

Equality and Human Rights Commission  
Research report 85

# Gender Diversity on Boards: The Appointment Process and the Role of Executive Search Firms

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This report examines the corporate Board appointment process, focusing on the role played by executive search firms (ESFs) and what is being done to make Boards more gender balanced in the light of the 2011 Davies Review. Through a literature review and interviews with leading ESFs, the research shows that, despite evidence of some good practice and recent improvements, the appointment process remains opaque and subjective, being driven by male-dominated corporate elites who tend to favour those with similar characteristics to themselves. The report contains recommendations on how ESFs and other stakeholders could make the board appointment process more inclusive.