

UK opportunity gap adding to gender pay gap woes, with men 65% more likely to be executives

New analysis from Syndio reveals the UK opportunity gap - showing women and ethnic minorities are disproportionately excluded from senior and higher-paying roles.

Syndio, the expert-backed workplace equity platform, has today revealed new analysis which calculates the UK's 'opportunity' gap - the disproportionate access to higher-paying roles that exist for certain groups, due to bias and inequities at hiring, promotions, and other stages of career advancement. The analysis explores the disparities between genders, ethnicities and per region in executive and management roles.

Gender opportunity gap

Across UK full-time workers, men are 65% more likely to be executives than women and 43% more likely to occupy management roles. Despite women comprising 41.6% of the full-time workforce, they hold on only 30.1% of executive positions and just 33.3% of manager roles.

This analysis is also before we take into consideration those in part-time employment. Overwhelmingly, fewer part-time workers reach executive and managerial positions, but women dominate the part-time workforce - they are

three times as likely as men to work part-time - so this is another avenue where women are disproportionately disadvantaged. Including part-time workers in the analysis, men are 131% more likely to be executives and 66% more likely to be managers.

Among full-time workers, the opportunity differs significantly across regions. Management opportunity gaps for women are relatively small in the North East (18%) and Scotland (19%), jumping to nearly 50% when we look in London, the South West, and the East of England.

There are some geographical anomalies among executive opportunity gaps, possibly driven by sampling error with the smaller executive counts when we split by region. For example, in the West Midlands women make up 52% of executive roles, yet represent only 41% of the full-time labour force, making them more likely than men to be executives. In the East Midlands, South East and South West, men are well over twice as likely as women to be executives. The executive opportunity gap is largest in North Ireland, though there are so few female executives in North Ireland that this estimate is less reliable.

[See the interactive infographic here](#)

Ethnic opportunity gap

Syndio's analysis of occupations by ethnicity also revealed significant gaps, especially for Black workers in the UK. While 3.2% of the workforce, they make up only 1.4% of managers and senior officials. The calculation reveals white workers are 135% more likely to be managers and senior officials than Black workers.

Similarly large gaps exist among Asian workers - especially those who are not Indian, Pakistani, or Bangladeshi, with white workers 49% more likely to appear among management positions. Pakistani and Bangladeshi workers collectively face a 33% opportunity gap, while all 'other' ethnicity catch-all groups have a 22% gap.

The pay gap – not just about equal pay for equal work

“UK businesses are already familiar with the gender pay gap – which sadly widened again this year to 8.3% – but the true picture of workplace equity is

much more nuanced. Pay gaps are driven by both pay inequities and opportunity gaps, and our analysis shows senior leadership positions still remain inaccessible to much of our workforce,” comments Ritu Mohanka, MD EMEA at Syndio.

“While looking at pay equity is a helpful and obvious place for businesses to start on their DE&I journey, it should be just that – a starting point. Scrutinising the paths to progression within your organisation and ensuring leadership opportunities are available fairly and equally to all is essential to achieving meaningful, long-term workplace equity.”

Founded in 2016, Syndio offers an expert-backed Workplace Equity Platform that enables companies to measure, analyse, improve, and report on every aspect of workplace equity. Its pay equity software solution helps companies to identify and close inequitable pay gaps, reduce legal risk, and turn DE&I goals into tangible results.

Maddyness, media partner of [Syndio](#)

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