



The Hidden Truth

Diversity on boards across UK listed firms

2024

Executive Summary

Gender representation in the boardroom has progressed significantly over the past decade, due in no small part to the work of the FTSE Women Leaders Review which has driven significant change in the FTSE 350, but when you scratch the surface of the overall gender diversity figures you quickly find female representation remains far from 'equal'. For the fourth year, this report shines a light on the unacceptably low levels of gender balance in listed firms below the FTSE 350.

Fiona Hathorn

CEO
WB Directors



Increased intersectional analysis of board diversity is now required to give women, and women of colour in particular, the confidence that this movement is truly inclusive.

Janet Barberis

MD
Protiviti



Diverse leadership brings to the organisation a broader range of thinking that is critical in today's highly competitive and fast-moving business landscape.

Are women reaching the 'four key roles'?

FTSE Women Leaders Review has defined these as the most influential positions in the boardroom – Chair, Senior Independent Director (SID), Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO).

We reviewed the 3452 key roles at the 863 listed firms across the FTSE All-Share and AIM listings (excluding Investment Trusts).

Four key roles

13% (436)

held by
women

0.7% (25)

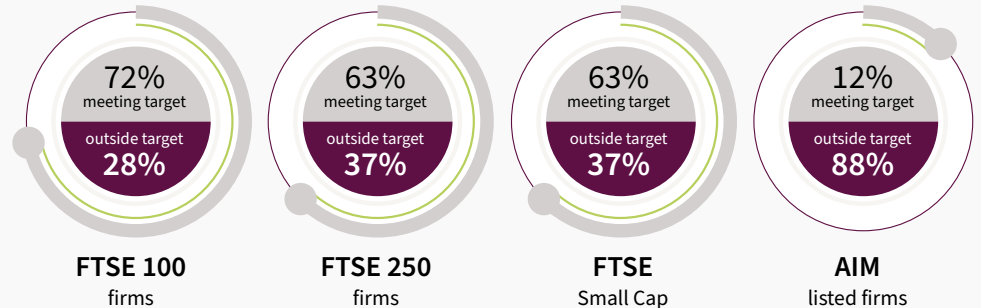
held by
women of colour

Are all listed boards gender diverse?

We analysed the board data across the entire FTSE All-Share and the AIM listed, totalling 1103 firms of all types. Whilst overall representation of female board members has improved significantly, equal representation around every board table is a long way off.

% of firms reaching the target of 40% women on boards:

Our analysis includes FTSE Small-Cap and AIM listing, which are outside the FTSE Women Leaders Review target.



All-male boards have risen dramatically in the AIM listing, which now has over a third all-male boards. This is a significant increase since our 2023 report, from 18% to 35%. Significant churn in the firms included on the AIM listing has in part driven this back-sliding. Worryingly, this may indicate very poor diversity across unlisted companies, which is now only coming to light as they join the AIM listing.

What are the challenges in enhancing greater Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in company culture?

Executive leadership appointments are deeply connected to company culture and inclusion. To understand more about the lack of progress in this important area, we have asked for the views of People, HR and ED&I professionals in an online survey.

This uncovered a significant expectations gap between aspiration and resourcing levels given to ED&I.

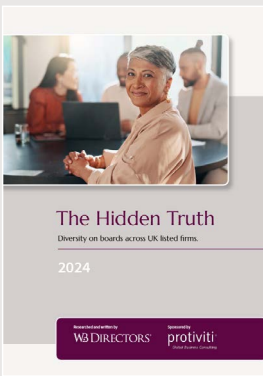
Considering the period since 2021 for ED&I, of our respondents:

70%

said **expectations** have **increased** from the **employees**

21%

said **budgets** have increased



► **Read the full report for further detail**

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