

# A quick guide to being a gender champion in your workplace

**Gender champions are senior leaders that advance gender equality through the management of their own organisations and in their work with others by making concrete and measurable commitments to women in the workplace.**

## **Define the outcomes you want to see and why**

Clearly defining the outcomes you want for the organisation not only helps you set expectations, but also gives you a goal to measure the success of your gender equality initiatives against. For example, as well as increasing the number of women in senior positions, you may also want to see greater gender diversity in teams at other levels in the organisation. Gender balanced teams have been shown to increase innovation and reduce ‘groupthink’<sup>1</sup>.

## **Know the business case for your organisation**

The business case for gender diversity is compelling, but in terms of communicating your approach any messages will be greatly strengthened if you can align benefits with your specific organisational circumstances.

Analysis of your organisation’s demographic data, for example, will help you identify particular advantages for your business. These will resonate within your

organisation and make it more likely that you can persuade key stakeholders to get on board.

## **and for the UK...**

Knowing the specifics for your organisation as well as the bigger picture for the UK economy is key. According to the McKinsey Global Institute, bridging the UK gender gap in the workplace 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.

## **Scrutinise your policies and procedures**

It’s essential to ensure that your policies and procedures are up to date, non-discriminatory and work to advance gender equality. Look at your maternity and paternity policies, flexible working arrangements and other areas like recruitment, training, development and promotion, pay, harassment, discipline and grievances, and redundancy.

Organisations that have had real success benefiting from the advantages of family friendly practices not only have the policies and procedures in place, but also push forward visible examples and support from their leadership.

<sup>1</sup>whereby members of a group can make irrational or damaging decisions, because of group pressures and a failure to scrutinise ideas properly.

### Think about your clients and customers

Increasingly, organisations are keen to ensure that those they engage with are promoting diversity. Being a gender champion and communicating the steps being taken to improve gender equality within your organisation can be an added incentive for clients and or customers looking to work with you. For example, many organisations are integrating diversity requirements into their procurement practices.

### Identify role models

**Identifying role models in your organisation and being one yourself visibly champions your support through actions.**

Being a visible role model can be as straightforward as taking family leave or working flexibly yourself and making sure this is known throughout the organisation (by setting out your working days in an email signature for example).

The choice of role model itself can be a useful expression of an organisation's commitment to gender equality. For example, choosing male role models to

highlight flexible working and family friendly policies can show that the principles of flexibility apply to all parents, helping challenge entrenched assumptions around caring roles.

### Monitor, evaluate and tweak

Monitoring progress towards gender equality is important so that you can see the impact of the steps you are taking. Employee feedback and surveys can help in a number of ways, including allowing your staff to feedback on how well you are handling your initiatives; measuring the proportion of women returning to work after maternity; and monitoring women's career advancement.

Taking steps to monitor and evaluate will help you get a picture of your progress. Identifying successes along the way will help you to communicate real time business benefits to all. Any problems or areas for improvement are a chance to improve and build upon the steps you are already taking to advance gender equality.