

Gender Equality in the UK


By N Salisbury Scott and J Walkley



- *Over the last 50 years, gender equality has transformed our society.*

EQUALITY

No longer are specific jobs reserved for men or for women. Our universities are close to having true gender parity in admissions, and the traditional family model is increasingly being redefined for modern attitudes and working styles—in fact, stay-at-home fathers whose spouse goes out to work now accounts for 10% of UK families.



*We've come a long way
and a lot has been
achieved.*

Business

Gender Equality in the UK

To many, creating gender equality is about being fair. But for business, it's about access to talent. Our research shows that effective gender parity efforts increasingly make the workplace better for women and men. Both benefit from programmes that support flexibility and ease the juggling act of professional and personal obligations, and programmes look less like special treatment and more like the norm when men also take advantage of them.



EQUALITY



Equality = SAMENESS

Equality is about **SAMENESS**, it promotes fairness and justice by giving everyone the same thing.

BUT it can only work if everyone starts from the **SAME** place, in this example equality only works if everyone is the same height.

EQUITY



Equity = FAIRNESS

Equity is about **FAIRNESS**, it's about making sure people get access to the same opportunities.

Sometimes our differences and/or history can make barriers to participation, so we must **FIRST** create **EQUITY** before we can enjoy equality.

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It may seem ironic, but that fact that both genders will benefit from 'gender parity programmes' may just make them more likely to be a success. Companies that nurture their talented women today will also support men with those same programmes and approaches as traditional family roles continue to evolve. In the end, creating the right environment and the right platform for talent to succeed, irrespective of gender, will be key to the future success of any business.



The structural barrier that women encounter is the need to balance work and family commitments, which slows the progression of their careers. And while this issue increasingly affects both sexes, it still has a highly disproportionate effect on women. Balancing domestic responsibilities with professional obligations often causes women to opt out of opportunities to take on broader or more challenging roles at work.



PARTICIPATION, POWER AND LEADERSHIP

In most areas of senior political life, leadership in business, public life and civil society, women hold less than 30 per cent of positions of power and influence.

Media

The impact of a gendered, sexist and often hostile culture in the media remains a significant barrier.



EDUCATION

**ATTAINMENT AND
OUTCOMES**

Girls in Education

Girls in education tend to perform better than boys at all ages, to the extent that concerns have been raised by some commentators, e.g. recently by the Higher Education Policy Institute. Yet as the EHRC says, the comparatively higher academic achievement of girls and women is not resulting in fuller employment or more highly paid work. Women and girls are still limited by gender stereotyping and inequality. The large-scale EPPSE 3–16 study of 2,600 young people in England found that at age 14 and 16 boys felt more confident and more positive about themselves than girls, and boys' academic self-concept was as high as that of girls, despite their lower actual test performance. In the Think Future study of over 20,000 undergraduate students in the UK and Ireland, most male and female students felt that they were treated equally at university, but only around 42 per cent of women were confident that their gender would have no bearing on their career progression after graduation, or on their future pay, versus around 72 per cent of men. There continues to be a gender pay gap among graduates.



ACCESS TO EDUCATION

- In the UK, almost all girls and boys have participated in education to age 14 for more than a century. This has been a right, and an obligation, in law since 1944. At tertiary level in the UK there are now more female undergraduates (56 per cent) than male undergraduates (44 per cent) (2014–15 figures), which may reflect knowledge of the added benefits of a university degree to women – a UK government report estimated the positive impact of a degree on lifetime net earnings to be 28 per cent for men but 53 per cent for women.



Educational Provision in UK

All nations of the UK provide access for all young people to state-funded primary and secondary education as a universal service, and every nation of the UK has some provision for free early-years (preschool) education. Primary and secondary education are compulsory between the ages of five and 16, and participation rates are equal for girls and boys at, effectively, 100 per cent. However, access and outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are very low and exacerbated by inadequate/inconsistent data monitoring arrangements as well as recent changes to planning policy and other policies affecting housing. UK participation rates in tertiary education are high – 35 per cent of women and 33 per cent of men are graduates of tertiary education.



Ranking

The UK continues to rank highly, though it has dropped from first to third among EU countries on the EIGE indicator for gender equality in the knowledge domain between 2005 and 2012 (largely as a result of a decrease in lifelong learning and an increase in subject segregation).

Professions

In the course of a generation (1985–2015), the traditionally male-dominated and high-status professions of medicine, law and veterinary science have been transformed through the entry of women, who graduated in these subjects in equal or above equal numbers to men. Participation rates of higher education (HE) students in the UK, however, vary markedly by gender according to subject choice, which directly affects the pipeline into careers.

The slide features decorative geometric shapes. On the left, there are several overlapping yellow squares and diamonds of various sizes. On the right, there are overlapping blue squares and diamonds, including a large one in the bottom right corner.


Discrimination

In the UK, legislation prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. This means that neither girls nor boys can be denied the right to study a subject based on their sex. Curriculum breadth and balance varies across the nations but ensures girls and boys are taught a range of subjects that might be thought of as 'traditionally' masculine or feminine to at least age 14 (at which point they often make gendered subject choices).



Legislation

Legislation also imposes a positive duty to prevent discrimination. It is widely recognised that the education sector is a key site for challenging and changing the discriminatory gender norms that are embedded in the media, homes and workplaces. There is no centralised database of relevant programmes but there are some excellent local, national and UK-wide initiatives, some of which are listed by the new Gender Equalities Leadership in Schools Network for England and Wales.





Challenges

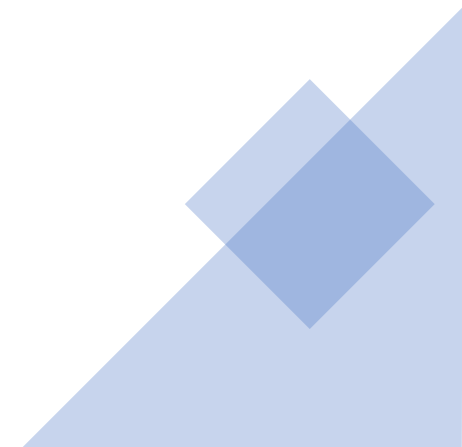
The key challenges for the UK have been identified as subject and opportunity segregation by gender.





Research

Research confirms the importance of cultural expectations and pervasive gender stereotypes, beginning at a young age, in setting gendered paths to further study and thence occupational segregation. Consistent messages are required to overcome these barriers, beginning with early years.



Teachers and Lecturers

Despite more women than men completing tertiary education, the education sector itself remains both horizontally and vertically segregated by gender. Only 15 per cent of primary school teachers in England are male but this rises to 38 per cent at secondary level. Scotland has even fewer male primary teachers, at nine per cent, although 13 per cent of primary heads are male. In UK universities, a recent report highlighted disparities between the number of female staff employed (63 per cent) and the number employed as academics (45 per cent). Of the female academics, fewer were on a permanent contract, fewer were on a senior contract and of professors only 22 per cent were women.


EAL

**ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER
LANGUAGES**



EAL and Women

Inclusive life-long learning opportunities, and especially the opportunity to learn English, are critical for the well-being of refugee and migrant women in the UK.



Economy

- Legislation for economic equality is ongoing in the UK. Milestones include the Married Women's Property Act of 1870, the Equal Pay Act of 1970 and the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, the Pensions Act of 1995 and the Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005. The law was changed in 2015 to allow future monarchs' daughters equal rights to inherit the throne. In the space of a generation, there has been a huge cultural shift in some areas towards UK women's equal economic participation. In particular, while women have always done paid work, cultural norms have shifted from a 'male breadwinner' model to an expectation that women will have a nominally equal participation in the paid workforce. However, the following figures show that the UK labour market remains segregated vertically and horizontally by gender.

Justice



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The UK, along with other nations, now has specific targets to meet by 2030 in the Sustainable Development Goals;

target 5.2 requires the elimination of all violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation,

and

5.3 requires the elimination of all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation.

The theme of justice and VAWG is also woven throughout the goals including

Global Goal 1: *End poverty in all its forms everywhere,*

Global Goal 10: *Reduce inequality within and among countries*

and

Global Goal 16: *Peace, justice and strong institutions.*



ADB
**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**

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#action2015

5 GENDER
EQUALITY



End all forms of
discrimination and
eliminate all forms of
violence against all
women and girls
everywhere

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FGM and forced marriage

- . While the UK government strategy is not fully comprehensive, government collaboration with experts in the BME women's sector has ensured that it includes global action on FGM and forced marriage, thus locating these as women's rights, rather than 'cultural' issues, and funders have supported this work.

CULTURAL SECTORS: ARTS, SPORT AND TECHNOLOGY

There is an entrenched gender gap in the production of UK arts and media:

Women hold 36.1 per cent of jobs in the 'creative economy' (47.2 per cent of the workforce overall), and 18.8 per cent of the third of jobs in the sector that are IT-related.





Women occupy

- 27 per cent of executive management positions in media organisations – significantly less than in both Nordic and Eastern European countries. Some 60 per cent of female journalists over 45 have experienced age-related discrimination; seven per cent of the total television workforce (on/off screen) are women.
 - In UK films in 2015 women accounted for just 20 per cent of the six key production roles, with only seven per cent of those women being of BME identity; 23 per cent of films had no women in these roles. Numbers of working female film directors have not improved from 13.6 per cent in ten years, and in television 14 per cent of drama credits for director are women.
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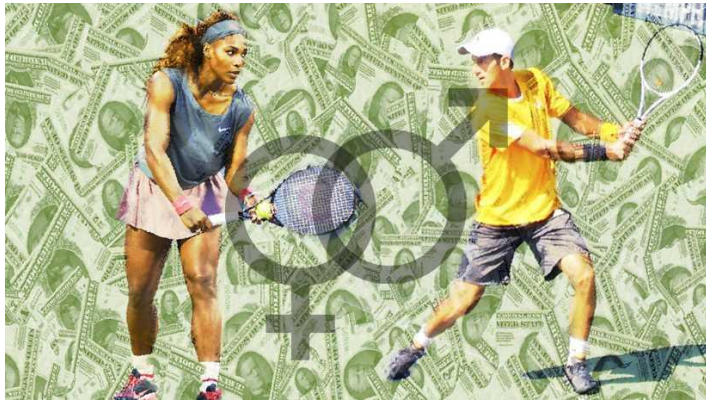
Performers and Visual Arts

- As performers, male roles in publicly subsidised theatre outnumber female by an average of two to one; Europe-wide research shows female performers are more likely to perceive ageing as a disadvantage to their career (49 per cent), have shorter careers, fall into the lowest income groups and consider parenting a career disadvantage (56 per cent) compared to men (15 per cent)
- In the visual arts female artists have fewer solo shows and commercial galleries represent fewer women than men even though 60 per cent of art school graduates are women; 70 per cent of the workforce in museums and galleries are women, yet just 37 per cent of director or chief executive roles are held by women in large publicly funded institutions in England, in Scotland 40 per cent and in Wales 50 per cent.

Creative Industries

- • The largest proportion of jobs held by women in the creative industries are in 'music, visual and performing arts', with over a fifth of women in the sector are employed here; men outnumber women two to one in albums shortlisted for the Mercury Music Prize; in 2010 1.6 per cent of conductors and 4.1 per cent of composers featured in the 2010 BBC Proms were women.


Sport



- Women in the UK participate in sport at a lower rate than men. Some 31.2 per cent of women take part weekly compared to 40.7 per cent men – a 1.7 million gap in participation rates of the over-16s. Only 16 per cent girls under 16 meet the guidelines for daily physical activity.



Sport in Education and beyond

- The gender gap opens in the later years of primary school, when girls of seven to eight years start pointing to gender stereotypes when defining their 'self' and what is important to them, and widens at secondary school, when 12–13 years is a key drop-out point. Social norms around being female and feminine are identified as a key factor affecting girls' attitudes and behaviour, with, notably: 'being sporty is still widely seen as a masculine trait'. As girls grow up, and as women age, barriers to participation are increasingly linked to body image, self-consciousness, and lack of confidence. Some sporting clubs in the UK remain men only: the Scottish government has made strong challenges to men only golf clubs.
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Case study – This Girl Can

- In 2015 Sport England launched This Girl Can, a campaign to change behaviour and get women aged 14–40 years to be more active. The campaign was grounded in a sophisticated approach to using data and insight on women's lives, and adopted cutting-edge marketing techniques; the resulting film was televised during prime time and highlighted women's fear of judgement in relation to being active. The campaign curated a diverse range of women's experiences, and used social media platforms for women to share their own stories, and to empower girls and women to be active; 8,000 sports organisations across England signed up as campaign partners and 2.8 million women were inspired to be more active. Among other awards #ThisGirlCan was presented with a Grand Prix for Good by the UN, recognising a specific contribution to the UK's progress towards the SDGs and the empowerment of girls and women.
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Technology

- **Case study – TechMums/Women’s Digital League**
- TechMums provide workshops for mums in deprived areas of England to gain a basic tech education. This group of women often lack the skills essential for most employment, or to become entrepreneurs. Founder Dr Sue Black emphasises the life-changing power of addressing the exclusion gap that arises from not having skills that ‘most people don’t even think about, because it’s so easy,’ and the power that enabling mums to be tech role models can deliver. Dr Sue Black, who has advised the UK Government Digital Service, passionately advocates for better tech education for all to address exclusion.

Conclusion

- *‘Realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets. The achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities. Women and girls must enjoy equal access to quality education, economic resources and political participation as well as equal opportunities with men and boys for employment, leadership and decision making at all levels. We will work for a significant increase in investments to close the gender gap and strengthen support for institutions in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women at the global, regional and national levels. All forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls will be eliminated, including through the engagement of men and boys. The systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Agenda is crucial.’*

Declaration, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development