

## **Continuing growth in women's representation at the top of British business but a step-change is needed by some companies to deliver gender balance**

- With **42%** Women on Boards of FTSE 350 companies, business is now reaping the rewards of diverse perspectives
- Women hold **35%** of all Leadership roles in FTSE 350 companies and with less than two years to go business is urged to double down on its efforts to reach the target
- Just over half of FTSE 350 companies (56%) have achieved or are well on their way to achieving gender balance but others have work to do - almost half of all available appointments now need to go to a woman to meet the 40% Women in Leadership target by the end of 2025

The FTSE Women Leaders Review, the independent business-led initiative, backed by the Government and sponsored by Lloyds Banking Group and KPMG, which is focused on increasing women's representation on the Boards and Leadership Teams of the FTSE 350 and the UK's 50 biggest private companies, today reported steady progress in the number of women at the top of British business as it closed out year three of its five-year term.

**Women on Boards and in Leadership:** women's representation on FTSE 350 Boards saw further gains reaching an all-time high of 42% with Women in Leadership increasing to 35%. Over half of FTSE 350 companies have met or are on their way to reaching the goal of 40% Women in Leadership, whilst others need to pick up the pace. Gender balance at the top of British business is clearly in sight but the job is not yet done.

The appointment rate of women to leadership roles still leans in favour of men with more than six out of every ten vacancies in the year being awarded to a man. To meet the 40% target for Women in Leadership as well as on Boards by the end 2025 deadline, this will need to change. Over the next two years, almost every other appointment will need to go to a woman.

**Women in the four key roles:** further positive progress was reported in the drive to have at least one of the four key decision-making roles of Chair, CEO, Senior Independent Director (SID) and Finance Director held by a woman by 2025. As women's representation on FTSE 350 Boards goes from strength to strength, the number of women in the SID role, which plays an important part in board governance, has increased significantly from 37% to 47% year-on-year.

Although there were several new appointments in the year, progress in the Chair and CEO role across the FTSE 350 has remained largely flat with marginal gains offset by losses elsewhere. There are, however, encouraging indicators of progress to come with the number of women on FTSE 100 Executive Committees reaching 30% and a welcome uplift to around a quarter of all FTSE 100 Finance Director and Chief Information Officer roles now being held by women - roles that are increasingly recognised as important career routes to CEO.

**Top 50 private companies:** the second year of reporting for the Top 50 private companies, in which diversity expectations are aligned with those of public-listed companies, shows a good increase in the representation of Women in Leadership to

36%, while progress for Women on Boards is at 31% and has remained flat in the year.

**International comparisons:** the transformation of British boardrooms that is well underway is borne out in the international rankings where the UK ranks second only to quota-led France and ahead of Norway cementing its reputation as a world leader for Women on Boards. With 350 public-listed companies and almost 3000 board seats in scope, the UK out-runs most of its international counterparts in scale and ambition with progress achieved through entirely voluntary action and commitment from business.

Penny James and Nimesh Patel, Co-Chairs of the FTSE Women Leaders Review, said:

"Over the last year we have seen continued progress in delivering gender balance across UK companies which is testament to the commitment and determination of business leaders. Whilst the number of women in senior executive roles has increased, we now need a step-change in the rate of improvement to reach our goal of 40% women's representation at the top of industry in the next two years. Given the cadre of talented women and the collective focus on building greater diversity of perspectives we believe that this is wholly achievable and look forward to working with businesses to deliver on our ambitions."

Denise Wilson, CEO of the FTSE Women Leaders Review, said:

"Over the last decade we have seen near revolutionary change in the culture and dialogue at the top of British business with diversity in leadership now viewed as a business imperative that is key to long term success. Whilst we have the strongest ever supply of experienced, capable women ambitious for themselves and for their organisations, the appointment rate is still skewed in favour of men. To fuel further, faster progress and deliver gender balance this will need to change."

**-ends-**

#### **Notes to editors:**

The FTSE Women Leaders Review (the Review) is sponsored by Lloyds Banking Group and KPMG.

Sir Robin Budenberg CBE, Chair of Lloyds Banking Group, said:

"We are proud to co-sponsor the FTSE Women Leaders Review and champion greater representation of women on leadership teams and boards across the UK. We place immense importance on this agenda in our own organisation and now rank fifth in the FTSE 100 with 45.5% Women on Boards and 46.9% in Women in Leadership, as a result of the progress we've made.

At Lloyds Banking Group we are strong believers that diverse leadership teams make better decisions - for their customers, their colleagues and their own business. We want to see and support more opportunities for women in leadership roles, in order to continue creating a strong, vibrant and successful business community."

Bina Mehta, Chair of KPMG UK, said:

“The representation of women in leadership roles has significantly improved over the last decade, testament to the sustained voluntary action taken by businesses to drive greater equality. The progress made demonstrates the power of businesses working together toward clear goals, while holding each other to account.

It’s now important to maintain this momentum and attract and retain a strong pipeline of talented women from all backgrounds, who will become the leaders of businesses in the future. We know that lasting, sustainable change requires consistent and significant effort; if we’re not pushing forwards, we risk going backwards.”

### **The Review**

The FTSE Women Leaders Review is the independent, business-led framework supported by the Government, which sets recommendations for Britain’s biggest companies to improve the representation of women on their boards and leadership teams. The scope of the Review covers the FTSE 350 and 50 of the UK’s biggest private companies.

Adopting a voluntary approach, the Review captures and publishes progress on over 26,000 roles on boards and in leadership two layers below the board, across all sectors of British business on an annual basis. This is typically the 80 to 100 most senior roles in an organisation below the board.

### **Women on Boards – 2023 Progress**

1. Reported numbers for Women on Boards of FTSE 350, as of 11th January 2024 show:  
*Source – BoardEx:*
  - FTSE 100 is at **42.6%**, up from 40.5% in 2022
  - FTSE 250 is at **41.8%**, up from 40.1% in 2022
  - FTSE 350 is at **42.1%**, up from 40.2% in 2022
2. The number of FTSE 350 Boards that have met or exceeded the previous 33% target now stands at 321, with a remaining 29 FTSE 350 Boards still to meet the 33% 2020 target.
3. The number of FTSE 350 Boards that have met or exceeded the current 40% target now stands at 235, with a remaining third of FTSE 350 Boards still with work to do.
4. The UK FTSE 350 is in 2<sup>nd</sup> place when compared internationally to 11 countries also working hard to improve the gender balance on the boards of public listed companies. The UK is however achieving this at a greater scale and through entirely voluntary action as opposed to mandatory quota systems. In the UK 350 companies are in scope compared with 40 in France and 25 in Norway with both countries delivering progress through quota legislation.

### **Four Key Roles – 2023 Progress**

1. Women continue to be appointed to the Chair role with a gain of eleven women Chairs in 2023 but this is offset against several long-serving women Chairs

stepping down. As a result, the number of women in the Chair role in the FTSE 350 has decreased slightly from to 55 in 2022 to 53 in 2023 (15%).

- The number of women SIDs has increased to 162 across the FTSE 350 in 2023, up from 130 in 2022. Now nearly half of FTSE 350 companies (47%) have a woman SID.
- The percentage of FTSE 100 CEOs is 11% (up from 9% in 2022) and the percentage of women Finance Directors has increased from 23% in 2022 to 25% in 2023.

## Women in Leadership - 2023 Progress

- Reported numbers for Women in Leadership (defined as the Executive Committee & Direct Reports to the Executive Committee on a combined basis) show:

Source – FTSE Women Leaders, Leadership Data Collection Portal as at 31 October 2023:

- FTSE 100 is at **35.2%** up from 34.3% in 2022
- FTSE 250 is at **33.9%** up from 32.8% in 2022
- FTSE 350 is at **34.5%** up from in 33.5% in 2022

### FTSE 100-Top Ten Best Performers

	Company	Combined Executive Comm & DRs	Sector
1	Burberry Group Plc	55.2%	Consumer Products & Services
2	Marks & Spencer Group Plc	51.3%	Personal Care, Drug & Grocery Stores
3	Next Plc	50.6%	Retail
4	National Grid Plc	48.7%	Utilities
5	Lloyds Banking Group Plc	46.9%	Banks
6	Pearson Plc	46.4%	Media
7	AstraZeneca Plc	45.7%	Health Care
8	Diageo Plc	45.6%	Food, Beverage & Tobacco
	Haleon Plc	45.6%	Health Care
10	BP Plc	45.5%	Energy

### Top Ten Poorest Performers

	Company	Combined Executive Comm & DRs	Sector
1	Fresnillo Plc	12.1%	Basic Resources
2	Endeavour Mining Plc	18.4%	Basic Resources
3	Antofagasta Plc	19%	Basic Resources
4	Ashtead Group Plc	19.8%	Industrial Goods & Services
5	Frasers Group Plc	22.2%	Retail
6	Airtel Africa Plc	22.4%	Tele communications
7	Diploma Plc	22.7%	Industrial Goods & Services
8	Intertek Group Plc	23.6%	Industrial Goods & Services
9	Hikma Pharmaceuticals Plc	24.5%	Health Care
10	Entain Plc	24.7%	Travel & Leisure

### FTSE250-Top Ten Best Performers

	Company	Combined Executive Comm & DRs	Sector
1	Law Debenture Corporation Plc	59.1%	Financial Services
2	IntegraFin Holdings Plc	53.8%	Financial Services
3	ITV Plc	52.4%	Media
	Virgin Money UK Plc	52.4%	Banks
5	Assura Plc	52.2%	Real Estate
6	Pets At Home Group Plc	50.9%	Retail
7	Moneysupermarket.com Group Plc	50.8%	Technology
	Spire Healthcare Group Plc	50.8%	Health Care
9	Playtech Plc	50.5%	Travel & Leisure
10	Syncona Ltd, Genuit Group Plc, Watches of Switzerland Group Plc, Baltic Classifieds Group Plc	50%	

### Top Ten Poorest Performers

	Company	Combined Executive Comm & DRs	Sector
1	Renishaw Plc	10%	Industrial Goods & Services
2	W.A.G Payment Solutions Plc	12.5%	Industrial Goods & Services
2	Hochschild Mining Plc	12.5%	Basic Resources
4	Clarkson Plc	13.4%	Industrial Goods & Services
5	Hill & Smith Plc	14.6%	Basic Resources
6	Keller Group Plc	14.7%	Construction & Materials
7	Tritax Big Box REIT Plc	18.2%	Real Estate
8	Ashmore Group Plc	20%	Financial Services
8	OSB Group Plc	20%	Financial Services
10	Aston Martin Lagonda Global Holdings Plc	20.7%	Automobiles & Parts

- The number of All-Male Executive Committees in the FTSE 350 has decreased again this year to 9, down from 54 in 2017.

### The Recommendations for the Review

There are four Recommendations that were announced in February 2022 to fuel further progress in delivering gender balance at the top of British business:

- The voluntary target for FTSE 350 Boards and Leadership teams was increased to a minimum of **40%** women's representation **by the end of 2025**.
- Companies should have at least one woman in the Chair, Senior Independent Director role on the board and/or one woman in the Chief Executive Officer or Finance Director role **by the end of 2025**.
- Key stakeholders should continue to set best-practice guidelines or use alternative mechanisms to encourage any FTSE 350 Board that has not yet achieved the previous 33% target for the end of 2020, to do so.
- The scope of the Review is extended beyond FTSE 350 companies to include 50 of the UK's largest private companies.

### For further information:

E: [info@ftsewomenleaders.com](mailto:info@ftsewomenleaders.com)

<https://ftsewomenleaders.com>