's award.

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 behaviours via training, toolkits and educational videos. Ensuring these mediums are applicable to today's working context (e.g. prevalence of online bullying)





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- The use of an external, confidential helpline made available to staff, clients, and third parties
 - Tailored line manager training, 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
 - Measuring workplace culture through employee surveys and providing safe spaces to surface issues within employee networks alongside formal reporting mechanisms
 - The use of storytelling and intersectional voices in raising awareness of non-inclusive behaviours
 - 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 in local action plans
 - Dedicated workstreams looking at issues of concern i.e. women's safety
 - Working across sectors and/or with external organisations to raise awareness or offer further support or areas of concern (e.g. domestic abuse)
 - The expansion of this work to consider customers
 - Aligning internal social media policy to these objectives
- BITC recommends that:**
- Employee training on this issue focused on bystander intervention to identify and address incidents of non-inclusive behaviour
 - That organisations proactively monitor the impact of any interventions made to create a more inclusive workplace culture (e.g. monitoring the impact of inclusive leadership training by employee survey results within team)





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Respect is at the heart of **Capgemini's** inclusive workplace; to ensure everyone feels a sense of belonging, can speak up and be heard. The company has a culture change programme of fostering intentional inclusion and preventing non-inclusive actions. This is done through setting clear expectations of behaviour in policies and communications, reiterated by senior leaders, the organisation's DE&I Steerco and local inclusion ambassadors who role model inclusive behaviour. An example of this is firm-wide Inclusion Circles, where senior leaders open up conversations on inclusion with team members, facilitating the sharing of lived experiences, connecting together and signposting further routes for colleagues to speak up.



Steady Progress

4) Recruitment and Selection

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, a vital element to any organisation's EDI strategy. Performance in this area was consistent with last year's cohort with employers using a range of approaches to ensure they recruit inclusively.

Best practice looked like:

- Mandatory training for resourcing and hiring managers to address unconscious bias and privilege
- Embracing a 'recruit to develop' approach rather than looking for 100% fit
- The use of de-biasing software for job adverts and removing gender-binary language
- Consideration of 'blind CV's' where appropriate, where name and other demographic identities are removed
- Increased online recruitment to allow for more accessibility



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- Providing enhanced candidate preparation resources, such as guidance/mock assessments to level the playing field
- 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. Issuing voluntary surveys to obtain an aggregated view of the diversity of applicants
- Adjusting the application process to the benefit of diverse candidates i.e. allowing for flexible interview times, extending the application window for senior appointments are evidenced to support more applications from women. The appointment of 'reasonable adjustment managers' to assist candidates with a disability, mental health condition or neurodiverse condition through the interview process
- Annual planning and targets to increase under-representation in specific roles and/or functions
- Employment of dedicated in-house EDI recruitment leads focused on female experienced hires
- 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
 - Scholarships and apprenticeships for applicants from lower socio-economic backgrounds
- Participation in social inclusion recruitment schemes, e.g. for refugees, ex-offenders
- Advertising on job boards for part-time and/or flexible work
- Monitoring recruitment data for equality, tracking real-time data on hiring patterns via internal dashboards
- Setting clear expectations with recruiters and the ranking of recruitment suppliers quarterly on diversity performance/progress





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BITC recommends that:

- The job design of all roles is 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, relevant case studies illustrating how the policies are adopted in reality



Capgemini has specific recruitment initiatives/ programmes to ensure it is recruiting a diverse workforce and are taking an intersectional approach:

- Partnership with external programme CodeYourFuture that supports refugees and those on low incomes to start careers in tech
- An internship/recruitment programme to support individuals back into work after 18+month career breaks
- Mentoring for black females externally through their BlackWomen@CapgeminiUK and Race & Equality networks
- Early Careers Outreach team runs year-round activities in schools, universities and online, targeting social mobility cold spots

Additionally, Capgemini has two dedicated in-house recruiters aligned to Diversity, Equality & Inclusion focussing on female experienced hires to increase gender diversity in certain roles/ capabilities that had low female representation.





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Tesco uses inclusive job design to remove gender bias from job adverts and partners with specific DE&I job boards to attract diverse talent, with intersectional stories shared on its Careers website. To drive further progress, a member of the recruitment team sits on the steering committee of each employee network. Additionally, Tesco has external inclusive recruitment training for all recruiters and works with Executive Search suppliers who are committed to the company's ambition to maintain diverse shortlists.

5) Flexible Working

Flexible working saw a slight resurgence in this year's cohort as applicants established and embedded their approach to hybrid working. A proven catalyst of gender equality, flexible working practices also boost the diversity of other groups through driving greater attraction and recruitment, employee engagement, productivity and wellbeing. Flexible working patterns also support the needs of other intersectional groups, such as working carers, neurodiverse individuals and employees with a physical disability. BITC research found that leading flexible working policies positively correlate with ethnic diversity on company Boards,

showing it to be a leading enabler of race equality.⁸ Whilst lots of applicants had good policies (formal and informal) to support flexible working within their organisations, few are going above and beyond to enable their people to work truly flexibly and adopt a culture that supports this.

Best practice looks like:

- Making a wide range of flexible working options available, both formally and informally, and making sure employees know about and understand them
- 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 within their team

⁸ [BITC \(2023\) Inclusive Flexible Working, August](#)



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- Investment in homeworking infrastructure and virtual collaboration tools
 - Activity and social norms to support flexible ways of working, i.e. email signatures to reinforce flexible working culture, hybrid working charters, team rituals and digital etiquette. Role modelling of flexible working policy by senior leaders
 - 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
 - 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, and more rapid promotion. This could include matching flexible working trends with wider demographic and 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 recommends that:**
- More employers actively monitoring 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 take up of different ways of working
 - More employers embedding flexible working across relevant organisational processes, such as within job design, recruitment processes and challenging perceptions / bias regarding agility and performance
 - Employers challenge their recruitment team with the starting position of 'why not', supporting/ challenging hiring managers to design and advertise all roles as flexible



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Flexibility forms part of **TLT's** core value proposition and is endorsed as a business-critical necessity. TLT promotes Flexible Working across three areas (hours, location and environment) that colleagues can flex to best suit them, their team and their clients. It is grounded in three core pledges: more choice – giving the option of working in a place and at a time that meets everyone's needs, more connection – designing environments that help connection, and more support – enabling a culture that considers different working patterns and styles.

Employees in **Standard Chartered** have the autonomy to choose the way they work flexibly, in consultation and agreement with their People Leaders: either flexible location or combining this with flexibility in hours and work pattern. Anonymised metadata helps a dedicated future of work team to understand impact and success of flexible working, by comparing working patterns with outcomes including wellbeing, stress, employee experience, client satisfaction and business performance. This information helps drive targeted interventions, including education materials and practical guidance, as well as identify further opportunities for the next evolution of flexibility.

6) Pay and Reward

The gender pay gap is one of the most stubborn, entrenched inequalities at work and an indicator of the structural inequalities that women and other marginalised genders continue to face in the UK. Performance on this theme was consistent with previous years with applicants struggling to evidence a sophisticated and sustained approach to monitoring their pay and reward policies or embed further transparency into their approach. It is imperative that employers take an expansive approach to understanding and interrogating their Gender Pay Gap, whilst also applying an intersectional lens as it is where identities combine that the largest disparities can be found.

Best practice looked like:

- Setting and disclosing a time bound goal or target to reduce (or eradicate) an organisation's gender pay gap, supported by an action plan 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





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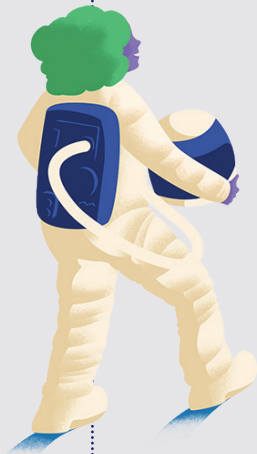
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- Sharing compensation levels/salary bands with employees to promote a culture of transparency
- Externally publishing information on pay and reward policies e.g. 'A fair pay handbook'
- Conducting regular equal pay audits that cover both gender and ethnicity
- Increased monitoring and transparency of pay across the organisation via real time dashboards, including proactive alerts where pay differential rises above a certain amount. The analysis of this data by other intersectional characteristics, such as age and ethnic group
- 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 e.g. for recruitment, progression and performance management

BITC recommends that:

- Employers as standard monitor and publicise their pay gaps through regular pay audits (gender and ethnicity), developing time bound 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 combing multiple data sets
- That pay and reward policies are made more transparent, encouraging a culture of openness around this topic, shown to benefit women and employees from Black, Asian, Mixed Race or other ethnically diverse backgrounds⁹

⁹ [CATALYST: HR, Take Note: Employees Want Pay Transparency. Smart Companies Are Listening](#)



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Shell has been increasing pay transparency by providing employees with clear information regarding pay determination and externally publishing its Fair Pay Principles. Shell also takes a holistic approach to the employee life cycle, by supporting women's careers through coaching, mentoring, sponsorship, and targeted development programmes that support women at different points in their careers.

Ipsos captures and analyses pay gap data to identify areas to drive progress. It takes an intersectional approach, reviewing gender pay gap data in relation to both age and different ethnic groups.



7) Progression and Promotion

This question considers the action employers are taking to remove the barriers to progression for all and provide opportunities for women and marginalised genders to learn and thrive. Typically, a strong performing area, this year saw an 8% dip in performance, with not enough evidence of initiatives to enhance the culture of the organisation alongside addressing occupational segregation.

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)
- 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 diverse interview panels, bias interrupters



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- Monitoring promotions and performance data, scrutinising inconsistencies and holding senior leaders accountable for results
- 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
- Measuring and adapting approach in line with employee sentiment via networks and/or employee surveys
- Implementation of an Employees Appeal Process if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of their performance review to ensure fairness

BITC recommends that:

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

Morgan Stanley

To ensure balanced progression **Morgan Stanley** uses gender-neutral language, gender-balanced shortlists and individual action plans created by managers, using talent indicators (Performance/Platform/Profile/Potential) for high-performing women, monitored by divisional leadership. The company also runs several programmes targeting diverse women at all levels, with coaching/ sponsorship as key elements. To complement internal programmes, the organisation partners with external vendors to develop talent with an intersectional lens. Additionally, Morgan Stanley's Future Generation Scholarship provides £10,000 of financial support alongside mentorship and career-readiness training to scholars with ethnic-minority and/or low socio-economic backgrounds.





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Greater improvement needed

8) Supporting women and other marginalised genders at risk of low pay

Despite seeing the greatest improvement in this year's scoring, identifying and supporting women on low pay continues to be an area that requires further attention. Women, who make up the majority of those earning low wages and in highly insecure work, can find themselves 'trapped' in lower paid roles and unable to access progression opportunities and many of the workplace benefits that more highly paid colleagues can experience. The increased application of generative AI to the workplace also puts some of these roles under threat of future existence, with identifying, supporting and reskilling women in low paid roles never being of higher importance.

Best practice looked like:

- Continually monitoring female representation in different job groups, experience levels, and working patterns to understand potential disparities
- 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

- Targeted skills development or mentoring programmes for women in lower salary groups
- The redefinition of secretarial roles to focus on specific specialisms to increase the diversity of applicants and allow greater career progression opportunities
- Taking an intersectional approach when setting targets (e.g. the number of women in entry-level technology roles), monitoring and reporting these to senior leadership
- Expanding options for diversity data collection, to include, amongst other things adult / elder / child caregiver status, socio-economic background, neurodiversity and disability
- Provision of resources to support women in lower pay grades, through live events, webinars, videos, and financial toolkits
- Supporting the successful integration of employees from lower socio-economic backgrounds by dedicated training around inclusive management
- Raising awareness around mitigating potential microaggressions or biases related to social mobility





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- Dedicated work with suppliers to address this issue, through:
 - Establishing a vendor code of conduct.
 - Requesting EDI statements and gender data from suppliers
 - Establishing specific gender targets in collaboration with suppliers
 - Increasing partnerships with diverse suppliers
 - Investing in this area through the appointment of specialist teams/headcount
- Regular reviews of pay bandings and budgets and adjusting these if not in line with market value
- 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

BITC recommends that:

- Employers pay the national living wage, and only work with contractors and suppliers who also pay this
- Employers recognise that across their workforce, including those working via contractors and

suppliers, there will be women experiencing low pay and to take action accordingly via targeted development, promotion and other career progression opportunities

- Pay and reward is regularly reviewed against inflation to evaluate if there is any need for improvement
- Employers be as supportive as possible in working arrangements, development opportunities and access to help and support (EAPs) to help retain and progress socially mobile employees

NatWest conducts socio-economic analysis to identify the women in the organisation within the lowest pay quartile. This identified that clerical-level colleagues are almost twice as likely to come from a working-class background compared to those in senior roles, and that women within the organisation are 13% less likely to have a degree and are at an educational disadvantage. When overlaid with minority ethnic data this disadvantage increases. As NatWest has a higher proportion of women in junior roles, it is addressing these imbalances through sponsorship, re-skilling and inclusive job-design to support advancement of junior colleagues regardless of background.





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PwC has a significant focus on the experiences of employees from lower socio-economic backgrounds and has conducted multiple research projects. The firm commissioned research on the new joiner experience of junior employees from Lower Socio-Economic Backgrounds (LSEB), ensuring participants were gender balanced and spanned across the business. PwC also carried out a data research project into progression rates and intersectionality (gender, ethnicity and Social Economic Background). Additionally, a further study is underway exploring cultural experiences of class in the workplace, including socio-economic microaggressions. Outcomes from research to date have included increased financial support and targeted action planning which forms part of PwC's wider inclusion strategy. It has also supported the development of SEB targets that have been externally published.

9) Sexual Harassment

Reintroduced as a standalone question for this year's award, sexual harassment is a prevalent issue, with the likelihood that most employers will, at some point, employ someone who experiences such misconduct. Although sexual harassment can affect individuals of any gender, research indicates that women are more vulnerable to workplace harassment especially if they are marginalised due to factors such as race or disability.¹⁰

Whilst applicants evidenced a clear policy and zero tolerance approach towards sexual harassment, supported by training, a more proactive and deliberate approach needs to be taken to surfacing issues and supporting those to report their experiences.

Best practice looked like:

- A zero-tolerance approach outlined in a clear policy that is communicated to all employees, contractors and clients that is readily accessible
- 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



¹⁰ [FAWCETT SOCIETY: Tackling sexual harassment in the workplace: Recommendations for employers](#)



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- Having multiple channels available for employees to report instances of sexual harassment (formally or informally) with an anti-retaliation policy in place
 - Supporting individuals who report or witness sexual harassment through counselling and access to Employee Assistance Programmes
 - The use of internal communications to facilitate employee understanding and action against sexual harassment e.g. 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 employee engagement surveys, exit interview material to understand if your approach is effective
- 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
 - Making available and promoting independent legal support for people who report
 - Avoiding the use of 'non-disclosure agreements' or similar designed policies to restrict individuals who have experienced poor behaviour at work from sharing their experiences with others – tools developed to ensure commercially-sensitive data is kept confidential should not be deployed to in-effect 'gag' people who speak up

BITC recommends that:

- 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 employees including information on how they were addressed
 - Sharing case studies of previous incidents, including how they were addressed





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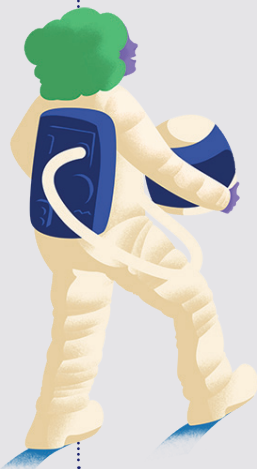
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As a regulated business, **TLT** takes seriously Sexual Harassment within its organisation, reporting all cases to its Operations Board. Any trends in this data are analysed and monitored, with actions agreed as required. To ensure impartiality and accountability, an external law firm is used to check grievance processes, and any cases of sexual harassment are reported externally to the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). Furthermore, the company organises specific sessions on sexual harassment with equity partners, reviewing case studies and discussing/replaying what should have been done differently.

10) Support for Parents and Carers

This question seeks to understand what employers are doing to support their employees manage work and care, instilling a workplace culture that facilitates and supports this. Performance in this area saw the most significant drop against last year's cohort at almost 10%, with applicants taking little action to tackle the stigma faced by working parents and carers and demonstrate the impact of their policies. The importance of reducing the gender imbalance in responsibility for care cannot be overstated, with unequal parental leave driving 70% of the Gender Pay Gap¹¹. Data suggests an increase in the length of parental leave taken by fathers estimated to result in a potential £260 million a year cost saving for employers.¹²

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

¹¹ [Equal parental leave policies key to addressing UK gender pay gap](#)

¹² [PwC \(2023\) Women In Work 2023 Closing The Gender Pay Gap For Good: A Focus On The Motherhood Penalty.](#)



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- The provision of paid carers leave that can be taken in hourly chunks if necessary
- 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 leave buddies/mentors and a phased return to work. Early conversations led by line managers around flexible working options
- 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
- Supporting 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

BITC recommends that:

- Employers consider care, in all its facets, 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)
- Organisations monitor the take up of policies to support parents and carers to better track their impact and check for potential biases. For example, only 43% of applicants track promotion rates after periods of parental leave currently
- 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 people is a business priority (only 50% of applicants do this currently)





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Ipsos offers an enhanced and equal parental policy to support parents to build a meaningful career whilst balancing caring responsibilities. The policy offers all parents 12 weeks of fully paid leave, followed by 27 weeks leave at double the rate of statutory pay. Expectant and new parents are also supported with the transition to parenthood and their return to the workplace through parental coaching. Additional paid time off and support is given to carers, people experiencing or supporting someone through menopause, pregnancy loss, fertility treatment, neo-natal leave and to new grandparents.



Deloitte offers externally facilitated workshops, groups and 1:1 coaching to support transition, wellbeing, and work-life balance before, during and after parental leave. Revamped in 2023, content is tailored based on length of leave as well as mixed-group parent sessions to reduce stereotyping and broaden perspectives. Deloitte also has an externally facilitated 'Carers Programme' that provides workshops, group coaching, self-facilitated mentoring circles to help carers manage roles at home and work, supporting wellbeing and resilience.





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BITC'S GENDER CAMPAIGN

Business in the Community's (BITC) Gender Campaign aims to foster inclusive workplaces where everyone, regardless of gender, can thrive. The campaign supports businesses to focus on eliminating gender bias and promoting equal opportunities across all levels of business. By addressing systemic inequalities and implementing actionable strategies, it aspires to create a more balanced and fair working environment. The ultimate goal is to ensure that everyone can have equal access to career advancement, leadership roles, and professional development opportunities.

Engaging with the BITC Gender Equality Campaign offers numerous benefits for businesses. Participating companies can **enhance their reputation** as progressive and equitable employers, which can attract top talent and improve employee retention. Research consistently shows that diverse teams lead to **better decision-making, greater innovation, and improved financial performance**. By committing to gender equality, businesses fulfil their social responsibility and gain a competitive edge in the market. The campaign provides practical tools, resources, and support to help businesses implement effective gender equality policies and practices.

Participation in this campaign is not just about compliance or public image; it is about creating a sustainable and inclusive future where everyone has the opportunity to succeed. We would love to work with your business.

Find out more:



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EMILY RONER-ROPER
Campaign Manager



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WHAT THE LIST MAKERS SAY



Diversity, equity and inclusion is the pulse of our firm and our ambition is to achieve gender balance at all career levels. We support the retention and progression of our talented women through a focus on inclusion, sponsorship, fair work allocation, development programmes, agile working and market-leading family-friendly policies.



Women make up half the world's population which is why achieving gender equality in the workplace is important to us. At the heart of our strategy we focus on our people and our planet. Embracing uniqueness and valuing all genders is a way of being, woven into everything we do.



Linklaters



Worldline

Hear from the list makers on our YouTube playlist

The Times Top 50 for Gender Equality 2024
Business in the Community
25 videos 430 views Last updated on 20 Jun 2024

▶ Play all ⌵ Shuffle

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.

- The Times Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality - Mary Macleod**
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Gender equality at work is essential to achieving gender equality in society, enabling a fairer future for all. We serve many consumers and communities and it's important that we represent and are trusted by them all. Our inclusive culture, where everyone can thrive, is built on our values of respect.



Nestle



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APPENDIX: 2024 QUESTION SET

1. Strategy and Objectives

- 1.1 Tell us about your strategy to address gender equality in your organisation. What targets have you set to measure progress, and who is accountable for achieving this? How have you ensured that the strategy is integrated across all functions and levels of the organisation and is intersectional? (500 words).

2. Line Managers

- 2.1 How do you mobilise and support line managers to achieve greater gender equality? How are they held accountable for achieving your gender equality strategy? (500 words).

3. Pay and Reward

- 3.1. What action have you taken to address your organisation's Gender Pay Gap and ensure your pay and reward processes are fair and transparent? (500 words)
- 3.2 Please provide evidence that your activity has had an organisational impact in the last two years.

4. Recruitment and selection

- 4.1 What are you doing to recruit a gender diverse workforce? Please consider activities across different levels, functions and for internal and

external applicants, including any longer-term initiatives with your communities and how your approach is intersectional. (500 words).

- 4.2 Please provide evidence that your activity has had an organisational impact in the last two years.

5. Progression and promotion

- 5.1 How do you ensure that all women and other marginalised genders within your organisation are able to progress and flourish? What processes, policies and activities do you have in place to support this, including activity to increase diversity in senior leadership? How do you ensure that you are taking an intersectional approach? (500 words).

- 5.2 Please provide evidence that your activity has had an organisational impact in the last two years.

6. Flexible working

- 6.1 How do you enable employees to work flexibly within your organisation and address the barriers to greater flexible working for all? (500 words).
- 6.2 Please provide evidence that your activity has had an organisational impact in the last two years.



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7. Polices to support parents and carers

- 7.1 How do you ensure parents and carers are able to flourish and progress at work at the same rate as those without caring responsibilities? (500 words)
- 7.2 Please provide evidence that your activity has had an organisational impact in the last two years

8. Low paid women

- 8.1 How is your organisation supporting and developing women and other marginalised genders on low pay? Do you work with your supply chain to encourage and enable them to support and develop their lowest paid women? If you have no specific activity targeting low paid women, please share your approach to supporting low paid workers. (500 words)

9. Sexual Harassment

- 9.1 What measures does your organisation have in place to prevent sexual harassment, promote employee reporting of such incidents, and address cases when they do occur? (500 words)

10. Inclusive Cultures

- 10.1 What are you doing to ensure your workplace is inclusive – that all employees feel respected, valued, that they belong and able to use their voice? How do you identify and address non-inclusive behaviours in your workplace, whether these be online, in the office, on-site or perpetrated by customers and clients? (500 words)





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