

strategy&

Part of the PwC network

Women in Work 2021

**The impact of
COVID-19 on
women in work**

March 2021



COVID-19 is reversing the OECD's progress towards female economic empowerment

International Women's Day 2021 is an opportunity for everyone to celebrate the successes that women have achieved in the workplace. This year, Iceland and Sweden once again take the top two places on the Women in Work Index, with New Zealand coming in third. The United Kingdom (UK) ranks 16th out of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries.

But the pace of improvement across the OECD remains slow – and COVID-19 threatens to reverse the important gains that have been made over the last decade, as the damage from the pandemic and unintended fallout from government response and recovery policies is disproportionately being felt by women.¹

More women than men are employed in the sectors hardest hit by COVID-19; women's job losses outpaced men's in 2020 across the OECD.² And with job retention schemes still masking the full effects of the economic fallout on employment, it's likely that the worst is still to come for women.

COVID-19 has also highlighted pre-existing gender inequalities in society. It has forced individuals and governments to see the value of the unequal burden of unpaid care work that women undertake across the world, giving family members (particularly men) more time to participate in labour markets and education. This disproportionate burden of care on women has increased even further during COVID-19, leading some women to reduce their participation in the labour force, with many more considering leaving jobs and/or reducing their hours if things don't get easier.³

For nine years, our Women in Work Index has reported progress towards gender parity in the workplace. But we expect to see this trend reverse, with the value of the Index falling back to 2017 levels by 2021.

Even more concerning is that the damage could be lasting, or even permanent. Without direct action by governments, businesses and society to address the impact of the pandemic on women, or to tackle pre-existing gender inequalities in care,

more women will leave the workforce permanently, dampening progress towards gender equality in work over the long term, and stunting economic growth.

If the OECD is to completely recover from the damage done by COVID-19 to women in work – even by 2030 – our scenario analysis shows progress towards gender equality needs to be twice its historical rate.

There is a huge prize at stake from accelerated progress: our analysis finds that increasing women's employment rates across the OECD (to match those of Sweden – a consistent top performer) could boost Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by US\$6 trillion per annum, while closing the gender pay gap could boost female earnings across the OECD by US\$2 trillion per annum.

So, in the spirit of International Women's Day 2021, we encourage everyone around the world to #ChooseToChallenge gender norms and government policy initiatives to support economic recovery from the pandemic.

From challenge comes change, and collectively we can create a more inclusive world.

“

If the OECD is to completely recover from COVID-19 by 2030, progress towards gender equality needs to be twice its historical rate.



Larice Stielow
Senior Economist, Strategy& UK
l.stielow@pwc.com



Tara Shrestha Carney
Economist, Strategy& UK
tara.shrestha.x.carney@pwc.com



Divya Sridhar
Economist, Strategy& UK
divya.x.sridhar@pwc.com



Oliver Forsyth
Economist, Strategy& UK
oliver.forsyth@pwc.com

Since 2011, OECD countries have consistently made gains towards women's economic empowerment – but considerable progress is still needed to achieve gender parity in the workplace

In the ninth update of the Women in Work Index, we provide our assessment of women's economic empowerment in 2019 across 33 OECD countries. The Index is a weighted average of five indicators that reflect women's participation in the labour market and equality in the workplace.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Female labour force participation rate (proportion of working age women in the labour force)	Participation rate gap (percentage point difference in female and male participation rates)	Gender pay gap (percentage point difference in median level of income for females and males)	Female full-time rate (share of female employees in full-time employment)	Female unemployment rate (share of female workforce who are unemployed)
2011 (first edition of Women in Work)	66% compared to 79% for men	13%	16%	74% compared to 91% for men	8% compared to 8% for men
2019 (current edition of Women in Work)	70% compared to 81% for men	10%	15%	76% compared to 91% for men	6% compared to 5% for men
Given the progress made by the OECD over the past nine years against each of our five indicators, it would take at least...*	22 years For women's participation rate in the labour force to catch up to men's current participation rate.	24 years to finally close the participation rate gap.	112 years to close the gender pay gap.	60 years for the share of female employees in full-time employment to be equal to the current share of male employees.	4 years for the female unemployment rate to fall to men's current unemployment rate.

Source: Strategy& analysis, see full report for complete list of data sources.

* Assumes that each indicator continues to grow at the same linear growth rate as the nine-year historic average from 2010-2019. Growth in the Index has slowed slightly since 2017. If this trend continues, these estimates represent a 'best case scenario' and it may take much longer for women to reach a state of gender parity.

Between 2018 and 2019, gains were mainly driven by increasing female participation rates and falling female unemployment rates

Across our 33 OECD countries, the top and bottom performers on the Index remain relatively consistent with previous years, with Iceland retaining top place for the eighth year in a row.



The top two performing countries – Iceland and Sweden – remain the same as in 2018, with New Zealand this year moving up one spot into third place.

New Zealand's increase in ranking was driven by improvements across all five labour market indicators, most notably a closing of its gender pay gap and an increase in its share of full-time female employees by more than one percentage point each.



Greece (current rank #30) increased its Index score the most, due to improvements across all labour market indicators except its share of full-time female employees.



Israel (current rank #20) experienced the second largest increase in its Index score, with its gender pay gap narrowing the most out of OECD countries.



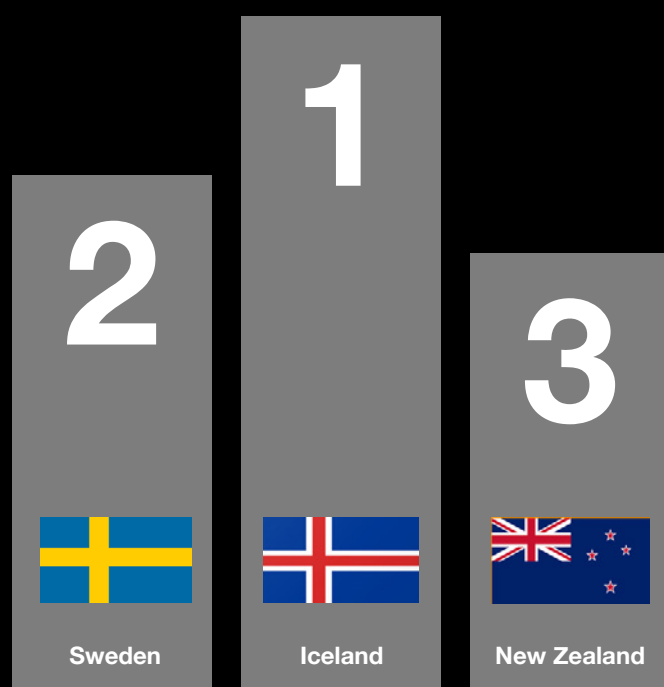
Ireland (current rank #14) recorded the largest improvement in its ranking on the Index, rising by four places from 18th to 14th. Progress was driven mainly by its narrowing gender pay gap and a fall in its female unemployment rate.



Portugal (current rank #9) recorded the largest decrease in its Index score due to a significant widening of its gender pay gap. It also experienced a fall in its share of full-time female employees.



Hungary (current rank #18) experienced the largest decline in its Index ranking. Its position fell by five places from 13th to 18th, due to a widening of both its gender pay gap and participation rate gap.



Continued progress towards gender parity could bring significant long-term economic gains for the OECD

Boost to OECD GDP
from increasing female
employment rates to
match Sweden's

US\$6tn
per annum*

Boost to OECD
female earnings
from closing the
gender pay gap

US\$2tn
per annum*

* Reported here are the gross economic gains per annum in nominal terms. See full report for more detail.



The UK made greater progress towards women's economic empowerment than the OECD average in 2019, with growth across all five indicators

UK rank: #16

Slow and steady

The UK was ranked 16th on the Index in 2019 against OECD countries, and second across the G7. It increased its Index score from 64.8 in 2018 to 66.5 in 2019, growing at twice the rate of the OECD average.

The low proportion of female employees in full-time employment in the UK is holding back progress

The UK continues to perform strongly on female labour force participation, scoring 12th in the OECD.

It lags behind other countries in its share of female employees in full-time employment. In 2019, only 64% of women in work were in full time employment, compared to 89% for men.

At current growth rates, it could still take 32 years for the UK female full-time rate to equal the current OECD average.*

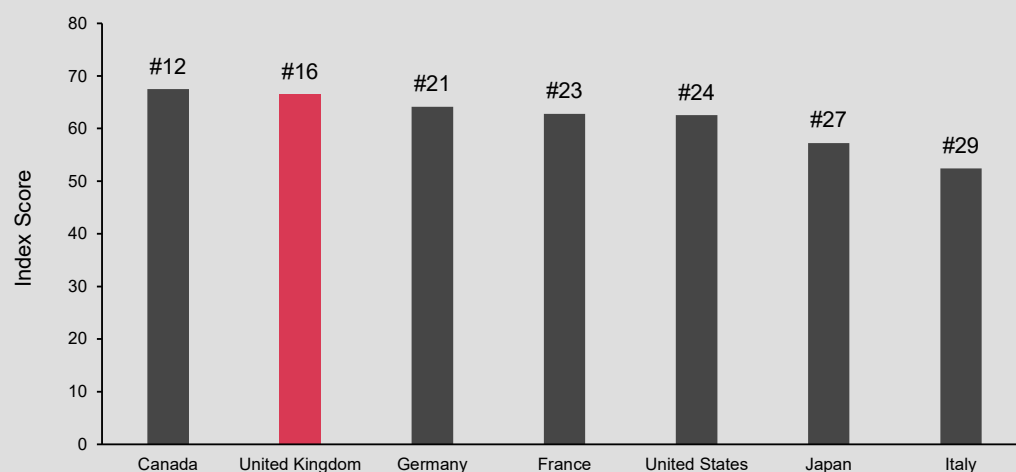
There are large economic benefits to increasing the number of women in work. We estimate the UK could gain:

£48bn per annum
840,000 jobs

from increasing female labour force participation rates to match those of the South West – a consistent top regional performer for female participation in the UK Index.**

Index score comparison: UK against G7 Countries (2019)

Ranks show the country's index performance within the OECD



Source: Strategy& analysis, see full report for complete list of data sources.

* Assumes the female full-time rate continues to grow at the same linear growth rate as the eight year historic average from 2011-2019. Reported here is the number of years for the UK to achieve the current OECD average female full-time employment rate.

** Reported here is the increase in total jobs in the UK, combining both full-time and part-time roles. We calculate the number of new full-time equivalent (FTE) roles from increasing female participation to be 680,000, reflecting the lower output of part-time roles. See the full report for more detail.

Progress was not spread evenly across UK nations and regions, and regional inequalities increased for the first time

Slow progress for low-performing regions from 2018 to 2019

All nations and regions except Wales showed progress in their Index score between 2018 and 2019, with scores increasing by 2.4 points on average across the UK. However, this growth was not spread equally across nations and regions, with lower growth seen in regions at the bottom of the Index rankings. This reverses the trend of regional scores slowly converging, which was evident from 2016 to 2018.

The North West, North East, West Midlands, and Yorkshire and the Humber scored lower than the UK average. These regions all struggled with higher than average female unemployment, averaging 4.4% compared to the UK average of 3.7%.

These results show the importance of putting women's economic empowerment at the heart of efforts to reduce regional economic and social disparities, and to 'level up' the UK economy.

Breaking the trend: the East Midlands

The East Midlands has shown the largest absolute and relative improvement in its Index score from 2018 to 2019, with the region's score increasing 5.9 points and its rank improving from ninth to fifth place. This was in contrast to much slower Index growth in surrounding regions, such as the North West, West Midlands, and Yorkshire and the Humber, where scores increased on average by a single point.

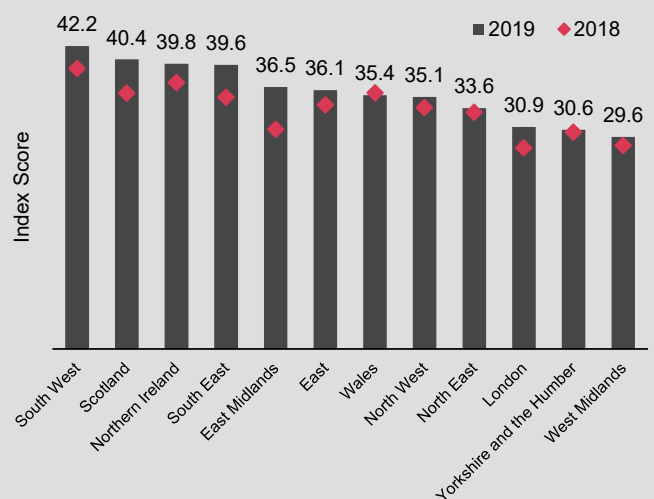
Progress in the East Midlands was driven by improvements across every indicator, with the region most notably seeing a 3.5% increase in the proportion of women in the labour force and a 13% fall in the female unemployment rate.

Our reigning champion: the South West

The South West retains first place for the second year in a row in the 2019 Women in Work Index, with Scotland in second place, and Northern Ireland in third. The South West's score increased 3.1 points in 2019, widening the gap between first and last place on the Index to 12.6 points (from 11.1 in 2018), showing the increase in regional inequalities across the UK.

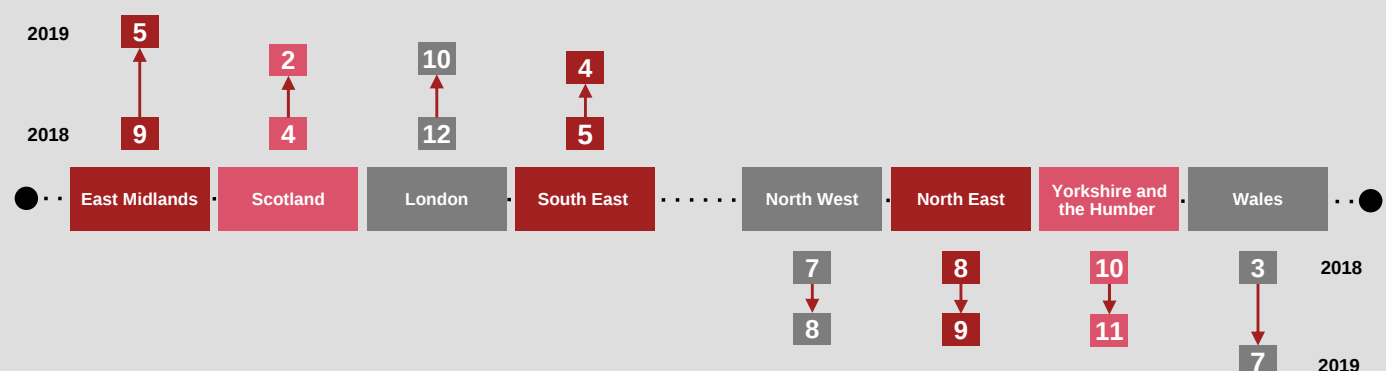
The South West continues to have the highest female labour force participation rate in the country at 79%, and has improved on some previous weaknesses – for example, the gender pay gap fell on average 5.7% each year from 2017 to 2019. The region still has the lowest female full time employment rate in the UK (56%) and will need to address this to achieve continued progress.

Women in Work Regional Index scores, 2019 and 2018



Source: Strategy& analysis, see full report for complete list of data sources.

Biggest movers in the Women in Work Index ranking between 2018 and 2019



Strategy& analysis, see full report for complete list of data sources.

Women's jobs are being hit hardest by COVID-19

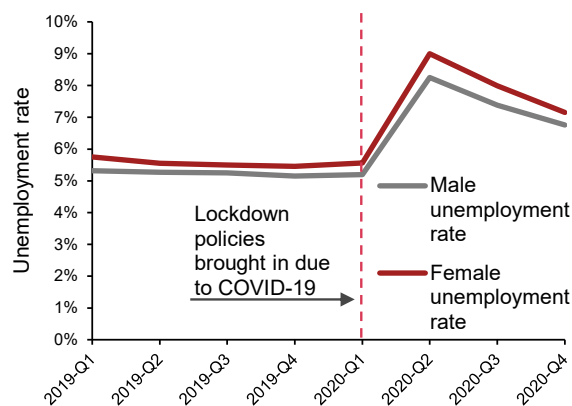
COVID-19 is having a huge impact on labour markets around the globe. The closing of whole sections of the economy has brought with it job losses for both women and men. Between 2019 and 2020, the annual OECD unemployment rate is estimated by the OECD to have increased by 1.7 percentage points for women (from 5.7% in 2019 to 7.4% in 2020), and 1.5 percentage points for men.

In the US, OECD data shows the female unemployment rate increased sharply from 4.4% in March 2020 to a high of 16.1% in April 2020. It ended the year in December 2020 at 6.7%, 3 percentage points higher than in December 2019. The male unemployment rate also increased, but showed a smaller increase compared to the female rate.

In some countries, like the UK, the pandemic's full impact on jobs is yet to be seen, as government job retention schemes have allowed businesses to retain workers despite shocks to demand. However, data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on the number of redundancies each quarter shows a large increase between the second and third quarter of 2020. UK data from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) suggests that more women's jobs are at risk than men's. Between July and October 2020, a total of 15.3 million jobs were furloughed in the UK. Out of those for which gender was known, 52% were women's jobs, despite women only making up 48% of the workforce.

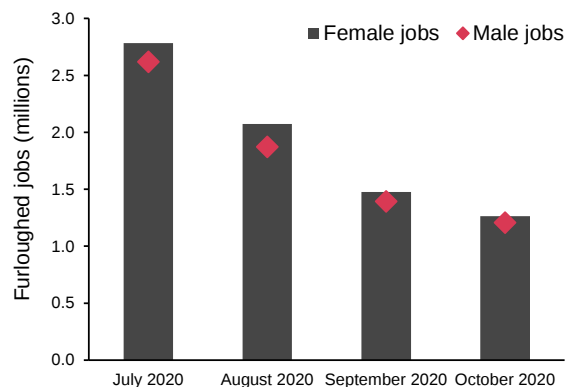


Quarterly unemployment rate across the OECD, by gender



Source: Strategy& analysis, OECD, see full report for complete list of data sources.

Number of furloughed jobs in the UK, by gender



Source: Strategy& analysis, HMRC CJRS, see full report for complete list of data sources.

The pandemic is disproportionately hurting sectors with more female employment and amplifying gender inequalities in care

The nature of the pandemic and the gendered distribution of workers across industries has placed women's jobs at higher risk than men's.

COVID-19 is different to previous economic and financial recessions, in that it has hit faster and harder those who are the most vulnerable in society. People working in lower paid, contact-intensive sectors have been impacted the most by the large-scale closure of businesses and sections of the economy.

The clustering of women in sectors facing maximum disruption has resulted in a higher risk of job loss for women than men. Globally, 40% of all employed women (nearly 510 million women) are employed in 'hard-hit' sectors, compared to 37% of employed men.^{4*}

If current UK furlough data is indicative of future unemployment trends, a larger number of women will face the risk of job loss than men once support schemes end.⁵ In the UK, female-dominated industries are bearing the brunt of lockdown restrictions. The most impacted sectors include *accommodation and food services and arts, entertainment and recreation*. In October 2020, for example, the *accommodation and food services industry* recorded both the highest number of furloughed jobs (more than 600,000) and the highest share of furloughed jobs within a sector (40%) – women make up 55% of jobs in this sector.⁶

COVID-19 has exacerbated the already unequal burden of unpaid care and domestic work shouldered by women. This could force more women out of the workforce, reversing progress towards gender equality, and stunting economic growth.

Even before the pandemic, women on average spent 6 more hours than men on unpaid child care every week. During COVID-19, women have taken on a greater share of the increased burden. **Women now spend 7.7 more hours per week on childcare than men. This 'second shift', adding up to 31.5 hours per week, equates to almost an extra full-time job.**⁷

The impact of this higher care burden has already reduced women's contribution to the economy. Working mothers in the UK, for example, experienced a 22% fall in paid work hours per day compared to a 16% fall for fathers between February and May 2020.⁸

The longer this higher burden on women lasts, the more women are likely to leave (or reduce time spent in) the labour market permanently. A survey of women working in corporate jobs in the US showed that **more than a quarter of women are considering permanently reducing the amount of time they allocate to their careers or leaving the labour market for good after COVID-19.**⁹ This would result in a permanent fall in the female labour force participation rate, and a widening of the participation rate gap. An outflow of women from the corporate sector could also increase the gender pay gap.

* The top 5 'hard hit' sectors according to the ILO are accommodation and food services, real estate, business and administrative activities, manufacturing and wholesale/retail trade. The ILO uses real-time data on output and labour intensity by sector and finds that these are the 5 sectors in which workers have faced the highest risk of job loss and largest fall in working hours globally since the pandemic began.

This is reversing the OECD's progress towards gender parity in the workplace

The full impact of COVID-19 on women in work has not yet been realised. We estimate the Index will fall in 2020 and further in 2021 – setting back progress for women in work to 2017.

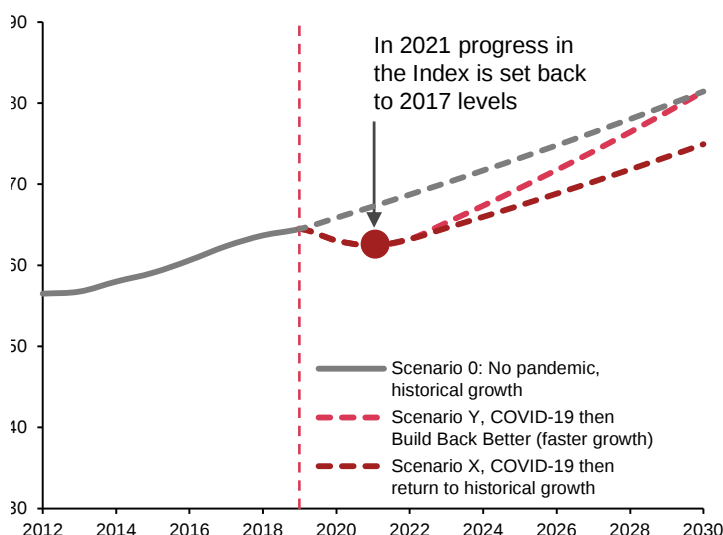
This is our ninth year reporting the progress of the OECD against the Women in Work Index. Up until 2019, OECD countries made progress towards gender parity each year. We estimate that this trend will be reversed in 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19 on labour markets, and the disproportionate effects felt by women.

Applying OECD forecasts of the unemployment rate and labour force size (to 2022) to the Index results for 2019 shows the potential impact on the Index in 2020-22. The Index is estimated to fall 2.1 points between 2019 and 2021, falling below the 2017 score of 62.4. In 2022 the Index begins to recover as labour markets rebound.

If the OECD is to fully recover from COVID-19's predicted damage by 2030, progress towards gender parity (as measured by the Index) needs to be double its historical rate.

- In **Scenario 0**: a scenario where COVID-19 did not happen, we assume the Women in Work Index continues to grow at a rate similar to its historical progress from 2019. In this scenario, the OECD would score 81.4 on the Index by 2030.*
- In **Scenario X** we assume after a fall in the Index due to COVID-19, the Women in Work Index returns to its historical growth rate from 2022 as labour markets recover. **The Index returns to its 2019 value by 2023, but it never reaches its pre-pandemic growth path. By 2030, the OECD is still four years behind where it would have been if COVID-19 did not happen.****
- **Scenario Y** shows that if the OECD is to return to its pre-pandemic growth path by 2030, it would need to almost double its historical growth rate as measured by the Index from 2022. That is, **to undo the damage caused by COVID-19 to the Women in Work Index by 2030, progress towards gender equality needs to be twice as fast as it was between 2011 and 2019.**

Estimated Women in Work Index for 2020-30



Source: Strategy& analysis using OECD labour market forecasts, see full report for complete list of data source.

* This scenario represents one possible future outcome for the Index in a world without COVID-19. We have used the 5-year growth rate for our analysis to support projection over a longer term time horizon. Growth in the Index has slowed slightly since 2017, so using a shorter time horizon to calculate the projected growth rate would reduce the speed of progress.

** This does not represent a 'worst case scenario'. There are scenarios where future progress for women is slower and does not bounce back to historical growth levels, even if overall economic recovery is as expected. This could happen for example, if women permanently leave the labour force due to permanent behavioural shifts brought about by the crisis, such as a return to greater unpaid care and domestic duties or a difficulty regaining lost employment at previous levels of pay/experience. In this case, progress could be much slower, and may never recover to pre-COVID-19 rates.

Policy responses to support economic recovery from COVID-19 need to specifically address the impacts of the pandemic on women

Governments are not taking account of the disproportionate effects of COVID-19 on women in responding to the pandemic.

The UN's Gender Response Tracker found that only 10% of all measures put in place globally are policies specifically designed to provide economic support to women.¹⁰

The lack of a gender-sensitive response to the pandemic has led to policies that ignore, and in some cases exacerbate, existing labour market and social inequalities such as the higher proportion of women in vulnerable and precarious work, and the higher burden of unpaid care work carried out by women.¹¹ Poorly designed policies lead to more women exiting the labour force, in some cases permanently – reducing women's economic security, reversing progress towards gender equality, and slowing overall economic growth.

In the UK, the Women and Equalities Committee launched a report in February 2021 titled *Unequal impact? Coronavirus and the gendered economic impact*, examining the gendered effects of the pandemic and the UK government policy response.¹² The report found that in designing job support schemes at pace, inequalities faced by women were overlooked, including in relation to employment, welfare, childcare and pregnancy, and maternity. The Committee made over 20 recommendations to the UK Parliament in an effort to support gender inclusive policy design. Key findings of the report included:

- Equality Impact Assessments of job support schemes and broader policy measures are needed to better protect women, who are already at a disadvantage in the labour market.
- Government investment plans are heavily gendered in nature, skewed towards male-dominated sectors, which could create further unequal outcomes by exacerbating existing inequalities.
- Research is needed into the gendered impact of eligibility requirements for benefits and social security, and for statutory sick pay – given women are less likely to qualify for often much needed support, in part due to caring responsibilities.¹³
- Targeted job search support should be provided for women with caring responsibilities to maintain mothers' attachment to the labour market and increase opportunities to retrain for jobs in viable sectors.
- A strategy should be developed to ensure adequate financial support for the childcare sector.
- Gender pay gap reporting for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 financial years should be urgently reinstated, and the feasibility of reporting on parental leave policies should be explored.

Based on our analysis using the Women in Work Index, we believe immediate action is needed to undo the damage from COVID-19 to women's economic empowerment.

Governments and businesses need to work together for faster progress towards gender equality in work, and a sustainable and inclusive post-COVID economic recovery. This can be achieved by:

1. **Actively assessing the gender equality impacts of all policies.** Governments should undertake gender budgeting and equality impact assessments to ensure policies better protect women and other marginalised groups in the labour market, and do not put them at a greater disadvantage. This will help inform fairer and more effective policy responses to the recovery from COVID-19 and future crises.
2. **Empowering women to participate in the labour force by addressing underlying gender inequalities in society around unpaid care and domestic work.** This will create the enabling environment necessary for women **and especially mothers**, to participate optimally in the labour market. Governments, policymakers and businesses should focus on recognising the enormous value of the unpaid care work done by women, and on taking action to reduce women's burden of unpaid care through policies such as shared paid parental leave, affordable access to childcare, and flexible working options for employees.
3. **Taking action to stop the pandemic from widening already significant gender pay gaps**, through mandating gender pay gap reporting, compensating women's and men's work equally across (as well as within) industries, and implementing effective gender action plans in the workplace to support and empower the progression and promotion of women.
4. **Providing dedicated support for female business initiatives and future female employment in high growth sectors of the economy.** If the recovery from COVID-19 is to meaningfully support and empower women in the labour market, they need to be able to access productive, fulfilling, sustainable, and well paid jobs. These opportunities exist in high growth sectors. Governments, policymakers, and businesses therefore need to focus on **retraining and upskilling women to access jobs in growth areas** such as digital, AI, renewable energy and the Green Economy. **Financial support schemes for female entrepreneurs and female-led start-ups** in these sectors will also provide large gains to women's economic empowerment and increase the productivity of the economy. This will help establish the necessary conditions for progress towards gender parity in the longer term.

Endnotes

- 1 ILO. (2020). The COVID-19 response: Getting gender equality right for a better future for women at work. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_744374.pdf; UN Women. (2020). COVID-19 and its economic toll on women: The story behind the numbers. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/9/feature-covid-19-economic-impacts-on-women>; McKinsey & Company. (2020). COVID-19 and gender equality: Countering the regressive effects. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/covid-19-and-gender-equality-countering-the-regressive-effects>
- 2 ILO. (2020). The COVID-19 response: Getting gender equality right for a better future for women at work. https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/WCMS_744685/lang--en/index.htm
- 3 Survey data from the UK and the US show that the increased care burden during COVID-19 has led to a larger share of women reducing their hours or leaving the workforce compared to men. See IFS. (2020). Parents, especially mothers, paying heavy price for lockdown. <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14861>; Econofact. (2020). The importance of childcare in reopening the economy. <https://econofact.org/the-importance-of-childcare-in-reopening-the-economy>. Ipsos survey data from 16 countries conducted for UN Women shows the increase in hours spent on childcare for women and men during COVID-19. See UN Women. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the care burden, but by how much?. <https://data.unwomen.org/features/covid-19-pandemic-has-increased-care-burden-how-much-0>
- 4 ILO. (2020). ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Fifth edition. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_749399.pdf
- 5 UK furlough data shows a larger number of women being furloughed each month between July and October 2020 than men. See HMRC (2020). Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme statistics: December 2020. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-december-2020/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-december-2020>
- 6 Strategy& analysis, HMRC Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme statistics; ILO Short-term labour force statistics
- 7 Ipsos survey data from 16 countries conducted for UN Women shows the increase in hours spent on childcare for women and men during COVID-19. See UN Women. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the care burden, but by how much?. <https://data.unwomen.org/features/covid-19-pandemic-has-increased-care-burden-how-much-0>
- 8 The Institute for Fiscal Studies and the UCL Institute of Education conducted a survey of 3,500 families with two opposite gendered parents who share paid work and household responsibilities in May 2020. See IFS. (2020). Parents, especially mothers, paying heavy price for lockdown. <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14861>
- 9 Based on research conducted by McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.Org on 317 companies in the US and Canada from the private, public and social sector. See McKinsey & Company, LeanIn.Org. (2020). Women in the Workplace 2020. https://wiw-report.s3.amazonaws.com/Women_in_the_Workplace_2020.pdf
- 10 The COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker monitors policy measures enacted by governments worldwide to tackle the COVID-19 crisis, and highlights responses that have integrated a gender lens. It includes national measures that are directly addressing women's economic and social security, including unpaid care work, the labour market and violence against women. The tracker is coordinated by UNDP with substantive leadership and technical contributions from UN Women. Co-created by both entities, it includes over 2,500 measures across 206 countries and territories. See UNDP. (2020). COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker. <https://data.undp.org/gendertracker/>
- 11 Research shows that although women make up less than 40% of total employment globally, they account for 57% of workers employed in part-time jobs. Globally, a large share of employed women (58%) also work in informal jobs. In the UK, women make up 54% of workers on zero-hours contracts. A higher burden of unpaid care work is carried out by women, as discussed in page 37. See ILO. (2016). Women at work. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_457317.pdf?utm_content=buffer92781&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer; UN Women. (2020). COVID-19 and its economic toll on women: The story behind the numbers. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/9/feature-covid-19-economic-impacts-on-women>; Womens Budget Group. (2020). Crises Collide: Women and COVID-19. <https://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/FINAL.pdf>
- 12 House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee. (2021). Unequal impact? Coronavirus and the gendered economic impact. <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/4597/documents/46478/default/>
- 13 For example, income support payments for self-employed people are based on average profits made between 2016 and 2019, meaning that self-employed women who took maternity leave during this period are eligible for lower payments than if they had not taken maternity leave. Women are less likely to qualify for statutory sick pay partly due to caring responsibilities. See BBC. (2021). Covid: Self-employed mothers 'deserve equal help'. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-55711852>; House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee. (2021). Unequal impact? Coronavirus and the gendered economic impact. <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/4597/documents/46478/default/>

For more information about this report, please contact members of our team



Larice Stielow

Senior Economist, Strategy& UK

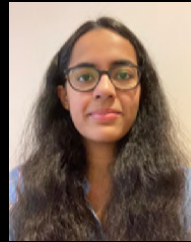
l.stielow@pwc.com



Tara Shrestha Carney

Economist, Strategy& UK

tara.shrestha.x.carney@pwc.com



Divya Sridhar

Economist, Strategy& UK

divya.x.sridhar@pwc.com



Oliver Forsyth

Economist, Strategy& UK

oliver.forsyth@pwc.com

Our Economics practice in the UK offers a wide range of services covering: market reform in a range of industry sectors (including energy, water, media and telecoms, financial services, health and government services); competition policy, disputes and other investigations; economic, social and environmental impact analysis; financial economics; fiscal policy and macroeconomics. This practice forms part of Strategy&, PwC's strategy consulting business.

For more information about our Economics services please visit: www.pwc.co.uk/economics

Our Women in Work Index is one of a series of macroeconomic publications produced by our Economics practice. Please take a look at our other recent publications at the links below:

Global Economy Watch

<https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/research-insights/economy/global-economy-watch.html>

Upskilling for Shared Prosperity

<https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/upskilling/upskilling-for-shared-prosperity.html>

Strategy&

Strategy& is a global strategy consulting business uniquely positioned to help deliver your best future: one that is built on differentiation from the inside out and tailored exactly to you. As part of PwC, every day we're building the winning systems that are at the heart of growth. We combine our powerful foresight with this tangible know-how, technology, and scale to help you create a better, more transformative strategy from day one.

As the only at-scale strategy business that's part of a global professional services network, we embed our strategy capabilities with frontline teams across PwC to show you where you need to go, the choices you'll need to make to get there, and how to get it right.

The result is an authentic strategy process powerful enough to capture possibility, while pragmatic enough to ensure effective delivery. It's the strategy that gets an organisation through the changes of today and drives results that redefine tomorrow. It's the strategy that turns vision into reality. It's strategy, made real.

www.strategyand.pwc.com



© 2021 PwC. All rights reserved. PwC refers to the PwC network and/or one or more of its member firms, each of which is a separate legal entity. Please see www.pwc.com/structure for further details. Mentions of Strategy& refer to the global team of practical strategists that is integrated within the PwC network of firms. For more about Strategy&, see www.strategyand.pwc.com. No reproduction is permitted in whole or part without written permission of PwC.

This content is for general purposes only, and should not be used as a substitute for consultation with professional advisors.

RITM4508576