

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2022

CMI
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75

YEAR

1947-2022

ANNIVERSARY



#BreakTheBias



International
Women's Day

CMI is currently undertaking a deep dive through our [75th anniversary project](#) to identify the actions that employers need to take to deliver genuinely diverse and inclusive workplaces that are fit for the future.

For International Women's Day 2022, we're taking stock of progress and identifying the key actions employers and the Government need to take now to ensure women have fair and equitable treatment and opportunities at work.

The pandemic has fundamentally changed the world of work. Workplace flexibilities, in the form of remote and hybrid working¹ - that were previously inconceivable for many businesses in the UK - have become the norm.

CMI's own research finds that - as of February 2022 - 84% of organisations are still working in a hybrid way, with many senior leaders remaining supportive of hybrid working as a result of the events of the last two years.² Both men and women recognise the benefits of hybrid working: 90% of men and 87% of women want to continue to work remotely at least one day a week.³

Women in the pandemic: small gains but big gaps remain

There were concerns at the start of the pandemic about the impact on women's labour market participation. This is because women - particularly women from diverse ethnic backgrounds - were more likely to be employed in less secure, low quality work, and women were initially furloughed at greater rates than their male counterparts. But two years on, these concerns have not been wholly realised, and we've even seen small gains in female participation:

- Workplace participation among women aged 25-44 has risen by 1.8 percentage points during the pandemic⁵
- 74% of mothers of 0-3 year olds were in the workforce in 2021 compared to 68% in 2019: this is likely to be because of the increased availability of flexible and remote working, especially in more female dominated industries.⁶

It's positive that the forced move to remote working for many has - in the main - changed long term opinions about workplace flexibility for the better. But it's telling that it required a pandemic for many businesses, leaders and managers to realise this change.

- Before Covid-19, 58% of managers said their organisation offered flexible working arrangements; that proportion currently stands at 89%⁷
- 2 in 5 managers (39%) report an increase in the number of staff using flexi-time⁹
- 9 in 10 managers (87%) agree there has been a positive shift in senior leaders' perception of remote working since the pandemic⁸
- A third of managers (33%) report an increase in the number of staff working staggered hours¹⁰

The widespread acceptance of flexible working is important because it has the potential to improve workplace representation and to close gender pay gaps. Moreover, it provides a particularly good opportunity to build on this progress, and deliver gender balance in the workplace.

Remote/ hybrid/ flexible working on its own, however, is not a panacea for this balance.

¹ Hybrid working is a form of flexible working where workers spend some of their time working in their employer's workplace and some of their time working remotely - usually from home but can be in another location.

² CMI Managers Voice Pulse Point Poll 3rd February 2022

³ CMI polling of UK employees in 27th August to 3rd September 2021

⁴ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/4597/documents/46478/default/>

⁵ Brewer, McCurdy and Slaughter (2021) Begin again? Assessing the permanent implications of Covid-19 for the UK's labour market

<https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/press-releases/pandemic-driven-shifts-have-made-the-workforce-smaller-younger-and-more-female/>

⁶ Ibid

⁷ CMI, Managers Voice polling, December 2020

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid



Women's experience of work over the pandemic ¹¹

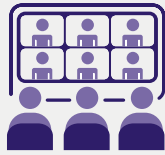


CMI has polled managers extensively over the last 6 months on a variety of topics relating to women in the workplace.

On IWD, we are showcasing what we have learnt about female managers' attitudes to the major topical issues around work over the course of the pandemic.

Attitudes towards hybrid and flexible working

91%



of female managers are personally in favour of hybrid working.¹²

73%



of female managers think that it is very important to promote a flexible working culture to recruit and retain the best staff.¹⁴

63%



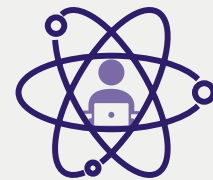
of female managers believe they are more productive when working from home, driven by fewer workplace interruptions and no commute.¹⁶

79%



of female managers agree that senior leaders are more supportive of flexible working arrangements since the Covid-19 pandemic.¹³

56%



of female managers say that flexible working options would be more important to them in a decision to take a new job with a greater salary than their current role.¹⁵

57%



have not received training on how to manage a remote team.¹⁷

¹¹ Please note that we are summarising women's experience of work over the pandemic: their male counterparts did not necessarily have a different opinion unless otherwise stated.

¹² CMI, Managers Voice polling, February 2022

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ CMI, Managers Voice polling, October 2021

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ CMI, Managers Voice polling, September 2021

¹⁷ CMI, Managers Voice polling, October 2021

Systemic challenges: Representation, pay and action

A move to more flexible working does not mean existing barriers have disappeared. Representation of women in management roles remains low.

- CMI's analysis shows¹⁸ that despite women making up nearly half the UK working population (48%), they make up only 2 in 5 (41%) of management roles.
- In senior leadership roles the situation is even worse: women make up just 38% of senior leaders in the UK.¹⁹
- Women remain over-represented in insecure and low paying roles such as care work.²⁰

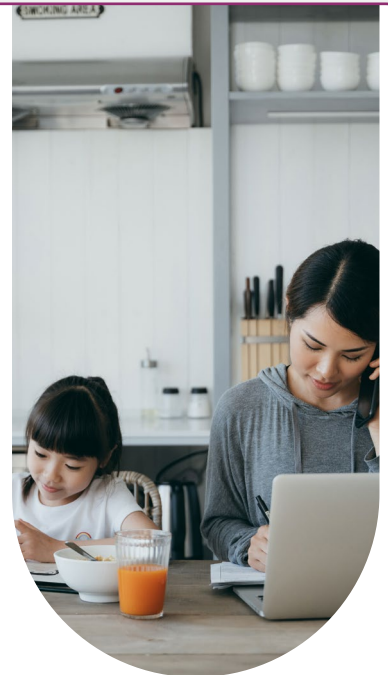
Uptake of initiatives & approaches that are known to improve gender balance at work also remain low:

- Only a third of managers (34%) report mentoring and sponsorship programmes to champion the progression of women.²¹
- 1 in 5 (22%) said that managers or senior leaders pro-actively seek out and advocate women for key projects/roles/promotions, but this dips to just 14% for female respondents compared to 27% for male respondents.²²
- The same 1 in 5 (21%) report balanced short-lists are used for recruitment.²³

Women continue to shoulder the burden of childcare and unpaid work in the home. Research from the ONS in 2020 found that during lockdown, on average women were carrying out two-thirds more of the childcare duties per day than men.²⁴ Indeed just over two thirds (68%) said their organisation has policies to support working families and carers, despite caring responsibilities being a major driver of opportunity gaps between men and women at work.²⁵

Gender pay gaps persist. The gender pay gap (GPG) had been steadily declining prior to the pandemic, but rose among full-time employees to 7.9% in April 2021, up from 7.0% in April 2020. We must be careful not to turn a blind eye to the long-running pay gaps that hold women back. Mandatory GPG reporting was almost scrapped during Covid - because it was considered too much of a burden on organisations - and only reinstated after significant campaigning. It will be important to review both the direction of travel and compliance of mandatory GPG reporting in April 2022.

As pandemic restrictions ease, hopefully for the last time, we are now at a turning point. We can choose to take concerted action to close these gaps or risk them becoming more entrenched.



¹⁸ CMI analysis of the Labour Force Survey Jan - Mar 2021

¹⁹ CMI analysis of the Labour Force Survey Jan - Mar 2021

²⁰ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/4597/documents/46478/default/> p.7

²¹ CMI, 75th Anniversary Project, January 2022

²² Ibid.,

²³ Ibid.,

²⁴ ONS (2020) Parenting in lockdown: Coronavirus and the effects on work-life balance, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/articles/parentinginlockdowncoronavirusandtheeffectsonworklifebalance/2020-07-22>

²⁵ CMI, 75th Anniversary Project, January 2022

Women's attitudes towards inclusivity in the workplace in 2022²⁶

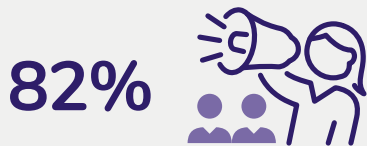
Through our polling in CMI 75th anniversary year, we have explored how women in the workplace feel about inclusivity. Although women generally suggest that their employers are doing a good job, they report low up take of initiatives and actions that can level up the position of women in the workplace. Our research demonstrates that employers need to do more to support gender parity.



Just over 9 in 10 female respondents (91%) agree that their organisation is inclusive of all staff regardless of gender.



Female respondents generally agreed that staff have equal progression opportunities regardless of gender (78%) and that their organisation supports the progression of working mothers (73%).



Female respondents agreed that their organisation's culture was open enough for staff to report inappropriate behaviour such as sexism or sexual harassment in the workplace.



Of female respondents who agreed their organisations were inclusive regardless of gender, believe that supporting gender equality is important in improving the organisation's culture. 66% recognised that it is important in ensuring the organisation had diversity of thought.

Use of some specific initiatives is low. Of those who agreed their organisation is inclusive of all staff regardless of gender:

31%

of managers report mentoring and sponsorship programmes to champion the progression of women.

20%

report balanced short-lists are used for recruitment.

14%

said that managers or senior leaders pro-actively seek out and advocate women for key projects/roles/promotions.

²⁶ All findings on page 4 are taken from our polling for CMI 75th anniversary project undertaken in January 2022 as part of CMI's 75th anniversary research project, which had 1,183 respondents

Unchanging attitudes amplify new threats

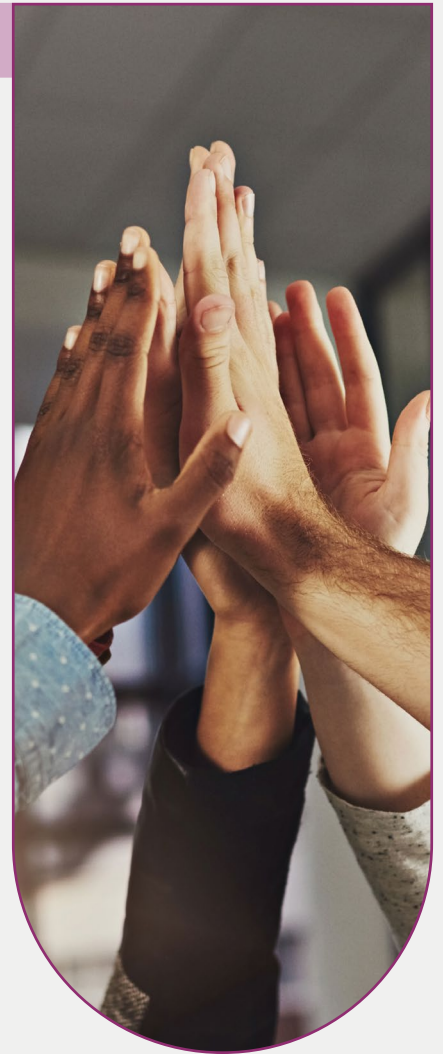
We will not be able to embed and sustain workplace wins around flexible working, or deal with challenges around pay and representation, without tackling workplace cultures that are detrimental to gender inclusion. Latest CMI data shows real challenges when it comes to the position of women in the workplace:

- Under two thirds (61%) of respondents told us that managers or senior leaders ensure women and men receive equal voice in meetings and making decisions - a most basic 21st century workplace expectation²⁷
- Less than half of respondents (49%) said they have managers or senior leaders actively and visibly championing gender equality initiatives.²⁸

Hybrid and remote working presents specific challenges to workplace inclusion for women and without good management, existing disadvantages risk being exacerbated. From **recent work** CMI carried out with the Work Foundation, we know particular barriers include a lack of access to networks and wider workplace opportunities, which women already have to fight harder to gain access to in the first place: more than half (55%) of managers expect increased remote working to exacerbate existing inequalities, and 23% thought access to stretch projects would decrease through hybrid working.

Managers and leaders have a responsibility to ensure already under represented groups don't miss out. But legacy attitudes towards remote working and career development may persist. Of particular concern was the finding that 1 in 3 managers (33%) believed that people use remote working as an opportunity to put in less effort.²⁹

Women are also significantly more likely than men to believe that women amongst other staff groups, including those with parenting responsibilities would miss out on workplace opportunities if some staff worked exclusively remotely and some were office based (18% vs. 9%).³⁰



So what next? ...

Building back without bias: breaking gender barriers in the workplace once and for all

We know that organisational culture and poor management has held women's careers back. We now have the opportunity for a paradigm change in what it means to lead and manage, focusing on bringing out the best in everyone, maximising talent and opportunity by providing the flexibility and support that will advance gender equality. This is not a zero sum game. Gender balance benefits everyone.

²⁷ CMI, 75th Anniversary Project, January 2022

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/work-foundation/news/blog/post-pandemic-hybrid-working-poses-new-challenges-to-diversity-and-inclusion>

³⁰ <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/work-foundation/news/blog/post-pandemic-hybrid-working-poses-new-challenges-to-diversity-and-inclusion>

Employers need to:

- Ensure company-wide training to embed inclusive practice and an awareness of equity and its importance.
- Utilise positive action to ensure women are equitably represented on short-lists for recruitment and promotion opportunities.
- Provide two-way workplace flexibility - that takes account of employee - not just business - needs
- Provide mentoring and sponsorship, which are known to increase knowledge and boost promotion opportunities.³¹
- Demonstrate leadership commitment to tackling harassment including measuring and reporting on organisational attitudes towards harassment.³²
- Provide information, advice and support to advance women's progression. Ensuring there are role models for women in leadership positions and creating employee networks can help with this.
- Create a culture that recognises and values differing work and personal circumstances. For example, ensuring that if individuals need time off because of health issues or caring responsibilities they do not lose access to development opportunities.
- Take action to close pay gaps. Multiple resources exist to support this, including the CMI/ EHRC [toolkit](#).

Government needs to:

- Commit to an impact assessment of how women's position in the workplace has been affected by the pandemic and implement recommended actions that come out of this.
- Make action plans a requirement as part of reporting and bring medium-sized firms into scope. That's at least another 35,000 private sector companies providing 3.5 million jobs.
- To champion gender balanced workplace practice through a commitment to good management and leadership.

Play an active role in shifting the focus from a siloed diversity and equality agenda to widespread embedding of inclusive practice. At the very least this means:

- Government guidance should be clear that all organisations should have clear EDI policies, strategies and action plans which should be followed through in procurement processes with government and supply chains.
- Ensuring all organisation bidding for government contracts are able to demonstrate ambitious plans to close pay gaps and can show progress towards these goals.
- All public services must adopt and demonstrate best practice in policies, practices and cultures of support for ED&I.

For more resources and information on how we are supporting International Women's Day, #Break the bias visit www.managers.org.uk/campaigns/international-womens-day/

³¹ CMI, 30% Club and Russell Reynolds Associates (2019), Sponsoring Women's Success

³² Fawcett Society (2021), Tackling Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Chartered Management Institute (CMI)

The Chartered Management Institute (CMI) works with business and education to inspire people to unleash their potential and become skilled, confident and successful managers and leaders. With a wealth of practical qualifications, events and networking opportunities on offer throughout the UK and across the globe, CMI helps people boost their career prospects and connects them with other ambitious professionals in any industry and sector. In fact, CMI has more than 120,000 people training to be better managers right now. Backed by a unique Royal Charter, CMI is the only organisation allowed to award Chartered Manager status – the ultimate management accolade, and Chartered Management Consultant status which sets and maintains the highest standards for the management consulting profession.


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