

Sex and power: who runs Britain? 2007

The EOC asks: **Where are the women missing from our boardrooms and public life?**

More than thirty years since the Sex Discrimination Act came into force, women have made significant strides in the workplace and in public life. But despite this, and despite the achievements of inspirational, groundbreaking women, they are still not reaching the top of their professions in significant numbers. They represent just 10% of directors at FTSE 100 companies, and barely 20% of Members of Parliament. Among

those few women who do make it to the top, ethnic minority women make up just 0.3% of MPs and 0.4% of FTSE 100 directors, despite the fact that they comprise 5.2% of the population and 3.9% of the labour market.¹

Missing women

If we hope to shatter the glass ceiling, we would need to find the nearly 6,000 women 'missing' from more than 33,000 top positions of power in Britain today.² These include:

- 3,067** missing from among the 21,103 public appointments
- 448** missing from among the 1,130 directorships in FTSE 100 companies
- 233** missing from among the 751 members of the House of Lords
- 217** missing from among the 914 Civil Service top managers
- 197** missing from among the 646 Members of Parliament
- 162** missing from among the 449 council leaders in local government
- 101** missing from among the 269 senior police officers
- 78** missing from among the 194 senior judges



Women. Men. Different. Equal.
Equal Opportunities Commission



To highlight the scale of the challenge if we hope to shatter the glass ceiling across the public and private sectors, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) has calculated that we would need to find the nearly 6,000 women 'missing' from more than 33,000 top spots. At a time when the pace of change is painfully slow and in some cases is even going into reverse, that is quite a challenge. This year, as the EOC publishes the final *Sex and Power* index before moving into the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) in October 2007, the EOC asks: Where are the women missing from our boardrooms and public life? What's holding them back? And what price are we – as a society and as employers – paying for their absence?

The challenges ahead

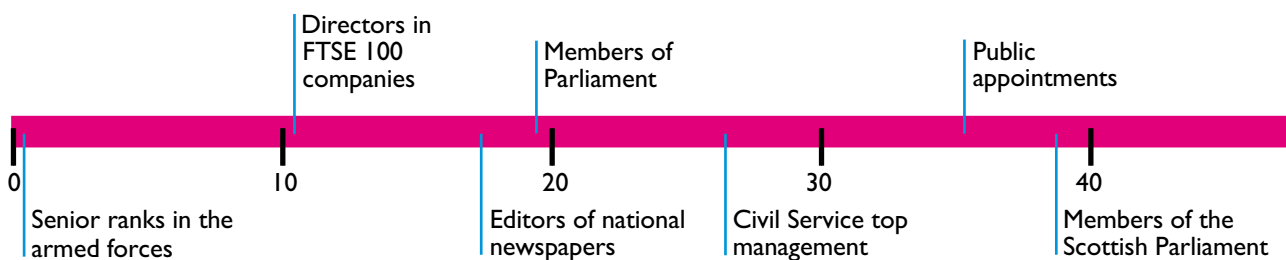
If Britain is to succeed as a high-skill economy competing in a global marketplace, we need to maximise the pool of talent from which we draw our workforce and this applies from the bottom to the top. Additionally, if we are to achieve cohesive communities, then representatives in political and public life need to reflect the communities they serve. *Sex and Power 2007* shows that we are failing to respond to either of these challenges. Our economic success and social wellbeing are, therefore, at risk of being undermined.

This year's *Sex and Power* index will be the last the EOC produces before moving into the new

CEHR. The survey shows unequivocally that gender equality is still far from realised in Britain's boardrooms, in Whitehall and Westminster, across local government and our entire public and private sectors.

As the new CEHR will be well placed to tackle all of these issues in the round, the EOC hopes it will continue to push for progress. That may require the development of new data sources to help monitor progress – in particular looking at the extent to which women are not only present at the top, but representative of this country's diversity.

Women's representation (%)



Progress is painfully slow and at risk of going into reverse

This year's survey (see pages 4 – 5) shows that progress on women's representation across a wide range of professions and sectors is painfully slow, and in some cases has gone into reverse.

This indicates that there is a lack of concerted action to address these issues, and suggests that achieving equality at the top cannot be left to chance. There is a danger that progress so far will be lost.

Gains made have been small. One extra female editor of a national newspaper has increased the percentage to 17%, up on last year. But at only one in six that is still very low. An extra two senior judges has increased women's representation to 10%, and three more female university heads has increased representation to 13%. Britain's Civil Service top managers are still overwhelmingly male with just over 26% women, up slightly on last year's figure. Local authority chief executives are 21% women, up from last year's 18%.

Where there are few women, the loss of one or two is noticeable. The loss of one female director of a major museum or art gallery has resulted in a drop from 22% to just 17%. And the number of women who had achieved senior ranking in the armed forces has now reduced from four to two. Showing almost no change are public appointments, in which the percentage of women has stayed between 35% and 36% since 2003, and chief executives of voluntary organisations, which have remained between 45% and 46% women. Chairs of national arts companies and chief executives of sports bodies are also both unchanged since 2005.

Lack of flexibility at the top of professions often drives women towards setting up their own businesses. Just over one million women in the UK are now self-employed and the number of self-employed women has increased by 18% in five years.³ It is estimated that between 34.1% and 41.2% of the UK small business stock is either owned or co-owned by women.⁴

Members of the National Assembly for Wales



Sex and Power 2007 Index

Indicator	2003 % women	2004 % women	2005 % women	2006 % women
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Politics: women's average representation = **29%**

Members of Parliament ¹⁷	18.1%	18.1%	19.7%	19.5%
The Cabinet ¹⁸	23.8%	27.3%	27.3%	34.8%
Members of the House of Lords ¹⁹	16.5%	17.7%	18.4%	18.9%
Members of the Scottish Parliament ²⁰	39.5%	39.5%	39.5%	38.8%
Members of the National Assembly for Wales ²¹	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	51.7%
Local authority council leaders ²²	n/a	16.6%	16.2%	13.8%
UK Members of the European Parliament ²³	24.1%	24.4%	24.4%	25.6%

Business: women's average representation = **14%**

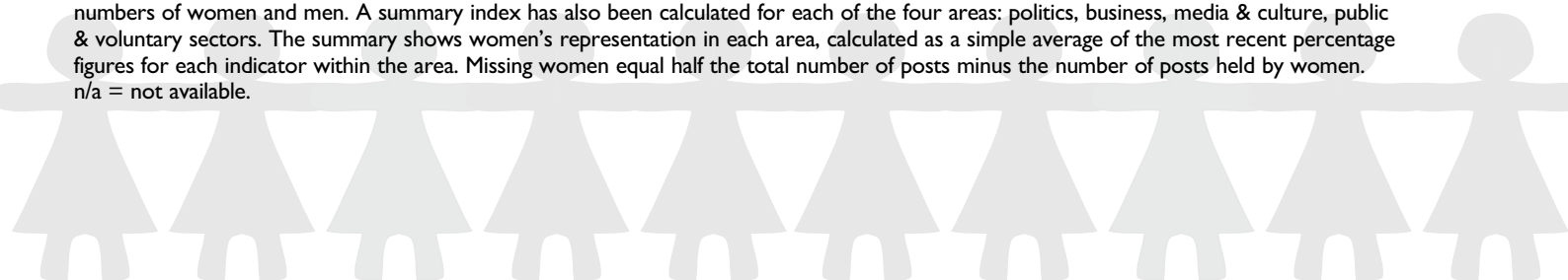
Directors in FTSE 100 companies (executive and non-executive directors) ²⁴	8.6%	9.7%	10.5%	10.4%
Small businesses with women the majority of directors ²	12.3%	14.4%	18%	n/a

Media & culture: women's average representation = **17%**

Chief executives of media companies in the FTSE 350, and the DG of the BBC ²⁶	7.4%	4.3%	9.5%	10.5%
Editors of national newspapers, including the Glasgow Herald and the Western Mail ²⁷	9.1%	9.1%	13.0%	17.4%
Directors of major museums and art galleries ²⁸	21.1%	21.1%	21.7%	17.4%
Chairs of national arts companies ²⁹	27.3%	27.3%	33.3%	33.3%
Chief executives of national sports bodies ³⁰	14.3%	6.3%	6.7%	6.7%

Indicator	2003 % women	2004 % women	2005 % women	2006 % women
Public & voluntary sectors: women's average representation = 24%				
Public appointments ³¹	35.7%	35.9%	35.0%	35.5%
Local authority chief executives ³²	13.1%	12.4%	17.5%	20.6%
Senior ranks in the armed forces ³³	0.6%	0.8%	0.8%	0.4%
Senior police officers ³⁴	7.6%	8.3%	10.2%	12.3%
Senior judiciary, high court judge and above ³⁵	6.8%	8.3%	8.8%	9.8%
Civil Service top management ³⁶	22.9%	24.4%	25.5%	26.3%
Chief executives of voluntary organisations ³⁷	45.2%	45.4%	45.2%	46.0%
Head teachers in secondary schools ³⁸	30.1%	31.8%	32.6%	n/a
FE college principals ³⁹	25.8%	28.0%	27.5%	n/a
University vice chancellors ⁴⁰	12.4%	15.0%	11.1%	13.2%
Health service chief executives ⁴¹	28.6%	27.7%	28.1%	37.9%
Trade Union general secretaries ⁴²	18.3%	16.9%	22.4%	23.0%
Heads of professional bodies ⁴³	16.7%	25.0%	33.3%	33.3%

NB The statistics in this index have been selected to represent positions considered to have power or influence in Britain. As far as possible these relate to Great Britain or the United Kingdom, with the obvious exceptions of the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales. For each statistic included, the percentage of women has either been taken directly from the source or calculated from the actual numbers of women and men. A summary index has also been calculated for each of the four areas: politics, business, media & culture, public & voluntary sectors. The summary shows women's representation in each area, calculated as a simple average of the most recent percentage figures for each indicator within the area. Missing women equal half the total number of posts minus the number of posts held by women. n/a = not available.



Driving forward change at the top

Britain is missing out on a pool of female talent and women and their families are missing out on fulfilling their potential. This is no time for complacency. If we are to maximise the use of our female talent, we have to take concerted action to remove the barriers that stand in their way or opportunities may be lost for generations to come. This would be both a waste of human capital and a loss to the economy. **Just as the sex equality agenda has been central to the EOC's work, so too must it be central to the work of the new CEHR. There is still a long way to go.**

The reality is that unless women can combine work and caring roles successfully, they are unlikely to reach the top in great numbers. What's more, all women will continue to experience a thin veneer of equality, that cracks as soon as they have children or take on caring responsibilities. Far too many workplaces still follow a long hours, inflexible model of work. This has never worked well for women and is increasingly out of date for the ever-growing number of men who say they want to be more involved at home. EOC research shows that 70% of fathers with babies under 15 months want to be more involved with their children, and nine

out of 10 new dads (87%) are as confident in caring for their child as their partner.⁵

Greater availability of flexible working without the consequent career penalties is, therefore, essential. Women still do most of the caring, but as they progress up the management chain the availability of part-time and flexible working diminishes. Or they find that they have to 'trade-down' in order to get flexibility and pay too high a price. The part-time pay gap remains stubbornly high at 38%⁶ and EOC research shows four out of five part-time workers, many of whom are women, are working in jobs below their potential, in part due to the lack of flexible high-skills, senior roles.⁷

The EOC wants to see a transformation in our workplaces where flexibility becomes the norm rather than the exception – something that is open to all women and men to negotiate with their employers, many of whom increasingly recognise the business benefits. The need for high-quality, well-paid flexibility at work is increasingly a concern for men too and is often wanted by people at different points in their lives, for example by people working near or beyond retirement age.



Choose a winner – select a woman

We should note that Parliamentary changes are largely driven by elections, but the statistics show that because male candidates have been elected in by-elections, female representation in the Scottish Parliament and in Westminster is marginally down on last year. The proportion of female local authority council leaders has fallen to 14% in 2006 from 16% in 2005. In the world of politics one welcome exception to this trend is the increase in Cabinet level representation, where the number of women is up from 27% to 35%. **But there are still 629 women missing from political life in Britain today.**

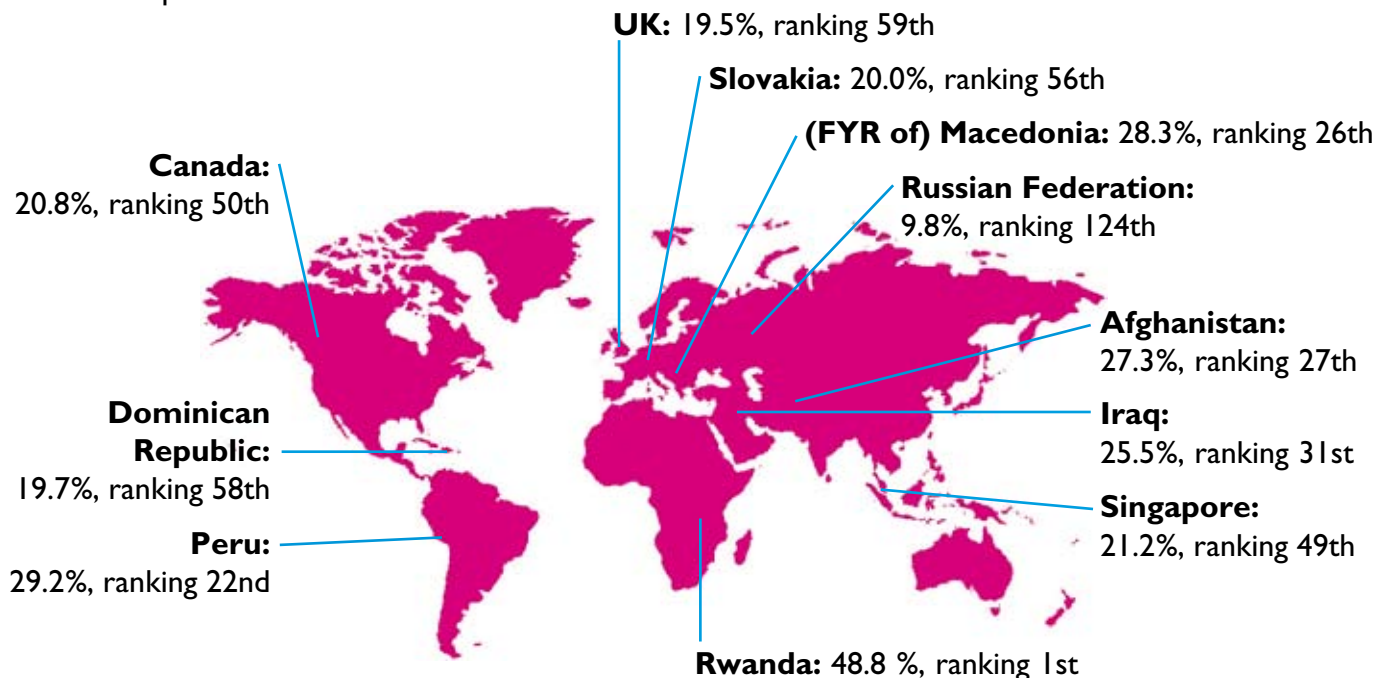
The battle for the women's vote is on. EOC polling shows that the parties would be better able to connect with the electorate if they address the daily private struggle of balancing work and family life and if they select more

women candidates.⁸ It could mean the difference between winning and losing at the next election. Electoral Commission research showed that in seats where a woman MP was elected to Parliament in 2001, a higher percentages of both women and men reported having voted compared to seats where a man was elected.⁹

Political parties are beginning to make progress with their candidate selection procedures, notably the Conservative Party's 'A' list of candidates, which has so far seen over one-third (36%) of Conservative 'winnable' seats select a woman,¹⁰ the Liberal Democrats' recent initiative to provide additional support to constituency parties that select a woman candidate, and Labour's retention of the all-women shortlist, which has driven the progress in Labour's representation so far.

Women's representation: the international perspective

The UK currently ranks 59th and is out-performed by Rwanda, Afghanistan and Iraq in terms of women's representation.¹¹



Action across the parties indicates that at the next general election we might expect to see more women elected as MPs, but so far it is too early to establish a clear picture. **It is important for all the parties to ensure that women, in all their diversity, are selected as candidates.**

At the current rate of progress it will take...

Another **20 years** to achieve equality in Civil Service top management.

Another **40 years** to achieve an equal number of senior women in the judiciary.

Another **60 years** to achieve an equal number of female directors of FTSE 100 companies.

Up to **200 years** – another 40 elections – to achieve an equal number of women in Parliament.

Last year, the EOC calculated that taking no action to address the lack of women's representation would mean we would have to wait up to **200 years** for equality in Parliament, and that's simply too long to wait.¹²

Research shows that progress on women's representation cannot be achieved without some form of mechanism or intervention.¹³ The use of all women shortlists is permitted by the Sex Discrimination Amendment Act but this is time limited until 2015. **It is important for all parties to ensure that positive action benefits all women. If they don't, they risk becoming increasingly out of touch with their electorate and missing out on the female talent in their own ranks.**

Women's representation as elected councillors ranges considerably from 32% in Yorkshire & the Humber to 22% in Scotland and Wales.¹² Just 3.5% of councillors in English local authorities are from ethnic minority groups and only 2.2% of women councillors in England are from ethnic minority groups.¹⁴

These statistics show that even though representation in the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly is relatively strong, women have not progressed beyond one-fifth of councillors, and ethnic minority women are yet to break through into party politics at a local or national level. Proactive steps to address the need for diversity at a local level are as vital as those for the Westminster Parliament.



Glass ceiling – low for most and lower for some

Ethnic minority women are significantly less likely to be in senior roles, yet at age 16 Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls have the same aspirations as their white British counterparts and EOC research shows they are increasingly well qualified.¹⁵ The glass ceiling that most women experience is lower for ethnic minority women, with only 6% of employed Pakistani women and 9% of Black Caribbean women working as managers or senior officials, compared to 11% of white British women.¹⁶

For employers, their overriding concern is whether they are recruiting from the widest pool of talent available. By missing out on ethnic minority women's skills and abilities they risk handing the advantage to their competitors. Best practice companies are aware of the business benefits a diverse workforce brings them and ensure that their recruitment practices reflect that.

An EOC survey found that 93% of employers in local labour markets with an above average Black and Asian population recognise that there is a business case for employing more ethnic minority women.¹⁶ However, in practice fewer than half employ an equal or greater proportion of Black and Asian women than are economically active in their area. Two-thirds of those who employ Black or Asian women had none in senior roles. Addressing this is fundamental to creating the opportunities for ethnic minority women in middle-ranking and top-level jobs, which in turn will help to drive better community cohesion and engagement.

Unless ethnic minority women can look at major organisations and see women in positions of power, they will continue to feel excluded. Evidence from the EOC's ongoing investigation into the employment experiences of ethnic minority women showed that where they cannot see themselves represented in the workforce, they won't apply to work there because they feel the organisation won't be the right place for them.

This, in turn, has significant implications for community cohesion, because the workplace is one of the key opportunities for increasing contact and building greater understanding between people from different ethnic and religious groups.

Ensuring that ethnic minority women have a voice in their communities and a voice at all levels of public life is fundamental to building stronger communities across the country. Ethnic minority women are still largely invisible in public life and this has to change if we want our communities to thrive.

Ethnic minority women at the top

0 in the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales

0 as chief executives of media companies in the FTSE 350 companies

1 in the Cabinet

1 UK representative in the European Parliament

1 in the senior judiciary

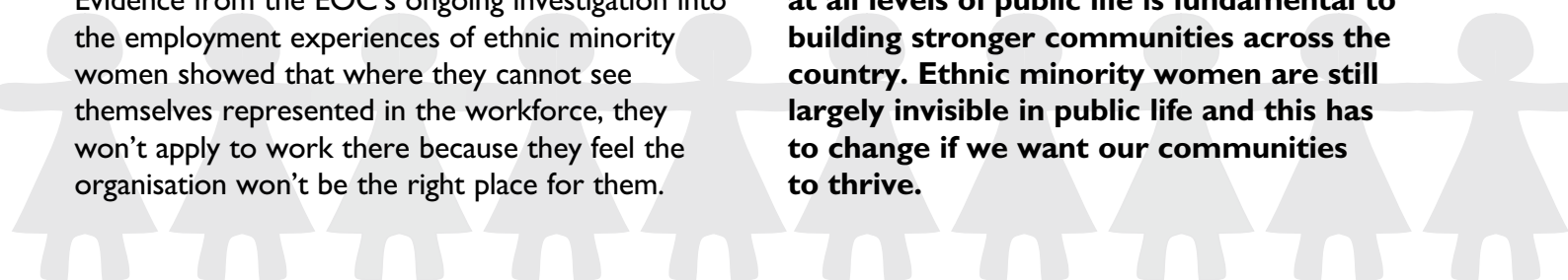
2 Members of Parliament

4 directors in FTSE 100 companies

7 in the House of Lords

9 Civil Service top managers

489 public appointments



Missing, presumed... excluded

The absence of women at the top of public and business life in Britain today is not of their making. Significant barriers remain that prevent women from progressing up their career ladders into positions of power. Unless we drive forward change at the top, remove

barriers and take concerted steps to consolidate and build on the progress we've made, there is a risk that we will not only see progress stall but go into reverse. The significant number of women 'missing' from positions of power is indicative of our failure to meet the economic and social challenges that confront us.

The EOC is calling for:

- **The extension of the right to request flexible working to all** and the availability of more high-quality, well-paid flexible and part-time work at higher levels.
- **Political parties to continue to take positive action** before the next election to improve women's representation.

It is vital that policy makers ensure that we make the right choice if we are to see a future where women's and men's choices are supported, not penalised; where potential is fulfilled, not squandered and where greater control over our working time is widespread, rather than the exception.

The challenge ahead for the CEHR is to keep the pressure on for further progress in the years ahead.



Notes and sources for main text

- 1 EOC analysis of ONS (2006) Labour Force Survey 2006, Quarter 2 Dataset, percentages refer to people aged 16–64.
- 2 The ‘missing’ women figures are calculated from the number of women required to bring each percentage up to 50%. Information by ethnic group is only available for certain groups of women, so a total figure for ethnic minority women in the index cannot be calculated neither can the number of ‘missing’ ethnic minority women. See table on pages 4–5 for details of the indicators and references to sources.
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- 29 English National Opera, Royal National Theatre, Royal Opera House, Royal Shakespeare Company, South Bank Company, Royal Ballet, English National Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Scottish Ballet, Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera, Rambert Dance.
- 30 UK Sport Annual Review 2002/03 and Annual Review 2004; national sports bodies.
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- 33 DASA, TSP 09 – Rank structure of UK regular forces, 1 July 2003–2006.
- 34 Home Office, Police Service Strength, England and Wales, 31 March 2003–2006; unpublished data from ACPOS. Members of ACPO and ACPOS.
- 35 Department for Constitutional Affairs, Women in the judiciary as at 1st September 2003–2005; Judicial Communications Office, Women judges in post as at 1st September 2006; Scottish Courts.
- 36 Cabinet Office.
- 37 Unpublished data from ACEVO.
- 38 Department for Education and Skills; National Assembly for Wales; Scottish Executive.
- 39 Association of Colleges; Association of Scottish Colleges.
- 40 Universities UK.
- 41 Special and Strategic Health Authorities in England, NHS Boards in Scotland (including Special), Local Health Boards & National Public Health Service in Wales.
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- 43 Engineering Council, General Council of the Bar, General Dental Council, General Medical Council, General Optical Council, General Social Care Council, General Teaching Councils for England, Scotland and Wales, Law Society, Law Society for Scotland, Faculty of Advocates.

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