

# Close The Gap



Improving gender  
equality in practice

We all have a responsibility to help close the Gender  
Pay Gap. Together we can address the issue.  
Discover how: [architecture.com/CloseTheGap](https://www.architecture.com/CloseTheGap)

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# Foreword

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## Ben Derbyshire

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**Architects strive to build a better society. While our profession has made progress on gender equality, significant instances of inequality remain. Change is long overdue and we all – employers, employees and the RIBA – have a vital role to play. I applaud the practices who have shared their insights and intelligence to shape this guidance.**

While they are all UK employers of more than 250 employees and are therefore legally required to report their Gender Pay Gap data, their findings are relevant to all architecture practices, of all scales – and not just those operating in the UK.

I encourage all practices, including those under the official threshold of 250 employees, to be transparent about their challenges, to sign the pledge and put in place actions to #CloseTheGap where it exists.



Driving improvements in equality, diversity and inclusion – including closing the Gender Pay Gap – is a top priority for the RIBA. We have further expanded our membership requirements around fair and equitable working environments and pay and will continue to deliver and develop a programme of work to address attrition rates and the lack of progression for women in architecture.

There is much work to do to drive out inequality. This guidance is a welcome step on the path to a more inclusive profession and I commend all those involved in its development.

## Jo Bacon

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**My ambition has always been that the RIBA should exist to provide leadership to all practices, whatever their size. Now that the Gender Pay Gap is at the front of our minds, the RIBA can help practices to be able to fully understand the consequences of their gaps and also invite them on a wider journey to improve access to architecture and equality for all.**



In my election leaflet for RIBA Council, I committed to promoting a more diverse profession and helping to nurture new talent, regardless of characteristic or background, so that no one feels excluded from an architectural career. Architecture has proportionally fewer women compared to law or medicine and the profession also needs to be more accessible for lower income candidates, ethnic minorities and architects who have qualified internationally. This will only make our talent base stronger. It will also make the architecture we create better.

Much of the guidance proposed here should help achieve good practice for all who aspire to be an inclusive employer where recruitment and retention is based on individual talent and skills. In practice, we need to reflect and engage positively with these challenges. I am personally not convinced that it will always be that easy to improve the Gender Pay Gap year on year through selection of the best talent alone, so our wider strategies must also be ambitious and optimistic.

In my own practice, Allies and Morrison, we have reported now for the second year and we have a longer-term plan of initiatives to promote a more inclusive practice, including more flexible working arrangements, diversification of our leadership, supporting those who return to work after time away, apprenticeships and internal support networks.

This guidance includes a pledge developed with the seventeen practices who have reported their Gender Pay Gap for the last two years. We hope that more practices might also see the value in this pledge, sign up to it and then report their Gender Pay Gap data.

The RIBA represents a huge diversity of talent internationally and I hope that, for all members, this guidance will nurture and enhance the diversity and the reputation of the profession.



The RIBA has developed this best practice guidance for Chartered Practices of all sizes. The RIBA is keen to encourage practices of all sizes voluntarily to evaluate their Gender Pay Gap data, and share it if willing and, more importantly, to take the most effective recommended actions to improve their gender equality, and benefit the wider profession. Very small practices may encounter confidentiality issues when disclosing gender pay data by quartiles, but they should usually be able to safely develop and implement an action plan and their headline Gender Pay Gap data (both mean and median).

From 6 April 2017, the UK government has required all legal entities that employ 250 or more people to publish a Gender Pay Gap Report on an annual basis.<sup>1</sup>

All employers with 250 or more employees must calculate and publish the following data.<sup>2</sup> They may also choose to publish a commentary on progress made since the previous year's report, explaining any actions taken to improve the Gender Pay Gap and any changes in the reported data:

- mean Gender Pay Gap
- median Gender Pay Gap
- mean bonus Gender Pay Gap
- median bonus Gender Pay Gap
- proportion of men in the organisation receiving a bonus payment
- proportion of women in the organisation receiving a bonus payment
- proportion of men and women in each quartile pay band

This information must be recorded publicly, i.e. via a company website, and must also be reported in conjunction with the Gender Pay Gap service.<sup>3</sup> Organisations with fewer than 250 employees can also choose to voluntarily disclose a Gender Pay Gap Report.

The recommendations in this document are based on those of the Government Equalities Office<sup>4</sup> and other research into the issues underlying the Gender Pay Gap as well as effective actions to address them. It draws on analysis and reports by other organisations in addition to the RIBA's own qualitative research with a core group of current, or soon to be, Gender Pay Gap Reporting practices.

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**The recommendations set out workable measures that can be put in place by practices to enable the women they employ to stay in the profession and reach senior levels, thereby closing the Gender Pay Gap.**

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<sup>1</sup> The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2017/9780111152010>

<sup>2</sup> Gender Pay Gap Reporting – government overview  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/gender-pay-gap-reporting-overview#mandatory-gender-pay-gap-reporting>

<sup>3</sup> Find and compare Gender Pay Gap data  
<https://www.gov.uk/find-gender-pay-gap-data>

<sup>4</sup> Reducing the Gender Pay Gap and improving gender equality in organisations: Evidence-based actions for employers  
[https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/public/assets/pdf/Evidence-based\\_actions\\_for\\_employers.pdf](https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/public/assets/pdf/Evidence-based_actions_for_employers.pdf)

# What is the Gender Pay Gap?



The Gender Pay Gap is the difference in the amount that women in an organisation, on average, are paid for each hour worked relative to the amount that men in the same organisation, on average, are paid, also for each hour worked.

The Gender Pay Gap is not to be confused with equal pay requirements which stipulate that people doing 'like work' or 'work of equal value' must receive the same or equal pay.<sup>5</sup> Equal pay and the Gender Pay Gap are both important issues, which need to be addressed. Practices seeking to measure and improve their Gender Pay Gap should take the time to ensure that they do not have an equal pay – i.e. pay discrimination – issue as well.<sup>6</sup>

The ONS' headline measure of the Gender Pay Gap is the difference in the *median* pay between men and women working for the same organisation.<sup>7</sup> This is expressed as a percentage of men's earnings e.g. women earn X% less than men. A Gender Pay Gap of zero indicates that men and women in an organisation are, on average, paid exactly the same for each hour worked. A positive Gender Pay Gap figure indicates that women are paid less per hour than men. A negative Gender Pay Gap figure indicates that women are paid more per hour than men.

Organisations which are legally required to disclose their data will report both their median and their mean Gender Pay Gaps. The median is the number that falls in the middle of a range when everyone's wages are lined up from smallest to largest. The mean is calculated by adding up all of the wages of employees in a company and dividing that figure by the number of employees. Both measures provide useful information and insights.

It is important to recognise that a mean Gender Pay Gap favouring men does not necessarily show that all men in the organisation are paid more per hour than all women. The mean Gender Pay Gap is often influenced by the gender composition of the highest paid employees in the organisation, particularly if there is a large pay differential between this highest paid cohort and other employees in the organisation.

The median Gender Pay Gap shows the difference in the hourly pay rate to the 'middle woman' and 'middle man' in the organisation. It does not capture the extent of pay inequality across the range of men or women.

The Gender Pay Gap varies by occupation, age and even working patterns. For example: the gap tends to be higher in industry sectors such as finance, energy and construction and lower in sectors such as public administration, support services and social work.<sup>8</sup>

The available data shows that every country in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (the OECD)<sup>9</sup> has a Gender Pay Gap in favour of men. On average, women in the OECD earn 15.1% less than men and the median Gender Pay Gap across OECD countries ranges from 36.7% in Korea, to 3.3% in Belgium.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission: Equal Pay for Equal Work  
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equal-pay-equal-work-what-law-says>

<sup>6</sup> ACAS advice and guidance on equal pay  
<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1811>

<sup>7</sup> More exactly, the Office for National Statistics headline measure for the Gender Pay Gap is calculated as the difference between median gross hourly earnings (excluding overtime) as a proportion of median gross hourly earnings (excluding overtime) for men. Crucially, this measure does not take into account equal pay for equal work.

<sup>8</sup> Managing Gender Pay Reporting – ACAS Guidance  
[http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/9/p/Managing\\_gender\\_pay\\_reporting\\_07.02.19.pdf](http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/9/p/Managing_gender_pay_reporting_07.02.19.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> The OECD is an intergovernmental economic organisation with 36 member countries, founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations: Moving Forward on Gender Statistics  
<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/dataWW2015.html>



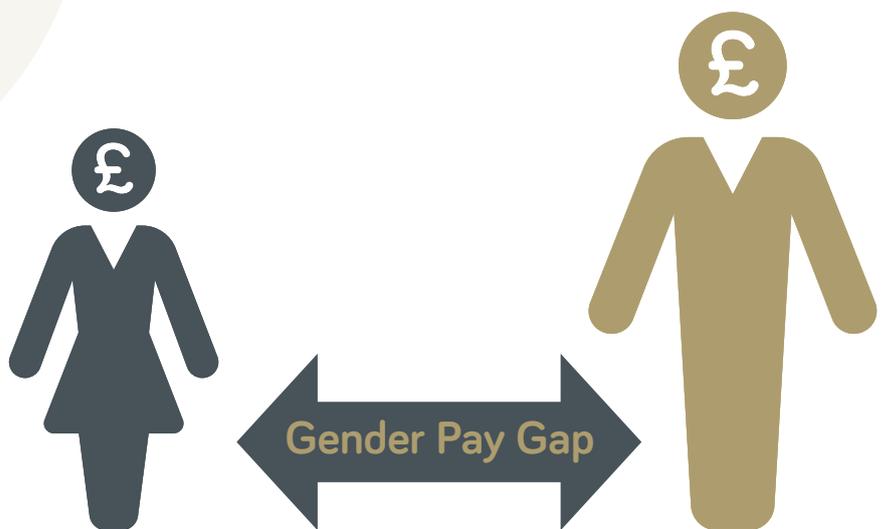
Many of the measures adopted to improve gender equality are also likely to improve diversity more broadly.

Addressing the Gender Pay Gap is not only a matter of fairness and equality – it also makes good business sense. There is clear evidence that diverse teams perform better and that having different perspectives makes teams more creative and innovative.<sup>11</sup>

Recent research reported that highly inclusive organisations are 120% more capable of meeting financial goals and generate 1.4 times more revenue. Businesses which are more diverse increase their cash flow.<sup>12</sup>

Improving gender balance at all levels in the workplace is a route to addressing the Gender Pay Gap.

Gender diversity has been found to provide a competitive edge and companies in the top quartile for gender or racial and ethnic diversity are more likely to have financial returns above their national industry medians.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, companies in the bottom quartile are statistically less likely to achieve above-average returns. Closing the overall gender gap in work, including employment rates, has the potential to create an extra £150 billion on top of business-as-usual GDP forecasts in 2025, and could translate into 840,000 additional female employees.<sup>14</sup>



<sup>11</sup> Tanya Castell of Changing the Chemistry: [https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/105452.aspx#\\_ftn29](https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/105452.aspx#_ftn29)

<sup>12</sup> Maverick Research: Embrace Inclusion to Improve Team Performance <https://www.gartner.com/doc/3803478?ref=mrktg-srch>

<sup>13</sup> Vivian Hunt, Dennis Layton, Sara Prince (2015), Why Diversity Matters, McKinsey & Company: <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters>

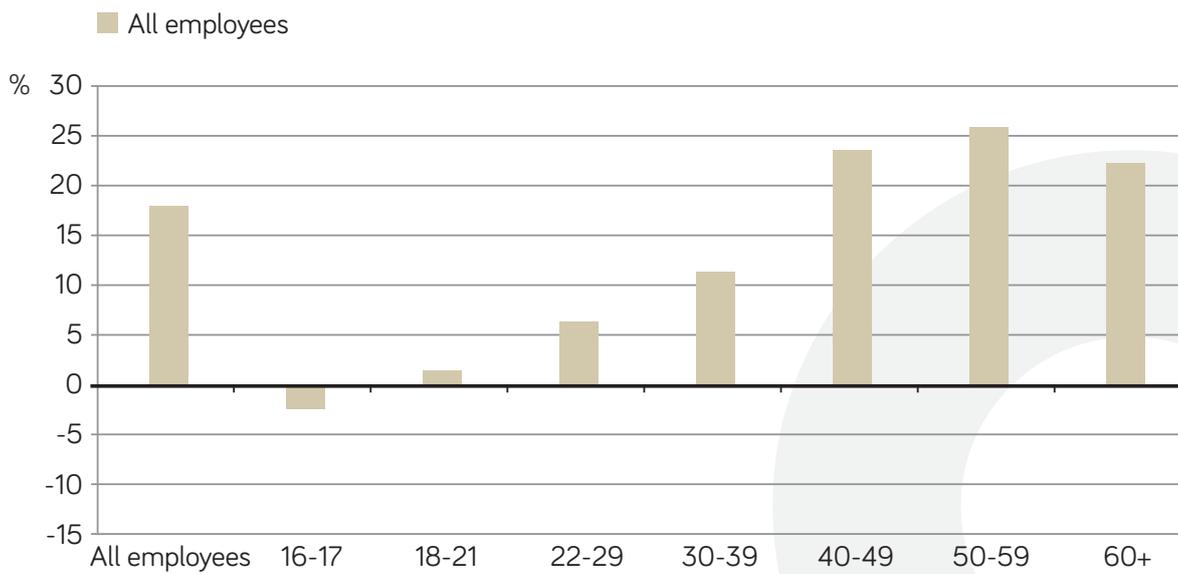
<sup>14</sup> The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's Equality in the United Kingdom <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/the-power-of-parity-advancing-womens-equality-in-the-united-kingdom>



## Gender Pay Gaps in all reporting organisations

The overall Gender Pay Gap across the UK is shown through the Government's official statistics, which are drawn from PAYE data. They show that the mean Gender Pay Gap across the economy for full-time workers is 13.7%, and 17.1% if part-time workers are included. The median gap stands at 8.6% and 17.9% respectively.<sup>15</sup>

## Gender Pay Gap for median gross hourly earnings (excluding overtime) by age group, UK, April 2018



Age Group	16-17	18-21	22-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Proportion of female employees working part-time jobs	93%	62%	28%	38%	41%	43%	64%

<sup>15</sup> ONS: Gender Pay Gap in the UK 2018  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/genderpaygapintheuk/2018#analysis-of-the-gender-pay-gap>



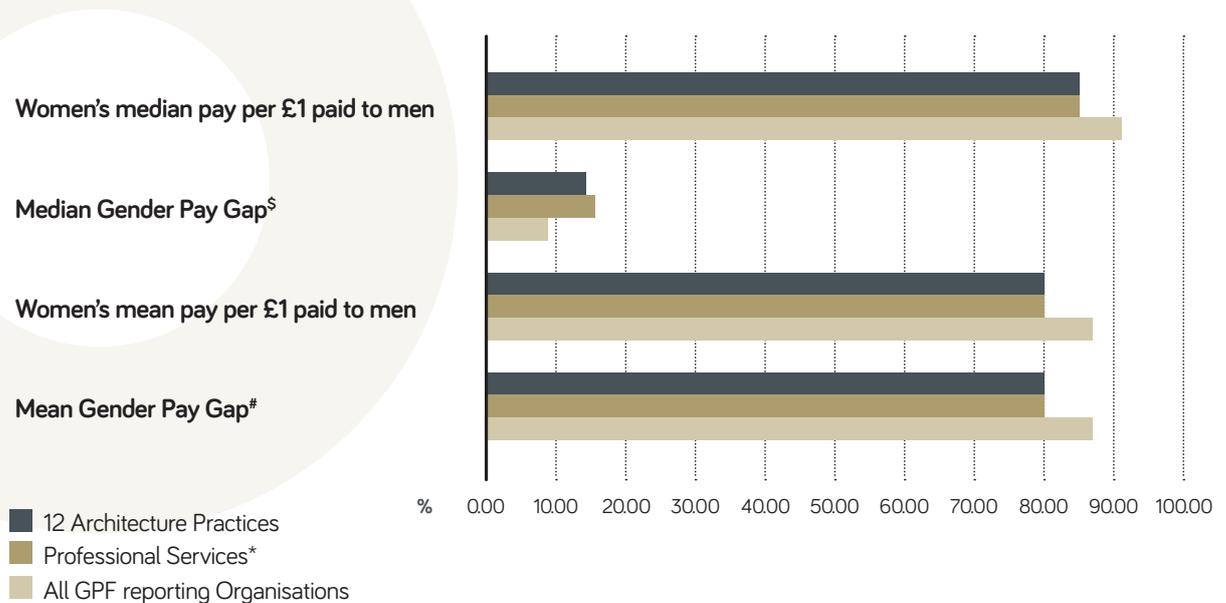
## Gender pay gaps in architecture: UK<sup>17</sup>

The vast majority of architecture practices in the UK are micro, small and medium-sized organisations; few are ‘large organisations’, employing at least 250 people, and therefore few were obliged to submit Gender Pay Gap reports.<sup>18</sup>

The government data shows that across the architecture industry as a whole, there is a Gender Pay Gap in favour of men of 10.4% (median) and 15.2% (mean). This is lower than the overall figures for the economy; but looking just at full-time workers, which is more relevant as relatively few people work part-time in architecture, the gap is larger, at 11.4% (mean) and 16.1% (median).

A set of 12 practices which are large employers of architects in the UK was identified by the RIBA. Ten of these are architecture specific practices, all with over 250 employees in the UK, while the other two are multidisciplinary consultancies, employing a large number of other professionals, as well as a significant number of architects. The below charts provide a summary of the Gender Pay Gaps for these 12 “architecture practices”. Note that no architecture practice with fewer than 250 employees voluntarily submitted a Gender Pay Gap report in 2018, and only 280 organisations in total did so.

### How the Gender Pay Gap in architecture compares overall



\* These organisations all reported their activities as being in, and only in, Section M of the standard industrial classification – Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities

<sup>§</sup> Strictly, this is the difference in the median hourly rate. \*UM = Upper Middle; LM = Lower Middle.

<sup>#</sup> Strictly, this is the difference in the mean hourly rate.

Without exception, reporting architectural practices have mean and median Gender Pay Gaps favouring men.

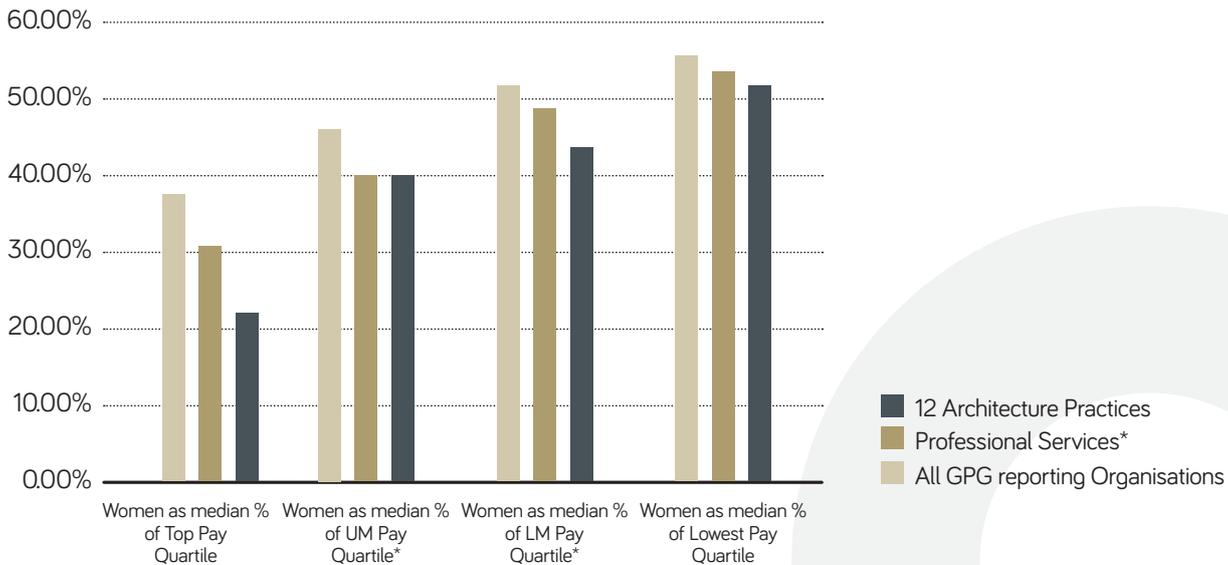
<sup>17</sup> For a European comparison, see: Architects' Council of Europe – The Architectural Profession in Europe 2018: A Sector Study <https://www.ace-cae.eu/?id=999>

<sup>18</sup> Gender Pay Gap 2019: How Architecture Practices Compare <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/gender-pay-gap-2019-how-architecture-practices-compare/10028645/article>



In all 12 architecture practices, women constitute a minority of employees in the top quartile by hourly pay. In fact, women never constitute more than 35% of employees in this quartile. These proportions of women in the top pay quartile are all lower than the median share of women in this best paid quartile across all reporting organisations (37%) and the vast majority are significantly below the share of women in the top pay quartile among other professional service organisations (31%).

## How the Gender Pay Gap in architecture compares by quartile



\* These organisations all reported their activities as being in, and only in, Section M of the standard industrial classification - Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities

Overall, women typically constitute about a third of the 'top half' of employees by hourly pay (this ranges from 17% to 42% in the 12 practices). By contrast, women typically constitute almost half of employees in the bottom half of the pay distribution. In three of the 12 practices there are twice as many women in the bottom half of the pay distribution as in the top half.

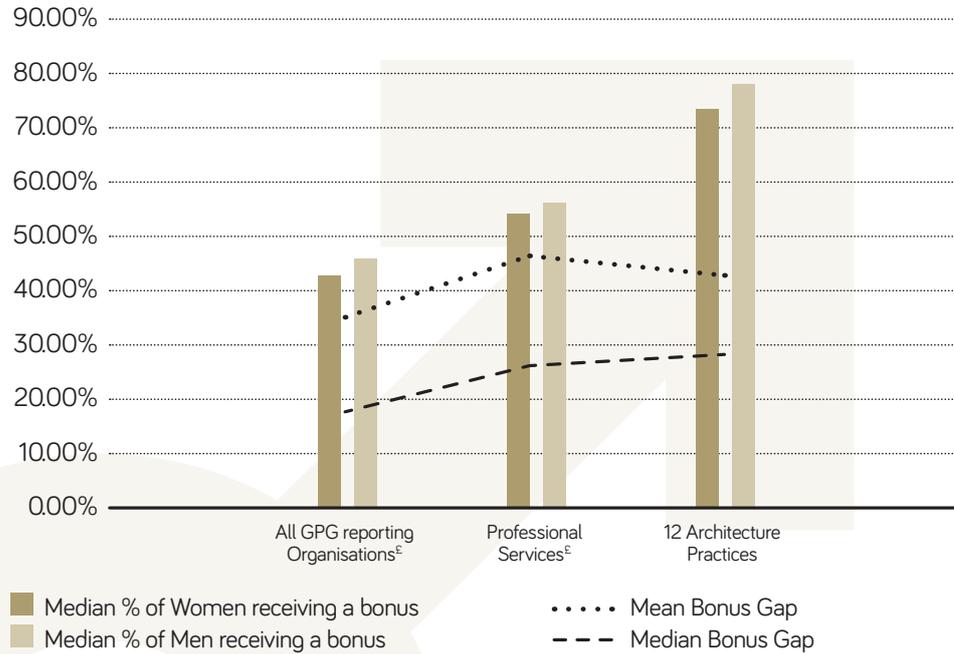
While men dominate the top pay quartile in all 12 practices, in seven of these more than half of the employees in the bottom quartile by pay are women, and the median share of women in this bottom pay quartile is 51.5%. This median is lower than that for all reporting organisations (55.6%) and also lower than that for other professional service organisations (53.3%). Also notable is that, in nine of the 12 practices, the share of women decreases with each step up the pay distribution.

The proportion of men and women paid bonuses by the 12 practices varied widely, from 6% to 89% among women, and 19% to 92% among men. In one practice, women were more likely to have been paid a bonus than men, and in another the proportions of those who were paid bonuses were equal; but in the other ten, men were more likely to have been paid a bonus. In all 12 practices the reported mean bonus gap favoured men, and in 11 of the 12 the median bonus gap also favoured men. In the remaining practice, which paid the smallest proportion of its staff bonuses, the median bonus gap was zero.

**Overall, it is clear that the 'middle man' employed in these 12 architecture practices was better rewarded than the 'middle woman' employee.**

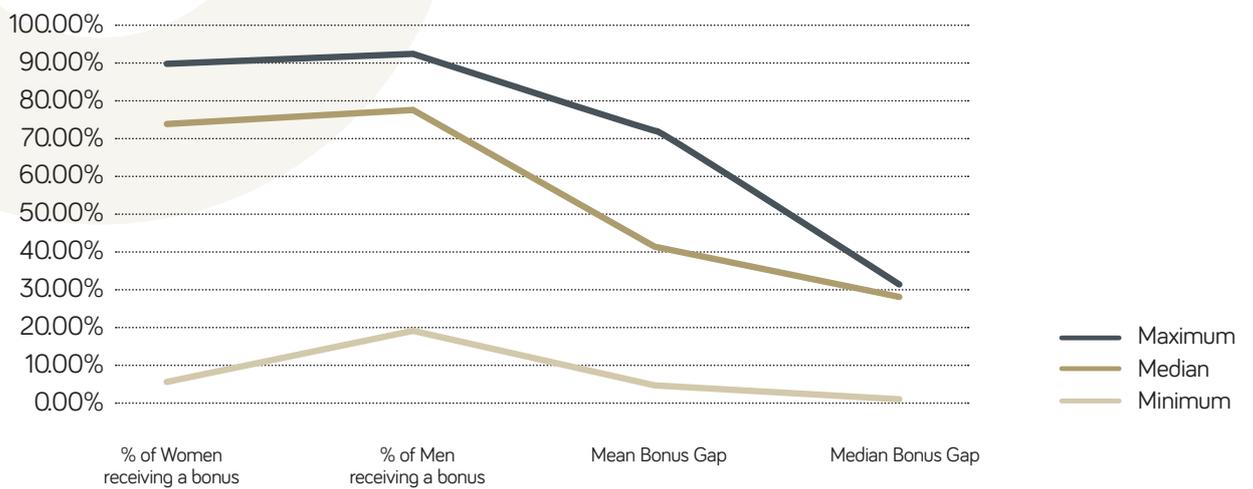


## A comparison of bonuses



<sup>£</sup> As all 12 of the architecture practices paid bonuses to both men and women, the figures reported here for professional services and all reporting organisations are confined to those that paid bonuses to both men and women.

## 12 Architecture Practices – Bonuses



Overall, it is clear that the ‘middle man’ employed in these 12 architecture practices was better rewarded than the ‘middle woman’ employee, and moreover that the gap is roughly similar to that in other professional services practices, but larger than that in all reporting organisations in the UK. It must be stressed, however, that this comparison does not take into account other characteristics such as experience and job role.



## Some health warnings

- 1 It is important to recognise that side-by-side comparisons of standard form Gender Pay Gap reports may be misleading.**

For instance – differences arise between practices operating as partnerships and those operating as limited liability companies. Partners are not ‘employees’, whereas directors of limited liability companies are. On identical sets of salary data, it is likely that the Gender Pay Gaps reported by the limited liability company will be larger than those of the partnership.<sup>19</sup> Partnerships may choose to analyse the additional information and publish it in their supporting documentation, including their mean and median Gender Pay Gaps, but they are not currently obliged to disclose it on the government portal.

- 2 A practice may report ‘worse’ Gender Pay Gap figures in any given snapshot due to taking measures to improve its situation. It may also be distorted by leavers, starters, maternity leave and unpaid leave.**

For instance – a large Gender Pay Gap may be reported if a male dominated business tries to address its gender imbalance by recruiting more women, initially in junior professional roles. Women in junior roles are likely to be paid in the lower half of the hourly pay distribution, and therefore the share of women in the lower half of the pay distribution will increase. The difference in the amount paid per hour to the ‘middle man’ and the ‘middle woman’ may also increase, widening the median Gender Pay Gap in the short term.

It is true that this practice could seek to redress its gender imbalance by recruiting women into senior roles. However, if this implies recruiting them from other practices this will not improve the overall situation for women in senior roles in the profession.

This issue emphasises the need for practices to analyse the causes of their gap, and to publish a narrative and action plan with their data.

<sup>19</sup> Managing Gender Pay Reporting – ACAS Guidance  
[http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/9/p/Managing\\_gender\\_pay\\_reporting\\_07.02.19.pdf](http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/9/p/Managing_gender_pay_reporting_07.02.19.pdf)



## Understanding the Gender Pay Gap in architecture

It is worth noting that there are two primary reasons for the median Gender Pay Gaps reported by architecture practices, and professional practices more generally:

1. Men dominate the senior roles, and therefore the better paid roles, in these practices (and the upper two quartiles of the pay distribution); and
2. Women in the organisations are more likely to be in the bottom half of the pay distribution as:
  - (a) women dominate the relatively lower paid administrative and support roles; and
  - (b) the distribution of female professionals tends to be more junior than the distribution of male professionals.

A high *mean* Gender Pay Gap in favour of men will typically arise when the most senior employee roles in the organisation are held by men and there is a high pay differential between these roles and the amounts paid to other employees – a large proportion, if not a majority, of which are female.

So why do men dominate the senior and management roles in these organisations, particularly in architecture?

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### **There is a widespread perception, even among men working in architecture, that employers do not provide equal opportunities for career advancement**

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The Architects' Journal has been campaigning to advance the status of women in architecture for several years, including undertaking surveys and establishing the Women in Architecture initiative. Their surveys have found there is a widespread perception, even among men working in architecture, that employers do not provide equal opportunities for career advancement to women as to men.

One report highlights that historically the share of women entering the architecture profession was low, with parity only reached in recent years: "In the time period between 1979 and 2015, the percentage of female architecture students at university has increased from 18% to 49%".<sup>20</sup> This partially explains why the supply of experienced women in architecture is lower than the share of experienced men, which offers some explanation for the gap.

But while the rising tide of women qualifying in the profession increases the likelihood that equality will, in time, be achieved, there is no room for complacency and much can be done to ensure that the Gender Pay Gap is actively closed.

It is surely no coincidence that the architecture practice with the 'best' Gender Pay Gap report with regard to gender equality is the practice that reports the most actions being taken to improve the situation.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Gender Pay Report 2017, Allies and Morrison  
<http://www.alliesandmorrison.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Gender-Pay-Report.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> This practice reports that women constitute 35% of employees in its top pay quartile, a figure matched but not surpassed by other practices, and a median Gender Pay Gap of 2.6%, indicating that its "middle woman" earns 97 pence per hour for each £1 earned by its middle man.



Addressing the Gender Pay Gap begins with understanding the underlying causes that exist in practice before taking the most effective action to address them.

The Government Equalities Office (GEO) published research and guidance in February 2018 to help gender pay reporting organisations to better understand the specific causes of their pay gap (Eight ways to understand your organisation's Gender Pay Gap <https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/public/assets/pdf/understand-your-gender-pay-gap.pdf>) and develop a meaningful, strong action plan (Four steps to developing a Gender Pay Gap action plan <https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/public/assets/pdf/action-plan-guidance.pdf>) that will have real and targeted impact on their Gender Pay Gap and the underlying causes. The guidance advocates a systematic approach to identify issues and consider actions which are proven to be effective to tackle them at each stage of the employee life cycle, from recruitment to leaving an organisation. Evidence-based actions for employers [https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/public/assets/pdf/Evidence-based\\_actions\\_for\\_employers.pdf](https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/public/assets/pdf/Evidence-based_actions_for_employers.pdf) distinguishes the actions that were found to have a positive impact, those which are promising and those which have mixed results. The icons on the pages to follow denote the efficacy of the range of actions that can be taken to address specific issues, to enable practices to focus on the big wins when addressing their Gender Pay Gap. These recommendations, which apply as much to architectural practices as any other organisation, are set out below to follow the stages within an employee's life cycle where women encounter barriers which impede or slow their careers:

- when recruitment decisions are made
- during career development
- in the ongoing experience of employment leading to the decision to continue in, or leave, a practice or the profession.

Wider research and best practice – beyond the Government Equalities Office resources – has been referenced to provide guidance on how to tackle issues specific to our profession. These barriers to access, progression and retention and measures to address them are included in the following pages.

The good practice outlined below is characterised by some overarching themes:

- greater transparency, objectivity and accountability – in recruitment, promotion, pay and reward decisions
- raising awareness of the issues underlying the Gender Pay Gap
- promoting and role modelling good practice
- monitoring and evaluating progress
- taking targeted evidence-based action.

Underlying these themes are cultural and attitudinal factors which have an impact on how women in the workplace are perceived and how they value and perceive their own performance. Lower self-confidence and higher self-doubt<sup>22</sup> have been found to be barriers to women in applying for roles, negotiating pay, seeking promotion, or choosing to stay in a role.<sup>23</sup>



<sup>22</sup> Institute of Leadership Management, Ambition and gender at work

<sup>23</sup> Ehrlinger, J. and Dunning, D. Cornell University (2003). How Chronic Self-Views Influence (and Potentially Mislead) Estimates of Performance



## RECRUITMENT

- 1 Advertise roles transparently, offering flexible working by default, using language that does not deter or exclude women
- 2 Include multiple women in shortlists and/or consider anonymising applications
- 3 Ensure that interview and selection processes are unbiased, structured and skill-based
- 4 Operate transparent and fair processes for setting salaries and encourage salary negotiation by sharing salary ranges
- 5 Make senior staff accountable for, and aware of, unbiased recruitment practices

## PROGRESSION

- 6 Operate transparent, fair and objective promotion procedures
- 7 Recognise the value of different career paths and skills gained outside practice
- 8 Introduce sponsorship and support mentoring schemes and networking during working hours
- 9 Consider providing training and development opportunities for women, including leadership training
- 10 Appoint a Diversity Champion with a senior role and/or Diversity Task Force, including leadership training

## RETENTION

- 11 Improve workplace flexibility for men and women by offering part-time, remote working, or job sharing or compressed hours
- 12 Encourage the uptake of Shared Parental Leave
- 13 Take steps to understand and improve your practice culture to ensure women are equally valued, engaged and supported
- 14 Operate transparent, balanced and objective appraisal and performance review systems using measurable targets
- 15 Develop an action plan and set internal targets, with input from staff and buy-in from practice leaders



## RECRUITMENT

The employee life cycle starts with the decision to appoint a new member of staff, and the processes put in place to attract a diverse pool of applicants and recruit to the role have a significant impact on the gender balance and Gender Pay Gap at different levels. Women make up 50% of entrants to schools of architecture, falling to only 45% of registered architects in Chartered Practices. By the time female architects have been in practice for more than five years, the gap has increased with a ratio of nearly 2:1 male to female qualified architects. And women make up as little as one fifth of the most senior roles.<sup>24</sup> So in addition to improving progression rates for women *within* practice, enabling progression *through* hiring by recruiting women directly into more senior roles will be part of the solution to reducing the Gender Pay Gap. A major barrier to lateral or diagonal hiring is that currently only 11% of well-paid roles in the economy as a whole are advertised flexibly.<sup>25</sup>

## ADVERTISING

The way that roles are advertised may not reach or attract a wide applicant pool, and may deter some women.

**Advertise roles transparently offering flexible working by default, using language that does not deter or exclude women.**

- 1 Ensure your recruitment routes are transparent, accessible and advertised openly to attract the widest pool of suitable internal and external candidates.
- 1 Widen your potential applicant pool by advertising all jobs as having flexible working options by default at the point of recruitment.<sup>28</sup>
- 1 Address issues that may be deterring candidates such as avoiding language coded towards gender stereotypes.<sup>30</sup>

## SHORTLISTING

Shortlists with only one woman do not increase the chance of a woman being selected.<sup>26</sup>

**Include multiple women in shortlists and/or consider anonymising applications.**

- 1 Include more than one woman in a shortlist of qualified candidates.
- 1 Anonymise applications to tackle unconscious bias towards women. Anonymised applications are also valuable in tackling racial discrimination.<sup>29</sup>
- 1 Ask recruitment agencies to provide long-lists which include a minimum number of women, taking legal advice if you are considering positive action.<sup>31</sup>

## INTERVIEWS

Unstructured interviews are more likely to allow unfair bias to creep in and influence decisions.

**Ensure that interview and selection processes are unbiased, structured and skill-based.**

- 1 Use skill-based tasks and standardised scoring to assess performance and the suitability of a candidate for a role.
- 1 Use structured interviews and portfolio reviews to enable objective comparison between candidates including consistent questions on e.g. experience at RIBA work stages.
- 1 Consider using selection panels with a mix of men and women and include women in the decision-making process.

## SALARIES

Women may start on lower salaries than men doing similar jobs; women are less likely to negotiate their pay and can be judged more harshly for doing so.

**Operate transparent and fair processes for setting salaries and encourage salary negotiation by sharing salary ranges.**

- 1 Encourage women to negotiate their salary by clearly communicating the salary range and stating if the salary is negotiable.
- 1 Ensure that you are meeting the legal requirement for equal pay for like work, by conducting an equal pay audit if possible, and introduce job evaluation frameworks.
- 1 Make the requirement for candidates to disclose their previous salary optional when making job offers.<sup>32</sup>

## INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

Hiring managers tend to recruit in their own image unless they are supported by systems to behave differently<sup>27</sup> and may be unaccountable for diversity and inclusion.

**Make the senior leadership team accountable for, and aware of, unbiased recruitment.**

- 1 Make hiring managers accountable for recruitment decisions – to the senior leadership team and the individual responsible for monitoring equality and diversity.
- 1 Consider practice-wide diversity and unconscious bias training to raise awareness, and reduce the impact of, potentially harmful unconscious biases.

BARRIERS

ACTION

MONITORING

RESULTS

Monitor all recruitment activity to capture candidate lists, selection criteria and appointment outcomes

For each grade or level, monitor the proportion of women applying for positions and compare your applicant pool with your actual applicants.

For each grade or level, monitor the proportion of women making it through to any assessment stage or shortlist.

For each grade or level, monitor the proportion of women being selected and accepting roles.

Monitor starting salaries on entry to the practice to ensure that you are meeting your obligation to provide equal pay and you are not importing pay discrimination from elsewhere.

Monitor the effectiveness of training and accountability on unconscious bias and recruitment outcomes.

The recruitment process attracts a wider pool of female applicants to roles at all levels.

The chances of women being selected may increase.

Structured and unbiased interview processes reduce the risk of non-relevant factors influencing decisions and the wrong candidate being selected<sup>33</sup>

If women negotiate their salaries more, they will end up with salaries that more closely match the salaries of men.<sup>34</sup>

Raising awareness and increasing accountability reduces biased decisions in recruitment and selection.

- 1 Actions with positive results
- 1 Actions with promising results
- 1 Actions with mixed results

Women make up **50%** of entrants to schools of architecture

Women make up **20%** of senior roles in practice

<sup>24</sup> The Fees Bureau (2018), RIBA Business Benchmarking Survey 2018

<sup>25</sup> Timewise, Flexible Jobs Index 2018

<sup>26</sup> Johnson, S. K., Hekman, D. R., & Chan, E. T. (2016). If there's only one woman in your candidate pool, there's statistically no chance she'll be hired. Harvard Business Review, 26(04).

<sup>27</sup> Bohnet, I. (2016) What Works: Gender Equality By Design

<sup>28</sup> The Government has committed to consulting on advertising all roles flexibly (it's in the Conservative manifesto) so it may be a legal requirement soon. It may be beneficial for practices get ahead of the curve.

<sup>29</sup> Menino, T. (2013), Boston – Closing the Wage Gap: Becoming the Best City in America for Working Women, and Department of Work and Pensions (2010) Test for Racial Discrimination

<sup>30</sup> A Gender Decoder for Job Ads can be used to check whether a job advert has the kind of subtle linguistic gender-coding that has this discouraging effect. Danielle Gaucher, Justin Friesen, and Aaron Key, (2011), 'Evidence That Gendered Wording in Job Advertisements Exists and Sustains Gender Inequality', Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 101:1: 109-28

<sup>31</sup> For guidance on positive action see A Quick Start Guide to Using Positive Action in Recruitment and Promotion

<sup>32</sup> In Manhattan they have introduced legislation on removing the requirement for candidates to disclose their previous salary to pay for the skills people have and avoid replicating previous inequalities.

<sup>33</sup> Kahneman (2011), Thinking Fast and Slow

<sup>34</sup> Leibbrandt, A., & List, J. A. (2014). Do women avoid salary negotiations? Evidence from a large-scale natural field experiment. Management Science, 61(9), 2016-2024.



## PROGRESSION

There are a range of factors preventing women from progressing to senior levels in practice including disproportionate caring responsibilities and inflexible working arrangements for architects in senior roles; because of this, the majority of female architects with a family feel that having children has had a detrimental effect on their career.<sup>35</sup> A culture which values stereotypically male attributes, in addition to stereotypical assumptions about women's capabilities and talents<sup>36</sup> by their employers - and their own self-perception - are also barriers to progression; women tend to be more realistic about their abilities and therefore might find their confidence undermined within a profession dominated by men who may rate their abilities more highly.<sup>37</sup> The 'glass ceiling' in architecture seems to occur at Associate or Associate Director level when architects take on responsibility for leading a project or studio. These roles may be considered incompatible with part-time working or family-friendly hours at times of high pressure approaching project deadlines - and the actual or perceived inability to substitute<sup>38</sup> senior roles in practice to maintain project oversight or key client, design team or contractor relationships. This requires a creative and problem-solving approach for practices to move past these barriers and enable the best talent, regardless of gender, to rise to the top.

- ✓ Actions with positive results
- ⓘ Actions with promising results
- ⦿ Actions with mixed results

## PROMOTION

Promotion procedures may favour men; very few senior posts are available part time and incorrect assumptions are made that women don't want, or can't take, promotion.

### ✓ Operate transparent, fair and objective promotion procedures.

- ✓ Be open about processes, policies and criteria for decision-making on reward and promotion by publishing your pay policy.
- ✓ Base promotion on objective measures such as skills, expertise and performance, and carry out promotion in planned rounds rather than on an individual basis to reduce the impact of bias.
- ✓ Make senior staff accountable for promotion decisions to the Diversity Champion as well as the leadership team.
- ✓ Ensure that internal recruitment processes follow the good practice outlined above including offering flexible working as a default.

Monitor the proportion of women at a given grade applying, being assessed, shortlisted and selected for promotions

Introducing transparency to promotion, pay and reward processes can reduce pay inequalities.<sup>45</sup>

## RETURNSHIPS

Experienced women who have taken an extended career break may not be considered suitable for senior roles in practice - by employers or themselves.

### ⓘ Recognise the value of different career paths and skills gained outside practice.<sup>41</sup>

- ⓘ Consider recruiting 'returners'<sup>42</sup> or running returner programmes to bring experienced women back into practice.<sup>43</sup>
- ⓘ When advertising roles, target places where returners are likely to be looking.
- ⓘ Ensure the recruitment process is returner-friendly.
- ⓘ Offer support to returners before and during the assessment process.

Returners are people who have taken an extended career break for caring or other reasons and who are either not currently employed or are working in roles for which they are over-qualified.

Monitor the effectiveness of returner programmes.

Returner programmes provide a route for talented and experienced women with high levels of commitment to be brought in at senior levels after a career break.

## CAREER SUPPORT

Women may not benefit from the same level of confidence in their abilities as men, nor have the same visibility nor access to sponsorship and networks, to support their progression.<sup>39</sup>

### ⓘ Introduce sponsorship<sup>40</sup> and support mentoring schemes and networking during working hours.

- ⓘ Introduce sponsors to support the advancement and visibility of women, focusing sponsorship schemes on underrepresented groups.<sup>44</sup>
- ⓘ Consider introducing mentors to provide guidance and advice to women, particularly those with part-time working or returner experience.
- ⓘ Offer opportunities to meet and share career advice at convenient times of day and inside and outside the workplace.

Monitor the progression of women who participate in mentoring and sponsorship schemes and the impact of accessible networking opportunities.

Although mentoring programmes support career progression and reduce attrition for some women, the evidence that sponsorship helps women to advance is stronger.<sup>46</sup> Networking can be helpful for some women but not others.

## DEVELOPMENT

Women may underestimate their abilities or are more conservative in their assessment of their abilities than men are.

### ⓘ Consider providing training and development opportunities for women, including leadership training.

- ⓘ Give men and women equal resources for their training and development.
- ⓘ Provide part-time employees with equal access to training and development including equal opportunities for 'stretch assignments' - prominent pieces of work or relationships which can lead to promotion.
- ⓘ Actively engage part-time employees in conversations about their careers rather than making assumptions about their aspirations.
- ⓘ Consider introducing performance self-assessments.

Monitor how training and other resources are allocated to support the development of men and women.

Training and development may support self-confidence, self-belief and career progression.

## INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

Leaders and decision-makers may be unaware of and/or unaccountable for diversity and inclusion.

### ✓ Appoint a Diversity Champion and/or Diversity Task Force with a senior role.

- ✓ Make the Diversity Champion/Taskforce responsible for monitoring, promotion and diversity within the practice.
- ✓ Empower the Diversity Champion/Taskforce to ask for information on decision making and hold senior staff and managers to account.
- ✓ Empower the Diversity Champion/Taskforce to develop and implement diversity strategies, policies and action plans.
- ✓ Make the senior leadership team accountable for equality, diversity and inclusion.

Monitor the effectiveness of appointing a Diversity Champion and/or Diversity Task Force with a senior/executive role.

Accountability to a Diversity Champion and/or Diversity Task Force can reduce biased decisions in promotion, and improve the representation of women in a practice.

<sup>35</sup> Waite, R and Tether, B. (2018). AJ survey reveals 1 in 7 women architects have experienced sexual harassment

<sup>36</sup> Close the Gap

<sup>37</sup> Ehrlinger, J and Dunning, D. Cornell University (2003). How Chronic Self-Views Influence (and Potentially Mislead) Estimates of Performance

<sup>38</sup> Claudia Goldin, (2014), A Grand Gender Convergence

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<sup>40</sup> Sponsors advocate, while mentors advise and guide. A sponsor is usually a senior level staff member invested in an

individual's career success; a mentor could be anyone in a position of experience who can offer advice and support.

<sup>41</sup> Archiparlour, (2014), Parlour Guide to Equitable Practice, Career Progression

<sup>42</sup> Returners are people who have taken an extended career break for caring or other reasons and who are either not currently employed or are working in roles for which they are over-qualified.

<sup>43</sup> Government Equalities Office, (2018). Returner Programmes, Best Practice Guidance for Employers

<sup>44</sup> Sponsorship focused on underrepresented groups is acceptable from a positive action point of view. Workplace Gender Equality Agency, (2016), Supporting careers: mentoring or sponsorship?, Perspective paper, Australian Government; Tammy Allen et. al., (2004) 'Career benefits associated with mentoring for protégés: A meta-analysis', Journal of Applied Psychology 89:1, 127-136

<sup>45</sup> Castilla, E. J. (2015). Accounting for the gap: A firm study manipulating organizational accountability and transparency in pay decisions. Organization Science, 26(2), 311-333.

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## RETENTION

Recruitment and staff development are costs to the business both financially and in management time, so from a business perspective alone it is important that practices strive to retain talent. Given the evidence that women disproportionately leave professional practice in early and middle professional career stages<sup>47</sup>, measures to retain talent are essential to closing the Gender Pay Gap. Women are not leaving the profession because they are incompetent professionals or no longer want to be architects, but because of a combination of factors: low and unequal pay; long, inflexible and stressful working conditions incompatible with a healthy work-life balance; a macho, paternalistic or sexist culture; and limited ability to progress or return to practice after maternity leave or career breaks.<sup>48</sup> Women have also cited the excessive dedication to working long hours required to be a successful architect, as well as feelings of inadequacy and low self-perceived capacity to contribute to the profession, particularly as designers,<sup>49</sup> although some women are leaving for more positive reasons finding more rewarding careers elsewhere.

## FLEXIBLE WORKING

Women with caring responsibilities who work part time may feel they cannot apply for senior positions if they are not offered on a flexible basis resulting in talented people leaving practice because they cannot develop and succeed.

**II Improve workplace flexibility for men and women by offering part-time, remote working, job sharing or compressed hours.**

- II Actively promote and encourage a culture of flexible working – open to both men and women.
- II Consider offering more senior positions on a part-time or flexible basis, including job shares and consider how to make roles more 'substitutable'.<sup>57</sup>
- II Encourage senior leaders to role model working flexibly and to champion flexible working.
- II Give managers advice and guidance on how roles can be done flexibly, and work resourced in their teams, encouraging them to think creatively e.g. supporting women to take on part-time project or studio leader roles.<sup>58</sup>

## PARENTAL LEAVE

The Gender Pay Gap widens dramatically after women have children,<sup>50</sup> suggesting that motherhood is a significant barrier to retention.<sup>51</sup>

**II Encourage the uptake of Shared Parental Leave.**

- II Consider offering enhanced Shared Parental Pay at the same level as enhanced maternity pay.<sup>55</sup>
- II Inform future fathers that it's their legal right to request Shared Parental Leave and state the practice's positive support for that decision.
- II Provide future parents guidance and personal support to understand the scheme.
- II Share and promote examples of senior leaders who have taken Shared Parental Leave in your practice.

## WORKPLACE CULTURE

The long hours working culture may make it difficult for caring responsibilities to be balanced with career progression. In addition, prejudice, discrimination and harassment are still experienced by a significant proportion<sup>52</sup> of women in practice.

**II Take steps to understand and improve your practice culture to ensure women are equally valued, engaged and supported.**

- II Have a clear 'Dignity and respect at work' policy and transparent process to prevent sexual discrimination and harassment.<sup>56</sup>
- II Ensure that women have an equal voice and their attributes are equally valued, particularly if the environment is predominantly male.
- II Resource projects properly and lead by example in hours worked.
- II Introduce additional employee benefits to help mitigate low pay such as a salary sacrifice schemes.

## APPRAISAL AND REWARD

Annual appraisals may be subjective and value characteristics more positively when demonstrated by men. Women are more likely to receive critical subjective feedback than men e.g. a forceful man is 'dynamic' whereas a woman is 'bossy'.<sup>53</sup>

**✓ Operate transparent, balanced and objective appraisal and performance review and reward systems – using measurable targets.<sup>54</sup>**

- ✓ Use objective criteria, involving a broader group of reviewers to remove subjective biases that creep in.
- ✓ Ensure appraisals and personal development programmes provide structured constructive criticism and unbiased analysis of the same traits.
- II Train appraisers to give feedback about specific criteria that the employer and employee agree to.

## INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

Change is unlikely to happen without a conscious focus on, and commitment to, improving equality, diversity and inclusion.

**✓ Develop an action plan and set internal targets, with input from staff and buy in from practice leaders.**

- ✓ Ensure that your equality goals are clear and realistic, and that progress towards them can be tracked, by setting specific targets: what change will be achieved, and by when?
- ✓ Understand why your practice's Gender Pay Gaps exists by following Eight ways to understand your organisation's Gender Pay Gap. <https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/public/assets/pdf/understand-your-gender-pay-gap.pdf>
- ✓ Adopt a systemic approach to identifying actions by following Four steps to developing a Gender Pay Gap action plan. <https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/public/assets/pdf/action-plan-guidance.pdf>
- ✓ Identify evidence driven actions by following Evidence-based actions for employers. [https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/public/assets/pdf/Evidence-based\\_actions\\_for\\_employers.pdf](https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/public/assets/pdf/Evidence-based_actions_for_employers.pdf)

BARRIERS

ACTION

MONITORING

RESULTS

Monitor the rates at which women leave compared to men at each level of your practice and use exit interviews to monitor reasons for leaving

Monitor the uptake of flexible working by gender. Find out whether employees know what options are available and whether they feel supported to take up flexible working or see it as a barrier to progression.

Monitor the uptake of shared Parental Leave and paternity leave.

Monitor working hours. Undertake staff surveys to identify differences in engagement, aspiration to progress or feelings of belonging which may impact retention, and analyse results by gender.

Monitor performance-related pay to ensure that it is clearly linked to a defined level of performance and whether men and women doing comparable work received different bonuses and pay for overtime.

Monitor and evaluate your action plan, changing and adapting it as required.

Ensuring that part-time employees are well supported and are given opportunities to progress to senior levels means that well-qualified, experienced women are better able to keep participating in the workforce.

The Gender Pay Gap could be reduced if men and women were able to share childcare more equally.

Changing the culture of the workplace in architectural practice is fundamental to retaining women in the profession. The practice reporting the lowest Gender Pay Gap demonstrated the most awareness of the issues and had measures in place to address them.

Using objective specific criteria and performance data from a range of people throughout the year ensures employees are evaluated for their actual performance, decreasing the likelihood of appraisals being based on negative personality-based criticism.

An effective Gender Pay Gap action plan will focus your practice on understanding your Gender Pay Gap and will demonstrate your commitment to taking serious steps to tackle it.

- ✓ Actions with positive results
- II Actions with promising results
- Actions with mixed results

<sup>47</sup> Data based on a longitudinal analysis of the proportion of women at each career stage taken from the RIBA Education Statistics and RIBA Business Benchmarking Survey.  
<sup>48</sup> Manley, S, de Graft-Johnson, A. and Greed, C., (2003), Why do women leave architecture

<sup>49</sup> <https://archiparlour.org/why-do-women-leave/>  
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<sup>51</sup> 78% of women at Associate/Associate Director level

reported that having children has a detrimental effect on career progression.  
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<sup>52</sup> Waite, R and Tether, B. (2018). AJ survey reveals 1 in 7 women architects have experienced sexual harassment

<sup>53</sup> Cecchi-Dimeglio, Paola (2017) How Gender Bias Corrupts Performance Reviews and What to Do About It, Harvard Business Review  
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<sup>55</sup> Which enables working parents to share up to 50 weeks of leave and up to 37 weeks of pay in their child's first year.  
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**The RIBA is committed** to making the profession more diverse and inclusive. Closing the Gender Pay Gap is an important part of that work.

By signing up to the #CloseTheGap Pledge, practices demonstrate their commitment to improving gender diversity, broadening access to the profession and ensuring that career prospects and progression are independent of gender, race, background or any aspect of an individual's identity.

By signing up to this pledge practices are committing to:

- Operate fair, equal and unbiased recruitment and promotion procedures
- Support flexible working patterns and a healthy work-life balance
- Introduce greater transparency in pay and reward processes
- Ensure equal opportunities for career progression
- Promote equal opportunities to represent the profession at industry events
- Appoint a Diversity Champion or Taskforce
- Take targeted evidence-based action and monitor and evaluate progress
- Share knowledge, information and best practice with the RIBA

Sign up to the pledge here –

[www.architecture.com/knowledge-and-resources/knowledge-landing-page/gender-pay-gap-pledge](http://www.architecture.com/knowledge-and-resources/knowledge-landing-page/gender-pay-gap-pledge)





