

WOMEN<sup>IN</sup>  
DEFENCE

WOMEN<sup>IN</sup>  
DEFENCE  
CHARTER

# Changing the face of defence

## Insight and Data 2024

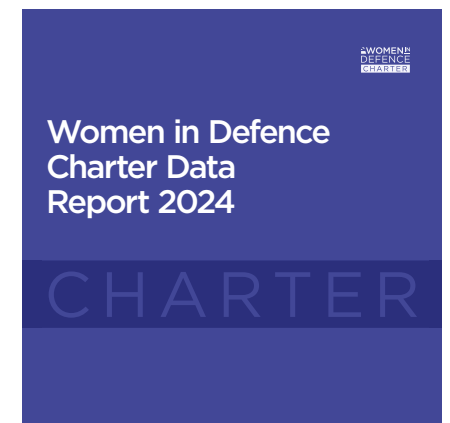
# Introduction —

## Diversity of thought – reducing the risk of group think

Given the uncertainty the world faces at the moment, it's even more important than ever to have diverse voices around the decision making table to bring real diversity of perspective and reduce the risk of group think. Women can help with that. So it's important to get women into those decision making roles and to retain women in the sector.

There is some cause for hope. The percentage of women in the sector is increasing as shown in the [Charter data report](#). The pace of change is slow although that could be a factor of better data - our data now covers 470,000 people in the sector, up from 395,000. And, with decision making roles in mind, for the first time ever, the report introduces data on the percentage of women in defence mission/business critical roles.

For insight on how to retain the brilliant women already working in the sector, coupled with how to make defence better for everyone - read the [Critical Mass Summit report](#).



# Changing the face of defence

by retaining more women in the sector



Critical Mass

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**babcock**<sup>™</sup>

# Contents

---

05

Critical Mass  
– a definition  
and an article

---

06

Executive  
summary

---

07

The Urgency of  
Gender Equity in  
the Workplace

---

09

Parenting Out Loud - why  
supporting working Dads  
is key to gender equality

---

11

Meet the  
Queenagers!

---

13

What if...?

---

15

Our current  
partners

# Critical Mass – a definition and an article

## DEFINITION

Noun – the size or number that something needs to reach before a particular change or development can happen.

**CAMBRIDGE BUSINESS ENGLISH DICTIONARY**

## ARTICLE

// When women reached 20% of the US Senate, they went after the Pentagon to reform the military's sexual-assault protocol. When they reached 25% of Hollywood producers, they took down Harvey Weinstein and his casting-couch culture. And when they reached a third of the White House press corps, Fox's Roger Ailes, NPR's Michael Oreskes and other serial harassers in the media began to be called out. Somewhere in that zone, when women comprise 20% to 30% of an institution, things begin to change.

Critical mass has its roots in physics: it's the amount of material needed to sustain a nuclear explosion. Accumulate enough, set it off and there is no other outcome than **boom!**

**TIME MAGAZINE**

With the help of all of our Partners, our Critical Mass Community is thriving and sharing leading practice and great ideas.

The monthly Community meetings so far have covered:

- 'Gender Decoders in Recruitment Advertisements' hosted by BAE Systems
- 'Back to basics – Business critical understanding' focus on the use of data in ED&I hosted by Babcock
- 'Digital Skills Transformation in the Defence Sector.' hosted by QA
- 'Getting Senior Leadership buy in by making EDI a business problem' hosted by Northrop Grumman
- 'What does good social value look like?' hosted by Leidos
- 'Women's empowerment' hosted by Costain
- 'Dealing with challenging situations to drive an equitable and inclusive environment' hosted by Frazer Nash Consultancy
- 'Attract, recruit, develop and train: How to get more women into the UK technology sector' hosted by Sopra Steria

# Executive summary —

Women in Defence UK's purpose is accelerating gender equity, for all genders, not just women. With our focus on retention at the Critical Mass Summit, we were pleased to welcome Elliott Rae, Founder of Parenting Out Loud, who talked about how supporting dads at work helps women. From Eleanor Mills, we learned about Queenagers (women aged 45+) and what an under-valued demographic they are and heard the latest insight from Charlotte Woodworth of Business in the Community and their Times Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality.



Here's some of the key takeaways:

- **Flexibility is key** – whether you're a working dad, a Queenager, a Gen Z or a Millennial, flexibility ranks really high in why people stay with an organisation.
- **Do you really know why people leave?** Interrogate your data, ask the right questions, hold 'stay' interviews and apply an intersectional lens as you can't assume that everyone's needs are the same.
- **Non-inclusive behaviour is a real problem** so you need to educate and encourage employees to address & report non-inclusive behaviour; if they don't recognise it, how will they know what to report?
- **80% of the gender pay gap is attributed to the motherhood penalty.** If we want women to stay and reach the top, we need to reset the caring paradigm to enable dads to be parents too. Equalising parental leave or offering enhanced paternity leave are great ways of helping both men and women.
- **Overlook the power of your Queenagers at your peril.** Not only are they your role models, but they act as the canaries in the coal mine for your company culture as, if they're happy, your Gen Z and Millennials will be happy too. Both demographics want the same things from work; purpose, flexibility, autonomy, being able to make a real difference and a good work life balance.

# The Urgency of Gender Equity in the Workplace —

Gender equity remains a pressing issue in today's workforce, demanding focused discussion and action. Charlotte Woodworth from Business in the Community highlighted the critical importance of addressing gender disparities, pointing to four key indicators that underscore how far we still have to go.

## Four Key Indicators

- 1. Pay Gap:** The gender pay gap remains a significant issue, with women earning 14.3% less than their male counterparts across all UK employment.
- 2. Power:** Leadership positions are predominantly male. Only 10 companies in the FTSE 100 are led by women, and there are no women of Black or Asian heritage among the top 10 businesses.
- 3. Job Security:** Women are nearly twice as likely (1.8 times) as men to be in severely insecure work. This insecurity impacts not only their current job stability but also their long-term career prospects and financial security.
- 4. Harassment and Discrimination:** Gender-based harassment and discrimination continue to plague workplaces.

Equity and equality mean providing equal opportunities for all, regardless of gender. To rebalance the burden of caring and domestic duties, the workplace must evolve to support men in caregiving roles as well. Parental leave, remote work options and support for carers should be equal for all genders and all genders should feel able culturally to take advantage of the policies available. **Flexible working arrangements are key** to fostering inclusion and ensuring that all employees can thrive.



## A spotlight on retention – learnings from the Times Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality

- **Prioritise becoming an inclusive, equitable employer.** Address known barriers and enablers to inclusion generally but particularly for women and other marginalised genders e.g. ensuring family-friendly policies, creating a respectful working environment, flexible working. Leadership from the top and support for line managers is key.
- **Commission and interrogate data about YOUR organisation.** It's vital to understand what might act as an incentive to stay, what might push people out. Draw on insight, quantitative and qualitative e.g. stay interviews, exit interview feedback, network insights, pulse surveys with targeted questions.
- **Educate and encourage employees to address & report non-inclusive behaviour.** Facilitate psychological safety by introducing different reporting mechanisms across the organisation (formal, informal, anonymous) Educate employees on what non-inclusive behaviour looks like - encourage speaking out and up.
- **Apply an intersectional lens.** Friction points can vary for different groups and at different stages of the employee life cycle. Consider individuals as a whole, recognise where there might be an overlap for example older women are more likely to be grappling with health concerns; women of colour are at greater risk of harassment and discrimination, the sandwich generation (multi-generational carers) can be struggling to combine work with wider responsibilities.

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### Specific Examples from this year's Times Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality

- Conduct targeted stay interviews addressing 'at risk groups'
  - Promotion of flexibility across our organisations – as open to all, phased retirement, secondment opportunities, supporting those with caring responsibilities
  - Clear, mainstreamed focus on results not presenteeism – 'results only work environment' embedded via clear evaluations processes.
  - Mainstreaming support for working carers - including ensuring senior leaders embrace and model this.
- 

#### FLEXIBILITY IS KEY

Pre-pandemic, flexibility ranked 17<sup>th</sup> for employees when thinking about what would make them stay with their organisation. Post pandemic, flexibility is ranked second, with only remuneration first.<sup>1</sup> Nearly three in ten women (28%) have considered leaving a job due to a lack of flexibility, compared to 17% of men. And about a third (32%) of people from an ethnic minority background have considered leaving a job due to a lack of flexibility, compared to around one in five white people.<sup>2</sup>

If you want to hear more about BITC go to <https://www.bitc.org.uk/>

1. Analysis of Mercer

2. Ipsos Mori. C10 – Have you ever left a job or considered leaving a job because of a lack of flexibility of not? Base: All participants (5444); Fieldwork dates: 11-17 November 2021



# Parenting Out Loud – why supporting working dads is key to gender equality —



## Redefining Masculinity and Supporting Men as Caregivers

Elliott Rae, the founder of Parenting Out Loud brought an essential perspective to the conversation about gender equity in the workplace. While much of the focus has been on supporting women, society hasn't really evolved when it comes to how a man can behave at work. We don't have the language to discuss fatherhood or men's caring whether that's caring for parents or caring for younger children.

## Parenting has changed

In modern households, it is common for both partners to work. Despite this, women often shoulder the majority of childcare and domestic responsibilities. To address this imbalance, we need to encourage and enable men to be active and present at home but also have a career too. How do we normalise male caring in the workplace, how do we create workplace cultures where dads can be loud and proud of their parenting responsibilities at work?

**// If we want to get really sustainable long term gender equality for women, we absolutely must support dads to be equal parents, to have the option to parent loudly, to take enhanced paternity leave. It's also really good for men too, the State of the World Father's report said that 85% of men wanted to spend more time with their children."**

**ELLIOTT RAE**

FOUNDER OF [PARENTING OUT LOUD](#)

#### **What does Parenting Out Loud look like on a practical basis?**

- It looks like requesting flexible working for child-care reasons. And being open and honest about it.
- It looks like taking all the paternity leave your workplace allows and doing that loudly and coming back into the workplace and talking about what you learned.
- It looks like being open and honest when your child is sick and you have to stay at home and look after your sick child.
- It looks like using your OOO message to let people know that you've left early for the school run.
- It looks like men sharing parenting stories, being an active part of the parenting network.

#### **This is a step change that is really important for many different reasons:**

- For gender equality – 80% of the gender pay gap is attributed to the motherhood penalty, the disparity in the gender pay gap starts when the first baby is born into a family.
- If we want to get gender parity for women and support women to reach senior levels, we have to support dads to have the option to parent loudly and take enhanced paternity leave.

#### **How can we create cultures where dads can parent out loud?**

- Bring men into the gender equality conversation by investing in safe places like dad's networks.
- Introduce equalised parental leave and pay or offer enhanced paternity leave. Over 70 organisations in the UK have introduced equal parental leave, many more have enhanced paternity leave. In the UK, one in five men do not take any paternity leave.
- Try to change expectations about what men do. Look for any bias around approval for flexible working for men. Men in the UK are less likely to ask for flexible working, and when they do, they are less likely to have a flexible working request approved.
- Leadership plays a crucial role in this process by modelling supportive behaviours and openly discussing the importance of shared caregiving responsibilities. Champion and role model policies, speak at town hall meetings, encourage dads to take paternity leave.

# Meet the Queenagers! —

## The Benefit of Hiring and Retaining Women in Mid-Life

In the quest for building diverse and resilient workforces, hiring and retaining women in mid-life offers unique advantages that are often overlooked. Eleanor Mills, the founder of Noon.org.uk, a consultancy that believes that 'midlife is an age of opportunity – a time for transformation and reinvention with the right help' gave us a fantastic talk focusing on 'Queenagers'.

## Who are Queenagers?

Queenagers are women over 45. A valuable demographic that can significantly enhance an organisation's strength, stability, and business performance. Yet companies make huge effort when it comes to retaining women post maternity then take their eye off the ball when it comes to gendered aging. Nearly half of women in this age group feel they are invisible or overlooked.

## The Resilience of Queenagers

Most Queenagers have been forged in the fires of life's challenges. They have navigated experiences such as divorce, bereavement, redundancy, and caring for elderly parents. Additionally, they have often managed teenagers in trouble, health issues, financial crises, and other significant life events.

Despite these hurdles, many Queenagers have developed a remarkable resilience and wisdom that can only come from overcoming such challenges.

This resilience is a powerful asset in the workplace. Women who have weathered these storms tend to approach problems with a balanced perspective, having learned to manage stress and uncertainty effectively. Their ability to stay calm under pressure and to find solutions in difficult situations makes them invaluable team members and leaders.

## What do Queenagers want from work?

**Flexibility is sixteen times more important to Queenagers than status.** They want to feel valued, to have autonomy, to have the ability to make their own decisions and not to be micro-managed, they want a manager who understands the intricacies of what they might be juggling. About 30% of Queenagers don't have children but most have parents who will need care at some point. They don't want to be seen purely through the lens of the menopause.

What Queenagers want from work – purpose, autonomy, being able to make a real difference, a good work life balance is the same as what Gen Z and Millennials want from work. They are the canaries in the coal mine for your company culture as, if they're happy, your Gen Z and Millennials will be happy too.

### A BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

Hiring and retaining women in mid-life is not just a matter of equity; it is a business advantage for organisations. Queenagers offer resilience that younger people may not have, experience that comes with age, and a balanced approach to problem-solving that comes with a longer time overcoming obstacles.

If you want to hear more about Noon.org.uk and Queenagers – go to <https://www.noon.org.uk/>. Alternatively, Eleanor's Times Best Seller book 'Much More to Come' is published by Harper Collins.



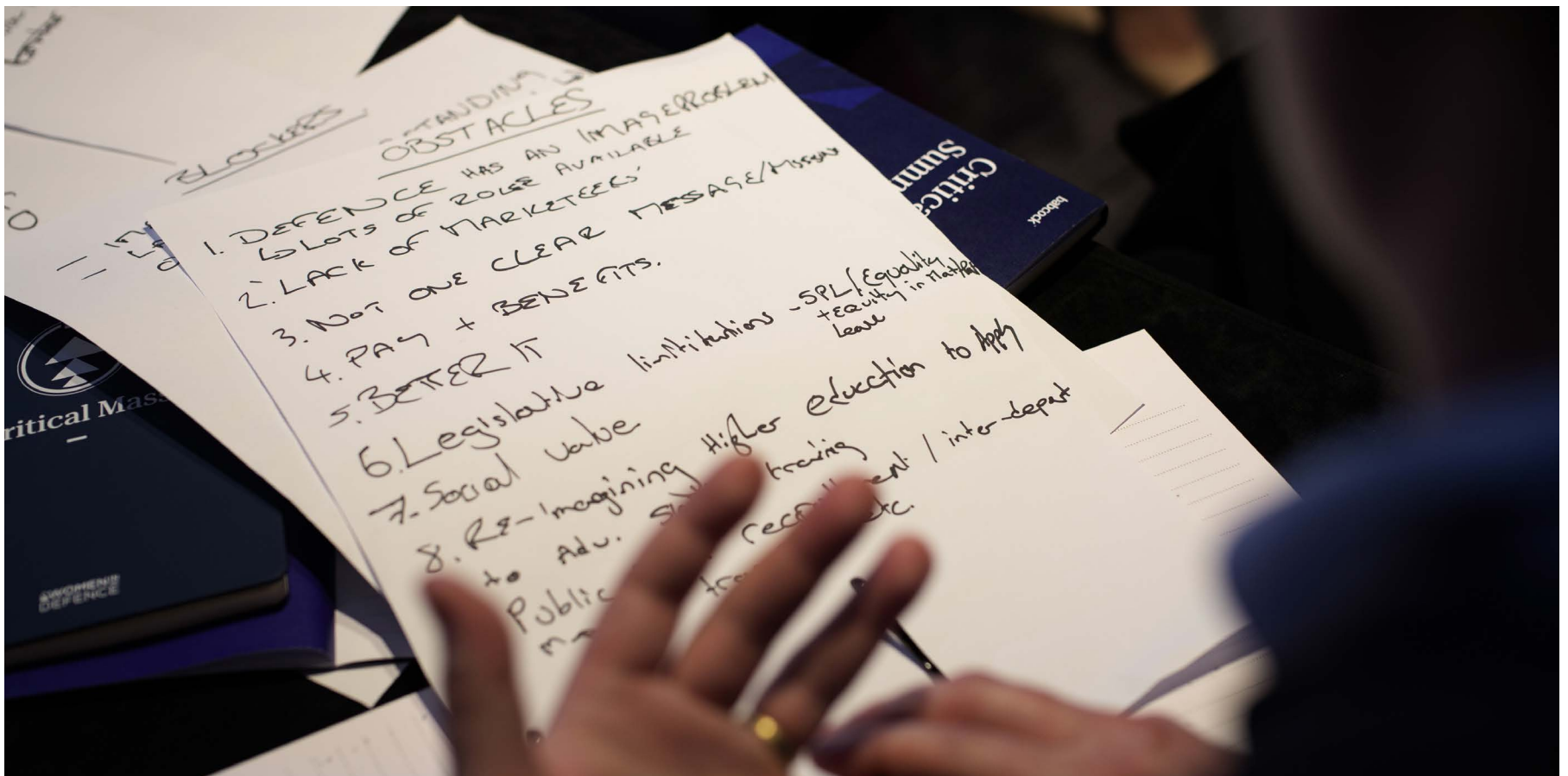
## Retaining the Queenager Workforce

To retain Queenagers, organisations need to adopt strategies that address the unique challenges and opportunities associated with this demographic. Here are a few key approaches:

- **Fostering Inclusivity and Visibility.** Organisations should actively work to counteract the sense of invisibility felt by many mid-life women. This can be achieved by promoting inclusive policies and ensuring that Queenagers are represented and visible in leadership roles and decision-making processes.
- **Flexible Work Arrangements.** Many Queenagers are balancing work with significant personal responsibilities, such as caring for aging parents or managing health issues. Offering flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options and flexible hours, can help these women maintain their work-life balance and remain committed to their roles.
- **Mid-life check ins.** What are their ambitions, what do they need? Ensure they are given the opportunities for placements, re-skilling and training, don't only target grads or post maternity women.

# What if...? —

At the Summit we ran a workshop on barriers holding back women (and men) in the sector. Here are some ideas that came from the workshop.





## What if.....

<p>Defence has an image problem, repeated negative news stories, everyday sexism, which puts people off considering the sector for a career.</p>	<p>What if there was an early intervention education – e.g. raising awareness of a career in defence at schools, demonstrating the range of skills and careers in modern armed forces, industry &amp; civil service. Multiple Departments could collaborate on this: MoD, Home Office, Education, Social Care</p>
<p>Job advertisements are opaque, with lots of fine words about being an inclusive employer but very little detail to back that up.</p>	<p>What if we set minimum standards for job ads e.g. including the salary range, clarity on flexible working arrangements. And follow through on these standards, holding organisations to account. DWP, Home Office, MoD to implement. All government departments should role-model this.</p>
<p>Too many defence organisations seem to be stuck in the traditional male/female work paradigm, where women, counter-intuitively, have more choice than men when it comes to family caring responsibilities. They can take long periods of maternity leave, and flexible working for many, if not all, is seen as a natural thing for women to do. It is rare that organisational policy permits men to take enhanced or extended parental leave, and if the policy exists, rarer still that where it is culturally acceptable for men to take time off to spend with their families.</p>	<p>What if statutory paternity leave and pay was increased with a longer term aim of equalising all types of parental leave?</p> <p>What if the skills learned through career breaks / parental leave were valued – resilience, planning, negotiation, rather the time away from the office being seen as ‘lost time’?</p>
<p>Zig Zag careers are a great idea to keep people in the sector, but the devil will be in the detail.</p>	<p>What if vetting could be kept during career breaks, enabling a smoother transition?</p> <p>What if skills learned whilst away from the Armed Forces could be easily assessed and valued for re-entry?</p>
<p>A real understanding of what it means to be an inclusive leader is patchy.</p>	<p>What if leaders were measured on their ability to lead in an inclusive way.</p>
<p>Access to schools is determined by the location of your house, which is often nowhere near where you work, making the school run etc more difficult to accommodate.</p>	<p>What if you could choose to use your work location as the determining factor for selection for access to a school rather than your home?</p>

# Our current partners\*

\*As at September 2024



# A thought —

**// Women belong in all places where decisions are being made. It shouldn't be that women are the exception.”**

**RUTH BADER GINSBERG  
SUPREME COURT JUSTICE**



# Women in Defence Charter Data Report 2024

CHARTER

# Contents

---

19

Executive  
summary

---

21

Highlights

---

22

Female  
Representation

---

24

Representation in mission/  
business critical roles

---

26

Senior  
leadership

---

27

What are signatories  
doing?

---

28

Measuring  
progress

---

29

Charter  
Commitments

---

32

Conclusion

# Executive summary

## 4 years of progress

Since its launch in 2019, the Women in Defence Charter has sought to support and challenge signatory organisations to improve gender balance across the sector. This, our fourth annual data report, shows another year of progress with **the average female representation now at 25%**. This is **nearly a 1% increase from 2023** and is a small step towards our 30% by 2030 ambition.

Today, the Charter has 98 Signatories and we are pleased to report an increase in participation in this report, with 63 organisations contributing data, covering around 473,000 people in the defence enterprise. **Almost two thirds of organisations reported an improvement in female representation this year** and the Armed Forces and Civil Service have both improved their gender balance.

Since our 2023 report, **the biggest shift was in the Civil Service which is moving even closer to gender balance with an increase of 2.2% to 43% female representation**. The Armed Forces saw a smaller shift of just 0.2% to 31st March 2024. The private sector remained flat at 29%.

This year, we wanted to understand more about female representation **in mission/business critical roles and/or decision-making roles** which revealed that **women occupy 36% of the senior Civil Service roles**. Using earnings as a proxy in the private sector we found only 20% of the highest paid were female. However, in the Armed Forces we were encouraged to find that there are similar proportions of men and women occupying command roles, (18% females and 21% of males). The delta of only 3% between male and female officers eligible for and filling Command posts is very promising progress given the historical context of these previously male-dominated roles.



Photo above: UK MOD © Crown Copyright 2021

To continue to make progress in increasing the gender balance across defence, we need to **keep a focus on Senior Leadership and Board roles to ensure visible female role models**. This year, the reported average % females at Board level was 23%, and the number of female Directors in Signatory organisations reduced to 21% (from 25% in 2023). However **the female representation in the Manager and Senior Manager populations has increased** from 20% to 23% and 21% respectively, which is positive.

We are pleased to see progress is happening all across the sector and the face of defence is slowly changing. We have moved another step closer to the Charter ambition of 30% by 2030. We must maintain our effort and increase the pace of change. With continued focus on signatory commitments and targeted action we will have a better gender balance to help protect the nation and ensure we all prosper.

**Sam des Forges** – MOD Charter Co-Chair

**Katharine Sealy** – Northrop Grumman – Industry Charter Co-Chair

**Angela Owen OBE** – Women in Defence UK Charter Co-Chair



# Highlights

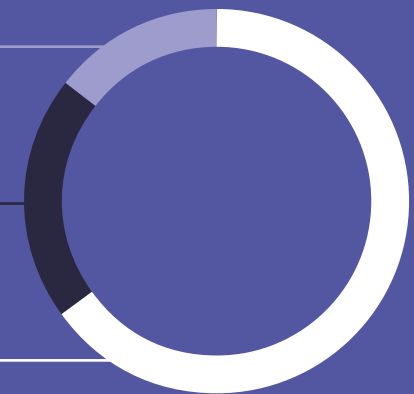
# 63↑

Signatories completed the exercise  
(vs 54 last year)

**Small employers**  
(less than 49 employees) **9**

**Medium employers**  
(50–249 employees) **13**

**Large employers**  
(250+ employees) **41**



An 18% increase in data with approx

# 473,000

people being represented.

# +1%

The gender balance has improved in comparison to our 2023 report.

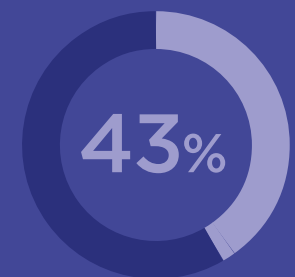
# 25%

The average female representation in Signatory organisations is now 25%.

The Armed Forces and Civil Service have both

## increased representation

The biggest shift was in the **Civil Service** with a 2.2% increase to 43% female.



# Female Representation

In 2023 we reported the overall representation of women in the sector from the 53 signatories that submitted this data was 24%. This year, 63 respondents submitted representation data and we are delighted to see that **in 2024 female representation has increased to 25%**.

Of the 63 organisations who responded, 65% (**41 organisations**) **reported an improvement in female representation this year**. 14% (9 organisations) stayed the same and 13% (8 organisations) saw a reduction. In 2023 63% saw an improvement, 18.5% stayed the same and 11% saw a reduction.

Within an increased sample size, we can see the Public Sector has increased representation by 0.7% overall.<sup>1</sup> This is an increase of 0.2% for the Armed Forces and **2.2% for the Civil Service, who are moving close to gender balance**.

**The private sector continues to have 25% female representation** (though the overall numbers in the data set has increased by c50,000).



Photo: UK MOD © Crown Copyright 2024

1. The 2024 data represents all UK Armed Forces, Regular and Future Reserve 2020, Trained and Untrained Personnel as at 1 April 2024. This matches the rounded figures in the Official UKAF stats ([UK armed forces biannual diversity statistics: April 2024](#)). The percentage change shown reflects the change from restated 2023 figures.

Representation in 2024						
Area	Total Headcount			Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Change
<b>Public</b>	179,951	44,663	224,614	80%	20%	0.7%
→ Armed Forces	149,232	21,383	170,615	87%	13%	0.2%
→ Civil Service	30,719	23,280	53,999	57%	43%	2.2%
<b>Private</b>	177,316	71,605	248,921	71%	29%	0.0%
<b>All</b>	<b>357,267</b>	<b>116,268</b>	<b>473,535</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>



# Representation in mission/business critical roles



Photo: UK MOD © Crown Copyright 2023

This year, we wanted to widen the lens through which we review the statistics from a simple headcount at differing levels to a better understanding of where women work, are they working in mission/business critical roles, and what impact women have the opportunity to make. To explore this, we added a question to understand the number of women who are in positions of authority and influence. Each part of the sector is organised differently so for the defence industry, we used the proxy of the top 10% of earners; for the MOD Civil Service, the number of female members of the Senior Civil Service (SCS); for the Armed Forces, the proportion of female officers employed in command roles as at 31st March 2024.





The data revealed:

- **For the defence industry**, 55 companies submitted data this year. Of those, 24 shared data on their top earners. The average percentage of women who were reported to be in the top 10% of the highest paid people in the company/Charter Signatory division was 20%.
- **For the MOD Civil Service** including Defence Equipment and Support and the Submarine Delivery Agency, 36% of the total population of members of the Senior Civil Service are female.
- **For the Armed Forces**, we used the proportion of women employed in Command roles, in essence roles that have disciplinary powers over others. Each Service defines a Command role in a slightly different way as shown in the caveat below. Of the 360 females eligible for a Command role, 55 or 18% were in a Command post as at 1 April 2024. This compares to 2804 male officers eligible of whom 593 or 21% were in post at 1 April 2024.

### Comment

Whilst the defence industry data is a proxy measurement, it seems to roughly match the number of women on private sector Boards at 24%. We hope that more companies will share this data next year so that we can get a better feel of where women are working.

The number of women in the SCS is good news and is backed by a growing number of senior women leaders in the Civil Service at three- and four-star level.

The delta of only 3% between male and female officers eligible for and filling Command posts is very promising, especially when you take into account the impact of historically heavily male dominated parts of the Armed Forces such as the Infantry and the Royal Marines, each forming about one quarter of their Service. Whilst the absolute number of women in the Armed Forces remains low, those women serving compete exceptionally well against their male counterparts for key roles.

#### Caveats for the Armed Forces

- Figures include Trade Trained Regular UK Armed Forces Personnel as at 1 April 2024.
- Navy command appointment numbers were unable to be identified, therefore eligible command ranks from Captain rank (OF5) and above have been provided instead.
- Army numbers identified personnel in command appointments at rank OF4 (Lieutenant Colonel) and above based on their Command List including personnel transferred from GURTAM to UKTAP and excluding Gurkhas & Army Reserves (FTRS).
- RAF numbers identified personnel in command appointments at rank OF5 (Group Captain)

# Senior leadership

The overall average % females at Board level is 23%. We saw a reduction in the number of female Directors in Signatory organisations to 21% (from 25% in 2023), however **the female representation in the Manager and Senior Manager populations has increased from 20% to 23% and 21% respectively.**

As the sample sizes are small, we know that a single person change can have a marked increase on the female %, however promoting and retaining senior female role models is important for driving overall gender balance. It would appear this is continuing at lower management levels in signatory organisations, and we need to keep a focus on Senior Leadership and Board roles to ensure female role models are visible.

**Average of total % of females at each level 2024**

Sector	Workforce	Manager	Senior Manager	Director	Board
Civil Service	30%	28%	22%	22%	20%
Armed Forces	12%	16%	8%	8%	7%
Private	29%	23%	21%	21%	24%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>23%</b>

Survey respondents provided overall headcount numbers and percentages for females at particular job levels. Job level averages shown here are therefore averages of the percentages reported which does not take account of different organisational size. We plan to change the data request for the 2025 report to improve accuracy.

# What are signatories doing?

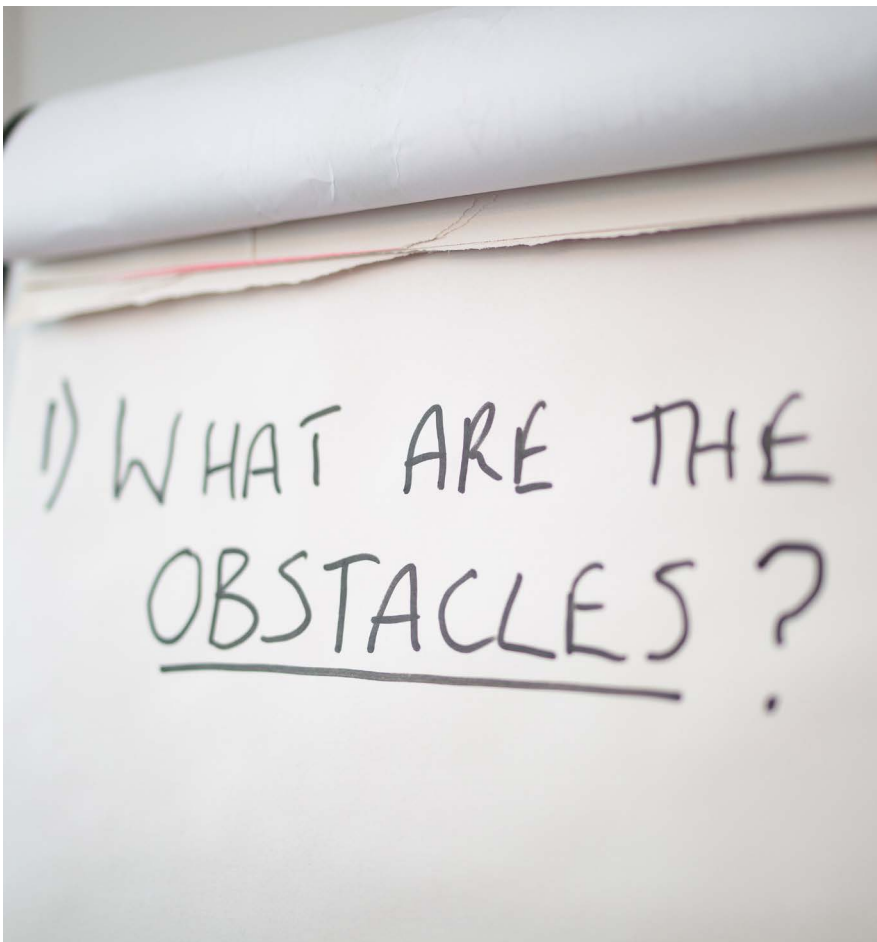
In terms of activity that attracts and retains female talent, there has been an increase in the number of signatories that are now offering female talent development programmes – more than half (51%) and nearly two thirds offer female mentoring schemes (62%).

Signatory activities in 2024				
Measure	Number	%	% in 2023	Change
Flexible or hybrid working	55	87%	87%	0.3%
Education and awareness programmes	43	68%	69%	-0.3%
Female mentoring programme/schemes	39	62%	57%	4.5%
New inclusive/gender policies	38	60%	56%	4.8%
Gender balance or female affinity/employee network groups	37	59%	57%	1.3%
Female talent development programmes	32	51%	39%	11.9%
Childcare facilities or specific support other than vouchers	24	38%	28%	10.3%
Setting additional targets e.g. recruitment or promotion ratio	23	37%	41%	-4.2%



Photo © Northrop Grumman UK

# Measuring progress



The most popular ways to measure progress continue to be exit interviews (79%), employee surveys (78%) and data collection (75%). 71% of organisations surveyed also use recruitment data which has increased slightly this year.

How is Progress Being Measured in 2024				
Measure	Number	%	% in 2023	Change
Exit interviews	50	79%	83%	-4.0%
Employee survey results	49	78%	81%	-3.7%
Attrition data / leavers data	48	76%	78%	-1.6%
Annual data collection/reporting	47	75%	81%	-6.9%
Recruitment data	45	71%	69%	2.9%
Gender Pay Gap reporting	44	70%	70%	-0.5%
Talent attraction data	35	56%	61%	-5.6%

# Charter Commitments

When an organisation signs the Charter, they make 4 main commitments:

1. To nominate one member of their senior executive team to be responsible and accountable for gender diversity and inclusion.
2. To set a gender balance target for their organisation.
3. Where appropriate, to set a target for gender diversity in senior management.
4. To have the intention to ensure the pay, or the objectives of the senior executive team, are linked to delivery of any internal targets on gender inclusion and diversity.

The Signatories are asked annually to report on their progress against these commitments and share their current female representation.

1. **89%** have a nominated senior executive member to be responsible and accountable for gender diversity and inclusion (56 organisations). This was 89% in 2023.
 
2. **79%** have set a gender balance target for their organisation (50 organisations) vs. 87% in 2023.
 
3. **71%** have set a target for gender diversity in senior management (45 organisations) which is a slight increase from 70% in 2023.
 
4. **63%** of signatories now have the intention to ensure the pay, or the objectives of the senior executive team, are linked to delivery of any internal targets on gender inclusion and diversity (40 organisations), compared to 61% in 2023.
 





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In 2024, **27% are meeting all 6 commitments**  
(vs 21% in 2023).

We will continue working with signatories over the coming year to ensure they understand their commitments, how they are performing against them and what we can do to further to support them in achieving the goals they signed up to, to increase gender balance in their organisations.

**73%**  
No (46)



**27%**  
Yes (17)

Huge thanks go to the following Charter Signatories who submitted data for our annual report.

Organisations		
AACE Ltd	Fujitsu	PricewaterhouseCoopers
Accenture UK Limited	General Dynamics United Kingdom Limited	QA Limited
ADS Group Ltd	Harquebus	QinetiQ
Airbus Defence and Space Limited	Helsing Limited	Raytheon UK
AirTanker	Impellam	Rheinmetall BAE Systems Land
Aquila Air Traffic Management Services Ltd	Jacobs (ES&T, Defence & Security (D&S) Performance Unit)	Rheinmetall Defence UK and Rheinmetall MAN Military Vehicles UK
Atlas Elektronik UK	KBR	Rolls-Royce
Babcock International Group	L3Harris Technologies	Rowden
BAE Systems Plc	Leidos UK	Saab UK
Boeing UK	Leonardo UK	Scientific Management International Ltd
Boyden	Lockheed Martin UK	Serco
BT	Manpower UK Ltd	Sharing in Growth UK Ltd
Capgemini UK / Capgemini Invent	MBDA	Skyral
Cervus Defence and Security Ltd	Ministry of Defence - Civil Service (MOD Main excluding Agencies)	Submarine Delivery Agency
Cohort Plc	Ministry of Defence - UK Armed Forces	Thales UK Ltd
Costain	Mott MacDonald	The D Group
Cranfield University	MRL® Public Sector Consultants Ltd	UK Space Command
Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S)	Northrop Grumman UK	VIVO Defence Services Limited
Empyrea Consulting Ltd	Occam Group Ltd	Vysiion Ltd
Envitia	PA Consulting	Walker Precision Engineering
Eviden (UK Defence & Security Account)	Pearson Engineering Ltd	Whitetree Group Limited

We hope this report will inspire individuals and organisations to take action to enable women to succeed at all levels and drive a critical mass of female representation, so we have a better gender balance across the defence sector.

# Conclusion

Both reports are encouraging. If progress continues in the same vein, the Charter 30% by 2030 ambition should be reached (as long as the pace does not slow further).

Given the current geo-political climate, diversity of thought in defence decision making roles becomes even more important. In 2025, we hope to gradually increase our data on where women are working rather than a simple headcount of how many women work at each level.

On the retention side, it's really heartening to see a new emphasis on the impact on women of dads being able to Parent Out Loud. Dads are parents too. Defence has lagged behind other sectors in recognising this fact. Over 70 UK companies offer equal parental leave; it would be great to see more defence companies on that list. And we mustn't forget the Queenagers, women over 45, who feel under-valued and invisible yet have so much to offer.

A theme that ran throughout the Summit mentioned by all three speakers was the **criticality of flexible working in retention**.

Business in the Community drew on insight from the Time Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality talking about flexible working arrangements are key to ensuring that all employees can thrive.

We hope that organisations and individuals will take something of value from this report. Whilst the dial is moving slowly, there is still much to do if we are to collectively build a defence where all feel valued.



**Visit us at:**

[www.womenindefenceuk.com](http://www.womenindefenceuk.com)

[www.womenindefenceuk.com/charter](http://www.womenindefenceuk.com/charter)

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