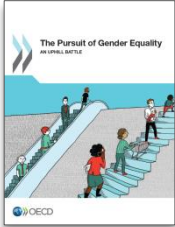


How does the UNITED KINGDOM compare?



The 2017 OECD report *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle* explores how gender inequalities persist in social and economic life around the world. Young women in OECD countries have more years of schooling than young men, on average, but women are less still likely to engage in paid work. Gaps widen with age, as motherhood typically has negative effects on women's pay and career advancement. Women are also less likely to be entrepreneurs, and are under-represented in private and public leadership. In the face of these challenges, this report assesses whether (and how) countries are closing gender gaps in education, employment, entrepreneurship, and public life. The report presents a range of statistics on gender gaps, reviews public policies targeting gender inequality, and offers key policy recommendations.

A moderate performance

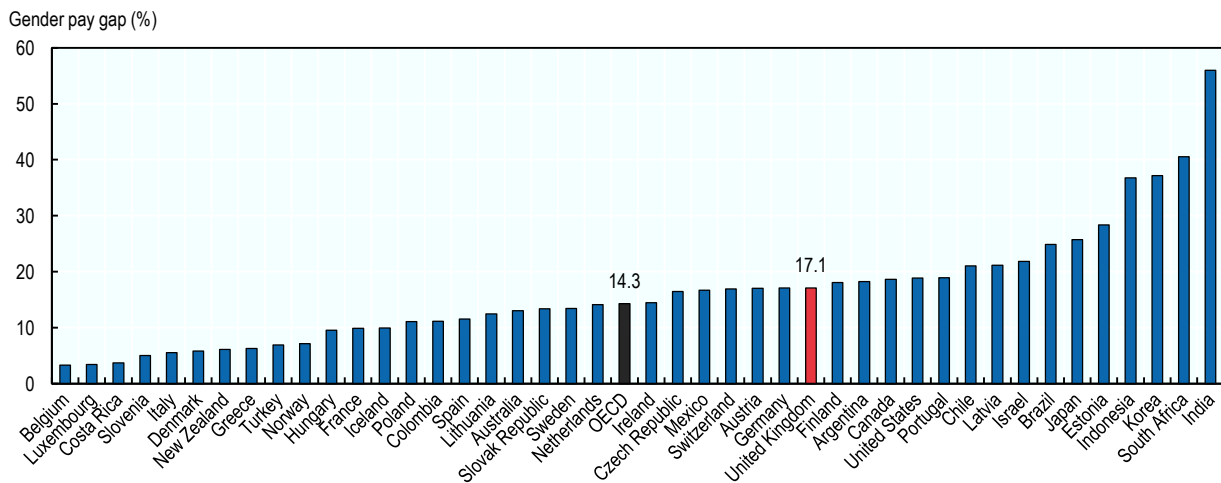
By OECD standards, the United Kingdom's performance on gender is moderate. In education, for example, gender gaps on the OECD's PISA tests are similar to the OECD average, as is the female share of students graduating with bachelor's degrees [Chapter 1]. The UK is more successful at encouraging young women to study subjects like science, maths and computing, but women still are under-represented among graduates in these fields.

The labour market shows a similar story. Women in the United Kingdom are likely to be found in work – the gender employment gap in the UK is a little smaller than the OECD average [Chapter 11] – but many employed women are in part-time jobs, especially mothers. At 17.1%, the gender pay gap in the United Kingdom is also larger than the OECD average (14.3%), although it has narrowed somewhat in recent years [Chapter 12].

There are areas where the United Kingdom performs well. The UK is relatively successful at getting women into leadership positions, for example [Chapter 14].

Some recent policy initiatives show promise. For example, the recently implemented requirements for mandatory gender pay gap reporting should help promote pay transparency and force companies to acknowledge the size of their own gender pay gaps [Chapter 12]. Measures taken to improve the availability of flexible working arrangements (e.g. extending the 'right to request') and reduce childcare costs for parents (the expansion of the free childcare hours programme and the introduction of the new "tax-free childcare" scheme) are also positive steps, even though the impact of these new measures on the actual final costs borne by parents is as yet unclear. The UK could go further, though, particularly in areas like fathers-only leave, out-of-school hours care and gender budgeting [Chapter 3].

Gender pay gap, 2015 or latest available year



Notes: Gender gap in median earnings for full-time employees. The gender gap is defined as the difference between male and female median monthly earnings divided by male median monthly earnings for full-time employees. Data for the United Kingdom are based on weekly earnings. See [Figure 1.3]

Summary indicators of gender equality

	Female share (%) of bachelor's graduates	Female share (%) of graduates in science, maths and computing	Gender gap (p.p.) in the labour force participation rate	Female share (%) of managers	Gender pay gap (median earnings, full-time employees, %)	Gender gap (p.p.) in the share of workers who are employers	Female share (%) of seats in parliament
United Kingdom	55.7	46.1	10.3	35.4	17.1	1.8	29.6
OECD average	58.2	39.2	12.2	31.2	14.3	3.3	28.7
Top performer	69.1 (SWE)	56.9 (PRT)	3.0 (FIN)	44.3 (LVA)	3.3 (BEL)	1.7 (NOR)	47.6 (ISL)
Bottom performer	45.4 (JPN)	21.3 (CHL)	42.0 (TUR)	10.5 (KOR)	37.2 (KOR)	4.6 (ISR)	9.5 (JPN)

Notes: BEL = Belgium, CHL = Chile, FIN = Finland, ISL = Iceland, ISR = Israel, JPN = Japan, KOR = Korea, LVA = Latvia, NOR = Norway, PRT = Portugal, SWE = Sweden, TUR = Turkey

In a survey carried out for *The Pursuit of Gender Equality*, governments identified the three most important gender inequality issues in their country as violence against women, the gender wage gap, and the unequal sharing of unpaid work. Many OECD countries are now prioritizing these issues in policy, and many are also pushing to get more women into public and private sector leadership.

The motherhood penalty

In the UK, as in most OECD countries, gender employment gaps widen once women become mothers and men become fathers. British mothers are about 23 percentage points less likely to be employed than British fathers – a gender gap that is over eight times as large as among men and women without children. This is due in large part to the fact that many women in the UK start to work part-time or withdraw from paid work when they have children, often at least until their children enter pre-primary education or primary school [Chapter 13]. Factors preventing mothers from returning to work sooner include the availability and the high cost of formal childcare services [Chapter 17].

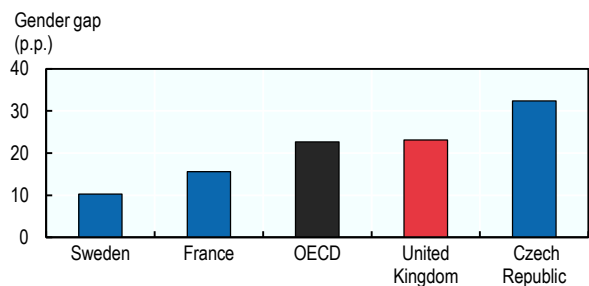
Women in leadership roles

The UK ranks above the OECD average when it comes to women in management positions, women in parliament, and women in leadership in central government. There has also been progress on women on boards of directors [Chapter 14], brought about in part by a successful voluntary business-led initiative. Since 2011, companies listed on the FTSE 100 index have been encouraged to ensure that at least 25% of board members are women. This target has since been widened to the larger FTSE 350 index, and also increased, with companies now asked to reach 33% female board members by 2020.

Life-time earnings and the pension gap

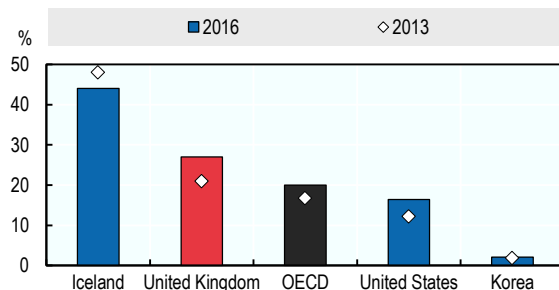
With women more likely than men to work part-time or withdraw (temporarily) from the labour force there are important gender differences in job quality and lifetime earnings. These gender differences make women vulnerable to financial risks in case of separation or divorce [Chapter 4] or in retirement [Chapter 13]. At 38%, women's average pensions are over one-third smaller than men's – only Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Germany have larger gaps. These outcomes illustrate how important it is that both men and women can engage in the labour market on a full-time basis.

Gender employment gap for parents, 2014



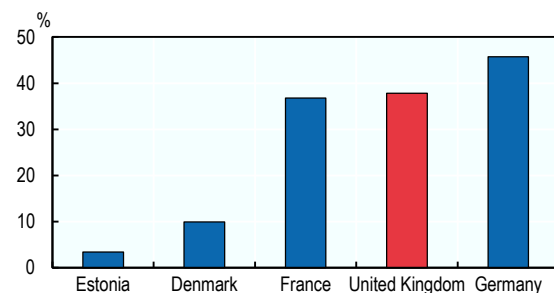
Notes: Male minus female difference in employment rates for parents (25-54 year-olds) with at least one child aged 0-14. Data for Sweden refer to 2012. See [Figure 11.5].

Women on boards, 2013 and 2016



Notes: Female share of seats on boards of directors in publicly listed companies. Data for Korea and the US refer to Q1 2013 and Q3 2015, and for Iceland and the UK to H2 2013 and H1 2016. See [Figure 14.1].

Gender gap in pensions, 2014



Notes: 65+ year-olds. Data for Denmark refer to 2013. See [Figure 13.4].