

Women in Public Affairs

Public Affairs Census



Key findings

22 October 2019

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About Women in Public Affairs

Women in Public Affairs was launched in 2012 by Ella Fallows and Laura Gilmore as an opportunity for women from across the industry to come together in an informal setting to share experiences, offer advice and support, and explore how we can work together to build a more diverse and representative public affairs industry.

Now in its seventh year, Women in Public Affairs is a well-established forum for women at all stages of their careers in public affairs.

We continue to focus on providing useful and interesting events with outstanding speakers which inform, inspire and support public affairs practitioners throughout their careers.

www.womeninpa.co.uk | [@WomeninPA](https://twitter.com/WomeninPA)

About the Research

This research was conducted between 8th August – 27th September 2019 via an online survey with a sample of 263 women who work in the Public Affairs industry. The survey was publicised online via the WiPA website and social media channels.

Looking for a job in Public Affairs

Nine in ten women in Public Affairs are attracted to roles which have flexible working policies

Nine in ten (87%) women in Public Affairs are looking for roles which offer flexible working hours, followed by an ability to work from home (77%) and a pension contribution (67%). Whilst not in the top four reasons, active diversity and inclusive culture is important to just under half (46%), while shared parental leave is attractive to 29% of women when looking for a new role in Public Affairs.

TOP FOUR ATTRACTIVE WORKPLACE POLICIES

1. Flexible working hours	87%
2. Ability to work from home	77%
3. Pension contribution	67%
4. Social benefits	55%

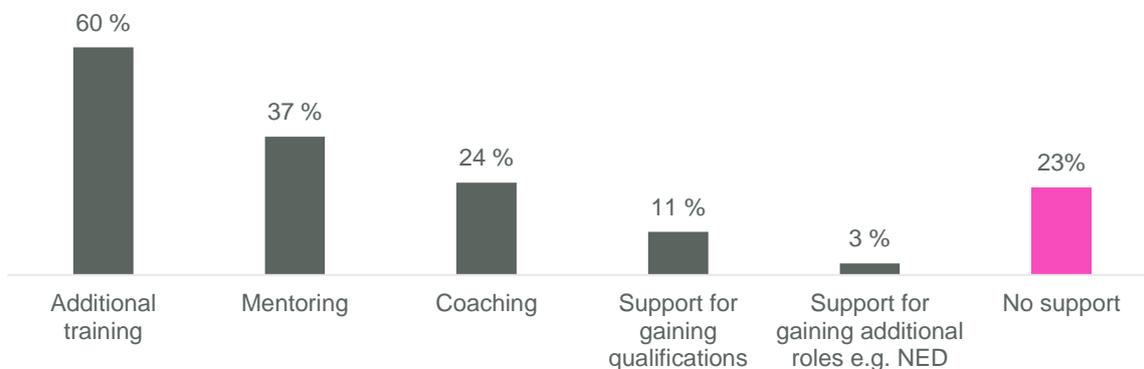
This is reflected in the current landscape of the Public Affairs workplace, with four in five women already being able to work from home (80%), followed by 66% who have flexible hours and 40% who have shared parental leave.

For those who have the ability to work from home, a third (36%) of women only do so in special circumstances, for example, if there's a home/child-related issue that requires them to stay at home.

"I would like to see more support for flexible working and better maternity leave"

Furthermore, there is still almost a quarter (23%) of women in Public Affairs who do not receive any support from their employers, whether it's additional training, mentoring, coaching, or support for gaining qualifications or roles.

Support women in PA receive from current company



The gender divide of interviewers has become more neutral in the past ten years

When interviewing for jobs, women in Public Affairs find there is a fairly even split between having more men or more women on a panel, or an even spread on the panel (more men 25%, more women 24%, even spread 26%) or not having a panel at all (25%). For those women with a tenure of 10 years or more, 30% find themselves being interviewed by panels with more men on them (30%) than panels with more women (17%), which may point to a gender disparity in more senior roles. More generally, throughout their careers, women in PA have disproportionately been interviewed more so by men (49%) than by women (22%).

In interviews, a third of women in PA are asked about their salary expectations (32%), while 19% are asked about their previous salary. Twice as many women in PA are comfortable talking about their salary expectations (64%) in an interview than are asked; similarly, almost two thirds (62%) are happy to discuss the company's gender balance. However, only a quarter (24%) of women feel comfortable asking about the maternity policy.

“I never wear my wedding ring as I am in my early 30s and I worry that the panel would have conscious or unconscious bias around me and have worries that I would go off on maternity leave”

When it comes to salary bands, 42% of women in Public were not given a salary band when last applying for a job. Interestingly, seven in ten (73%) of women are less likely to apply for a job that doesn't have salary bands, suggesting that higher transparency with regards to pay is more likely to generate interest in jobs within the industry.

Workplace policies in Public Affairs

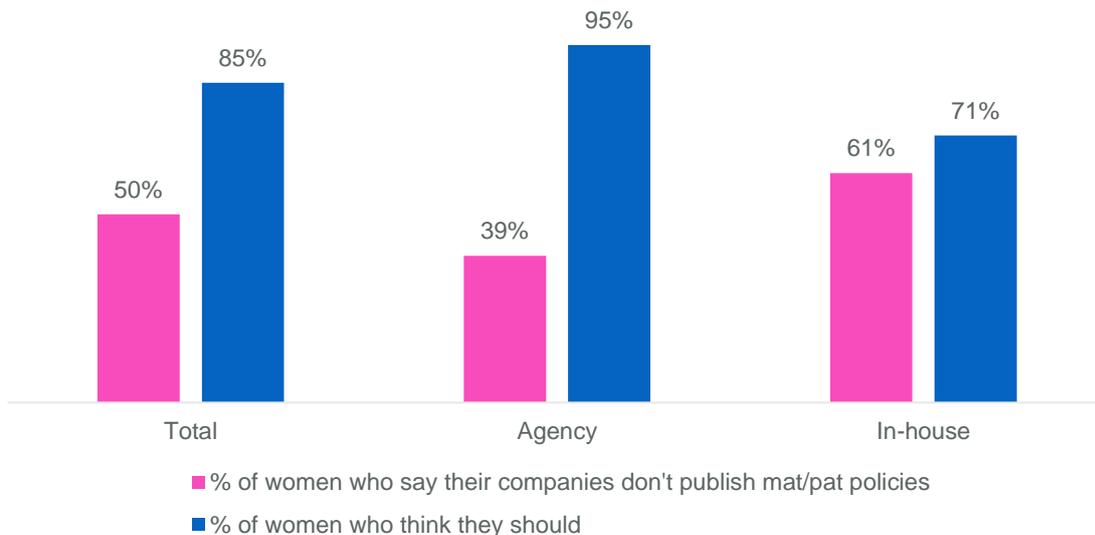
Nine in ten women in Public Affairs say both parents should be entitled to the same amount of parental/adoption leave – but only 1 in 2 see maternity and paternity policies published

A staggering nine in ten (93%) women working in Public Affairs agree that both parents should be entitled to the same amount of parental/adoption leave – however, only 50% of women see maternity and paternity policies published in their companies. Among those who don't see maternity/paternity policies published, 15% of women either think their company doesn't need to publish it or are unsure about it.

“Our maternity package is very weak and has deterred recruitment of strong female candidates”

Interestingly, there is a sizeable difference of policy publishing prevalence between women working in agencies and in-house, with only 39% of women working in agencies seeing policies published, in comparison to 61% of those working in-house. It's therefore unsurprising that women working in an agency feel more strongly about a need for this, with 95% of women working in agencies saying their companies should publish their policies, in comparison to 71% of those working in-house.

Companies that don't publish their maternity/paternity policies and the women who think they should



The prevalence of published maternity/paternity policies is also higher in larger businesses, with 65% of women working in businesses with 250+ members of staff seeing published policies, in comparison to 44% of those working in business with up to 50 members of staff.

“It is seen as a burden for women to go on maternity leave”

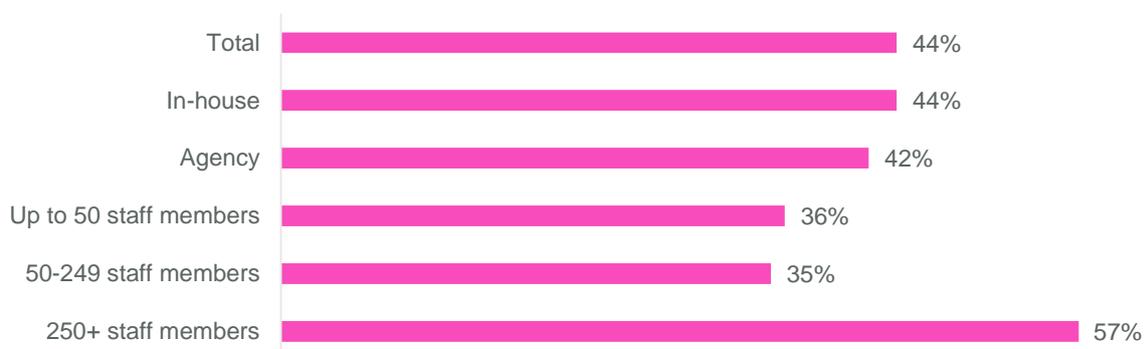
Six in ten women in Public Affairs think their company is not transparent on policies on pay and progression

Six in ten (60%) women working in Public Affairs feel their company isn't transparent when it comes to policies on pay and progression – a statistic that rises to 68% among women who work in agencies, in comparison to 51% among those working in-house. This is unsurprising, considering only 43% of women say their company publishes their gender pay gap. Even more so, only 86% of women working in companies with 250+ staff members see the gender pay gap published, despite the fact that companies of that size are required by law to publish it.

What's more, 44% of women believe that the pay differs for men and women at their level in their company, and that is true for both women working in an agency (at 42%) and those working in-house (44%). There is also a staggering difference between those working in small and large companies, with 36% of women working in companies of up to 50 staff members saying the pay differs, in comparison to 57% of those working in companies with 250+ members of staff.

Among those whose companies publish their gender pay gap, 71% don't believe or are unsure if that's helped with conversations around pay. Meanwhile, one in five (21%) women whose company doesn't publish its gender pay gap don't want them to, or are unsure if it's necessary.

Women who believe pay differs for men and women in their company



The industry & women's progression

Half of women in Public Affairs believe the industry is average at helping women progress

Just under half (48%) of women working in Public Affairs have stated that they believe the industry is average at helping women to progress within the industry. Only one in five (21%) believe the industry to be good or excellent, while 17% believe it to be poor or very poor.

“It's still a very 'macho' industry, which seems to require out of hours networking and ego”

It's therefore unsurprising that 48% of women working in Public Affairs have experienced some sort of discrimination whilst being in the industry, with 32% of women having been discriminated based on their gender. Furthermore, 27% of women feel they have been discriminated against due to their age.

“Walking into a room, the first thing you need to do is establish your authority for about 5-10 minutes before anyone takes you seriously”

Sadly, a quarter (27%) of women in Public Affairs report that they have experienced sexual harassment in the industry, with 30% rating the industry as poor at protecting and helping women deal with sexual harassment – almost eight times as many women as those who believe the industry to be good at it (4%).

“Westminster is a small world. And public affairs even smaller. There is still a lot of concern that if you speak out against a man who has acted inappropriately (or worse) you will be the one labelled as difficult”

Women in Public Affairs (WiPA)

Four in five women find women's networks helpful

Four in five women in PA (82%) find women's networks somewhat or very helpful. When looking specifically at the WiPA events and resources the network provides, we can see that training events are found the most valuable, followed closely by networking drinks. Women under the age of 35 place more value on WiPA events and resources, with only 8% saying they find none of the options valuable, whilst 18% of over 35-year olds said they don't find any of the events/resources valuable.

Most valuable resource/event



“The WiPA network has been great for me developing my network and good friendships with women across the industry. The people I have met are probably people I wouldn't have crossed paths with as we work in different sectors / parts of the profession, but I am really grateful that I did!”

Demographic makeup of the Census

Who took part in the survey?

77% aged 18-34

78% live in London

84% are White

83% have no dependants or caring responsibilities

23% identify as being part of a minority group (disability, LGBTQ+, ethnic minority, disadvantaged socio-economic background, religious minority, other)

50% work in-house

48% work in an agency

2% work freelance

6 years average tenure

99% have an undergraduate degree or above

