

What Women Want 2024

A global report revealing what women
and marginalized groups **want and need**
to thrive in the workplace



Contents

Introduction from the CEOs and co-founders	3-4
About the report	5-7
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• About the author and data• Participant demographics	
A few key findings	8
Learnings from last year	9-15
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learnings from last year• What did employers get <u>right</u> last year?• What did employers get <u>wrong</u> last year?	
What do women and marginalized groups say they want and need to thrive?	16-22
A closer look at the top in-demand policies	23-30
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A flexible working policy2. A zero-tolerance policy preventing/addressing sexual harassment3. Pay transparency	
An important note on the gender pay gap	31-33
What else could be putting women off and pushing them away from your company?	34-45
Closing comments	46-49
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ready to make a real impact?• Let's keep the conversation going	

An introduction from the CEOs and co-founders of WORK180

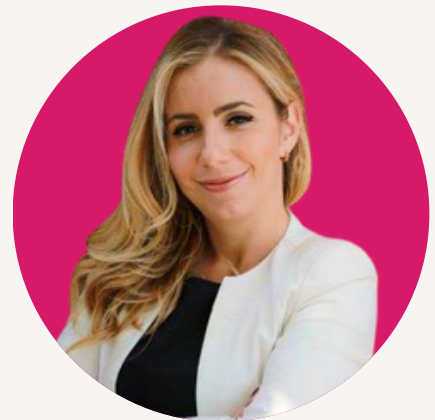
Last year saw a multitude of efforts pay off and progress gender equity around the world. Diverse casts and crews broke box office numbers, nations were inspired by the FIFA Women's World Cup, and governments enhanced progress through laws such as Australia's Workplace Gender Equality Amendment Bill. What's more, the World Economic Forum confirmed a slight reduction in the global gender pay gap.

At WORK180, we recognized and rewarded even more companies committed to gender equity with [our trusted endorsement and support](#). We're also proud to share that the overall representation of women within these organizations (many within traditionally male-dominated industries) increased from 34% to 41%. Empowering teams with easy analysis, tracking, and tailored diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) action plans, our newly launched Progress Hub tool is sure to amplify this impact even further. Enhancements to [our job board](#) also mean women and marginalized groups can now search, filter, and compare these committed companies using the benefits and policies that matter most to them.

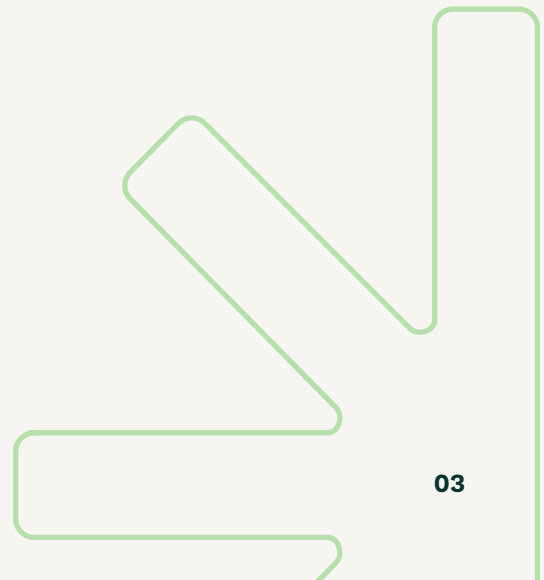
Unfortunately, strides toward progress have been marred again by another year of global setbacks. Women's rights were challenged and reversed in numerous countries. Anti-trans movements gained traction, the US Supreme Court reversed the Affirmative Action ruling, and the economic impact of global conflicts saw many companies falter in their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The rate of progress toward gender parity has not regained pre-pandemic pace, and it's unlikely any readers of this report will be alive to see it come to fruition.



Gemma Lloyd
CEO and Co-founder



Valeria Ignatieva
CEO and Co-founder



Despite this, many women and marginalized groups remain resolute in their pursuit of career progression. Almost two-thirds of women are open to or looking for new opportunities, and our survey reveals an increase in women ready to “level up”. However, for many, such opportunities for development have been jeopardized by a retraction of flexible working practices (as forewarned and appealed against by respondents of last year’s report).

Companies wishing to build and benefit from a diverse workforce should beware of ignoring such insights this year. While the wants and needs of women shared in this report are much the same as previous years, there’s a sense that the voices are louder. Women are frustrated with empty public promises and angry at workplaces’ lack of progress. Candidates (especially the younger Generation Z) also say they’re willing to walk away from roles not offering what they need to thrive.

Conversely, our findings from both our survey and hands-on support of employers throughout the year prove the positive impact of an ongoing commitment to DEI. Even organizations obliged by government legislation to reveal a poor gender pay gap this year can take comfort in the fact that 55% of respondents said they would still apply for positions with a company if they were able to prove their commitment to closing their pay gap.

Ultimately, the voices in this report are asking for progress, not perfection. As such, we urge readers to see this report not as a to-do list, but as a tool in your armor for change. Use the findings to fuel the right actions, in the right way, and use the real-life voices in this report to aid difficult discussions and gain that all-important buy-in. Remember that small steps make a difference, and standing still is no longer an option.



Valeria Ignatieva
CEO and Co-founder



Gemma Lloyd
CEO and Co-founder

About the report

About the author

Inspired by their own experiences of workplace discrimination, Gemma Lloyd and Valeria Ignatieva founded the first transparent job board for women. Almost a decade later, WORK180 is a thriving community and platform where women and marginalized groups access the information they need to make informed career decisions — and find workplaces that work for them.

The employers we endorse openly share their workplace benefits, policies, and opportunities on our platform, and must meet a minimum set of standards. As a result, our endorsement badge has become a globally trusted sign of a company committed to progress. We actively support this progress with expert guidance, tools, and a proven process for increasing gender representation in just 12 months.

A few key numbers

+1 Million

The number of people visiting our transparent career platform each year.

220,116

The number of women positively impacted by our work with employers in 2023.

+7%

The overall increase in the number of women across our Endorsed Employers in 2023.

About the data

The data in this report is the result of a global WORK180 survey, circulated both in and outside of our community of women. While the majority of respondents do identify as women, our survey was open to anyone who wished to share their voice.

Dates of survey:

29th September - 13th November 2023

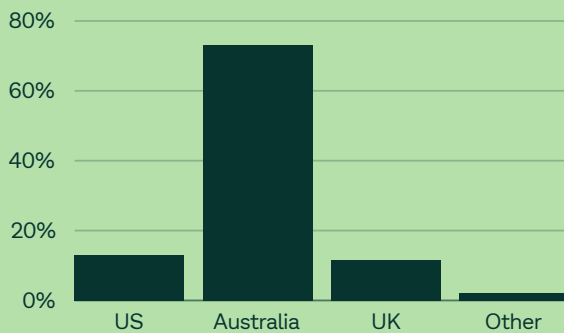
Total number of survey respondents:

769

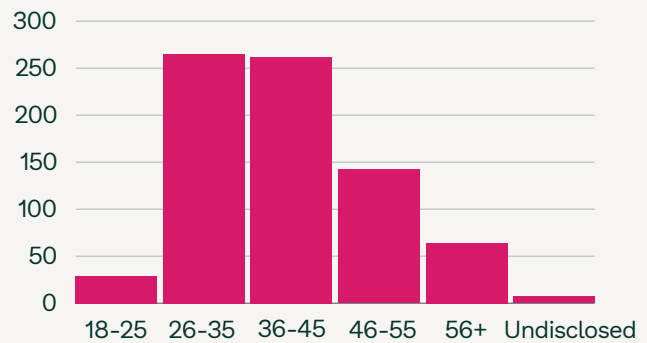
Participant demographics

The demographics of all survey respondents have been collected and presented to help readers view the report findings with an all-important intersectional lens. To aid in this intersectional reading, we have also actively amplified the voices of those underrepresented in their regions throughout this report wherever possible.

Where respondents live



Age categories of respondents



Employment status

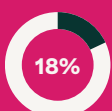
38.5%	Currently employed but open to new opportunities
24.8%	Currently employed and not looking for opportunities right now
22.8%	Currently employed but actively looking for a new opportunity
13%	Not currently employed
0.9%	Undisclosed

Gender

93.9%	Identify as a woman
4.3%	Identify as a man
0.8%	Identify as non-binary
0.4%	Also identify as transgender
0.7%	Preferred not to say
0%	Opted to provide an alternative identifier that was not listed

Current career stage

22.1%	Leveling up Focusing on moving to the next stage of their career
17.7%	Leadership and beyond Focusing on senior leadership opportunities, including board placements
14.2%	Ready to make a change Considering a new role, industry, and/or employer
13.5%	Established Satisfied with where they're at for now
12.7%	Returning to work Have had a period of absence as a result of health, parental commitments, travel, sabbatical, or other
11.4%	Starting out About to enter the workforce or in an early stage role
6.1%	Scaling back Looking to reduce their workload and find greater flexibility
2.3%	Other



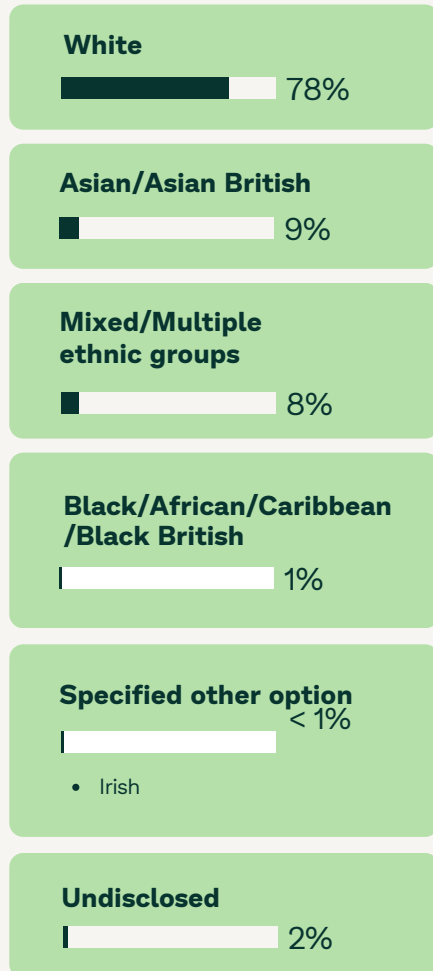
18% of respondents stated they are part of the LGBTQI+ community

Race and ethnicity

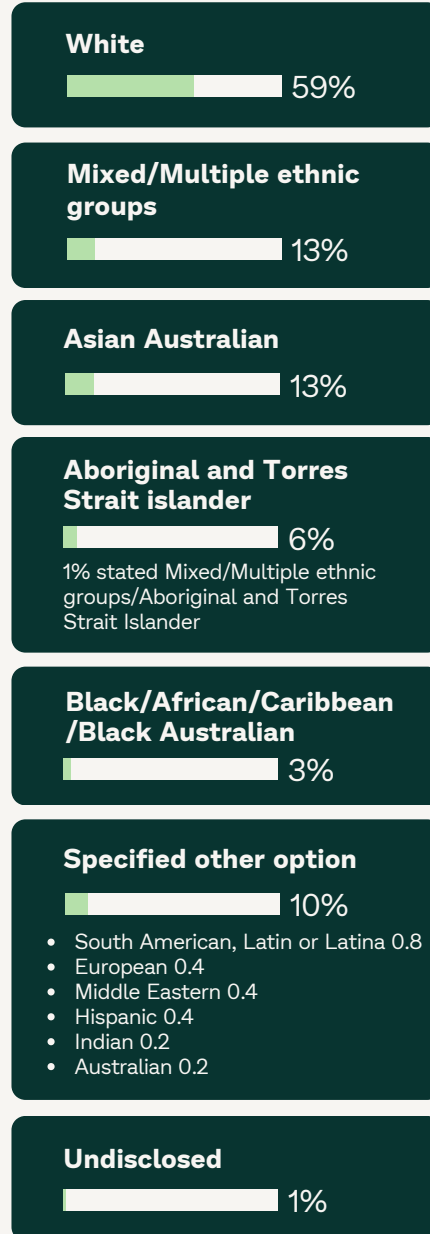
To ensure inclusivity, the survey invited participants to detail how they identify in terms of race and ethnicity. A list of options was provided dependant on the respondent's current country of residence, with the option to self-define in addition or instead. In respect of this, any language used by participants in addition to the categories provided has not been amended.

Please also note that the totals of all demographic responses do not equal 100% as respondents were able to select multiple options.

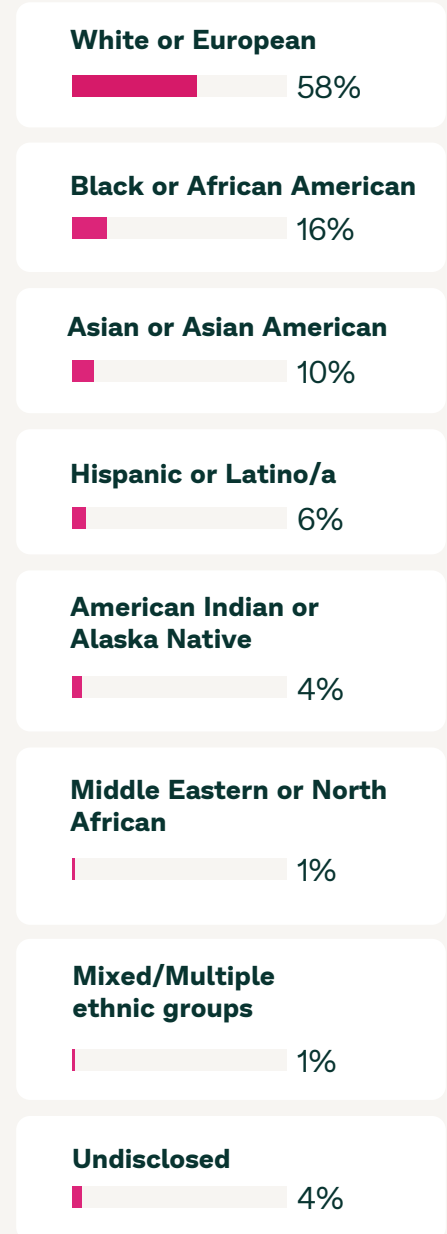
UK demographics



Australia demographics

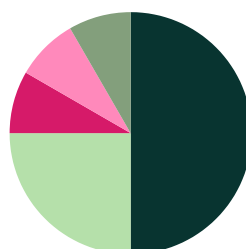


US demographics



2% of survey respondents live in...

- Canada
- New Zealand
- Germany
- Ghana
- Bangladesh
- Spain
- Netherlands
- Venezuela
- South Africa
- Ireland
- Russia



Race and ethnicities

- White
- Indian
- Multiple ethnicities
- Latino American
- South Asian

A few key findings

While dropping by 2% year-on-year, **almost two-thirds (62%)** of women are ready and open to opportunities with a new employer, with 23% actively looking.

We've also seen an increase in the rate of women wanting to level up:

- **22%** are focusing on moving to the next stage in their career (+3% versus last year's report)
- **18%** are focusing on leadership positions (+5% versus last year's report)

#1 Flexible working is back on top as the most in-demand offering, with three-quarters of respondents still prioritizing it over a top of market salary.

#2 and #3 position for the most important employer policies go to those preventing sexual harassment and promoting pay transparency.

Demand for transparency is loudest among respondents in Generation Z (born 1997-2012), who are also set to represent a quarter of all employees by 2025.

86% of all respondents want to know what employers are doing to remove and/or maintain zero gender pay gap (+5% versus last year).

But **55%** said they would still apply to a workplace with a poor gender pay gap if they could prove a commitment to closing it.

Workplace discrimination continues to prohibit women's full participation, with **46%** feeling unable to be their true selves in their current workplace.

This saddening number rises for those facing discrimination against multiple elements of their identity. For example, the number rises to 51% for those with a hidden disability, 52% for women of color*, and 72% for those over 56.

*While this report recognizes the limitations of the term 'people of color', it has been used here and within this report to refer to the respondents who do not identify as 'White only'. This is to enable a view of the results from the perspectives of those without the societal privileges afforded to 'White only' individuals in our three key regions.

Let's begin with learnings from last year



Learnings from last year

Last year, we reported a rise in the number of employed women ready or actively looking to find a new role. This year tells a similar story...

While dropping by 2%, almost two-thirds of women say they're ready and looking for new opportunities.

62% of women are open to new opportunities **23%** say they are actively looking

This is good news for recruiters, but companies wishing to truly develop diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplaces should be concerned; **your team could be losing out** on ambitious women ready to level up this year.

22% are focusing on moving to the next stage (+3% last year) **18%** are focusing on leadership positions (+5% last year)

What the experts are saying

“This desire to level up is an unmissable opportunity for employers. Facilitating upward mobility will not only help increase representation at the leadership level, but also positively impact all layers of the organization when more marginalized communities see themselves represented as decision-makers. We strongly advise teams to take time to review their pipeline, reviewing whether their career development opportunities, leadership development, and succession planning is set up to truly aid and drive long-term diversity.”

Jessie Yu
DEI Account Manager at WORK180



95% of 722 respondents to an additional WORK180 survey said they **would look for another job** if their current company **lacked career progression opportunities.**

How can workplaces attract, nurture, and retain women in 2024?

Firstly, it's important to acknowledge the progress and positive impact of many employers' dedication over the last year. More than half of respondents (56%) say they felt strongly or somewhat supported by their primary employer, and 60% say they feel proud of their company's reaction to the year's events.

The rewards of this commitment are clear when comparing responses of those who did and did not feel supported by or proud of their company.

31%

of respondents **who say they don't feel supported** are actively looking for new opportunities. **This is 10% higher than those who say they do feel supported.**

30%

of respondents **who say they don't feel proud** of their company are actively looking for new opportunities. **This is 8% higher than those who say they do feel proud.**

“

My employer has always been **very understanding and supportive** [...] I always boast about my employer.

Black or African American Woman aged 26-35 with parenting responsibilities and is a member of the LGBTQI+ community

“

There was a strong return to office five days a week culture from the start of this year. **I left and found a hybrid role.**

White woman aged 46-55 years old with parenting responsibilities

An additional well done for our Endorsed Employers

75% of respondents who revealed they work for an Endorsed Employer say they felt proud of their workplace. For comparison, this drops to 46% for respondents who don't work for an Endorsed Employer.

Endorsed
Employer

For all women



WORK180

So, what did many employers get right?

The following list is compiled from common themes found in the responses to our request for a reasoning as to why people said they felt proud or supported.

Employers acknowledged and supported local and global issues.

“I was particularly impressed with how Powercor conducted a Lunch & Learn to provide all employees/contractors information on the 'The Voice' to Parliament referendum. It was incredibly informative, provided the history and even the process on how to vote. The questions were answered professionally, and **I felt very prepared heading into the voting booth after this session.**”

White women aged 26-35 with a non-apparent disability and is a member of the LGBTQI+ community

Employers introduced or continued their commitment to flexible working options.

Here are few common examples of how:

- They avoided micromanagement/demonstrated trust in employees
- They actively supported the set up of safe home offices
- Employers wishing to bring their workforce back to the office used incentives as opposed to imposing mandates

What the experts are saying

Instead of making [two days in the office] a requirement, the company **introduced other incentives to get us in, like offering breakfast, team lunches, and paid for work drinks and socials.** Now the office is always buzzing because [if you're not there] you feel like you will miss out!

White woman aged 26-35

“Incentives are a great alternative to return-to-work mandates. Mandates have the potential to force many employees out of the workplace such as primary carers, those with disabilities, or those that have relocated to regional centres. If you're considering this approach, just be sure those that choose not to come to the office or event are not inadvertently blocked from career opportunities. For example, any potential favoritism or bias caused by bonding at such events can be mitigated by clear and company-wide promotional criteria.”

Julie Taylor
DEI Account Manager at WORK180



Employers demonstrated a focus on employee health and wellbeing (including generous sick leave and the introduction of days off for mental health).

Employers clearly communicated and demonstrated commitment to their diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

 **88%**

of all respondents say they somewhat (28.9%) or strongly (58.8%) want to know what their employer is doing to create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace.

Employers proved their commitment to closing their gender pay gap.

 **86%**

of all respondents say they somewhat (27.7%) or strongly (58.6%) want to know what employers are doing to close their gender pay gap.

Employers made sure team members felt heard and valued.

Employers provided adequate redundancy support.

“

“We had hiring freezes and reorganizations but **the impacted people had a generous severance with a real offer of support to help them find their next role.** We also had a formal response to support team members affected by the crisis in Ukraine.”

Woman who identifies as “mixed ethnicity (non-white)” aged 26-35 and with unpaid caring responsibilities

So, what did many employers get wrong?

The following list has been created from themes repeatedly seen among responses to our request for reasoning behind why individuals didn't feel proud or supported.

“

Employers failed to provide clarity around company direction and/or career development opportunities.

Employers failed to adequately communicate and/or manage redundancies.

Employers offered poor pay (particularly in relation to the rising cost of living).

“Pay rises **do not** match the economic conditions and the DEI policies **do not** keep up with other companies.”

Hispanic woman aged 26-35 years old

Employers promoted but didn't adequately implement or act on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

This feedback included feelings of frustration and anger at a lack of adequate preventative action for workplace discrimination and abuse against protected characteristics, such as race, gender, age, or sexuality.

“

“I want our workplace to start talking equally to the perpetrators, mostly men, and start telling them to stop harassing women whether overtly or with micro-aggressions as often as they tell the victims to speak up. We run a sexual harassment training course, which is comprehensive, **but it's once every 18-24 months and it just touches the surface of the issue.**

I also hear a lot about striving for gender equity, **but unless we get the above issue sorted out, gender equity isn't sustainable** because women keep leaving the industry as fast as they are able to recruit new women into it.”

White male aged 46-55 years with parenting responsibilities

“

Employers failed to adequately recognize and/or support issues and world events that impacted and/or mattered to team members.

Employers' flexible working policies were restrictive, unclear, or retracted.

“I feel like there was **minimal recognition of global events/situations or their impact on us**, and instead a focus on company needs and bottom line.”

White or European woman aged 26-25 years with a non-apparent disability and is part of the LGBTQI+ community

“

“When [my former manager] left, we were left with a micromanaging director who doesn't believe in flexible work arrangements. **They imposed their own set of guidelines that actually was counterproductive** to the policy that we have as an organization.”

Asian/Asian Australian woman aged 36-45 years with parenting responsibilities

“

“[I]n reality, **women or marginalized people are made to feel uncomfortable about flexibility or differing needs**. A prime example would be meetings being scheduled during flexible time or on days when people are not technically "working" — but if you don't attend, you miss critical information.”

White woman aged 46-55 years with a non-apparent disability

What the experts are saying

“Even when implementing excellent policies, issues may arise if there isn't clear and consistent communication regarding the purpose and specifics of these initiatives. Getting this right requires company-wide communication and buy-in, and this starts with leadership. We hope the facts and figures presented within this report helps such conversations, and remind our Endorsed Employers to make full use of the Progress Hub to track and prove their impact!”

Valeria Ignatieva
Co-Founder and CEO of WORK180



What do women and marginalized groups say they want and need to thrive?



What do women and marginalized groups say they want and need to thrive?

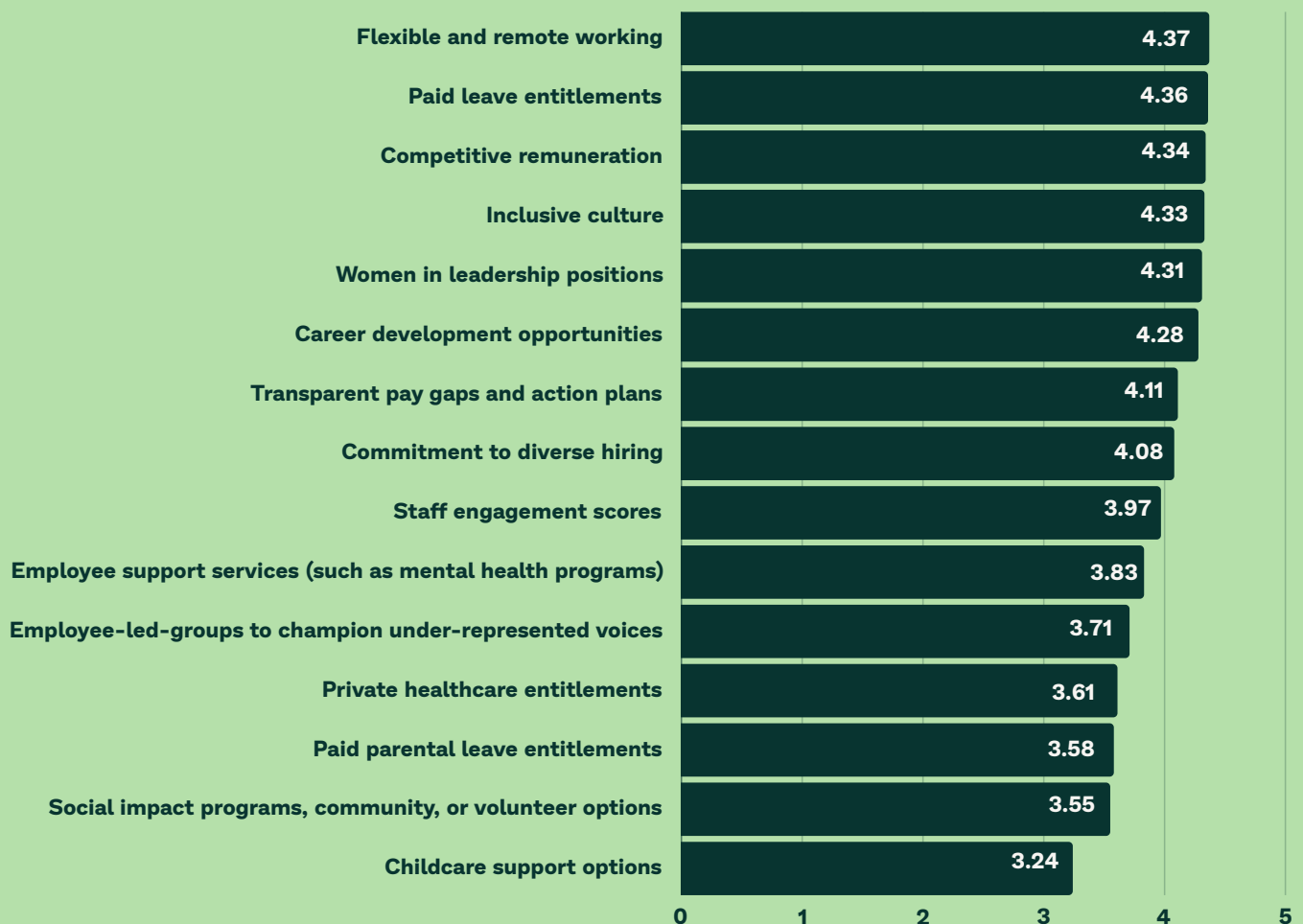
As always, at the heart of our survey was a desire to uncover exactly what women want and need to thrive in the workplace. To determine this, we asked respondents to tell us what they value most in an employer.

This began by asking them to rate the importance of a range of offerings proven to create a workplace where all employees can thrive.



We asked:

How important are these employer offerings to you on a scale of 1 - 5?



Please note, these priorities remained the same when factoring in or out the 4% of survey respondents who identify as a man.

Top priorities per region

Australia

1. Flexible and remote working
2. Inclusive culture and competitive remuneration
3. Paid leave entitlements
4. Women in leadership positions
5. Career development opportunities

USA

1. Paid leave entitlements
2. Flexible and remote working
3. Career development opportunities
4. Women in leadership positions
5. Competitive remuneration and inclusive culture

UK

1. Flexible and remote working
2. Paid leave entitlements
3. Women in leadership positions
4. Competitive remuneration
5. Inclusive culture

While not vastly different, the variation in priorities when broken down by country brings to life the importance of approaching all DEI initiatives with a regional view.

All too often, companies introduce benefits and policies based on global data, insights, and best practices from other countries — commonly the United States of America. This is an issue award-winning thought leader and WORK180 DEI Board Member Sheree Atcheson calls “US exceptionalism”.

What the experts are saying

“Many organizations will try to create a global data approach to diversity demographics, and whilst we can and should aggregate on a global level, it’s important to understand regional nuances, especially as an organization with a large employee base. Remember that data granularity will be different depending on organization size, DE&I focus, legal requirements and so on.”

Sheree Atcheson

Award-winning thought leader and member of the WORK180 DEI Board writing in Forbes on the topic



An even closer look at the wants and needs of women

Please note, the following segmentations of responses have been provided to aid and encourage an intersectional reading of the top employer offerings per region provided on the previous pages.

Women of color* only

1. Flexible and remote working
2. Paid leave entitlements
3. Competitive remuneration and inclusive culture
4. Career development opportunities
5. Women in leadership positions

*While this report recognizes the limitations of the term 'people of color', it has been used here to refer to the respondents who do not identify as 'White only'. This is to enable a view of the results from the perspectives of those without the societal privileges afforded to 'White only' individuals in our three key regions.



Respondents who have a disability (Both visible and non-apparent)

1. Flexible and remote working
2. Paid leave entitlements
3. Inclusive culture
4. Competitive remuneration
5. Career development opportunities

Respondents who identify as a member of the LGBTQI+ community

1. Inclusive culture
2. Competitive remuneration
3. Career development opportunities
4. Women in leadership positions
5. Paid leave entitlements

The number one offering by age group:

- 18-25** Career development opportunities
- 26-35** Flexible and remote working culture
- 36-45** Flexible and remote working culture
- 46-55** Competitive remuneration
- Over 56** Paid leave entitlements

A note for WORK180 Endorsed Employers

Want to better understand the priorities for women and marginalized groups from the perspective of your specific industry? Be sure to reach out to your dedicated DEI Account Manager who will organize a deeper dive of the data.



What specific policies are women looking for?

Workplace policies are so much more than a document. They're a powerful statement of what an employer does and doesn't stand for. As such, many candidates use them to determine whether or not a workplace will work for them.

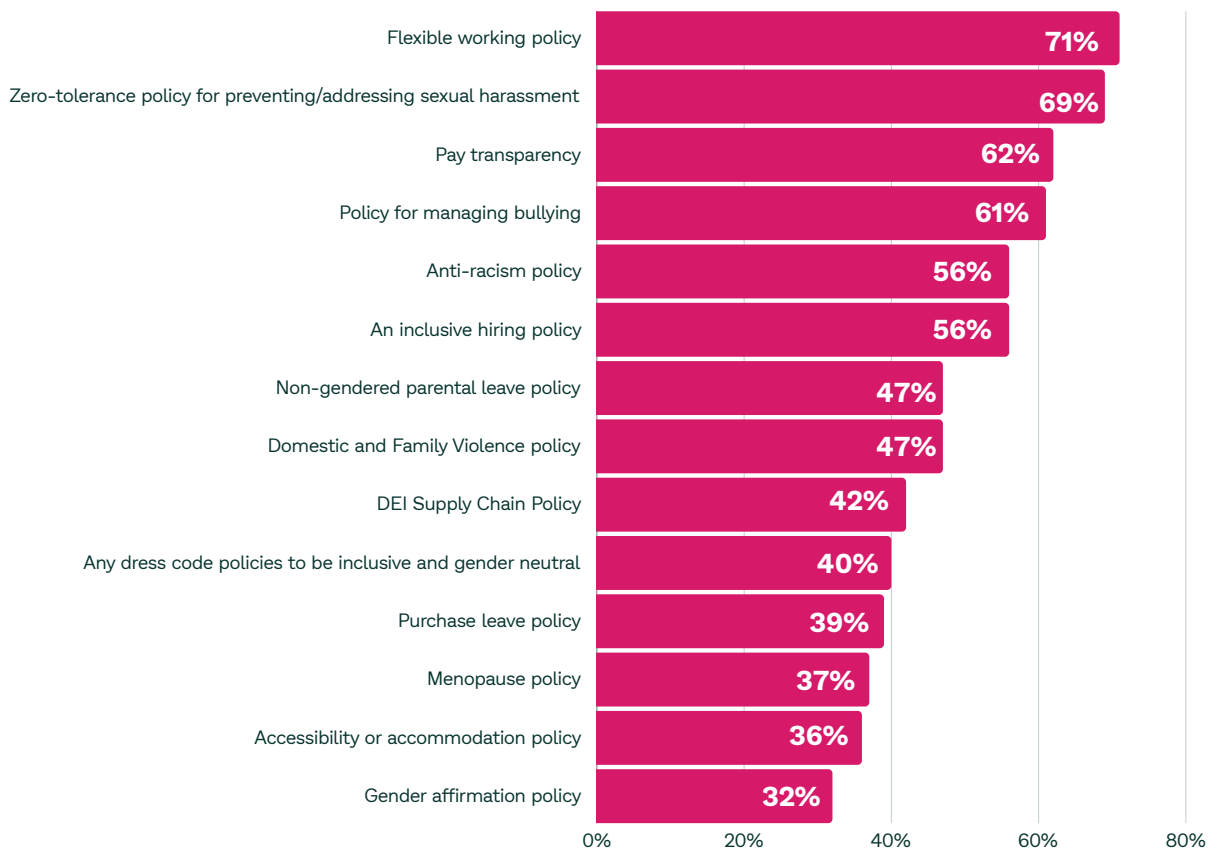
Don't currently display your benefits and policy information? Beware.

40%

of women said they **would be put off applying** for a role if a company hid their benefits and policy information.

That's just one of the reasons over one million people a year [visit our transparent career platform.](#)

We asked: **Which of the following policies or options would you like an employer to have in place?**



Again, these policies vary depending on individual circumstances. For example, the importance of a menopause policy increases for those within age ranges more likely to be directly impacted. Similarly, the importance of dress codes being inclusive and non-gendered increases for those who are more likely to have been discriminated against by dress codes in the past.

However, it's also important to note that presumptions must not be made about which policy matters to who. Many policies were voted of high importance by those who may be presumed to not want nor need it. For example, 58% of those who are neither parents nor carers voted both flexible working policies and a non-gendered parental leave policy as important to them.

“

“Work from home was an option for me during covid and past covid **but this has been removed with only some employees able to work flexibly, such as young mothers.**”

White woman aged 46-55

Remember, regardless of the benefit or policy your workplace chooses to offer, clarity and consistency is key. The confusion, distress, and damage caused by companies getting this wrong is clear within the heartbreaking experiences shared by respondents.

“

“I am m[male] to f[female] transgender and came out at work after they announced a diversity policy after having checked with HR that it included people like me. Being assured it did, I transitioned. It took them a few attempts to get rid of me. **Months later they abolished my role and outsourced it!**”

White transgender person, aged over 56 and part of the LGBTQ+ community

“

“I think the bereavement leave needs to be extended as our culture mourns death in very unique ways and that would be helpful. I don't want to feel bad about taking leave so it would be nice that there are options. I get confused with all the leave types so **it needs to be clear cut and for me to not feel like I'm doing anything wrong.**”

Asian/Asian Australian woman aged 36-45 with parenting responsibilities

What the experts are saying

“An effective workplace policy doesn’t just happen. Organizations need to provide a formal policy or guidelines, and work to ensure that a positive attitude towards the uptake of the policy is ingrained in the company culture. This is particularly important for policies with damaging stigmas, such as men taking advantage of parental leave opportunities. Teams can tackle this perception and make real change through regular reminders of such arrangements and celebrations of those who embrace it (especially within leadership roles).”

Chrissy Wakelin
DEI Account Manager at WORK180



How are people searching for your policies?

Remember, 40% of respondents said they want to see what companies have to offer before applying. (It’s just one of the many reasons why over a million people visit our transparent career platform each year!) Our survey also revealed that this candidate research goes beyond career platforms, with women and marginalized groups searching for real-life examples of your offering in action.

58% explore potential employers’ social media platforms

48% check employee review platforms

37% ask around for insights within their own networks

28% research to find relevant news articles

27% reach out to current employees for their first-hand experiences

How can your team harness these employer branding opportunities in a way that will support and strengthen your diversity efforts? Find out by reading [our Employer Branding info pack](#).

A closer look at the top in-demand policies



1



said a **flexible working policy** was important when considering a new employer.

2



said a **zero-tolerance policy preventing and addressing sexual harassment** was important when considering a new employer.

3



said **pay transparency** was important when considering a new employer.



1 Women say they want a flexible working policy

“

After a year of return-to-office mandates and an increased cost-of-living crisis, flexible working and remote options have knocked ‘career development opportunities’ from the top of women’s priorities. As a result, flexible working has also been voted the number one policy for employers to have in place.

‘I’m burnt out. **I’m also being pressured to work from the office** but I have kids in school and health issues, so I’d negotiated with the previous manager to work from home. **I’m looking for a new job at a company with a better culture.**”

Asian/Asian Australian woman aged 36–45 with parenting responsibilities

 **75%**

of respondents stated that they (somewhat or strongly) consider flexible working procedures more important than a competitive salary.

 **87%**

of respondents to additional WORK180 research said they would consider looking for another role if their workplace mandated a return-to-office five days a week.

 **13%**

of respondents who were unable to arrange official flexible arrangements with their employer said they reduced previous efforts to accommodate personal and or family needs.

“

“I’ve applied for many roles **where they wouldn’t consider a four day week so that I could still raise my young child.** It was inconceivable to them that I could be just as productive over four days.”

White woman aged 36–45 years with parenting responsibilities

Here's what women want from flexible working policies:

- Increased control over working hours
- Remote working options
- Flexibility to manage personal issues (beyond parenting)
- Part-time or flexible arrangements (without negative consequences)
- Clarity and consistency in policies
- Normalization/active removal of stigma for those using flexible working

“

“There are **not enough** part time roles that are well paid and in jobs women are trained or experienced to do.”

White woman aged over 56 years with parenting responsibilities

“

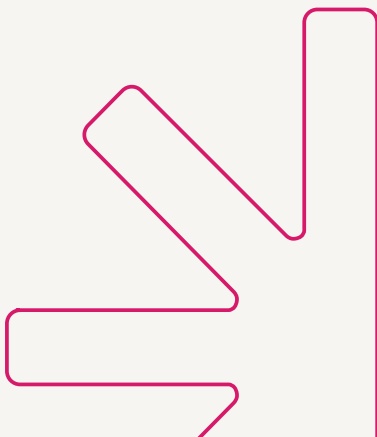
“I think that **flexible working hours and the ability to work from home are essential in supporting people (of all ages) going through menopause** because it can be a very difficult time to go through both mentally and physically.”

Woman who identifies as mixed/multiple ethnicities aged 36-45 years and with a non-apparent disability

What the experts are saying

“Flexible working has the power to break down many workplace barriers for women and marginalized groups, consequently widening and diversifying companies’ candidate pools. If this isn’t enough to convince decision makers to stay strong in their commitment to flexible working, try to help them see the more immediate benefits to the business. For example, remote working can be a much-appreciated perk in the cost-of-living crisis. While your company may not be in a position to offer pay rises, they can offer reduced commute costs.”

Jacquie Connaughton
DEI Account Manager at WORK180



2

Women say they want a **zero-tolerance policy preventing/addressing sexual harassment**

It's a sad sign of the workplace realities for many right now that a zero-tolerance policy preventing/addressing sexual harassment received the second-highest number of votes. What's more, the survey itself was packed with stories and appeals for help protecting workers from attacks and/or discrimination in the workplace.

“

“Sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination has made **doing my job extremely difficult.**”

Anglo-Indian woman aged over 56 years with parenting responsibilities

“

“Leaders in my company tend to be middle aged white cis [cisgender] men who **do not take the complaints of young women seriously.** When raising complaints I have been told, on multiple occasions, **to stop being so sensitive.**”

White woman aged 26-35 years with a non-apparent disability

“

“We hear a lot about "Speak Up". Everyone is encouraged to speak up and our workplace hands out cookies with speak up on them and sends out emails with how to speak up, but **I don't think my workplace understands what that really means for women when they do speak up.** Speak up is also very victim centric and reactive.”

White male aged 46-55 years with parenting responsibilities

“

“[I’d like employers to offer] protection from backlash if reporting violence/abuse/misconduct by a member of another gender. For example, reporting of a male abuser by a female, **backlash can occur from other males, particularly in a male-dominated industry like mining and resources).**”

White woman aged over 56 years

Beyond employee demand for this policy, there are legal motivations for ensuring your support is up to scratch this year; Australia, the UK, and some US states have laws in place that require employers to take preventative action against sexual harassment — and a powerful prevention is a policy with explicit definitions, procedures, and consequences around these matters.

Additional notice for employers in Australia

Passed in the Australian Parliament in March 2023, the Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Closing the Gender Pay Gap) Bill 2023 is a crucial reform to drive transparency and action toward closing the gender pay gap. In March 2024, this bill also requires companies to publish their policy/strategy for preventing and responding to sexual harassment in the workplace.

Already a WORK180 Endorsed Employer?

Be sure to head to the resources library in your team’s [Progress Hub](#) to find a best-practice sexual harassment policy template and guidance on implementation.

For those not yet endorsed by WORK180, you can find out more and [check your eligibility on our website](#).



WORK180

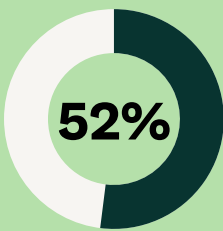
**Endorsed
Employer**

For all women

3

Women say they want pay transparency

The words ‘pay transparency’ can strike fear into the hearts of HR, leadership, and anyone dealing with teams. But with demand from candidates increasing (especially from younger members of the workforce) and regulations around pay gap reporting on the rise, it’s time for teams to face the topic head on.



of survey respondents even said a hidden or vague salary would put them off applying or proceeding with an application. **This figure increased to 69% for those aged between 18-25.**

Pay transparency can range from publicizing gender pay gaps (a legal requirement in 2024 for many companies in the UK and Australia) to openly sharing the salaries of each individual in the organization. The “right” level of transparency depends on your workplace but, at the core, women want and need policies and practices that make productive conversations around pay possible.

“

“I wish I could ask about remuneration reviews and targets and salary band levels **to understand how I would be fairly compensated for the amount of work that I do** (i.e., knowing self-worth and what is market compensation).”

Asian/Asian Australian woman aged 36-45 years with parenting responsibilities

Three small but powerful steps to take towards transparency in 2024

1

Be open about your processes

It's likely your team already has processes in place to ensure that you're offering competitive salaries in an equitable manner. By providing policies that clearly communicate these processes to employees, your team can;

“

Satisfy any curiosity and uncertainty

Prove your commitment to fair and equitable pay

Make it a lot easier to avoid and/or recognize any discriminatory practices

“My former boss (a woman, by the way, lol) said: Peter has got a family to feed, that's why we pay him more. **As if I was there just for fun.**”

White woman aged 36-45 years with parenting responsibilities

2

Create policies that welcome pay discussions

In Australia, the UK, and most US states, it's illegal for employers to prohibit the discussion of salaries. However, this doesn't stop many 'discouraging' it.

The thought of providing a policy that states your employees' right to discuss the topic can seem daunting. However, it sends a powerful message to all team members that your organization is committed to equitable pay and welcomes any conversations that help to ensure this.

3

Show salaries on advertised job roles

The perceived benefits of hiding salary information on job ads are almost always outweighed by the benefits of transparency. For example, displaying clear and concise salary ranges;

Attracts more candidates

Ensures your team is not wasting time with candidates who have expectations higher than the available salary

Communicates an honest and open culture from the start

Contributes to the decrease in gender pay gap

For specific guidance on addressing your company's gender pay gap, [download our free Gender Pay Gap Review Checklist.](#)

An important note on the pay gap



The Gender Pay Gap

What is it?

The gap between the average pay of all working men and all working women. This means that women, in any industry, earn far less than all working men in any industry.

What it's not

This term simplifies inequities to the single dimension of gender, failing to consider pay inequalities between people of different ethnicities or abilities.

Pay equality

What is it?

Workers with comparable experience and education, working in the same occupation at the same level are entitled to earn the same compensation.

What it's not

This metric fails to take into account the different types of jobs chosen by men versus women, and the stark difference in salary potentials between those jobs.

Pay equity

What is it?

Pay equity compares the value and pay of different jobs.

Rather than simply looking at the disparity in earnings between people of different genders or occupations, pay equity explores the systemic issues, conscious or unconscious biases, social norms, educational opportunities, and wealth that may negatively impact women, people of color, or people with other marginalized identities.

In a year when many Australian organizations join the UK in the publication of their pay gap data, it's vital that teams look at the power of policies for tackling their gender pay gap.

Even readers not legally required to share their gender pay gap should consider the public demand for both action and transparency around their gender equity efforts.



86%

of respondents say they want to know what employers are doing to close their gender pay gap (a 5% year-on-year increase).

“

“[The new director] didn't believe in the gender pay equity gap nor unconscious bias and, as a result of their strong personal opinions, **it became difficult to want to work for someone so uneducated on matters that don't personally impact them.**”

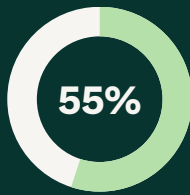
Asian/Asian Australian woman aged 36-45 years with parenting responsibilities



How can introducing the workplace policies requested by women and marginalized groups help reduce your gender pay gap?

From flexible working to sexual harassment, these policies help break down and remove workplace barriers that prevent women from reaching higher paid positions (which is a common cause of a company's gender pay gap).

While these policies won't positively impact your gender pay gap overnight, they will help to prove your commitment to progress — and this is important to the women your workplace wants and needs to thrive.



strongly or somewhat agreed that they would apply for a role with a company that had a poor gender pay gap **if they could prove their commitment to progress.**

What the experts are saying

“Providing progressive workplace policies communicates a company’s acknowledgement of the barriers for women, and a willingness to remove them. This helps with short and long term diversity hiring goals and, crucially, contributes to a better organization for everyone.

For example, a gender-neutral parental leave policy provides women with the confidence that their application will be considered on the same grounds as a man (who could just as easily take advantage of this paid leave). It also tells recruiters to focus on building long-standing teams made up of the best of the best, as opposed to the best of what they can get right now.”

Gemma Lloyd
Co-Founder and CEO of WORK180



What else could be putting women off applying for your roles?

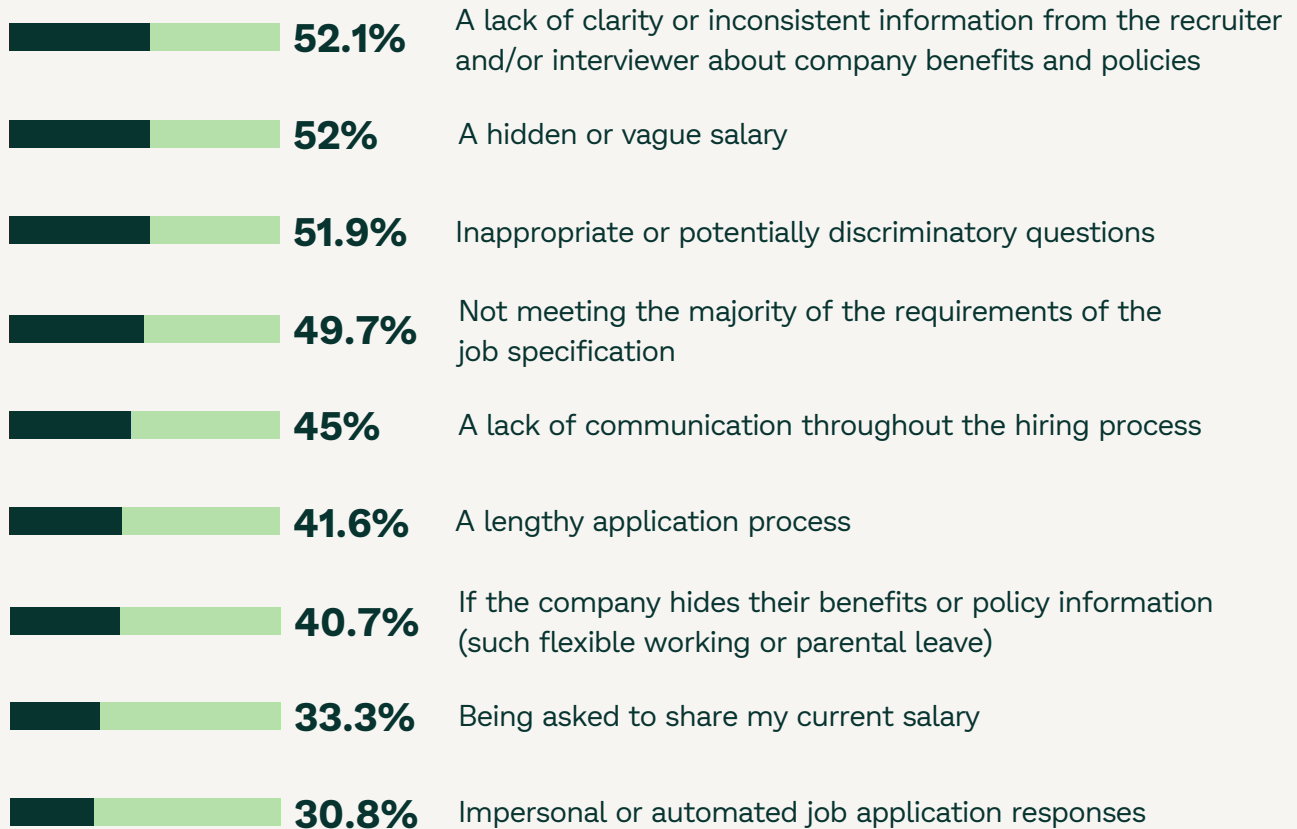


What could be putting women off applying for your roles?



We asked:

What has or would put you off applying or proceeding with an application?



“

“I was acting in a leadership role. I applied for that role, and was unsuccessful [...] The issue is they were trying to recruit the same way they always have. Instead, they need to tailor the process to be more inclusive.

I applied for another job in another organization and felt completely safe through the whole recruitment process, that was the signal for me that THIS was the right place for me. **If they value me through the recruitment process, then they will value me in the workplace too.**”

Asian/Asian Australian woman aged 36-45 years and with parenting responsibilities.

And, crucially, what could be pushing women within your organization away?

The top benefits, policies, and feedback about the previous working year are a great indication of the ways the workplace can improve in 2024. However, we wanted to ensure this report provides a clear understanding of the overarching issues holding women back in the workplace, so that's exactly what we asked respondents to share. From their answers, it seems a lot of prevailing issues are yet to be tackled...

A lack of access to appropriate mentors/leaders

Many survey respondents cited a difficulty finding or accessing mentorship within the organization as a barrier for their own development.



“

“As a female in a male-dominated industry I have always stood out. **Plus I have felt more pressure to overachieve, work long hours without role models or mentors.**”

White woman aged 46-55 years with a non-apparent disability

“

I am a relatively young leader (37) trying to establish an executive career **while struggling to access great mentorship from a consistent leader** whose style is both a fit for mine and consistent with my values.

White woman aged 36-45 years

“

“[We need] mentorship and sponsorship programs, paid internships, and **better internal mobility programs so people don't have to quit to change roles or get a decent promotion...**”

Woman aged 26-35 who identifies as “mixed ethnicity (non-white)” and is an unpaid carer

Coaches, mentors, and sponsors are proven to positively impact employees' careers. For example, according to Gartner's study of 1,000 Sun Microsystems employees, mentees are reportedly five times more likely to be promoted than those without a mentor. What's more, this study proved increased retention rates.

[Research reported in the Business Harvard Review](#) also reveals that, on average, mentoring programs boost the representation of Black, Hispanic, and Asian-American women, and Hispanic and Asian-American men, by 9% to 24%.

What the experts are saying

“Finding the right mentor can be especially difficult for women and marginalized groups whose networks don't already include senior figures in their chosen sectors. Similarly, employers can struggle to support these efforts as their own senior leadership teams already lack representation — but it's not impossible. For example, employers should actively seek out and support individuals to access relevant mentorships schemes and programmes.”

Chrissy Wakelin
DEI Account Manager at WORK180



Prejudices and barriers beyond those caused by workplace sexism

The voices in our survey make it clear that prejudices such as ableism, ageism, and racism remain present in the workplace. Sometimes subtle and often overt, those able to remain in such environments are doing so by expending additional energy on overachieving and/or masking their true identity.

“

“In one sentence or more, I am a woman of color in a male dominated industry **so I accommodate to the behavioral norms.**”

Women of mixed/multiple ethnic groups aged over 56 with parenting responsibilities

“

“The few women or marginalized groups who do lead are getting there by not rocking the boat, or by not becoming parents (or both). **Those who parent, or push back, or innovate, either never make it — or they disappear.**”

White woman aged 36-45 years old with parenting responsibilities

“

“I am publicly asked by ‘colleagues’ when I will retire and **made to feel that my work adds little value and has no skill.**”

White woman aged over 56 with both parenting and unpaid caring responsibilities

As a result, a staggering **46%** of people don’t feel able to be themselves in their current workplace. This increases to **51%** for those who have a hidden disability. **52%** when removing responses of those who identify as white, and **72%** for those over 56 years.

“

“I have had to choose between being myself and fully authentic, and survival [...] **The workforce is designed so that you either fit in or die,** and "fitting in" also means actively performing that you enjoy the job and are thriving because if it's not a good fit you are supposed to just 'find something else that is right for you'.”

White woman aged 26-35 years old with a non-apparent disability and a member of the LGBTQI+ community

“

“It's a lot to do with the emotional load of having to **explain contexts of my marginalized identities, seeing harmful practices enacted and not penalized in my workplaces,** and when I do speak up, having the perpetrator's intention emphasized over the impact they have created.”

Asian/Asian Australian woman aged 26-35 years and a member of the the LGBTQI+ community

What the experts are saying

“While readers may not recognize or believe these stories are present within their own organizations, it's important to remember that marginalized voices often go hidden and unheard. This is true even within workplaces with seemingly robust and anonymous feedback systems. While your current employee engagement survey may be receiving a fantastic response rate and an overall score, ask yourself: are you sure your systems aren't simply amplifying the voices of the majority?”

Shazya Azim
DEI Account Manager at WORK180



Lack of menopause support

Many respondents reported feeling impacted by the negative stigma attached to menopause, and beliefs around the work abilities of those experiencing it. So much so that several of the responses to our request for first-hand guidance on how employers can help were met with concerns of further backlash.

“

“I do worry that if we give lots of special considerations to women only it will make employers want to hire women less. Also ageism is so rife - I don't want to give companies another thing to say that an older woman is a bad choice.”

White woman aged 46-55 with parenting responsibilities

This concern is understandable and must be taken into consideration when approaching these conversations. However, with [scientific research making it clear that menopause does not impact cognitive performance](#), raising these voices is in the interest of everyone — especially employers themselves. By failing to support those experiencing menopause, the workplace risks losing out on an extremely large pool of able, experienced, and valuable employees.

But what can employers do to help? That's exactly what we asked those who have or are experiencing menopause:

“

“Understand that menopause symptoms are more than just hot flashes. It affects joints, mood, skin, energy, digestion, weight, and much more. Be knowledgeable and be inquisitive. Ask questions. **Don't make it a taboo subject.**”

White woman aged 46-55 years with parenting responsibilities

“

“**Tackle the attitude** that menopause is the point at which women become permanently less versatile and therefore less valuable as employees.”

White woman aged 46-55 years with a non-apparent disability, and both parenting and unpaid caring responsibilities

While we received a wide range of great suggestions including company-wide training to tackle biases, the standout request was for the provision of flexibility. In doing so, individuals can feel empowered and able to better manage their own symptoms (just as they would any other medical condition).

“

“I definitely would have worked remotely sometimes **if it had been acceptable.**”

White woman aged over 56 with both parenting and unpaid caring responsibilities

“

“Some days I am completely able to do my work from home **but for physical reasons I can't be in the office**

(inflammation, anxiety, pain). A flexible work arrangement **where I don't have to explain myself would help.**”

Latina woman aged 36-45 years with parenting responsibilities

“

“**Paid leave and to work from home, and not to be laughed at.**”

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman aged over 56

“

“Employers also need to appreciate that much of the flexibility they could put in place to support menopausal women manage their performance at work would also **benefit colleagues of all genders and ages that are experiencing health issues.**”

White woman aged 46-55 years with a non-apparent disability, and both parenting and unpaid caring responsibilities

A small but powerful way to both formalize and normalize the use of flexible working for managing menopause is to include it in official policies. This could simply be an update to your existing flexible working policy or (to really demonstrate your support) the introduction of [an official menopause policy](#).

The assumption that all women will become mothers and the primary carer

A substantial number of respondents believe antiquated presumptions that women will and/or should sacrifice their career to become the primary parent are holding progress back.

“

“Women who wish to excel in their career are **always put on the 'baby clock'** - it is assumed that every woman is going to go off and have a baby eventually and take a large chunk of time off so their work is seen with a clock on it.”

White woman aged 26-35 years old

“

“Even though nobody says it because it's illegal, **being a woman in your 30s is a barrier to promotions and opportunities** because most employers/managers have in the back of their mind that parents might be coming at some point, so it's always safer to give the opportunity to someone else.”

Hispanic woman aged 26-35 years old

This feeling is validated by [research such as that conducted by law firm Slater & Gordon](#) in which 40% of 500 managers surveyed said they're wary of hiring a woman of childbearing age. A similar number of the participants admitted to also being wary of hiring a woman who has already had a child or hiring a mother for a senior role. This is despite clear laws against such discrimination.

The good news is, workplaces have the power to change these damaging attitudes. For example, as highlighted earlier in this report, introducing and encouraging gender-neutral parental leave policies helps build a workplace where concerns around career gaps are just as applicable to would-be fathers as mothers.

“

“A stronger parity regarding parental leave, for example, secondary carers getting the same amount of leave as primary carers would **help counter the stereotype** and promote equality in the workplace.”

White woman aged 26-35 years old

“

“It is still quite normal for policies to be 'mother'-centric even when the language used is gender neutral [...] It feels that a lot of these policies have just replaced the word mother/maternity with 'Primary carer' and left it at that. Policies need to include **equal time** for carers of a child, and **flexibility** in when the leave can be taken over the first 12 months of a child's life, for both primary and secondary carers.

White woman aged 36-45 years with parenting responsibilities



Concerns of tokenism and taking efforts “too far”

Among the responses for the What Women Want Survey were genuine concerns of tokenism, as well as concerns for the negative impact of its real or perceived presence.

What is tokenism?

Tokenism is the superficial inclusion of individuals from under-represented groups without meaningful involvement or genuine efforts to address diversity or inclusion.

“

“I feel like **the tide is turning** in favor of women in high level roles. My husband is looking for work and **feels he'd be offered better opportunities if he were a woman.**”

White woman aged over 56 with parenting responsibilities

“

“Many women in higher management were put there for tokenism, which has **damaged the perception of female leadership.**”

White woman aged 26-35 years with parenting responsibilities

“

“We promote the images of successful women to use as role models, which is necessary. **But, on the flip side, many older males see this as proof that there aren't any barriers any more (even though they are the barriers themselves).**”

White woman aged over 56 with parenting and unpaid caring responsibilities



The actual or perceived presence of tokenism within an organization can cause division, disdain, and seriously damage your overall DEI efforts. It's therefore essential to not only advocate for DEI but also create opportunities to understand and address concerns about potential negative impacts.

What the experts are saying

“In DEI efforts, the risk of tokenism arises when symbolic gestures toward under-represented communities overshadow the substantive changes needed for true inclusion and diversity. The intersection of concerns regarding tokenism with a genuine apprehension about unfair treatment emphasizes the crucial need for transparency: openly sharing opportunities, clarifying hiring criteria, and fostering an inclusive culture where everyone feels safe to contribute ensures that concerns can be addressed in a constructive manner. This is critical to promote a sustainable diverse and equitable environment.”

Anna Kondritz
DEI Account Manager at WORK180



Closing comments



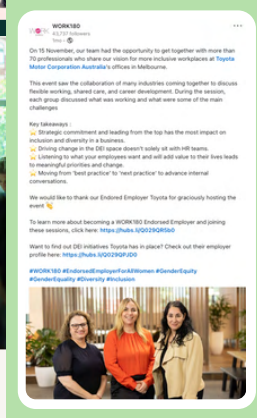
Ready to make a real impact?

We hope this report leaves you feeling informed and motivated to make a real impact in your workplace, but we also appreciate that the vast amount of insights may feel overwhelming. Our final guidance would be to focus your efforts on where you believe you can have the greatest impact right now, and remain committed. Remember, it's about progress, not perfection.

To stay inspired, why not follow us online and see how other changemakers are proving their commitment and progress throughout the year.



220,116
women were positively impacted by our work with employers last year



Overall, the employers we endorse **increased the number of women in their businesses by 7%** last year

For many, this figure was as high as **12%**

Could your company be eligible for endorsement and support?

Take 2 minutes to check



Endorsed Employer
For all women

Let's keep the conversation going



Our annual What Women Want survey creates a safe space for women to share what they want from employers. For more opportunities to share your voice and hear from other women in the workplace, join our community today.

[Join now](#)



If you'd like to be kept up-to-date with insights and resources to help you and your team build and benefit from a diverse workforce, sign up to our free HR newsletter.

[Sign up](#)

Want to know how our proven process, endorsement, and support can help your company drive diversity, equity, and inclusion in your workplace?

Visit our website or talk to our team at a time that suits you.

[Book a call](#)

