



Working for women? Young Women's Trust HR decision-makers survey 2017: summary of findings

The Young Women's Trust annual survey of 800 HR decision-makers, conducted by YouGov, examines the attitudes of the UK's bosses to equality in the workplace. It includes their views on hiring women, their own workplace culture and their expectations for the future. This briefing paper contains a summary of key findings relating to sex equality from the survey.

We commissioned this work to gain insight into the extent to which employers believe sexism is a problem and the barriers that women continue to face in the workplace. Sadly, the findings suggest that in a significant number of workplaces sexism remains a problem, with sizeable numbers of HR decision-makers holding views that may lead to them breaking the law when it comes to recruitment decisions. Throughout, it is the UK's female bosses who are more likely to be aware of sexism and less likely to engage in discriminatory practices. Male employees are also more likely to be described as ambitious, confident and likely to ask for a pay rise – even though female employees are more likely to be described as reliable and conscientious.

Sexism and sexual harassment

- Almost one in three HR decision-makers (31%) say that sexism in their workplace exists. Female respondents are more likely to say this than male bosses (40% female, 24% male).
- Far higher numbers - 63% - of HR decision-makers say that sexism in the workplace (in general as opposed to their specific workplace) still exists (76% female, 54% male).
- One in 14 HR decision-makers (7%) have been aware of formal reports of sexual harassment in their workplace in the last 12 months. This increases to one in ten HR decision-makers (10%) in large organisations.
- One in 12 HR decision-makers (8%) have been aware of sexual harassment in their workplace that has gone unreported in the last 12 months. This increases to one in eight decision-makers (12%) in large organisations.

Discrimination towards pregnancy and parenthood

- One in six HR decision-makers (15%) say that they would be reluctant to hire a woman who they thought may go on to have children (10% of female HR decision-makers, 18% of male HR decision-makers).
- One in five HR decision-makers (20%) disagreed that women should be entitled to maternity leave paid for by their employer.

- One in four HR decision-makers (25%) disagreed that their organisation takes no account of whether a woman is pregnant or has young children when making organisational decisions regarding career progression or promotion.
- One in three HR decision-makers (34%) say that men and women will never take an equal role in caring for children. A further 26% say it will take more than ten years for men to take an equal role.

Pay and progression

- One in ten HR decision-makers (10%) say that they have been aware of women being paid less in their workplace than men for jobs of the same level in the last 12 months (16% of female HR decision-makers, 6% of male HR decision-makers). This increases to one in eight (13%) for large organisations.
- More than a quarter of HR decision-makers (27%) say it is harder for women to progress in their workplace than men. Women bosses are more likely to say this than men (36% of female HR decision-makers, 21% of male HR decision-makers).
- Almost half of HR decision-makers (45%) say they don't think new gender pay gap reporting requirements will lead to organisations acting to close the gender pay gap (51% of female HR decision-makers, 40% of male HR decision-makers).
- Almost one in five HR decision-makers (18%) say they think that the gender pay gap will never be closed.
- One in five HR decision-makers (20%) say they think that there will never be as many women business leaders as men.

Views on male and female workers

- More than three in four HR decision-makers say that men and women are equally reliable as employees (78%). 13% say that women are more reliable and 8% say men are.
- HR decision-makers are five times as likely to say male employees are more ambitious than female employees than the other way round (25% say male employees are more ambitious, 5% female employees and 67% no difference).
- HR decision-makers are six times as likely to say female employees are more conscientious than male employees (24% say female employees are more conscientious, 4% male employees and 70% no difference).
- Male employees are more than five times as likely to be described as more confident than female employees (28% say male employees are more confident, 5% female employees and 65% no difference).
- Eight times as many HR decision-makers say than male employees are more likely than women employees to ask for a pay rise (40% say male employees are more likely, 5% female employees, 51% no difference). Similar proportions say male employees are also more likely to ask for a promotion (39% say male employees, 5% say female employees, 53% say no difference).

Methodology

Young Women's Trust commissioned YouGov to carry out a survey of HR decision-makers. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. The total sample size was 800 employees with HR decision-making responsibility. The fieldwork was undertaken between 5th April and 3rd May 2017. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of the UK business population by sector and size