

# Maximising women's contribution to future economic growth

Five years on  
Progress Report 2018



## Progress report

# Contents

Chair's foreword	1
Changing the conversation	3
Our five guiding principles	4
Timeline of activity	6
Progress against our original indicators	10
The Business Case	12
Starting Out	16
Getting On	20
Staying On	25
Enterprise	29
Men as Change Agents for Gender Equality	32
Our partners and collaborators	35
Next steps	36
Members of the Women's Business Council	37
Annex	39

'The five years since we published our inaugural report have seen a significant shift in the experiences of women in the workplace.'

**Dame Cilla Snowball**  
Chair, Women's Business Council

## Five year highlights



### Employment rate for women

has increased from 68% in 2014<sup>1</sup> to 71% in 2018<sup>2</sup>



### Gender Pay Gap

has fallen from 19.7% in 2013<sup>3</sup> to 17.9% in 2018<sup>4</sup>



### Women on FTSE 100 Boards

has increased from 20.7% in 2014<sup>5</sup> to 30.2% in 2018<sup>5</sup>



### Women as a percentage of all self-employed

has increased from 30.5% in 2014<sup>1</sup> to 33.2% in 2018<sup>2</sup>

## Chair's foreword

# Maximising women's contribution to the economy



### Dame Cilla Snowball DBE

Chair, Women's Business Council, Group CEO and Group Chairman of AMV BBDO

I am delighted to see the publication of our latest annual report, shining a spotlight on the progress made to maximise women's contribution to the economy.

We produced our inaugural report in 2013 and set out ambitious recommendations to Ministers. These recommendations set out tangible areas for both the Government and the business community to unlock the economic potential of women at all stages of their working lives.

Five years on, it's fantastic to see the progress that has been made.

I am also delighted to welcome the appointment of the Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt, Secretary of State for International Development and Minister for Women and Equalities and Victoria Atkins, Minister of State for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability and Minister for Women. I have been encouraged by the commitment that both Ministers have shown to this agenda and look forward to working closely with them over the coming year to drive change.

The five years since we published our inaugural report have seen a significant shift in the experiences of women in the workplace. In an economy recovering from the scars of the 2007/8 global financial crisis, the equality and diversity agenda has grown from strength to strength. Whilst there is still more to do, we are heartened to see that there are more women in work than ever before and more girls and young women going on to study STEM related subjects at university. The landscape has changed for women returning to the workplace and there are many opportunities for women mid-life and beyond in the world of work.

**'In an economy recovering from the scars of the 2007/8 global financial crisis, the equality and diversity agenda has grown from strength to strength.'**

'It is my sincere hope that the changes we have witnessed over the past five years have started to level the playing field within the workplace for women and men.'

It is my sincere hope that the changes we have witnessed over the past five years have started to level the playing field within the workplace for women and men. Sustained progress towards that goal requires the concerted commitment of the public, Government and business worlds.

The Women's Business Council has always understood that organisations and sectors face their own unique challenges when tackling the causes behind their gender gaps and has advocated from the very start, for organisations to learn from what has worked – to ensure their own actions to close these gaps are targeted, evidence-based and integrated.

Over the last two years, my fellow Women's Business Council members and their Champion Advocates have worked tirelessly to produce seven best practice toolkits providing concrete examples of what works in business to remove the barriers to attracting female talent, supporting men as change agents for gender equality, progressing women through the talent pipeline and supporting women in the third stage of their working lives to remain in work.

Looking back over the last six years of the Council's work, I am honoured to have engaged with such a brilliant group of people: passionate about business and equality within the workplace. I would like to take this moment to thank all of the members of the Women's Business Council, past and present, who have been committed to driving progress, not only in helping women flourish within the system but also in supporting men who are actively changing the system to drive equality.

I would also like to thank those who have continued to give advice and support to our work. Your support has ensured our messages have been heard and that we continue to maximise women's contribution to the growth of the UK economy.

*Cilla Snowball*

**Dame Cilla Snowball**

Chair, Women's Business Council,  
Group CEO and Group Chairman  
of AMV BBDO



# Changing the conversation

'We have built on these foundations to support Government initiatives such as gender pay reporting and increased opportunities for people returning to the workplace.'

In 2013, we published our inaugural report 'Maximising women's contribution to future economic growth'.

The report called for action across Government and the business sector to stimulate the changes needed to start to equalise men and women's access to opportunity in the workplace.

Later that year, the Government published its response to the 36 actions specific to Government and supported the continuation of the business-led and Government-backed Women's Business Council, to progress the remaining business level recommendations. This has led to the unique and world-class partnership we see today, driving change in the workplace, through business-led solutions. Since 2012, our reputation has grown: we have widened the conversation across the country; with member states in the EU; at the UN; and, globally.

In 2018, five years after that initial report, we revisit the business level recommendations made in our inaugural report to look at how the business conversation surrounding them has progressed and explore the developments of three new work areas the Council has since highlighted as essential to removing the barriers preventing women from achieving their full potential in the workplace.

Back in 2013, there were 2.4 million women not working who wanted to work and 1.3 million women who wanted to work more hours. Initiatives to: change perceptions in the classroom; help with the cost of childcare; offer more flexibility; share parenting; recognise the skills, talents and expertise of older women; and, encourage women to start up their own businesses – formed the cornerstones of our on-going work.

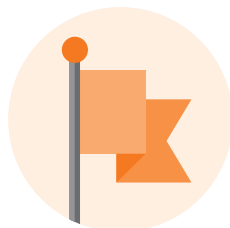
We have built on these foundations to support Government initiatives such as gender pay reporting and increased opportunities for people returning to the workplace. We have forged an important, credible dialogue with those men who hold positions of power and influence within the workplace. More importantly, we have passed the baton to those inspirational male leaders – to amplify our messages and act as a growing body of agents of change.



## Workstrands

# Our five guiding principles

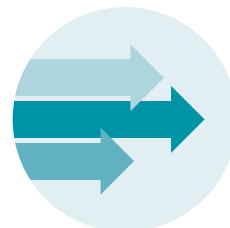
To realise the potential of women's full economic participation, the Women's Business Council is led by five guiding principles, each with a corresponding Action Group to oversee progress.



## Starting Out

### Supporting the choices of girls and young women.

Starting Out looks at raising the aspirations of girls and young women to consider careers in fields traditionally underrepresented by women, particularly in STEM industries.



## Getting On

### Ensuring women can capitalise on the progress they have made in their working lives.

Getting On looks to secure the progress women have made and ensure that they continue to progress, despite increased pressure on their working time, location and patterns of work.

### Gender Pay Reporting

In our inaugural report, the Women's Business Council welcomed the transparency shown by contributing organisations to the Government's *Think Act Report* initiative, through the publication of gender equality information and provided advice supporting the development of the gender pay gap reporting regulations.

In 2017, we welcomed the first year of gender pay gap reporting. Recognising that closing the gap will take a significant commitment by employers, we have promoted best practice to tackle the gender pay gap over the last year, by producing a range of toolkits advocating measures to support organisations to help close their gaps.





## Staying On

**Ensuring that women, mid-life and beyond, are supported to stay in work, return to work and progress in work.**

The UK population is ageing. By 2050, 35% of the working age population will be aged between 50 and the state pension age.<sup>6</sup> Women in this age group offer a brilliant resource of untapped potential and opportunity for economic growth provided they are given the opportunity to learn new skills, the flexibility to work patterns that accommodate their increased caring responsibilities and support from line managers.

### Women Returners

In 2017, the Staying On group engaged with the Government's returner ambition: **enabling more people to return to work following a career break.**

Returner programmes offer new and exciting opportunities for men and women who have been out of the labour market following a career break by looking beyond a gap in the CV, to the skills and experience a returner can offer to an organisation. By encouraging women to return to work following a career break, businesses are able to tap into an under-utilised, skilled workforce. In March 2018, the Council shared best practice for returner programmes in a toolkit for employers.



## Enterprise

**Encouraging more women to consider starting up and growing their own businesses.**

Enterprise looks at helping women to understand how enterprise opportunities can offer financial independence and flexibility in the workplace and how they can gain the skills necessary to set up and run their own businesses. 2018 has been a key year for raising awareness of women's enterprise, as highlighted in The Telegraph's Women Mean Business campaign, shining a spotlight on the important role women play as innovators and founders of British business.



## Men as Change Agents for Gender Equality

**Galvanising men to promote workplace cultural change to foster equality.**

Changing the status quo of workplace culture is vital to bridging the gender gap in work and achieving parity of opportunity between women and men in the workplace. The Women's Business Council understands that both men and women are needed to break down the barriers to equal opportunity in the workplace. In 2016, we expanded, to involve the work of male business leaders, actively championing gender diversity in their fields.

By building a mass of supportive male CEOs to operate as change agents and galvanise change from the very top of organisations, we are seeing a real shift in cultures within the workplace. A sustainable change also requires men throughout an organisation to challenge workplace cultures, so that both men and women can enjoy a better balance between their working and family lives.

# Timeline of Women's Business Council activity

In 2013, following the publication of our report to Ministers, we came together with common goals: to develop the WBC brand to help us share our messages; identify and promote the very best practice on gender equality; and; publish toolkits to influence other businesses and set out initiatives to help us to measure progress.

..... WBC activity

..... Related Government activity

2014



Introduction of the statutory right to request flexible working permitting all employees with 26 weeks' continuous service the right to formally request flexible working patterns from their employer

.....

Delivered 500 activities to promote the WBC recommendations



.....

Engaged with a potential audience of over 10 million people through media



.....

Reached over 138,000 people through active engagement opportunities including companies, Government, industry representative bodies, students, entrepreneurs and NGOs



.....

Welcomed an Older Workers Business Champion (Baroness Altmann)



.....

Hosted 100 industry-led case studies on the WBC website







Appointed Dame Cilla Snowball as the new WBC Chair and expanded the WBC's membership to 20 members including more male leaders and leaders in traditionally underrepresented fields including telecommunications, construction and engineering



Launch of the Hampton-Alexander Review and its recommendations calling for FTSE 350 organisations to meet a target of 33% women on FTSE 350 Boards and 33% women in FTSE 100 leadership teams by 2020



Extended the focus of the Council to support gender pay gap reporting



HM Treasury published the Women in Finance Charter, calling on organisations within the finance industry to commit to addressing gender gaps within their organisations



**2016**



Delivered a further 500 activities promoting the WBC's work and aims



Introduction of Shared Parental Leave enabling parents of newborns to share up to 50 weeks of parental leave



Reached a potential audience of 20 million through the media



Launch of 'Think Act Report', the Government's step-by-step framework for companies to think about gender equality in their workforce



Hosted 150 topical case studies on our website



Contributed to the Burt Report on Inclusive Support for Women's Enterprise



Increased WBC membership to 15



Increased the remit of the WBC to include a focus on the role of men in challenging and changing workplace cultures to ensure a level playing field for all



**2015**

2017



Announcement of a £5 million fund supporting those who had taken a significant career break for caring responsibilities, back into the workforce



Launched the WBC's first POWERlist in collaboration with Management Today, shining a spotlight on 30 Male Agents of Change for Gender Equality



Gender Pay Gap regulations that came into force in April 2017



Produced four best practice toolkits designed for business by business, advocating:



Provided input into the Government's Industrial Strategy White Paper reiterating the importance of diversity for business and national productivity



- 1 the benefits of a multigenerational workforce
- 2 toolkit for HR directors on getting women back into the workforce through older apprenticeships, returner and alumni programmes



Welcomed the appointment of the Government's second Older Worker champion Andy Briggs



- 3 the importance of flexible working, relatable role modelling and supportive line management for women's progression
- 4 a simple guide for businesses, large and small alike, on how to run a returner programme



Celebrated our second POWERlist awards, now gaining national traction



Published three best practice toolkits for businesses on:

- 1 the vital role of male leaders in championing gender diversity from the very top of their organisations and their personal role in pushing forward cultural change
- 2 a guide for STEM SMEs on how to engage with their supply chains on gender diversity at a local level
- 3 the importance of STEM SMEs on using a metrics-based approach for closing the gender gaps in their attraction, progression and retention policies with a downloadable dashboard allowing SMEs to set their own targets against 9 easy-to-use metrics



Launched spotlight pages from male leaders on what gender diversity means to them in their organisations, what they've done that's worked, and lessons learnt from initiatives that haven't

Hosted four events engaging business leaders on the importance of this agenda at the BT tower, House of Commons, St James's Palace with HRH Duke of York and at the Guildhall



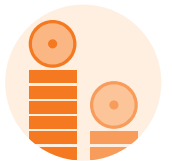
Announcement by HM Treasury of a review into barriers for women in business



Publication of the 2018–2020 carers action plan



We advised the Prime Minister on our reflections on the first year of gender pay gap reporting





Announcement of the extension of eligibility of 30 free hours of childcare for 3–4 year olds to those with foster parents



The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy announced plans to consult on increased transparency around parental leave



# Progress against our original indicators

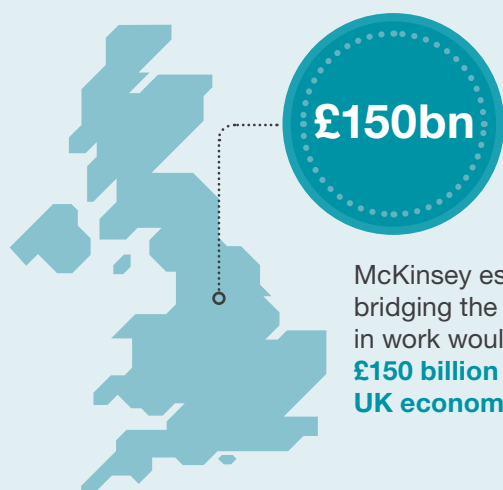
-  Progress against the original indicator
-  Regression against the original indicator
-  Similar to 2013 position

Starting Out			
Indicator	2013	2018	Trend
Girls taking STEM A-Levels (entries to the nearest 1000)	98,000 (2013) <sup>7</sup>	109,000 (provisional 2018) <sup>8</sup>	▲
Girls enrolled in STEM degrees (not counting 'other undergraduate'* studies to nearest 1000)	327,000 (for first degree 2012/13) 432,000 (including postgraduate degrees 2012/2013) <sup>9</sup>	369,000 for first degrees (2016/17) 497,000 including postgraduate degrees (2016/17) <sup>10</sup>	▲
Women in STEM occupations (to the nearest 1000)	689,000 (2014) <sup>11</sup>	864,000 (2017) <sup>12</sup>	▲
Reducing the Gender Pay Gap	19.7% in 2013 <sup>3</sup>	17.9% in 2018 <sup>4</sup>	▼
Getting On			
Indicator	2013	2018	Trend
Employment rate for women	68% in June–Aug 2014 <sup>1</sup>	71% June – Aug 2018 <sup>2</sup>	▲
Economic inactivity for women	27.7% June–Aug 2014 <sup>1</sup>	25.9% June – Aug 2018 <sup>2</sup>	▼
Women returning to work within 18 months of birth of the child	77% in 2009 <sup>13</sup>	Whilst this study has not been updated, the ONS found that that 59.6% of mothers with a youngest child aged three to four were in employment in 2012. By 2017 this figure had risen to 65.1% <sup>14</sup>	▲
Women in Managerial Roles	32.8% in April – Jun 2013 <sup>15</sup>	35.5% April–Jun 2018 <sup>16</sup>	▲
Women on FTSE 100 Boards	20.7% of FTSE 100 directors March 2014 <sup>5</sup>	30.2% 2018 <sup>5</sup>	▲
Women in the Senior Civil Service	36.1% 2013 <sup>17</sup>	42.7% March 2018 <sup>18</sup>	▲

\* Accounting for STEM based first degrees, postgraduate taught degrees and postgraduate research degrees. 'Other' undergraduate degrees have not been included in this analysis

Staying On			
Indicator	2013	2018	Trend
<b>Carers feeling their caring responsibilities affected their ability to take up or remain in employment</b>	In 2009/10 26% of carers felt their responsibilities affected their ability to take up or remain in employment <sup>19</sup>	In 2016 21% of carers felt they were unable to work as a result of their responsibilities <sup>20</sup>	▼
<b>Gender Pay Gap for older workers</b>	26.2% for 50–59 yr olds 20.8% 60+ yr olds in 2013 <sup>3</sup>	25.9% for 50–59 yr olds 22.3% for 60+ yr olds <sup>4</sup>	▲
<b>Employment rate for older women</b>	63.2% for 50–64 yr olds June–Aug 2014 7.6% 65+ yr olds June–Aug 2014 <sup>1</sup>	67.5% for 50–64 yr olds 7.9% for 65+ yr olds June–Aug 2018 <sup>2</sup>	▲
<b>Economic inactivity for older women</b>	34.6% for 50–64 yr olds 92.3% for 65+yr olds in June–Aug 2014 <sup>1</sup>	30.4% for 50–64 yr olds 92.0% for 65+ yr olds in June–Aug 2018 <sup>2</sup>	▼
Enterprise			
Indicator	2013	2018	Trend
<b>Percentage of women engaged in early stage entrepreneurial activity</b>	5.8% in 2013 <sup>21</sup>	5.3% in 2018 <sup>22</sup>	▼
<b>Women as a percentage of all self-employed</b>	30.5% June–Aug 2013 <sup>1</sup>	33.2% June–Aug 2018 <sup>2</sup>	▲
<b>Percentage of SMEs that are majority led by women</b>	19% of SMEs were women led in 2012, 910,000 <sup>23</sup>	19% of SMEs were women led in 2017, 1.2 million <sup>24</sup>	—
<b>Percentage of women believing they have the skills, knowledge and experience to start a business</b>	31.2% in 2012 <sup>25</sup>	33.4% <sup>25</sup>	▲
<b>Percentage of women reporting fear of failure as a barrier to starting a business</b>	46.4% in 2012 <sup>25</sup>	43.9% in 2017 <sup>25</sup>	▼
<b>Women-led SMEs reporting barriers to overdraft applications</b>	25% discouraged 27% issues with process (2012) <sup>51</sup>	26% discouraged compared to 38% of male 39% issues with process compared to 30% male (2015) <sup>54</sup>	▼ ▲
<b>Women-led SMEs reporting main reason for stopping applying for a loan was discouragement</b>	23% <sup>51</sup>	41% (2015) <sup>54</sup>	▲

# The Business Case



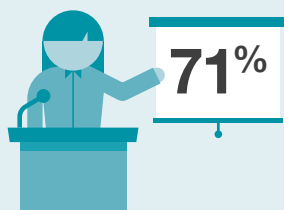
McKinsey estimates that bridging the gender gap in work would add **£150 billion to the UK economy by 2025**.<sup>26</sup>

Encouraging signs, but still more to be done

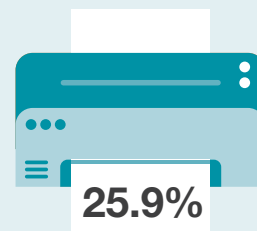
## The picture of female employment



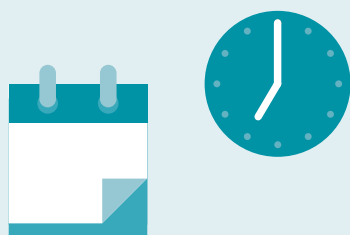
There are **15.2 million women in employment aged 16+**.<sup>2</sup>



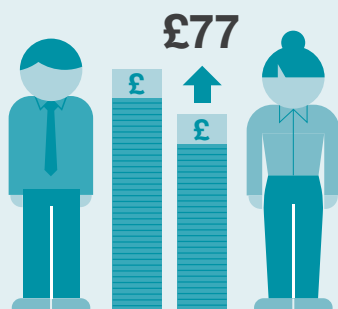
The employment rate for women (16–64) is **71%**, 3 percentage points higher than when the Council's inaugural report was published.<sup>1, 2</sup>



The inactivity rate for women (aged 16–64) is **25.9%**, 2.2 percentage points lower than when the Council's inaugural report was published.<sup>1, 2</sup>

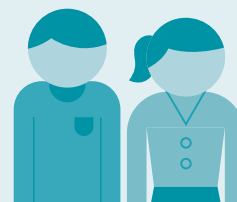


**59.1% of working women are working full-time** an increase of 1.8 percentage points.<sup>1, 2</sup>



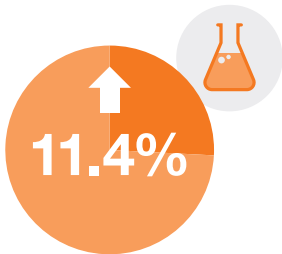
Women have seen an **11.2% increase in their salaries since 2013** whilst men have seen a 9.5% increase to their salaries over the same period.<sup>3, 4</sup>

The median full-time gender pay gap has **fallen to a record low of 8.6%** and the **overall median gender pay gap is 17.9%**, 1.9 percentage points lower than when the Council compiled their inaugural report.<sup>3, 4</sup>

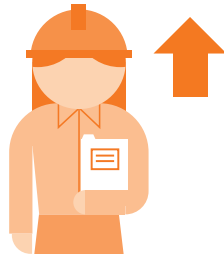




## Starting Out



There has been an **increase in number of entries to STEM A Levels by girls**, up 6.9% from last year and 11.4% since 2013.<sup>7, 8</sup>



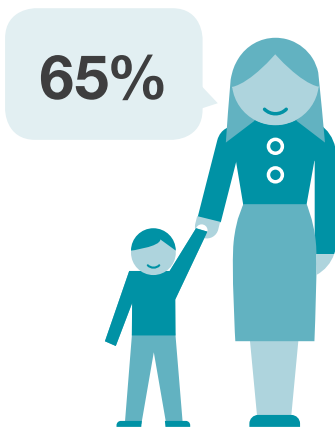
This uplift has also been shown in a **dramatic increase in the number of women enrolling on STEM degrees**. In the 2012/13 academic year, over 432,000 women enrolled on STEM based degrees; in 2016/7 this had increased by **nearly 65,000 to over 497,000**.<sup>9, 10</sup>



There are also **more women in STEM roles than in 2014** growing by 25% by 2017.<sup>11, 12</sup>



## Getting On



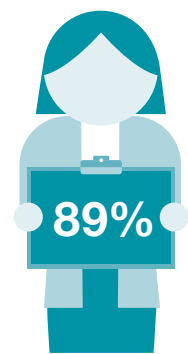
In England, there are **more mothers in employment** whose youngest child is a toddler than in 2013 increasing from over 61% to 65% in 2017.<sup>14</sup>



And **more women in senior management positions**, at 35%, that's over a 2 percentage points increase from the 33% figure highlighted by the Council in 2013.<sup>15, 16</sup>

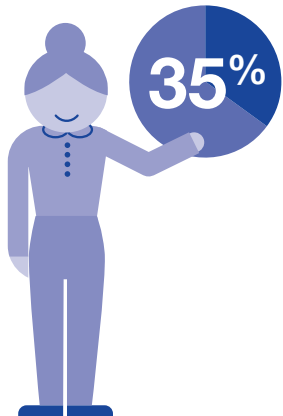


The Institute for Fiscal Studies has found that time out of the labour market has a substantial impact on women's salaries. **On returning to work, women earn around 2% less on average for every year spent out of paid work.** The penalty is worse for highly qualified women who earn 4% less on average for each year they take out.<sup>30</sup>



However **caring responsibilities still remain the main cause of economic inactivity**. Of the 2.04 million economically inactive people due to 'looking after their family or home', 89% are women.<sup>27</sup>

## Staying On



By 2050, **35% of the working age population will be aged between 50 and the state pension age** – an increase of 8 million people into the workforce.<sup>6</sup>



PwC estimate that should the UK increase its older worker employment rate to match that of Sweden, a potential **£80 billion could be added to the UK economy**.<sup>31</sup>

Women over the age of 50 represent one of the **fastest growing economically active demographics over the past 20 years**.<sup>32</sup>



Working longer could significantly increase pension pots, especially for women who have spent some time out of the labour market. DWP analysis suggests that a woman retiring at the age of 63 instead of 55 on average earnings – who took a 10 year career break – could see an extra **£180,000 added to her income and a pension pot increase by 50%**.<sup>32</sup>

## Women Returners



**1.2 million**  
returners in the UK<sup>50</sup>



**91%** of returners are female.<sup>50</sup>



**84%** of whom are mothers with dependent children.<sup>50</sup>



\* individuals who have taken a career break of a year or more for caring responsibilities and want to return to the workplace.

## Enterprise



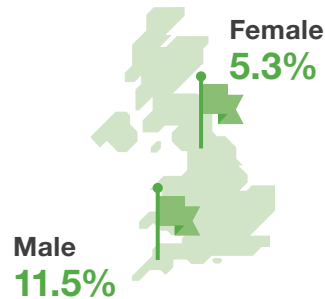
There are more self-employed women now than when the WBC's inaugural report was published, **an increase from 1,294,000 to 1,594,000.**<sup>27</sup>



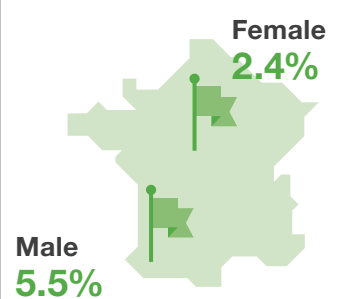
Whilst there has been a drop in female entrepreneurial activity within the UK since 2013 from 5.8% to 5.3%<sup>22</sup> in 2018, **the UK remains an entrepreneurial nation when compared to similar economies such as France and Germany.**<sup>25</sup>

### Percentage of male and female total early stage entrepreneurial activity 2017<sup>25</sup>

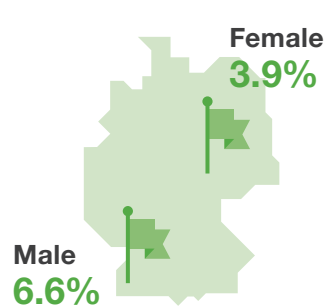
#### UK



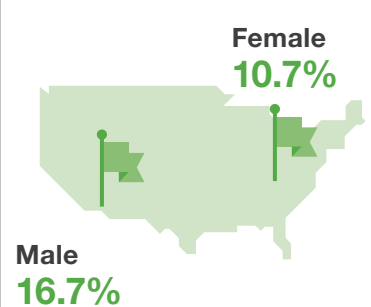
#### France



#### Germany



#### US



## Men as Change Agents for Gender Equality



Our POWERlist awards in collaboration with Management Today have **celebrated nearly 60 male role models for change.**

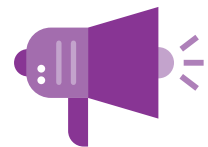
Earlier this year we launched our Men as Change Agents pledge inviting business leaders to:



Personally champion the achievement of the Hampton Alexander challenge of **33% of executive level business leaders being women** by 2020.

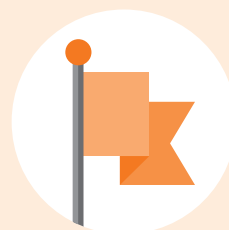


Sponsor 1–3 women in their organisation with the potential to **secure an executive level role within 3 years.**



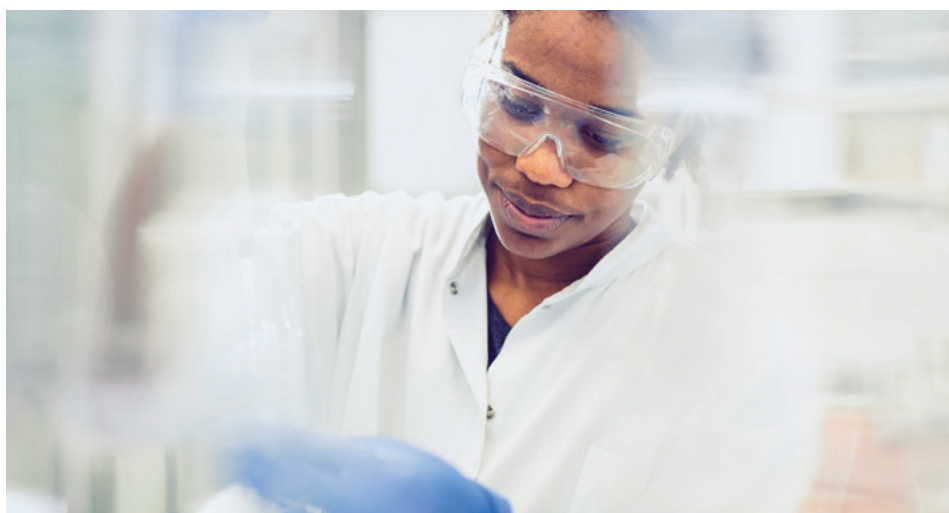
**Be an active and visible 'change agent'** for gender parity in UK business leadership.

# Starting Out



Girls entries into  
taking STEM A Levels  
compared to 2013

UP  
**11k**<sup>33</sup>



In 2013, the Women's Business Council identified occupational segregation as a key driver for gender pay gaps between men and women, noting that stereotypes between 'men's work' and 'women's work' play a strong role in influencing future subject and career choice, creating early barriers to girls and young women considering careers in higher paid fields.



More women are studying science-aligned subjects now than when the Council was originally set up, as shown by an increase in the **number of entries into STEM A levels by girls of 11.4% since 2013**<sup>33</sup> and an additional 65,000 female graduates

studying STEM aligned degrees than in 2012.<sup>9, 10</sup> However, women still remain underrepresented in the highest paid STEM subjects and roles, accounting for only 23% of those in core STEM occupations in the UK.<sup>12</sup>

Women graduates are more likely to be represented in subjects which lead to lower earnings <sup>29</sup>	One year after graduating, weekly earnings (Tax year 2015/16)		Female entries into undergraduate degrees <sup>9, 10</sup>	
	Men	Women	2012/13	2016/17
Subject area				
Medicine & Dentistry	£698	£688	56%	57%▲
Engineering & Technology	£487	£460	16%	18%▲
Architecture, Building & Planning	£467	£402	34%	38%▲
Mathematical Sciences	£438	£425	39%	37%▼
Computer Science	£410	£381	17%	17%–
Physical Sciences	£388	£362	40%	41%▲
Business & Administrative Studies	£385	£363	49%	49%–
Law	£342	£327	60%	62%▲
Social Studies (excluding Economics)	£365	£340	62%	63%▲
Languages (excluding English Studies)	£381	£367	69%	71%▲
Education	£400	£346	76%	76%–
Biological Sciences (excluding Psychology)	£312	£310	61%	63%▲
Historical & Philosophical Studies	£337	£333	53%	54%▲
Subjects aligned to medicine (excluding nursing)	£417	£402	79%	79%–
Creative Arts & Design	£277	£275	62%	64%▲
Mass Communications & Documentation	£294	£313	58%	59%▲
English Studies	£315	£312	62%	74%▲

Source: HSEA data, 2012/13 to 2016/17 accounting for STEM based first degrees, postgraduate taught degrees and postgraduate research degrees. 'Other' undergraduate degrees have not been included in this analysis.





The skills deficit in STEM sectors presents concerning trends for the UK's continued prosperity in a growing sector. In 2016, trends suggested that jobs in science, research and technology are expected to grow at double the rate of other jobs creating 142,000 new roles by 2023<sup>34</sup> and the majority of roles on the Home Office Shortage Occupation List fall into STEM related roles or industries.

In 2015, 43% of STEM employers reported that STEM vacancies were hard to fill<sup>35</sup>, representing a significant potential loss to the UK economy. Engineering UK suggests that the skills shortage in engineering alone could see the UK economy lose out on up to £27 billion a year from 2022.<sup>36</sup>

It is clear that both Government and STEM employers, large and small alike require a concerted effort, to open up career choices for young people but particularly young girls who are underrepresented in STEM further education and employment, encouraging women to enter, remain and progress within STEM careers. This was a key focus in our response to the developing Industrial Strategy last year.

In 2017, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy published an Industrial Strategy highlighting the Government's commitment to invest in STEM skills including:

- **£84m over the next five years** to deliver a comprehensive programme to improve the teaching of computing and drive up participation in computer science, with a particular focus on girls;
- awareness raising activity **by supporting the Year of Engineering** celebrations with industry to challenge traditional perceptions of engineering to show young people, their parents and teachers that background, education and gender should not be a barrier to becoming an engineer; and,
- supporting the promotion of **three STEM aligned Charters, in Finance, Aviation and Aerospace, and Tech** committing signatory organisations to set, track and meet gender diversity targets.

**In line with our original recommendations, the Council advises three priority areas for intervention.**

### Careers advice

On 19th July 2018, BAE Systems, Willmott Dixon and MTC launched '*Inspire the Next Generation*' a guide for small businesses on how to engage young people in STEM. The toolkit offers practical tips for small organisations to engage with school children within primary and secondary education with a range of STEM resources to bring a career in science to life.

The toolkit also encourages organisations to consider joining over 30,000 STEM Ambassadors<sup>37</sup>, a nationwide volunteer network which supports local schools with STEM related activities. Ambassadors play a vital role in making science careers relatable for girls and boys. Over 40% of Ambassadors are female<sup>38</sup>, and the scheme had a coverage rate of 93% of secondary schools within England in 2014/15. It therefore provides a vital platform for real-life role models for young people and particularly young girls.



### Girls enrolled in STEM degrees

has increased from 327,000 in 2012/13<sup>9</sup>, to 369,000 in 2016/17<sup>10</sup> for first degrees



## Improved work experience skills and placements

As part of its *'Inspire the Next Generation'* toolkit the Women's Business Council advocates for organisations to provide meaningful work experience and has included resources for STEM organisations and those in the construction industry to help them to develop effective work experience for young people, based on evidence, feedback and case studies of what works.

In 2016/17, despite women accounting for 53.4% of all apprenticeship starts, they were particularly under-represented in construction, representing just 3% of the sector's apprentices starting that year, and in Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, where they accounted for 8% of the sector's apprenticeship starts.<sup>39</sup> Providing work experience tied to local apprenticeship opportunities and ensuring they are inclusive in their design and advertising, offers an alternative career path for young people to consider and develop STEM skills.

## A concerted effort to support more girls into, and encourage them to remain within, STEM careers

Building the UK's STEM capability will rely on more than just encouraging more girls to study STEM related subjects. It also requires a significant commitment by organisations to understand what the barriers are to attracting, progressing and retaining female talent.

In 2018, the Starting Out group launched *'Balance the System'*, a guide for SMEs on how to increase gender diversity to accelerate business growth. The toolkit offers a supportive dashboard, easily downloadable for small businesses to measure HR policy interventions related to their attraction, progression and retention processes supported by key tips and evidence based resources shown to improve gender diversity.



### Women in STEM occupations

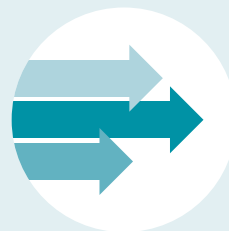
has increased from 689,000 in 2014<sup>11</sup>, to 864,000 in 2017<sup>12</sup>

'Building the UK's STEM capability will rely on more than just encouraging more girls to study STEM related subjects.'



# Getting On

Progression, flexible working and working motherhood



Provision of free childcare has doubled

UP TO  
**30hrs**  
per  
week



In 2013, the Women's Business Council identified talent management, access to flexible working and supportive childcare as key areas to remove barriers to women's progression.

Women in work often look to capitalise on the progress made during their 20s, either by securing their positions or looking to move into more senior and managerial roles. This is often also the period when women are likely to have their first child and experience increased caring burdens, resulting in some women deciding to take time out of the labour market to raise their children or care for others.

According to research conducted by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, women taking time out of the labour market is often accompanied by significant financial penalties, amassing to an average 2% fall in earnings per year spent out of employed work.<sup>30</sup> To offset this burden: supportive childcare; effective talent management programmes; and, flexible working environments are essential for ensuring the talent pipeline remains balanced at all levels.

### Talent Management

To fully unlock the potential of women in the workforce, barriers to women's progression need to be addressed. Analysis of ONS data highlights that it will take until at least 2043 to achieve gender balance in business leadership at the current rate of progress.<sup>16</sup>

That's not to say that important leaps have not been made. In 2011, the Lord Davies review found 152 all male boards amongst the FTSE 350.<sup>5</sup> Setting a target for increasing the number of women on FTSE boards was a key driver for change and for increased gender diversity at senior levels and ensured the Lord Davies review met its 25% target for the FTSE 100 by 2020.

There are now no all-male boards in the FTSE 100 and only five in the FTSE 350, the lowest number on record. The Hampton-Alexander Review built on the success of the Lord Davies review to set stretching targets of 33% for women on FTSE 350 boards, within FTSE 350 executive committees and for 33% of direct reports of the CEO to be female by 2020. Targets such as those displayed by the Hampton-Alexander Review are vital to levelling the playing field at senior levels.

### Flexible Working

Flexible working remains key to unlocking the full potential of men and women. Not only does it encourage those with caring and other responsibilities to return to the workforce, it also encourages greater employee engagement and retention.

In 2017, the Council published the Pipeline Effect a toolkit of best practice for businesses on tailoring support for female employees to progress beyond middle management. Recommendations included a focus on flexible working, authentic line management conversations and the importance of relatable role models.

Flexible, agile and dynamic working encompasses a wide range of working patterns yet is commonly associated with part-time working patterns. To break down myths around various forms of flexible working over the next year the council will develop '100 ways to work flexibly', encouraging business and managers to consider innovative ways to make flexible working work for their staff by highlighting the benefits of different forms of flexible working within large and small businesses alike.





## Supportive Childcare

Caring burdens and their associated time commitments, particularly in relation to childcare, remain a considerable barrier to women's progression in the workforce. ONS analysis of informal childcare suggests the value of unpaid informal childcare in England in 2016 equates to £32,400 per child.<sup>40</sup>

With a significant proportion of informal childcare provided by women, the Council endorsed the Childcare Commission's recommendations for increased financial support for parents to support those who want to work.

In 2017, the government extended the hours of free childcare for eligible parents of 3–4 year olds from 15 to 30 hours a week. Between April and August 2018, nearly 340,000 children<sup>41</sup> benefited from this policy and according to an independent review following the first year of roll-out for the policy, so did their mothers. Over a quarter of mothers interviewed extended their work hours (26%), and whilst a very small proportion returned to work (2%)<sup>42</sup>, the significant proportion of those already working who increased their hours of work, highlights the importance of policies reducing the cost of childcare in enabling more women to experience fuller working lives.

The introduction of policies such as the introduction of 30 hours free childcare and the statutory right to request flexible working for all employees with 26 weeks continuous work have been reflected in significant societal changes. In 2018, the British Social Attitudes Survey found that social views concerning the roles of men and women in the workforce and importantly, working motherhood, has shifted significantly.

'In 2017, the government extended the hours of free childcare for eligible parents of 3–4 year olds from 15 to 30 hours a week.'

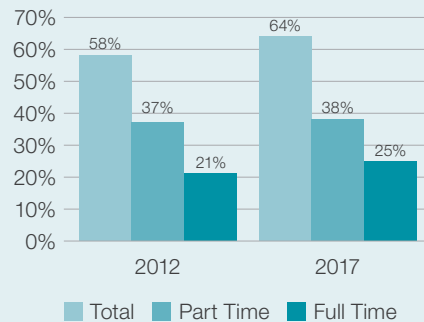
## British Social Attitudes Survey: It's not a man's job to earn money and a woman's to look after the home and family

Since 2012, there has been a considerable shift in social expectations surrounding working mothers, alongside improvements to technology enabling more employees to work outside of the office and subsequently change their working patterns to balance their caring commitments and careers.

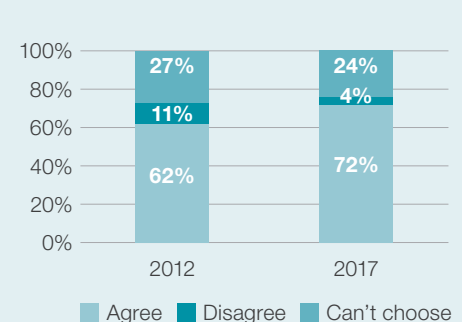
In 2012, research conducted by the British Social Attitudes Survey found that 65% of respondents stated that it is not a man's job to earn money and a woman's to look after the home and family. Last year this rose to 72%. More people than ever before agreed that both men and women should contribute to the household income.

Changes to perceptions of the gender roles of men and women in the economy have also influenced perceptions around working motherhood with more mothers with dependent children working. In 2017, 74% of mothers in England with a dependent child were in employment, an increase<sup>14</sup> of 12 percentage points from 1997. Of those, there has also been a sizable increase in the percentage of mothers whose youngest child is a toddler (children aged 3–4).

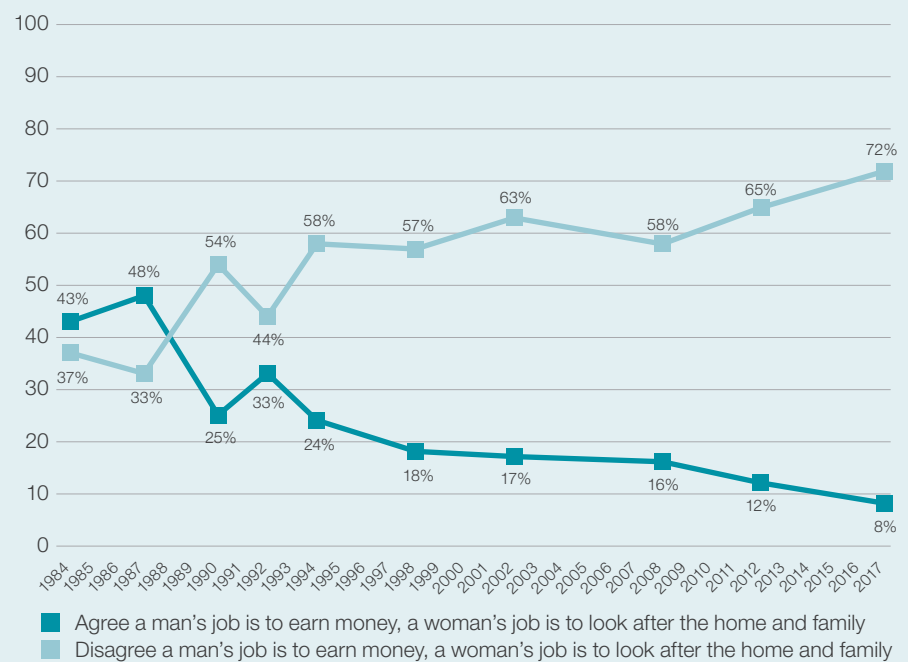
### Percentage of mothers whose youngest child is aged 3–4 years in employment<sup>14</sup>



### Both men and women should contribute to the household income<sup>43</sup>



### Views on traditional gender roles, 1994–2017<sup>43</sup>



## Gender Pay Gap

In 2017, the UK Government introduced world-leading regulations requiring all employers with 250 or more employees to report specific information about their gender pay gap. This ground-breaking legislation increases transparency, driving Board level discussions and pushing employers to take real steps towards closing the gap.

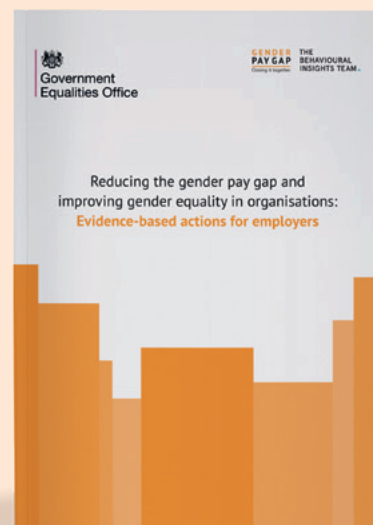
Not to be confused with the Equal Pay Act in which failing to offer equal pay has been unlawful for over 40 years, the gender pay gap shows the differences in the average pay between men and women across a workforce. In 2018, 100% of employers identified as in scope, reported their gender pay gap in the first year of the regulations – that is over 10,000 employers.<sup>44</sup>

The Women's Business Council welcomes increased discussion and transparency to shine a greater light on what works to close the gender gap in work and has recommended specific actions to help address the causes of the gender pay gap in our 'Balance the System' and 'Men as Change Agents' toolkits published earlier this year.

The Council was also engaged in the development of the Government Equalities Office toolkit on evidence based actions for employers to reduce the gender pay gap and improve gender equality in organisations. The Council would strongly recommend organisations to consider the evidence when developing their own action plans to close their pay gaps.

In 2018, the Council wrote to the Prime Minister with their views and recommendations following the first year of Gender Pay Gap reporting.

'In 2017, the UK Government introduced world-leading regulations requiring all employers with 250 or more employees to report specific information about their gender pay gap.'



### Gender Pay Gap

The national Gender Pay Gap fell to 17.9% in 2018<sup>3, 4</sup>



# Staying On

Mid-life and  
beyond



Employment rate for  
women aged 50–64

UP BY  
**4.3**  
percentage  
points<sup>1,2</sup>

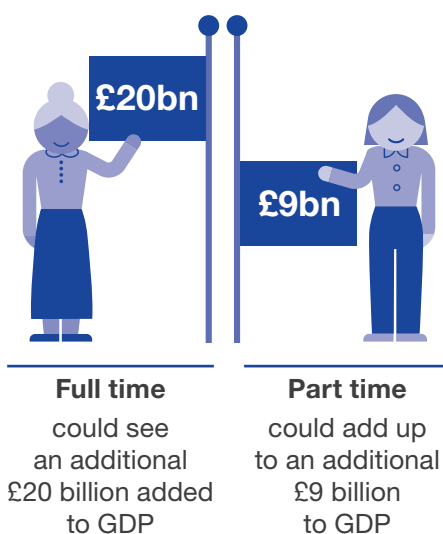


One of the original core areas of the Women's Business Council's agenda, women in the middle of their working lives and beyond represent one of the fastest growing economically active groups.

In our inaugural report, we recommended a focus on ensuring women in this group are fully engaged by their employers and not lost to the economy, advocating greater support for those with caring responsibilities and ensuring women in this phase are provided with opportunities to gain new skills to adapt to the changing requirements of work.

- By 2050, approximately 35% of the working age population will be aged between 50 and the state pension age, an increase of 8 million people.<sup>6</sup>
- If the UK increased its older worker rates to match those of Sweden, an additional £80 billion could be added to the UK GDP.<sup>32</sup>
- Evidence provided by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills in 2014 found that<sup>45</sup>:
  - 45% of people out of work would like to re-enter the labour market, as would 10% of retired people;
  - 33% of those over 50 named age as a key barrier to re-entering the workplace; and,
  - 85% of managers score over 50s highly for occupation-specific knowledge and skills.

- Analysis conducted by the Department for Work and Pensions in 2013, showed that women working beyond the State Pension Age contributed £13 billion to the UK economy, an increase of £10 billion since 2003.<sup>46</sup>
- The analysis also showed that should an additional 0.6 million women aged 50 and above enter work:



## Stereotypes

The 2010 Equality Act provides protection against direct and indirect discrimination against nine protected characteristics, including those related to age and disability, making it unlawful for employers to discriminate against employees on these grounds. However, changing social attitudes and workplace cultures takes considerable time and commitment from organisations.

In 2017, the Council published Age of Success, a toolkit for HR directors on how to utilise the benefits of a multigenerational workforce. Alongside top tips on retaining and recruiting older workers, we also spoke to John Cridland CBE, about his recommendations for a Mid-Life MOT for older employees. The MOT poses a series of questions for mid-life employees to support transparent discussions with line managers about their development, career plans and reasonable adjustments to working patterns.

‘People in their late 50s are coming to the end of their traditional working career, but may have another 30 years ahead of them... in this new world of work, everybody will need help finding a route through it. Employers need to design new policies to support older workers and employees who need help with deciding their work-life balance, the choices they want to make about lifestyle and what that means for work. I think all older people in their late 50s will be looking for a midlife MOT.’

### John Cridland

Author of the Smoothing the Transition, Independent Review of the State Pension Age

In 2017, the Government Equalities Office commissioned a review into the effects of menopause transition in the workplace on women's economic participation. With more women remaining in the workforce after 50, and women on average reaching the menopause at 51, based on current trends more working women will experience the effects of menopause transition whilst in work than ever before. The review found that within certain workplace cultures, mid-life women can be stereotyped by colleagues as menopausal, even when they weren't experiencing the symptoms of the transition, and, that there were generally negative views towards the menopause as well as a lack of awareness about the impact of the menopause on some working women.

We were heartened to see that menopause was addressed by the first Business Champion for Older Workers, Ros Altmann CBE in 2015. In 2017, the Women's Business Council built on these recommendations in the 'Age of Success' toolkit, publishing top tips for employers supporting mid-life women experiencing the effects of menopause transition including occupational health, adjustments to absence policies, flexible working, support networks and changes to the physical workplace environment.



### Economic inactivity for older women

has decreased from 34.6% in 2013<sup>1</sup>, to 30.4% in 2018<sup>2</sup> for 50–64 year olds

## Carers

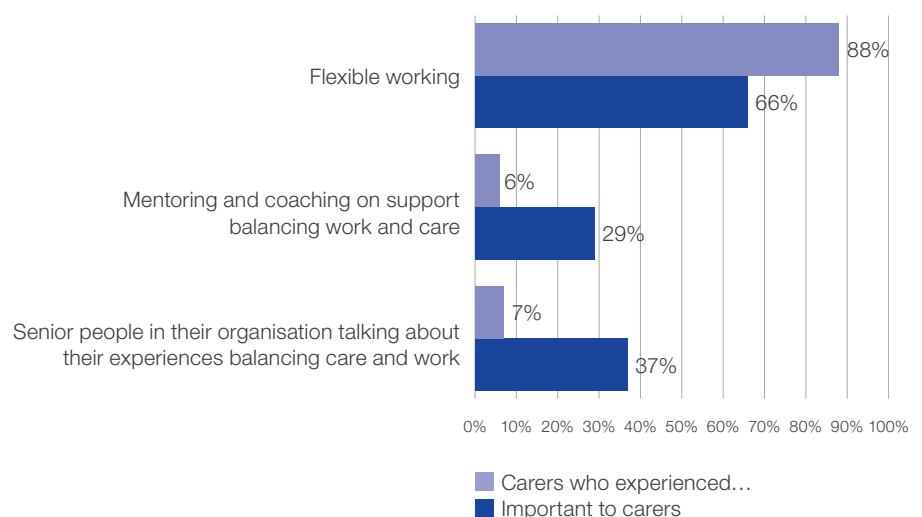
Around 1 in 10 working people in England and Wales are also carers.<sup>47</sup> The peak age for caring duties in the UK falls between the ages of 50 to 64 with increasing numbers of people, particularly women acting as 'sandwich carers', providing support for ageing parents as well as their own children. An estimated 1 in 4 women aged 50–64 are carers in the UK.

Caring for more than 10 hours a week can have a substantial impact on employment. 56% of people aged 50–64 years who spend over 10 hours a week providing informal care are in employment compared with 74% of males and 64% of females with no caring responsibilities.<sup>48</sup> The Department for Work and Pensions found that less than half of carers aged 50–64 caring more than 10 hours a week are currently in work.

Carers represent a vital source of skills for the economy and for business. Many companies offer their staff flexible working policies to enable them to balance work, personal and caring lives. However, respondents to Business in the Community's 2018 Equal Lives report<sup>53</sup> suggests that the policies carers often see rolled out in their organisations aren't always the same as those they identify as important to support their needs as carers. Carers in the survey highlighted the need for flexible working, mentoring, coaching and the relatable role models as the most important policies to support their working and caring lives: all three mirroring the Council's recommendations for unlocking the full potential of women.

Earlier this year, to support employers to put in place supportive policies for carers, the Government announced its Carers' Action Plan for 2018–2020, which alongside a focus on current policy provisions for carers, includes activities to help carers return to the workplace. We were delighted to see the Women's Business Council's returners' toolkit for employers highlighted as best practice in this plan.

### Activities carers report as important to help with caring and availability of those policies in the workplace<sup>53</sup>



## Upskilling and career conversations

In 2013, the Women's Business Council advocated for the upskilling of older workers to adapt to new and emerging markets and jobs driven by innovations in technology.

In 2017, the Department for Work and Pensions Fuller Working Lives Strategy noted that employees aged 50–64 are considerably less likely to participate in training than those aged 18–49 and that their training tends to be more narrowly focused on their current role as opposed to their wider development.<sup>48</sup>

The Government's Industrial Strategy has addressed this concerning trend, noting that as the population ages, the UK could find itself with a reduced workforce resulting in lower productivity. To continue to thrive in the competitive global market, British businesses will need to redesign jobs, workplaces and approaches to training to improve older people's working experiences, enabling them to remain in work for longer.

The Government is taking forward the Fuller Working Lives Strategy and has already appointed a Business Champion, in line with the Women's Business Council recommendations, specifically for older workers to work with employers across England to provide practical advice on how to make the most of the changing demographics of their workforce.

The Women's Business Council welcomes these commitments and has provided a suite of options for employers looking at innovative ways of hiring and retraining older staff. Barclays' 'older, bolder apprenticeship scheme' has been one such programme aimed at underemployed individuals with few qualifications but a wealth of life experience. In 2016/17, 58,110 apprenticeships were started by people aged 45–59 and 3,680 by those aged 60 years and above.<sup>49</sup>

Over the coming year the Council will continue to advocate for the benefits of recruiting, retaining and retraining older workers for business, individuals and the economy.



## Spotlight Returners

Despite the significant growth in working motherhood, the gender pay gap continues to open up for women following the birth of their first child.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies has found that time out of the labour market has a substantial impact on women's salaries. On returning<sup>30</sup> to work, women earn around 2% less on average for every year spent out of paid work. The penalty is worse for highly qualified women who earn 4% less on average for each year they take out. Returning to the workplace after a significant period out for caring responsibilities comes with sizeable barriers including a

lack of flexible work opportunities, lack of suitable and affordable care, and negative attitudes from employers, recruitment agencies and recruitment processes around a gap in a CV.

Research commissioned by the Government Equalities Office suggests that there are approximately 1.2 million returners in the UK (defined as an individual who has taken a career break of at least one year for caring responsibilities and intends to return to the workplace), of which 91% are female and the vast majority (84%) are mothers with dependent children.<sup>50</sup>

In 2017, the Government committed £5 million to increase awareness of, and opportunities available for, returners within the public and

private sector. This includes returners and returning opportunities within the public and private sector including a grant fund to support innovative projects across the country increasing returner opportunities in the private sector.

In March 2018, the Women's Business Council worked with the Government Equalities Office to develop a returners toolkit for employers. The toolkit guides employers through the benefits of returner programmes, key points to consider when developing, delivering and raising awareness of returners programmes and a guide for SMEs on how to make a returner programme within small and medium sized businesses.



# Enterprise



Women as a  
percentage of  
all self-employed

UP BY  
**2.7**  
percentage  
points<sup>1, 2</sup>



Since our inaugural report in 2013, enterprise activity within the UK has shrunk for both men and women, with women now less than half as likely to be entrepreneurs as men. 5.3% or 1.2 million women in the UK are involved in starting or running a new business, compared to 6.3% in 2012.<sup>21, 22</sup>

Whilst attitudes remain largely positive towards enterprise, since 2015<sup>25</sup> social attitudes in the UK surrounding enterprise as a career choice have seen a slight decline with women marginally less likely to agree that:

- those successful at starting a business have a high level of status and respect in society (1.2 percentage point drop to 76% agreement from 2017);
- most people would consider starting a business a good career choice (2.2 percentage point drop to 56.6% although women are 2.4 percentage points more likely to agree than men); and,
- you often see stories about people starting successful businesses in the media (0.8 percentage point drop to 57.2%, 2.9% lower than men)

Women are however less likely to cite fear of failure as the main barrier to them starting a business than in 2015 (43.9%, an increase of 1.1 percentage points and 8.2 percentage points above men).<sup>25</sup>

Aspiring female entrepreneurs are more likely to:

- personally know someone who has started a business recently rising by 4.1 percentage points since 2015 to 27.5%,
- believe that they have the skills, knowledge and experience to start a business rising by 2.6 percentage points since 2015 to 33.4%.

Whilst in all cases women under-report compared to their male counterparts, this promising trend suggests that more women are aware of relatable role models.

Our initial report noted that a perceived lack of diverse role models, confidence in their skills fitting those needed to start a business and perceived lack of access to finance combined to create sizeable barriers to women setting up their own businesses. We have seen some improvement from the 31.2% of women who believed they had the necessary skills to run a business in 2012 but confidence remains lower for women than their male counterparts.<sup>25</sup>

Over the past five years, the Women's Business Council has endeavoured to raise awareness of the experience of female entrepreneurs. By highlighting good examples of female entrepreneurs through collaboration with organisations leading this agenda such as Innovate UK, Everywoman and Inspire the Future, the Council has continued to increase the pool of relatable role models. Over the coming year, the Council will host supportive pages on the WBC website – signposting female entrepreneurs to useful resources – and personal stories from female entrepreneurs who have successfully started and grown their businesses.



**Reduction in the percentage of women reporting fear of failure as a barrier to starting a business**

has decreased from 46.4% in 2012<sup>25</sup>, to 43.9% in 2017<sup>25</sup>



### NatWest Everywoman Women in Business programme

In 2014, NatWest launched their Entrepreneur Accelerator programme to provide free mentoring, insight and bespoke coaching for high-potential start-ups who want to grow and scale up their businesses. Recognising the diverse needs of different entrepreneurs, the NatWest Everywoman Women in Business programme has focused on providing support for female entrepreneurs. Their accredited 'Women in Business' specialists are trained to understand and support the needs and motivations of female business owners to ensure their advice is tailored. As a consequence, in 2017, 48% of the entrepreneurs in their hubs were women, considerably higher than the national percentage of female entrepreneurs.<sup>25</sup>

### Access to finance

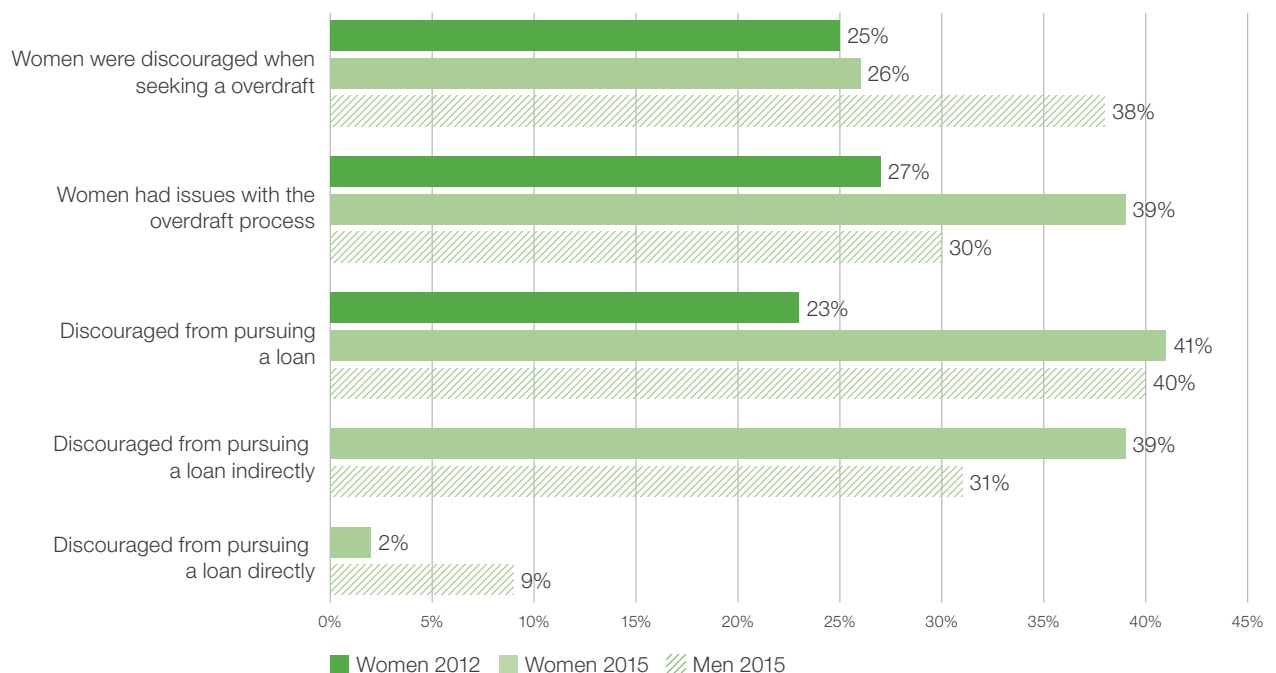
Access to finance has been commonly perceived as a key barrier to women starting and growing their businesses at the same rate as their male counterparts. In 2012, the Council reviewed the BDRC SME Finance Monitor<sup>51</sup>, assessment of female entrepreneurs would-be seekers success with loan and overdraft arrangements.

Given the importance of access to secure forms of finance for early stage entrepreneurial activity to succeed, the Women's Business Council welcomes the Government's review investigating ways to help women start and grow a business.

We welcome the focus on:

- considering the drivers of the disparity between male and female entrepreneurship;
- actions to reduce barriers to female engagement in enterprise;
- the disparities between female-led and male-led firms seeking and receiving external finance; and,
- recommendations of best-practice examples of investors and financial service firms seeking to avoid gender-bias in their investment decisions.

### Proportion of male and female led SMEs 'would-be' seekers of finance citing difficulties accessing loans and overdrafts 2012/2015<sup>51, 54</sup>



\* Would-be seekers of finance: SMEs who had not had a loan or overdraft borrowing event and said that something had stopped them applying for a loan/overdraft funding in the previous 12 months'

# Men as Change Agents for Gender Equality



The introduction of Shared Parental Leave in 2014 enables parents of newborns to share **up to 50 weeks** of parental leave.



In 2016, the Women's Business Council expanded its remit and membership to include Men as Change Agents (MACA), recognising the important role played by men, as well as women in transforming workplace cultures.

The group focuses on two primary areas: the role of senior business leaders, the majority of whom are currently male, in advocating and leading change within their organisations; and, the role of men in breaking down workplace stereotypes around gender roles and caring responsibilities.

### Role of senior business leaders

In 2018, the Women's Business Council launched its Men As Change Agents toolkit calling on senior business leaders and CEOs in FTSE 350 and other important UK businesses to champion gender equality in the workplace by:

1. taking personal responsibility for ensuring 33% of executive-level business leaders are women by 2020;
2. sponsoring 1–3 women within their organisation with the potential to secure an executive role within 3 years; and,
3. being an active and visible change agent and being part of the wider business conversation to achieve gender balance.

In September 2018, HRH the Duke of York hosted a dinner at St James's palace with 70 influential business leaders calling on all attendees to personally commit to these pledges.

The Women's Business Council has endeavoured to highlight the brilliant work of male leaders in this field in transforming working cultures from the very top of an organisation. Over the past two years our POWERlist awards, 2018 awards pictured below, in collaboration with Management Today have celebrated nearly 60 male role models for change. In 2018, we dedicated a portal to MACA on the WBC website, showcasing senior male and female leaders who are delivering real change.

*'In terms of what works, when improving gender diversity you first and foremost need strong leadership. If the company, board and top management believe that gender diversity is important then it will almost certainly be addressed.'*

#### Sir Philip Hampton

Chair of the Hampton-Alexander Review



## Changing Cultures: Moving from working motherhood to working parenthood

In 2012, the Women's Business Council advocated for policies to reduce the childcare burden on working mothers. We were delighted to see the Government's commitment to address the burden of care on women through its response to our 2013 report.

The Government has since introduced two policies to support mothers returning to the workplace:

- doubling the provision of free childcare from 15 hours a week to 30 hours in England in 2017; and
- introducing Shared Parental Leave legislation in 2015, allowing parents to share up to 50 weeks of leave, 37 of which are paid to look after their new child. Take-up to date has been low and in 2018, the Government launched a 'Share the Joy' campaign to raise awareness of the legislation.

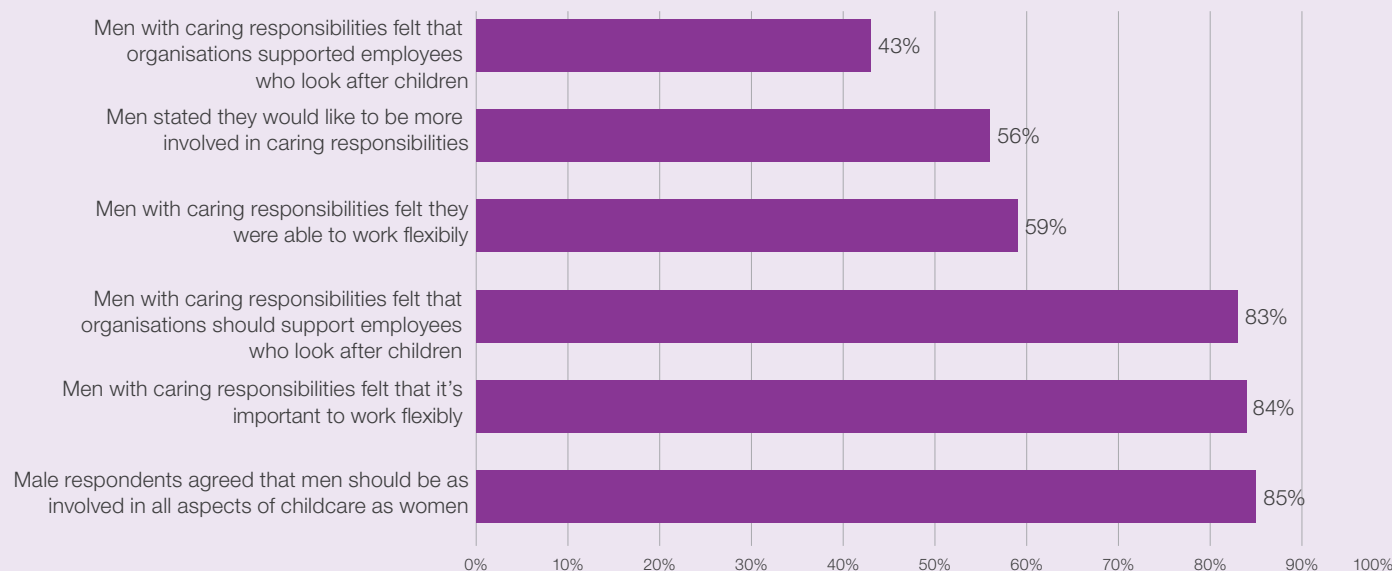
In 2017, the British Social Attitudes Survey<sup>43</sup> asked respondents how a mother and father on a similar full-time wage should divide the paid leave period between them. Only 15% of respondents believed that the mother should take all of the paid leave period whilst 30% felt that the mother and father should equally share their parental leave. Support for sharing parental leave is particularly high amongst the 18–34 year olds: 38% of whom supported sharing an equal division of parental leave between a mother and father. The increased awareness of flexible working has seen an increase in the number of fathers with young children aged between three and four working part-time, nearly doubling from 3.9% in 1997 to 6.9% in 2017.<sup>14</sup>



### Spotlight How equal are our caring lives?<sup>53</sup>

In September 2018, Business in the Community surveyed over 10,000 respondents to their Equal Lives survey, while this was unrepresentative of the UK it provides us with interesting insights

into the attitudes, behaviours, needs and challenges women and men face when balancing their work and caring responsibilities. Male respondents reported:





# Our partners and collaborators

We have worked extensively with business partners since 2013. This has enabled us to amplify our messaging and get traction in a range of companies across the UK.

Over the last year, we are delighted that we have been able to build up wider partnerships with SMEs through our supply chains and beyond. At the start of 2018, SMEs accounted for 99.3% of all private sector businesses and 60% of all private sector employment in the UK.<sup>52</sup> The scope to support women's access to, and advancement within, these companies offers a rich seam of opportunity.

We have been delighted to work in partnership with EU Member States, and learned a lot about the German model of small-scale technical enterprises supporting women in innovation. Members of the Women's Business Council have attended the UN Commission on the Status of Women on two occasions, to partner with the UK Government and a developing country in order to share best practice from within the heart of the business community. In addition to sharing our own vision, we have also had the opportunity to share the Council's unique model of engagement, through international engagements with China, US, Canada, Iceland, Serbia and Malaysia which has generated much interest internationally.

More recently, we have played an active role in the G20 Women Leaders Taskforce and have championed the need to include Male Agents of Change and entrepreneurs as part of this debate. We will continue to meet with visiting overseas delegations, to learn from their experiences and to share our own insights to add to the international dialogue on these important issues.

'More recently, we have played an active role in the G20 Women Leaders Taskforce and have championed the need to include Male Agents of Change and entrepreneurs as part of this debate.'



# Next steps

The good news is that the landscape on gender equality in the workplace is changing.

‘The situation nationally and internationally is likely to evolve post-Brexit but we all want the UK to be at the heart of the global marketplace, tapping into the skills, experience and talents of everyone.’

The business community understands the scale of the problem and the benefits of solving it. Inspirational leaders – both women and men – are driving the change.

As the Council enters its sixth year, we will review our initial recommendations to ‘maximise women’s contribution to economic growth’. The situation nationally and internationally is likely to evolve post-Brexit but we all want the UK to be at the heart of the global marketplace, tapping into the skills, experience and talents of everyone.

In addition to driving forward our current work programme, we will focus our efforts on:

- the role of fathers in supporting their daughters’ aspirations particularly within STEM fields;
- publishing 100 Ways to Work Flexibly;
- advocating support for employers looking to understand and start to close their gender pay gaps;
- commissioning further research into older working women and the impact of the menopause;
- raising awareness of the benefits of returner programmes with the business community;
- hosting supportive pages for female entrepreneurs on our website;
- working with male change agents to challenge status quo working cultures reinforcing traditional gendered divisions of labour;

- building our network of influential collaborators: CEOs and senior business leaders, the majority of whom are currently male, to lead from the top when advocating for gender balance in business;
- strengthening the role of SMEs in influencing gender diversity; and,
- showing leadership across our sectors to drive innovation and change.

It will also be timely to revisit our 2013 Five Simple Steps for business toolkit to see how women in the economy are progressing.



# Members of the Women's Business Council

**Dame Cilla Snowball DBE**

Chair, Women's Business Council,  
Group CEO and Group Chairman  
of AMV BBDO

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HR Director for Barclays UK and  
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**Fiona Dawson**

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**Dr Clive Hickman****John Whelan****Dame Fiona Woolf DBE****Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank the following members who stepped down from the council earlier this year for their hard work and dedication to supporting this agenda.

# Annex

1	ONS, Labour Market Statistics, June – August 2014	9	HESA qualifications by level subject and sex 2012/13	20	Personal Social Services Survey of Adult Carers in England 2016/17
2	ONS, Labour Market Statistics, June – August 2018	10	HESA qualifications by level subject and sex 2016/17	21	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2013
3	ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, median hourly earnings excluding overtime, 2013	11	WISE, Women in the STEM Workforce, Statistical bulletin, 2014	22	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2018
4	ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, median hourly earnings excluding overtime, 2018 provisional and 2017 revised results	12	WISE, Women in the STEM Workforce Statistical bulletin, 2017	23	BIS Small Business Survey, 2012 <a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/193555/bis-13-p74-small-business-survey-2012-sme-employers.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/193555/bis-13-p74-small-business-survey-2012-sme-employers.pdf</a>
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