

Women in Public Affairs

Public Affairs Census



Key findings

9 December 2020

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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 29th September - 20th November 2020 via an online survey with a sample of 144 women who work in the Public Affairs industry. The survey was publicised online via the WiPA website and social media channels.

Covid-19's impact on women in PA

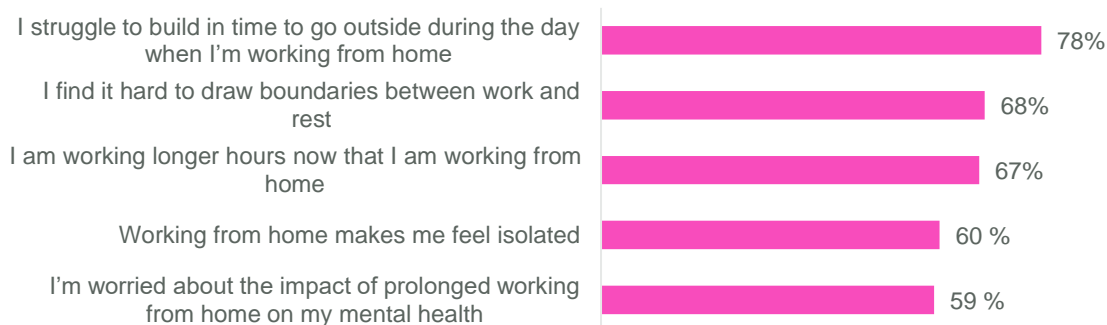
There's no doubt 2020 has been a momentous year. With a pandemic locking us in our homes and the Black Lives Matter movement shining a light on systemic racism, this has been the year for taking a good look at what works and what requires much, much more improvement.

Major shift to working from home in the industry has resulted in worsened mental health for many

Looking at how Covid-19 has changed life for women in Public Affairs, a staggering statistic emerges: one way or another, 100% of the women we surveyed have been working either entirely or partly from home since March. More than a fifth (22%) have experienced major changes in their employment situation or status during this time, such as starting a new job, being put on furlough or having had their hours cut.

And while there's been an enormous shift to working from home, it hasn't always been positive. Two thirds (65%) of the women we surveyed said their mental health has been negatively impacted by Covid-19. Eight in ten (78%) have struggled to build in time to go outside, followed by seven in ten who have found it hard to draw boundaries between work and rest (68%) and working longer hours (67%).

Impact of working from home due to the Coronavirus pandemic



"I have seen many colleagues suffer greatly during COVID-19 with having to balance the parenting act and working from home. It's worse for women who rely on childcare to continue being able to work"

And while it's been a difficult time for many, women in Public Affairs recognise that most organisations have worked hard to try and support their employees. Eight in ten (77%) have told us that they think their organisation has responded well to the issues posed by Coronavirus, with two thirds saying that management have made decisions based on what's best for the employees (63%) and been transparent and honest about it (64%).

Black Lives Matter and Public Affairs

In addition to the Coronavirus, the Black Lives Matter movement has also shaken up the industry, with a diverse and inclusive culture becoming increasingly important to women who work in Public Affairs. However, there is still a long way for the industry to go.

Three quarters have witnessed racial discrimination in the industry

Shockingly, three quarters (74%) of women in Public Affairs whom we surveyed say they have witnessed racial discrimination in the workplace, with a third (35%) witnessing it at least once a month. To add insult to injury, the Public Affairs sector as a whole is not perceived to have dealt with this problem well, with 51% saying it is poor at protecting people from racism, and only 4% saying it does a good job.

On a more positive note, 73% of women tell us that their organisation has taken action to support the Black Lives Matter movement and 58% are satisfied with their employers' response. More than half (52%) say their employer has released an internal statement of support and another 52% have introduced new diversity and inclusion initiatives.

52% released an internal statement of support

52% introduced new diversity and inclusion initiatives

42% reviewed internal structures and policies on diversity and inclusion

39% shared a list of educational resources on anti-racism

37% released an external statement of support

12% donated to a charity tackling racism and discrimination

However, the industry's collective response has been received much less positively, with only 8% of women in Public Affairs satisfied with the industry's response, citing a lack of real determination or change within the industry.

Looking for a job in Public Affairs

Nine in ten women in Public Affairs look for roles which have flexible working policies

Nine in ten (90%) women in Public Affairs are looking for roles which offer flexible working hours, followed by an ability to work from home (80%) and a pension contribution (69%). An active diversity and inclusive culture is becoming increasingly important to women in Public Affairs, with 61% selecting it as an important policy they look for in a job, compared to 46% in 2019.

TOP FOUR ATTRACTIVE WORKPLACE POLICIES

1. Flexible working hours	90%
2. Ability to work from home	80%
3. Pension contribution	69%
4. Diverse & inclusive culture	61%

“The entire culture needs in the industry to be flipped on its head. We need an inclusive culture to start to be manifested and organisations to take meaningful steps to improve diversity”

While there is a gender balance on interviewing panels, nine in ten do not include a person of colour

When interviewing for jobs, 80% of women in Public Affairs are interviewed by a panel. Of those, most 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 30%, more women 32%, even spread 37%) .

However, women who have been interviewed by a panel report that they rarely see a person of colour on the panel, with a whopping 90% saying there wasn't a single person of colour in their interview.

In interviews, 56% of women in PA are comfortable talking about their salary expectations; similarly, 52% are happy to discuss the company's gender balance. However, only one in five (19%) women feel comfortable asking about the maternity policy.

“There's no way I would have taken my last job if I had known it was statutory minimum maternity pay - that was a sign that the organisation would then be very hostile to recognising the demands of a young family once I returned to work, e.g. regular 6pm meetings and evening events at very short notice”

When it comes to salary bands, 41% of women in Public Affairs were not given a salary band when last applying for a job, rising to 65% of women working in PA agencies. Interestingly, more than eight in ten (84%) 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

A quarter of women in Public Affairs do not receive any support from their employer

Looking at the current landscape of the Public Affairs workplace, there is still more than a quarter (28%) 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



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

Seven in ten (69%) 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 80% among women who work in agencies, in comparison to 64% among those working in-house. This is unsurprising, considering only 32% of women say their company publishes their gender pay gap. Even more so, only 59% of women working in companies with 250+ staff members see the gender pay gap published, with the Government having suspended the requirement for employers with 250+ employees to publish their gender pay gap this year due to the pandemic.

What's more, 41% 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 40%) and those working in-house (45%). There is a small difference between those working in small and large companies, with 38% of women working in companies of up to 49 staff members saying the pay differs, in comparison to 49% of those working in companies with 250+ members of staff.

% of women in Public Affairs who think that pay differs for men and women at their level in the company

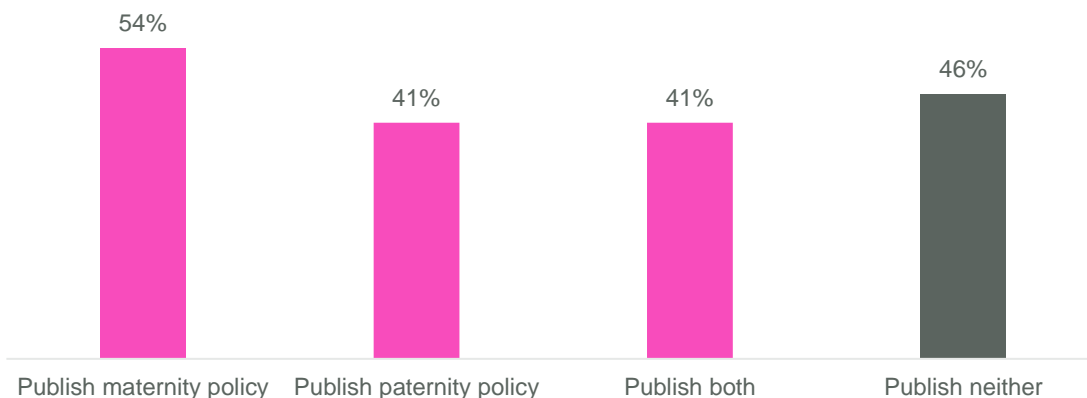


Only two fifths of companies publish both maternity and paternity leave policies

A staggering nine in ten (92%) women working in Public Affairs agree that both parents should be entitled to the same amount of parental/adoption leave – however, only 41% of women work in companies that publish both maternity and paternity policies. Interestingly, there is a sizeable difference of policy publishing prevalence between women working in agencies and in-house, with only 44% of women working in agencies seeing policies published, in comparison to 64% of those working in-house.

“I think the lack of transparency could create uncertainty for women hoping to start a family but wanting to do well in their career at the same time”

% of women in Public Affairs whose companies publish their maternity/paternity policies



The industry & women's progression

A quarter of women in Public Affairs believe the industry is poor at helping women progress

Just under half (47%) 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 (19%) believe the industry to be good or excellent, while 24% believe it to be poor or very poor.

“There is a boys club mentality in the senior ranks of the company and it feels really exclusive”

It's therefore unsurprising that 78% of women working in Public Affairs have experienced gender discrimination, bias, or sexist remarks during their years in the industry. The most common discriminatory behaviours include 'mansplaining' (i.e. the explanation of something by a man in a condescending or patronising manner, 51%), 'bropropriating', (i.e. a man taking credit for a woman's idea, 50%) and 'maninterrupting' (i.e. a man interrupting a woman whilst she is speaking, without it being necessarily relevant, 49%).

Experience of other types of discrimination is common for women in PA, with 38% of women feeling they have been discriminated against due to their age, 15% due to their socio-economic class, 15% due to their sexuality and 6% due to their race.

“[They] talk a lot about supporting women in the workplace but the reality is very different – women are held to different standards than men”

Sadly, a third (34%) of women in Public Affairs report that they have experienced sexual harassment in the industry, with 93% saying the industry is not good at protecting and helping women deal with sexual harassment.

Women in Public Affairs (WiPA)

Four in five women find women's networks helpful

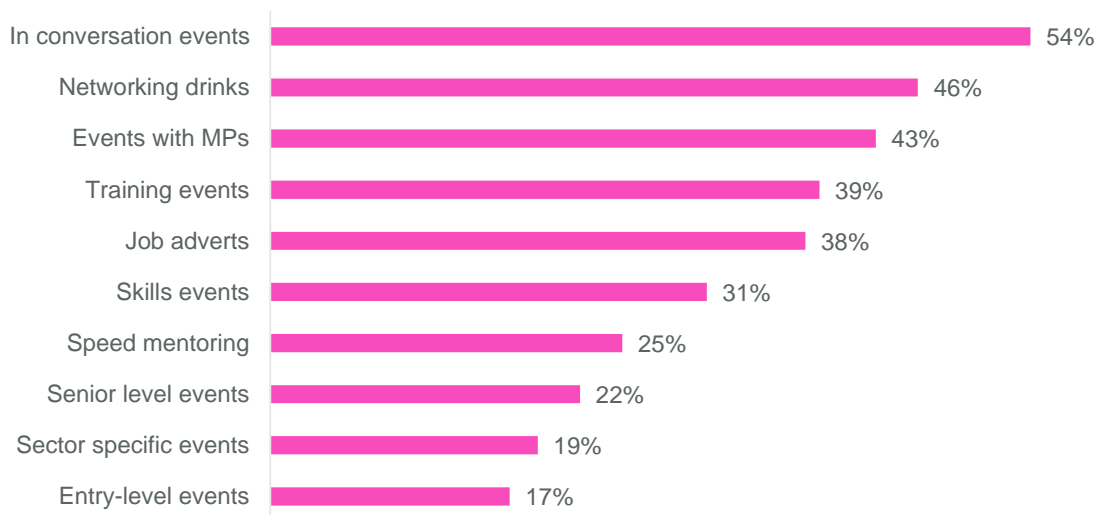
Four in five women in PA (88%) find women's networks somewhat or very helpful, particularly highlighting networking opportunities, the chance to learn from others, training & mentorship as well as a feeling of solidarity and camaraderie.

For those who don't find them as helpful, some simply said they lack the time to get involved, while others mention the events being focused on areas they didn't relate to, such as early career, maternity leave etc.

When looking specifically at the WiPA events and resources the network provides, we can see that in-conversation events and networking drinks are most valuable, followed closely by events with MPs.

Three in five (60%) have found WiPA's virtual events helpful during the coronavirus pandemic, while 74% have found WiPA's newsletters helpful.

Pre-Coronavirus WiPA events respondents found most valuable



Demographic makeup of the Census

Who took part in the survey?

70% aged 18-34

86% live in London

91% are White

79% have no dependants or caring responsibilities

26% identify as being part of a minority group (disability, LGBTQ+, ethnic minority, disadvantaged socio-economic background, religious minority, other)

58% work in-house

38% work in an agency

3% work freelance

7 years average tenure

97% have an undergraduate degree or above

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