

[illegible]

This report was first published in January 2019 by the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA).

Registered and operational address:
Universities and Colleges Employers Association
Woburn House
20 Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9HU
Tel: 020 7383 2444
Fax: 020 7383 2666
Email: enquiries@ucea.ac.uk
Web: www.ucea.ac.uk

© All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of UCEA.

Foreword

I am very pleased to introduce this new report, *Taking action: Tackling the gender pay gap in higher education institutions*. The report presents the findings from a UCEA survey of higher education institutions (HEIs) that sought information on the actions they have identified to help close their gender pay gaps and how they went about developing an action plan. This report builds on previous work and analysis looking at the gender pay gap and equal pay in higher education (HE) done by UCEA through New JNCHES.

The survey drew an excellent response rate with replies from 115 HEIs from across the UK, providing a broad view of the extensive work being done on gender pay gap action plans. The report shows that almost all HEIs are pursuing interventions across a range of areas; recruitment, staff development, reward, addressing vertical and horizontal occupational segregation, flexible working, the work environment and family friendly initiatives all being identified.

The gender pay gap for the HE sector has narrowed substantially over the last decade with the median pay gap in HE standing at 14% according to ONS ASHE 2016-17 data. Closing or reducing the gender pay gap is not, however, easy or straightforward. The reasons for such a gap (both in the HE sector and elsewhere) are, of course, complex. Much is also dependent on the context of individual HEIs and we have huge diversity in the size and nature of HEIs' workforces. We all know that there is no one solution, intervention or 'quick fix' that will close the gap and that HEIs, as do other employers, have to consider where to prioritise their efforts and resources.

The survey examined both the kinds of interventions being pursued and how the action planning is being done. The involvement of different groups and stakeholders has been a particular area of examination and we have some useful findings in this area. The survey also asked about evaluation and we note some useful reflections but also that this is an area where it may be helpful to focus attention.

We would like to thank the colleagues in the sector who assisted on our steering group and, of course, the HEIs who took the time to complete the survey. We hope that all colleagues with an interest in this important issue will be grateful for the sharing of information and experiences and that there will be some useful learning for all the readers of this report.

Helen Fairfoul
Chief Executive

January 2019

Contents

Contents.....	2
1 Executive summary	3
2 Background to the survey	8
3 Status of action plans	9
4 Involvement.....	11
5 Actions to address the gender pay gap	15
5.1 Recruitment	19
5.2 Staff development.....	22
5.3 Reward.....	25
5.4 Vertical occupational segregation	28
5.5 Flexible working	30
5.6 Work environment	33
5.7 Family-friendly policies and initiatives.....	35
5.8 Horizontal occupational segregation	38
5.9 Contract type	41
6 Evaluation	43
7 Communicating Plans.....	44
8 Other pay gaps	45
8.1 Intersectionality.....	47
9 Athena SWAN and the HR Excellence in Research Award	47
10 Concluding comments	48
Appendix – profile of respondents	52
References.....	53

1 Executive summary

The higher education (HE) gender pay gap has narrowed substantially over the past decade. According to ONS ASHE data, between 2006-07 and 2016-17, the median gender pay gap in HE narrowed from 25% to 14%, while the median gender pay gap in the whole economy narrowed from 22% to 18%. There is, however, much work still to be done to tackle the issues behind the progression of women and gender distribution within the workforce. UCEA undertook work to explore what was being done by higher education institutions (HEIs) seeking to close their gender pay gap and to share the most impactful practices. This report presents the results of the survey UCEA undertook. The survey received a high level of responses providing a good representative spread of HEIs across the UK.

Key findings about action planning

Gender pay gap action planning is widespread among sector employers, with the overwhelming majority of respondents either already having a published plan or with one actively in development. A significant number (61%) of institutions with published plans said that their current plan was not their first action plan indicating that this is a well-established activity. The most common driver cited was the HEI duties under the Equality Act 2010 although work being done as part of an Athena SWAN process was also cited as a driver by around two thirds.

All institutions identified a broad range of actions or interventions within their plans. The report goes into detail on each of the main domains of activity and whether actions have a short, medium or longer-term focus. We encourage readers to look at Section 5 of the report which contains detailed examples of actions and interventions. The examination of responses illustrates the differences in choice and emphasis dependent on each institution's profile and context, but it is possible to discern some broad patterns between pre-92 and post-92 institutions and between those with higher and lower pay gaps.

A significant number of HEIs have already started to examine other pay gap data and a majority say they are examining or have plans around the examination of intersectionality issues.

Groups involved

HEIs involve a wide range of staff and stakeholders in developing their action plans, with senior management, HR and equality staff all highly likely to be involved with either a published or prospective plan.

Management groups (equality and diversity, senior management and HR) have similar levels of involvement at each stage in those HEIs with published plans, whereas the involvement of other stakeholders (staff networks, students unions and trade unions) is more varied. Equality and diversity and HR staff were most likely to have actively contributed to the plan (80% and 81%, respectively) while senior management were most commonly involved in signing off the document (80%).

Stakeholder groups were most likely to be consulted prior to the development of the plan and to actively contribute to the plan. Engagement levels of trade unions are reported at their highest when they are actively contributing to the plan or with sustained on-going involvement, while there is relatively lower engagement reported where trade unions are involved in the consultation process.

For those HEIs with prospective action plans, significantly more active and on-going involvement is reported or anticipated for staff networks, student unions and trade unions than for those with plans already published. Those with plans already published had a similar level of management involvement, but lower figures for active and ongoing involvement by staff networks (42%), trade unions (40%) and student unions (21%).

Actions to address the gender pay gap

There is a large range of actions and interventions being reported in plans. Actions related to recruitment, staff development and reward are the most commonly found, featuring in 95% of published action plans. Institutions tend to be undertaking actions in a broad range of areas with interventions also commonly targeting flexible working, the work environment and the family friendly nature of employment. Actions to specifically address vertical and horizontal segregation are also common.

In terms of specific actions within these broader areas, the most common activities are the provision of unconscious bias training (91%) and mental health and well-being initiatives (86%). The most common initiatives are well-balanced between employer-side (unconscious bias training, review of job adverts, analysis of promotion outcomes, and support for promotion) and employee-side interventions (wellbeing initiatives, encouraging applications, flexible working, return to work support and mentoring). Actions that address vertical and horizontal segregation are also well-balanced. The analysis of work-in-progress action plans shows that interventions related to contract type and horizontal segregation are now more common than in published action plans.

There are some significant differences in the types of interventions used by pre and post-92 English HEIs with higher and lower gender pay gaps.¹ The more common actions taken by pre-92 English HEIs with higher pay gaps include: proactively support promotion, offering flexible working in job adverts, supporting return to work. Those with lower gaps tend more to actions related to maintaining a good environment: wellbeing, encouraging a flexible working culture, as well as providing support for carers and coaching and mentoring. Post-92 English HEIs are less likely to focus on analysing pay review and promotion outcomes or looking at promotions processes than pre-92 comparators. Actions related to training for career progression as well as mentoring are more common among post-92 respondents with both higher and

¹ We define a Pre-92 (or Post-92) English HEI as having a higher/lower pay gap if its pay gap is above/below the median pay gap among Pre-92 (or Post-92) English HEIs. The median pay gap for Pre-92 and Post-92 English HEIs is 18.6% and 17%, respectively (based on statutory reported data by English HEIs only).

lower pay gaps, indicating a strong development focus on the supply side. For those post-92s with a higher pay gap, reviewing the reward policy is a higher priority whereas we see a similar focus on the working environment (wellbeing, flexible working culture) in those with a below average gap.

Evaluation

More than half of the institutions with a published action plan have metrics or targets associated with their plan, but only 29% described work they had done to evaluate whether the actions implemented were effective. The most common metric reported relates to increasing female representation in senior job levels, while a smaller number of HEIs explicitly target a reduction in the gender pay gap. Regarding evaluation, many HEIs reported they could not comment on their effectiveness of their actions yet either because they only recently started to enact them or because their evaluation is still under way. Of those institutions that have evaluated their actions, nearly half were able to identify some immediate positive impact. Among the interventions evaluated as effective were: changes to progression and promotion processes for professors; a job evaluation review for senior support staff; and annual reviews of senior academics' profiles to identify those that are eligible to apply for the next level.

Communicating plans

In terms of communicating their action plans to different stakeholders, the large majority of institutions identified sharing their published plan with their equality and diversity committee and with trade unions (71% and 68% respectively). More than 65% of HEIs identified making their action plan publicly available, and the same proportion sharing it with the governing body. Institutions that have not published their plan yet have communication plans that include making it available to all staff (72%), trade unions (59%) and E&D committees (56%). More than half of institutions with either a published or a prospective action plan are also engaging with other HEIs or organisations to share progress and experiences in relation to their gender pay gap action planning.

Other pay gaps

The majority of published action plans address gender and do not additionally address other pay gaps. However, actions related to race, ethnicity and nationality feature in more than a third of published plans. Other pay gaps also being analysed include disability and full-time/part-time modes of employment.

Institutions are generally aware of the importance of intersectionality, with 63% of institutions including or planning to include an intersectional perspective when analysing their pay gaps. Examining the intersection of gender and ethnicity is the most commonly referenced approach, with more than one third of institutions reporting that they are investigating it. A smaller number of institutions are also looking at the intersection of gender with age, sexual orientation and mode of working.

Athena SWAN and the HR Excellence in Research Award

Institutions that applied for or received an Athena SWAN Charter Award reported they found this useful when developing their action plan. In particular, institutions reported that Athena SWAN provided a useful and rigorous framework for examining policies and processes and tackling a broad range of issues in a logical and structured way.

Institutions that received an HR Excellence in Research Award reported they are implementing a broad range of actions related to research staff. These include mentoring and one-to-one career support to address gender balanced progression. Some institutions also reported performing qualitative analysis to investigate why women were waiting longer to apply for academic promotion than men and evaluating mentoring schemes for women in STEMM.

Conclusions

We draw the following general conclusions:

- Employers should maintain focus on their core equality objectives rather than attempting to target the absolute level of the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap can be a useful indicator but can be an unsophisticated metric and targets may be better focused, for example, on gender balance both vertically and horizontally within the organisation.
- HEIs indicate that they are keen to learn from each other and whilst learning from other HEIs may help institutions better target their resources, HEIs should continue to focus on interventions tailored to their own specific context. Sector bodies may be able to assist in the sharing of learning.
- HEIs should continue to consider the wide range of stakeholders with whom to engage and consult in developing and carrying out their action plans.
- HEIs might consider whether they can do more to promote their employer brand and value proposition as part of conveying the attractiveness of employment in the sector in terms of flexibility and opportunity.
- Whilst recognising that establishing the causality relationship of various actions on the gender pay gap is not straightforward as the reasons for the gap are generally multi-factorial, HEIs should continue their efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of their actions, especially for cost-intensive interventions. Sector bodies might play a role in sharing findings, reviewing the evidence from evaluation studies and supporting evaluation activities.
- As more employers in other sectors take steps to address gender pay gaps, HEIs might also look outside HE at what actions have been taken and what has been effective. The Government Equalities Office, for example, published a toolkit in

August 2018² setting out actions employers can take to improve gender equality which provides a useful reference as to what works in other sectors and more than half of HEIs now developing a plan report making use of this.

- Whilst recognising that there may be constraints especially around HEIs having meaningful data on ethnicity, intersectionality in pay gaps is an important extension of the analysis that HEIs may wish to undertake, particularly at the intersection of ethnicity and gender. The insights may be an important consideration for gender pay gap action plans. This will be increasingly important with the Government's plan to introduce ethnicity pay reporting.
- HEIs should consider the communication plan for their published action plans noting the need to demonstrate their commitments, actions and progress to various stakeholders. Whilst not a requirement, HEIs doing statutory pay gap reports might wish to consider appending their gender pay gap action plan along with their statutory submissions and narrative reports.

² https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/public/assets/pdf/Evidence-based_actions_for_employers.pdf

2 Background to the survey

The HE gender pay gap has narrowed substantially over the past decade. According to ONS ASHE data, between 2006-07 and 2016-17, the median gender pay gap in HE narrowed from 25% to 14%, while the median gender pay gap in the whole economy narrowed from 22% to 18%. While there is much work still to be done to tackle the issues behind the pay and progression of women in our workplaces, the HE sector is heading in the right direction. UCEA has been undertaking work to support members in this area over the past few years, some jointly with the sector trade unions:

- During 2015 UCEA and the sector trade unions (GMB, EIS, UCU, UNISON and Unite) worked together to produce the [New JNCHEs Gender Pay Working Group Report](#) which examined examples of work done by HE employers in understanding the nature of gender pay gaps, contributing factors and the types of interventions they were making to address them.
- In 2016 UCEA and the HE trade unions worked to produce the [New JNCHEs Higher Education gender pay gap data report](#) with input from the former Equality Challenge Unit. This report took a detailed look at sector-level gender pay gap data, providing both greater insight into the nature of the pay gaps observable in HE and a platform from which future HE sector-level benchmarking could be done.
- There was further joint work by UCEA and the sector trade unions with the publication in January 2018 of the [New JNCHEs Equal Pay Reviews and Gender Pay Gap Reporting - Guidance for HEIs](#). This revised Guidance updated and built on the previous 2015 version by encompassing the new gender pay gap reporting requirements.

Recognising the importance of tackling the issues behind the pay and progression of women in the sector and also in the context of the 2018 statutory gender pay gap reporting requirements, UCEA undertook a survey of HEIs in September to October 2018 to find out more about HEIs' action planning. The survey sought to identify the extent and patterns of gender pay gap action plans being developed in HEIs, how this action planning has been done and to identify what actions were viewed as effective in closing the gender pay gap. The survey of HEIs was developed with input from a steering group of employer representatives from the higher education HR community and a representative from Advance HE.

Steering group

Kate Bradley	University of Leicester
Amy Causley	University of Liverpool
Sonya Clarkson	Edge Hill University
Roshan Israni	UCEA
Alison McGrand	UCEA
Fiona Millar	University of Glasgow

Andrew Mullen	University of Manchester
Clare Peterson	University of Gloucestershire
Ellen Pugh	Advance HE
Viola Salvestrini	UCEA

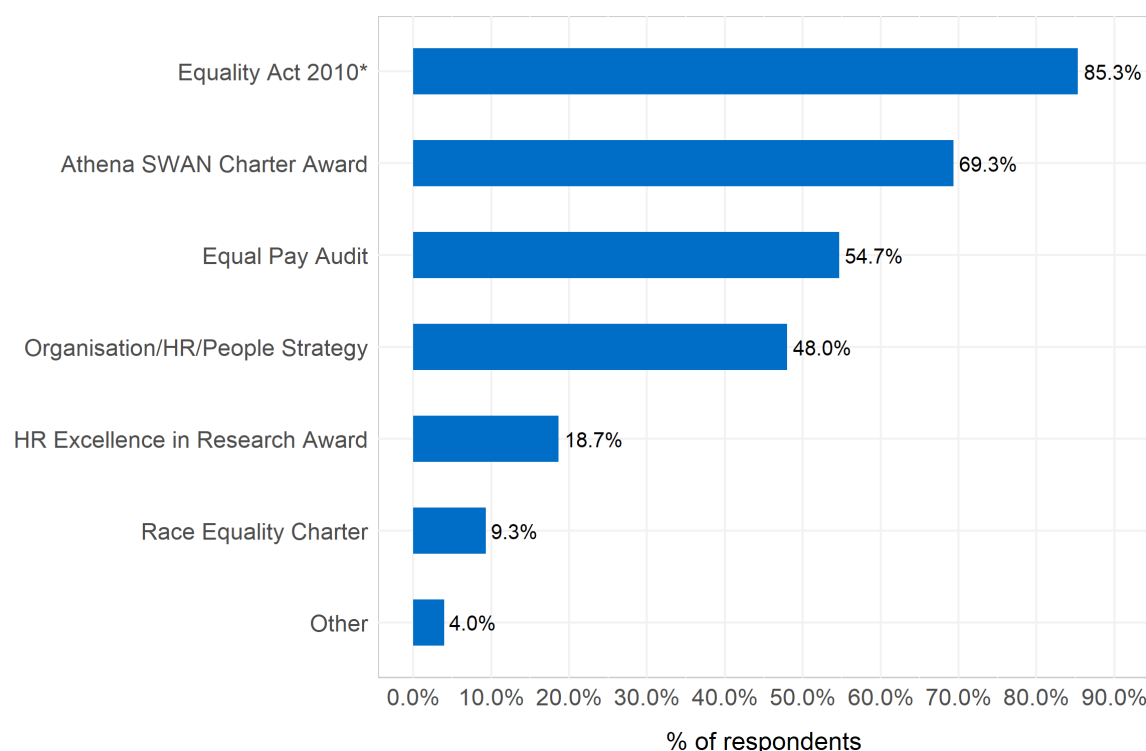
The survey asked a series of questions on action planning experience and the involvement of stakeholders. This was followed by a section focused on the action plans themselves, including areas of intervention, the timelines and the specific actions being undertaken by HEIs. Finally, the survey asked what institutions are doing to examine pay gaps other than gender and if they are adopting an intersectional approach in doing so. Each section could be answered either from the perspective of an institution that has a developed action plan or from the perspective of an institution with an action plan currently in development. The survey was sent to all UCEA member institutions in September 2018 and we received responses from 115 members. The analysis was carried out by UCEA with additional support from Incomes Data Research.

3 Status of action plans

Two thirds of respondents had published an action plan within the past three years, with 72% of these respondents publishing a plan in the previous twelve months. Of those with published action plans, 61% had already published an action plan previously. The remainder mostly reported that they have a work-in-progress action plan (28%). Only 6% of respondents said that they had not recently published an action plan and were not currently working on one. These HEIs were either small specialist institutions and/or HEIs that had not identified significant gender pay gaps. The analysis presented in this report primarily focuses on the 94% of respondents that have either a published action plan or an action plan in progress. These groups are disaggregated in the analysis.

The action plans published by HEIs are most commonly described as driven through duties under the Equality Act 2010 (85%), including the statutory duties in each nation. The next most commonly reported driver is the Athena SWAN process (69%). Action plans are also created as part of Equal Pay Audits (55%) and the HEI's organisational or people strategy (48%) – Figure 1. In many cases HEIs have published an action plan as a consequence of two or more of these drivers.

Figure 1: Main drivers for creation of action plan



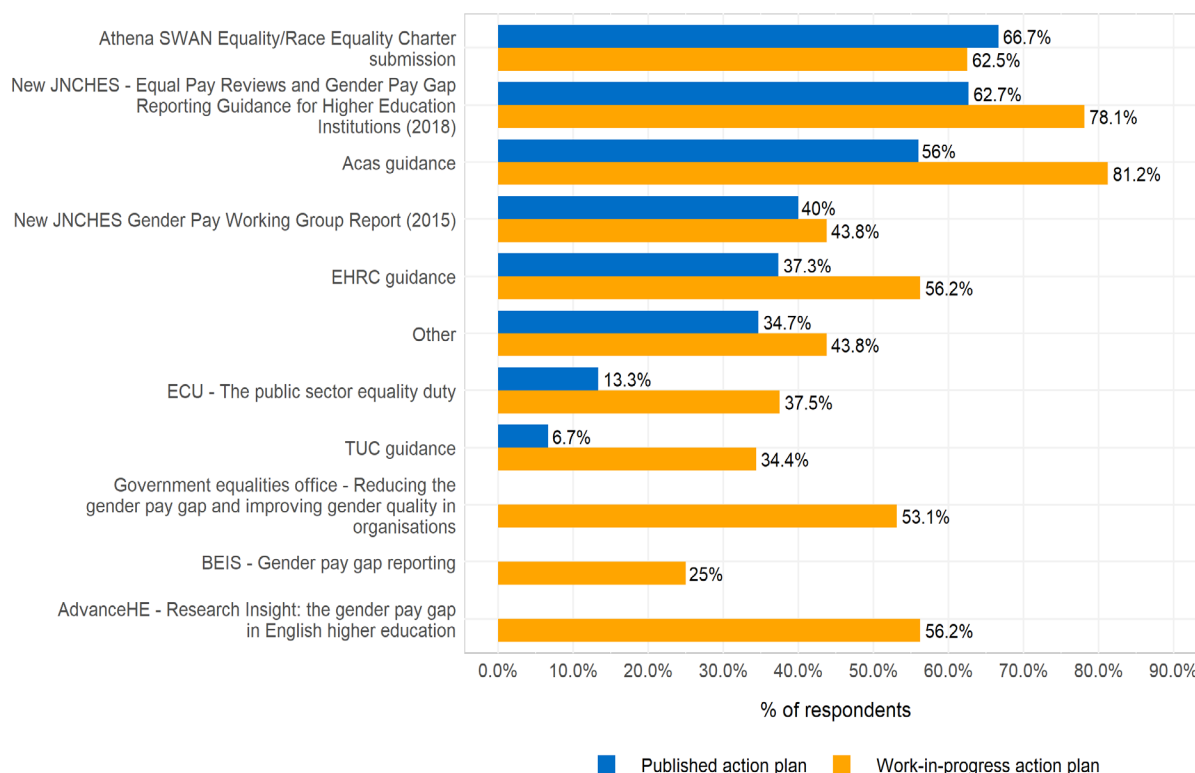
Notes: *Includes Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, and Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. Based on information provided by 75 HEIs.

For those HEIs with published action plans, the guidance most commonly used in developing their action plans was Athena SWAN documentation (67%) and the Equal Pay Review guidance published by New JNCHES (63%). Non-sector specific guidance from Acas (56%) and the EHRC (37%) was also popular. For those HEIs with action plans in development, Acas and recent New JNCHES gender pay guidance is more likely to be used but these documents were published after some of the HEIs with existing action plans developed their plans. EHRC, ECU and TUC guidance are also more likely to be used by HEIs with work-in-progress action plans. There is also significant interest in recent resources from the Government Equalities Office and Advance HE and use of resources from the Department for Business, Enterprise, Innovation and Skills (Figure 2). Other documents referred to by respondents in both groups include:

- CIPD Gender Pay Gap Reporting Guide
- Gender Pay Gap – Closing it Together (CIPD/GEO)
- Gov.uk guidance
- Other universities' Athena SWAN applications
- XpertHR guidance
- Data from the Office for National Statistics
- Resources from closethegap.org.uk

Respondents also referred to information that they gathered from UCEA briefing sessions and UHR networks as well as examples from organisations in other sectors accessed through the Government's reporting portal.

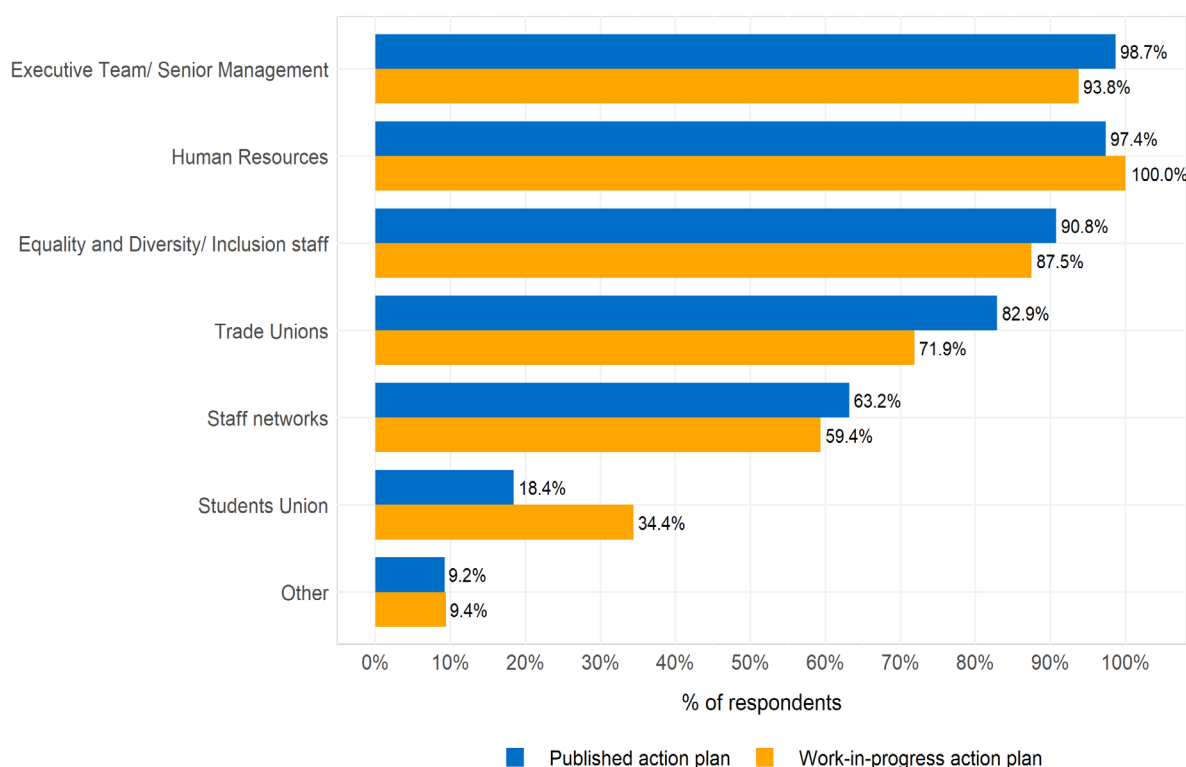
Figure 2: Documents used by HEIs in developing their action plans



4 Involvement

HEIs involve a wide range of staff and stakeholders in developing their action plans, with senior management, HR and equality staff being involved in 88% or more of HEIs with published or prospective plans. Trade unions were the next most commonly involved group with 83% of HEIs with published plans reporting their involvement and 72% of those with plans in development. The majority of respondents in both groups report the involvement of staff networks. Student unions were only involved in 18% of those with published plans but the involvement of student unions is nearly twice as likely in HEIs with plans in progress – Figure 3. Other groups involved include Athena SWAN working groups, remuneration and finance committees and departmental heads. One Pre-92 respondent explained that the HEI invited contributions and ideas from all members of staff to highlight actions and activities that could contribute to the action plan. Some HEIs also commented that groups were involved through existing mechanisms such as an equality and diversity committee or, in the case of trade unions, a joint consultative committee.

Figure 3: Groups/ stakeholders involved



The nature of involvement of management groups (E&D, HR, Executive team) tends to follow a similar profile in those HEIs with published plans, whereas that of other stakeholders is more varied (Figure 4). Equality and diversity staff and HR staff are most likely to have actively contributed to the plan (80-81%) and been involved throughout the process (68-69%). Senior management, unsurprisingly, were most commonly involved in being consulted before the action plan was developed (56%) and in signing off the document (80%). Among the main stakeholder groups, it appears common for these groups, where involved, to be consulted prior to the development of the plan and to actively contribute to the plan. For plans already published, staff networks (42%) and trade unions (40%) were more likely to be involved throughout than student unions (21%). For those HEIs with prospective action plans, a similar balance of management involvement is apparent, but significantly more active and on-going involvement is reported or anticipated for staff networks, student unions and trade unions (Figure 5). It is clear from comments received by respondents that there are a range of approaches to engagement and involvement across the sector and also that for some HEIs engagement with certain groups may have been limited to a set of relevant activities rather than the action plan as a whole.

Figure 4: Level of involvement of management and stakeholders – published action plans
For each group, respondents could select one or more stages in which the group was involved.

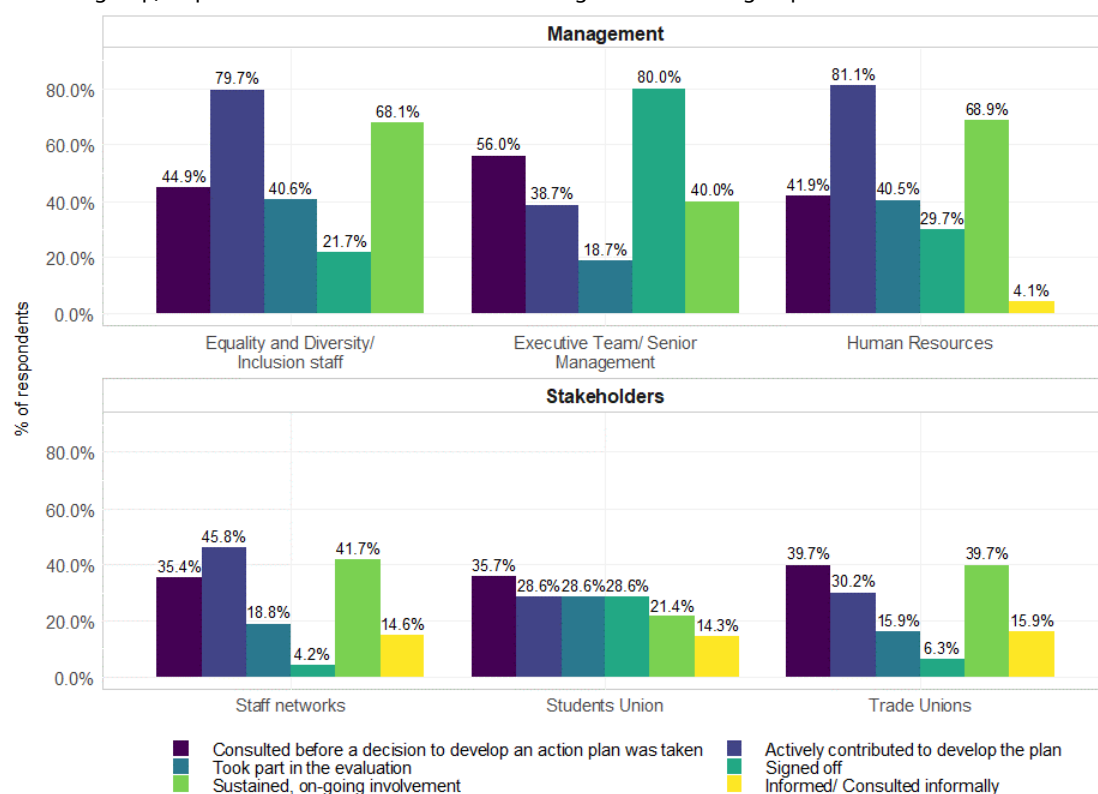
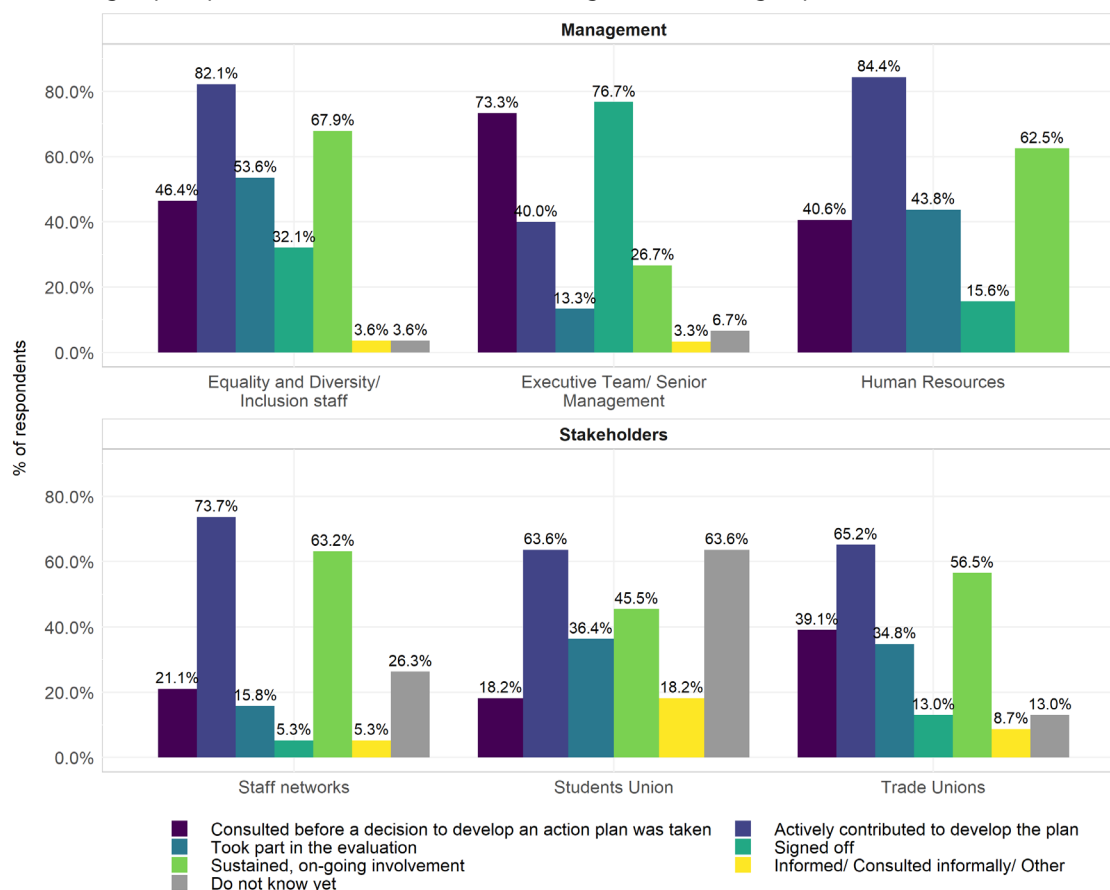


Figure 5: Level of involvement of management and stakeholders – prospective action plans
For each group, respondents could select one or more stages in which the group was involved.



Respondents were asked to rate the levels of engagement from trade unions in their gender pay gap action plans (Figure 6). Engagement levels are reported as highest for trade unions actively contributing to the plan or with sustained on-going involvement, while relatively less engagement is reported when trade unions are involved in the consultation process. Of those that had sustained and ongoing involvement, 69% said the trade unions were either very engaged or engaged while for those that were actively contributing to the plan 63% reported either engaged or very engaged. Comments from respondents indicate a range of approaches to involving trade unions in the development of action plans:

Trade Unions were consulted via Equality and Diversity Working Group on the mandatory Equality & Diversity training as well as the work of Aurora Leadership Development Programme and the Senior Women's Network. Trade Unions are involved in the review of our policies via the Policy Review Group where they are very engaged. (Pre-92, Scotland)

Although the Trade Unions were not directly involved at the development stage, they are consulted on changes to policies, process and initiatives that come out of the Athena SWAN Action Plan. (Pre-92, Scotland)

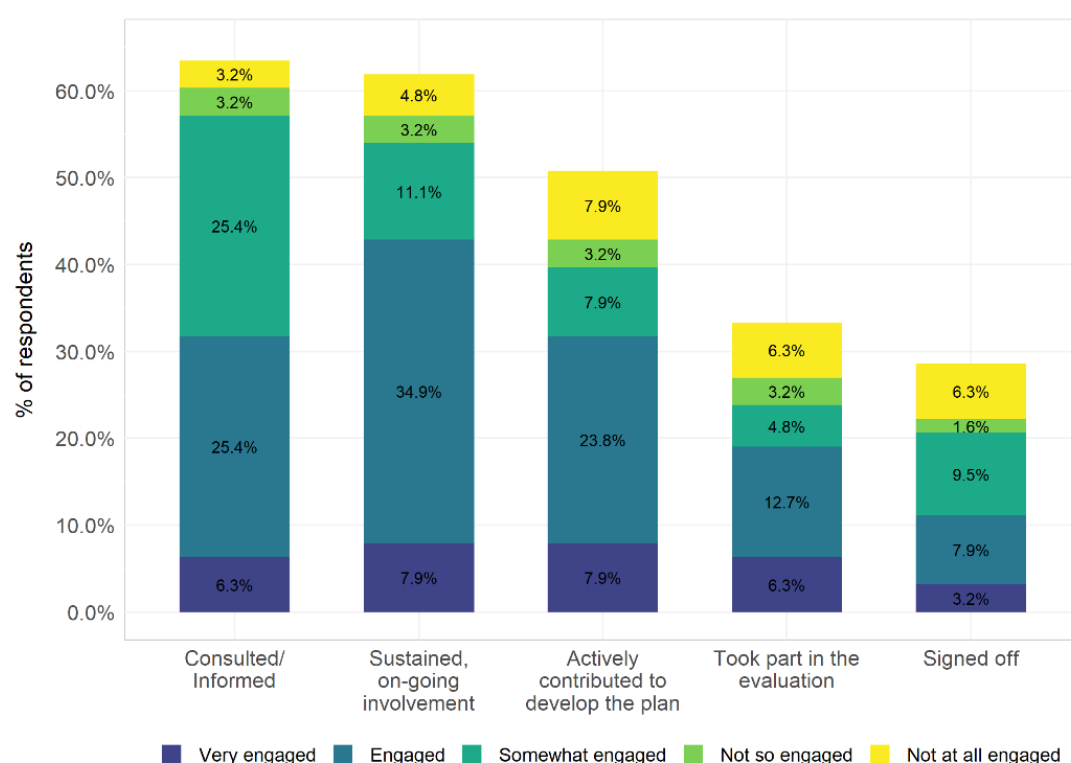
Consultation did not take place around the decision to develop an equal pay action plan, as this is a statutory duty for all public authorities in Wales. Trade Union representatives have been involved as key members of the Equal Pay Working Group throughout all aspects of this work. (Post-92, Wales)

We are engaged with UCU to jointly agree an action plan, and to monitor and review that plan together regularly to ensure we achieve our shared objective of eliminating the gender pay gap among academic staff at the University. (Pre-92, England)

We presented a draft action plan to the TU with the GPG report and invited contributions / ideas of actions. We also repeated this exercise when a more detailed final report was available and invited ongoing engagement to review activity and implementation. (Pre-92, England)

The collaborative approach of the recognised trade unions was helpful and positive. (Pre-92, England)

Figure 6: Trade union involvement and engagement

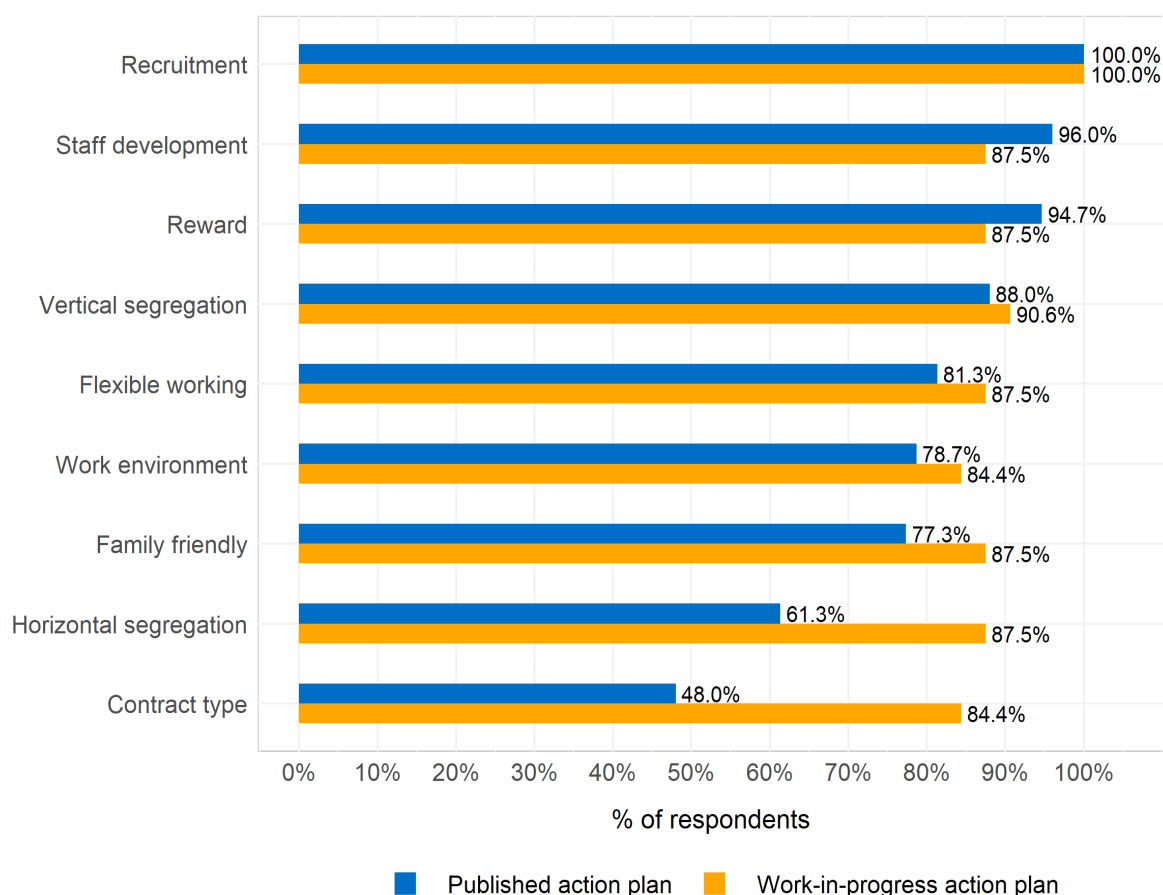


5 Actions to address the gender pay gap

This section provides an overview of the main areas of policy where gender pay gap actions are targeted and then offers greater detail on specific interventions and approaches within each of the nine domains identified.

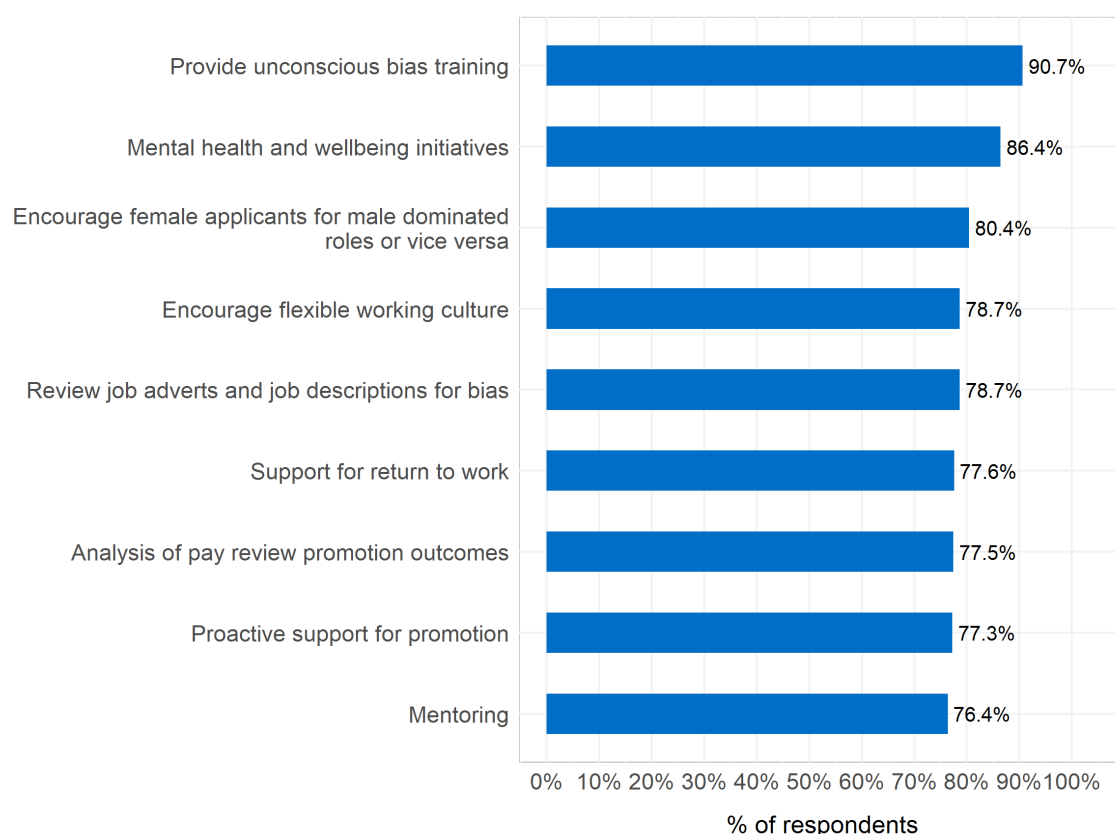
HEIs reported actions across a broad range of areas with actions related to recruitment, staff development and reward featuring in 95% of published actions. Other popular areas to target interventions are flexible working, the work environment and the family friendly nature of employment. Actions to specifically address vertical and horizontal segregation, which are typically identified as structural factors that contribute to the gender pay gap, are also common, although horizontal segregation measures feature less prominently in published action plans relative to vertical segregation. The balance of focus is similar in published and prospective action plans with the exception of measures to address horizontal segregation and actions related to contracts, both of which are significantly more likely to feature in prospective action plans – Figure 7.

Figure 7: Broad areas of intervention covered in action plans



In terms of the specific actions within these broader areas, the most common activities are the provision of unconscious bias training (91%) and mental health and well-being initiatives (86%). The hierarchy of these activities is not necessarily reflective of what works or what is relevant, but it is clear that there is a typical cluster of initiatives that is popular in the sector with at least three-quarters of HEIs taking the actions identified in Figure 8. The initiatives are well-balanced between employer-side (e.g. unconscious bias training, review of job adverts and analysis of promotion outcomes) and employee-side interventions (e.g. wellbeing initiatives, encouraging applications, flexible working, return to work support and mentoring). Actions that address vertical and horizontal segregation are also well-balanced.

Figure 8: Most common specific interventions across all policy areas



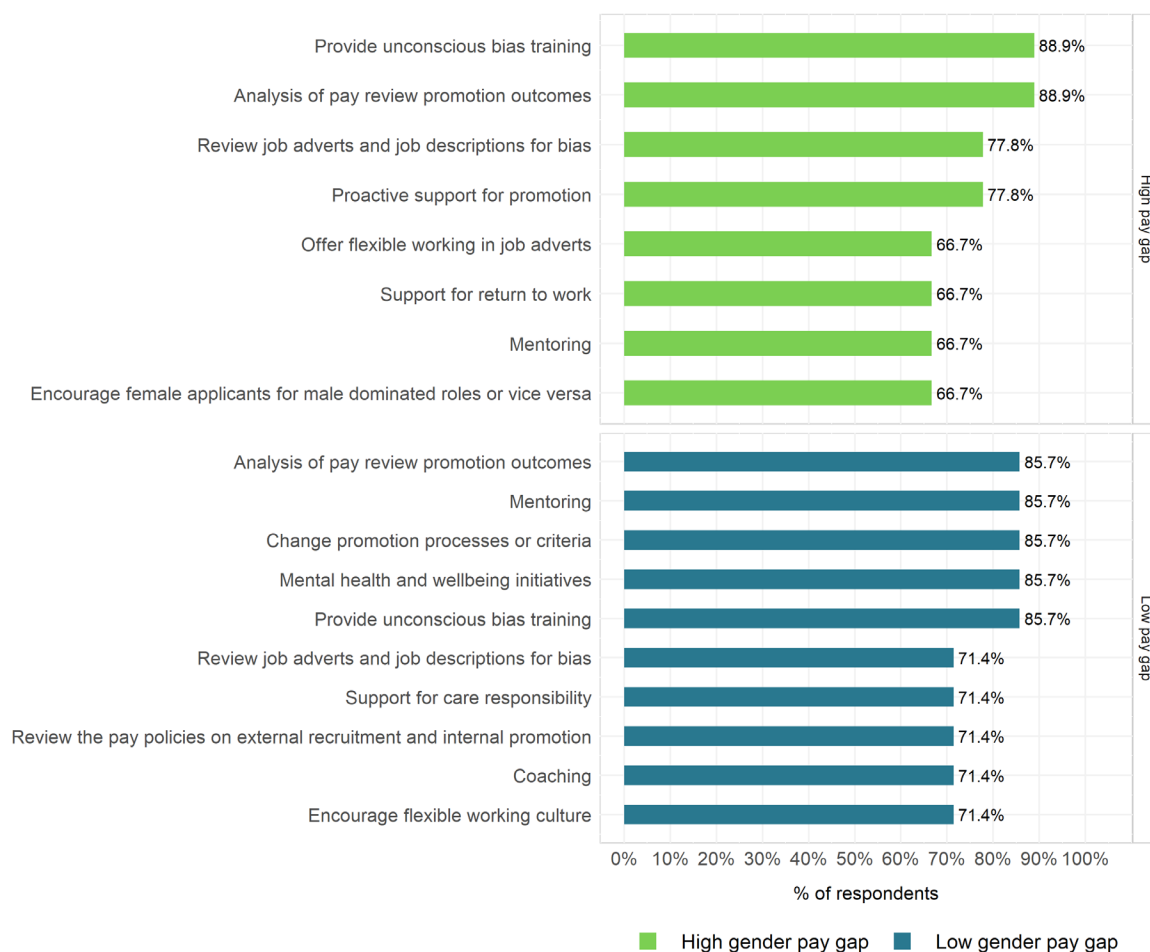
There are some significant differences in the types of interventions used by pre and post-92 HEIs and those with higher and lower gender pay gaps. The charts that follow (Figure 9 and Figure 10) are based on statutory pay gap data so are limited to respondents in England only. We have grouped pre-92 and post-92 institutions by whether they have an above or below average gender pay gap for that institutional type³. We would caution that this segmentation of the respondent sample does not imply that there is a correlation between these actions and the size of the gender pay gap, indeed as these are action plans the actions have not necessarily taken place, but we were interested in whether those with higher or lower pay gaps are taking different approaches.

There is some general overlap between those in the pre-92 sample of respondents, particularly on unconscious bias training, analysis of pay review and promotion outcomes and the review of job adverts and descriptions, which all feature regularly in action plans. Specific actions that are more likely in pre-92s with above average gaps include proactive support for promotion (78%), support for return to work (67%) and offering flexible working in job adverts (67%). These institutions are also more likely to be tackling horizontal segregation through encouraging applications from females into

³ We define a Pre-92 (or Post-92) HEI as having a higher/lower pay gap if its pay gap is above/below the median pay gap for Pre-92 (or Post-92) HEIs. The median pay gap for Pre-92 and Post-92 HEIs is 18.6% and 17%, respectively.

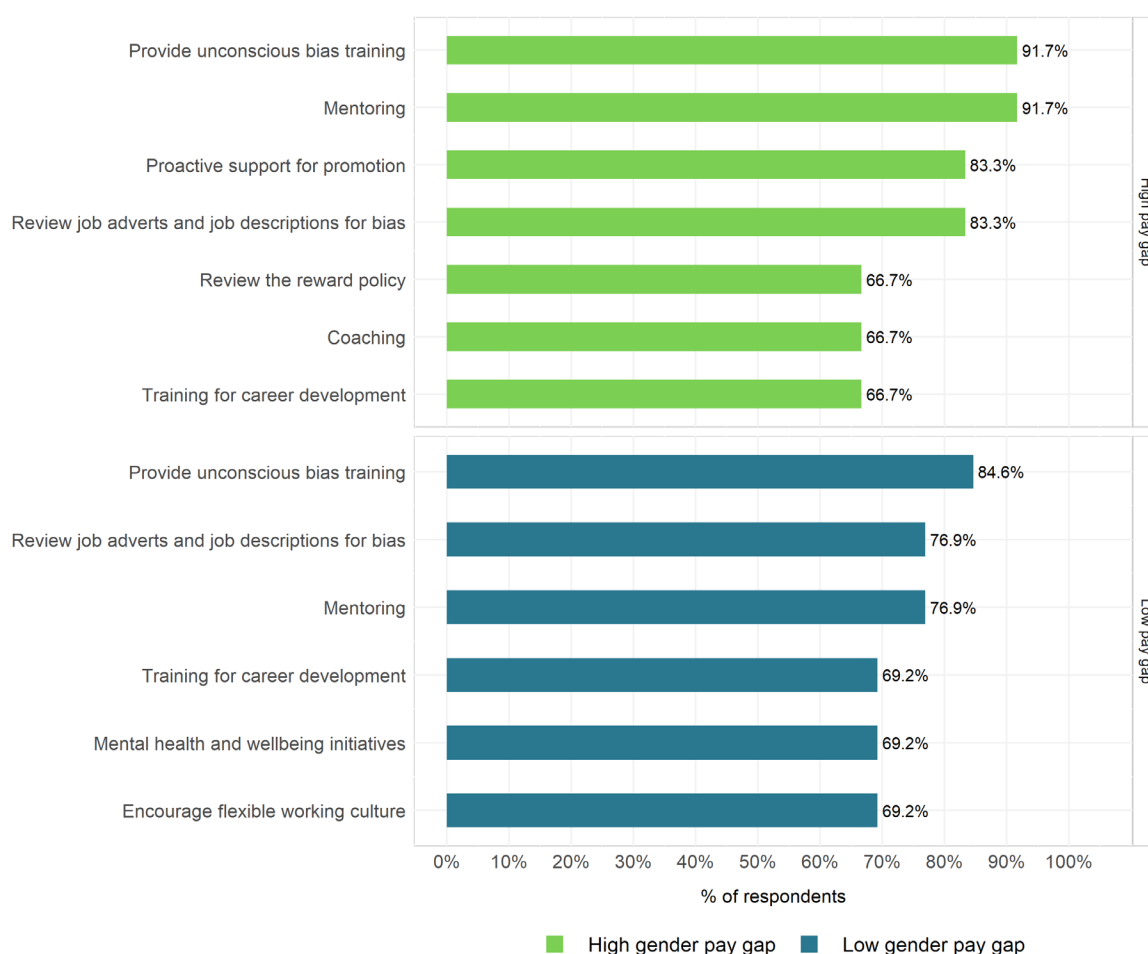
male dominated roles (and vice versa). In contrast, pre-92s with lower than average pay gaps are more likely to be focusing on mentoring and coaching programmes, looking at promotion processes, reviewing pay policies and encouraging a flexible working culture. The more common actions taken by those with higher pay gaps include: proactively support promotion, offering flexible working, supporting return to work. Those with below average gaps tended to be more related to maintaining a good environment: wellbeing, coaching and mentoring, encouraging flexible working and providing support for carers – Figure 9.

Figure 9: Most common specific actions – pre-92 institutions



Both groups of post-92 respondents differ from the pre-92 respondents in terms of the most common specific actions, but there are also differences between those with above and below average pay gaps. Unlike pre-92s the analysis of pay review and promotion outcomes does not feature in the list, nor does looking at promotions processes. Actions related to training for career progression feature in both post-92 groups as does mentoring, indicating a strong development focus on the employee side. For those post-92s with a higher pay gap, reviewing the reward policy is a higher priority whereas we see a similar focus on the working environment (wellbeing, flexible working culture) in those with a below average gap – Figure 10.

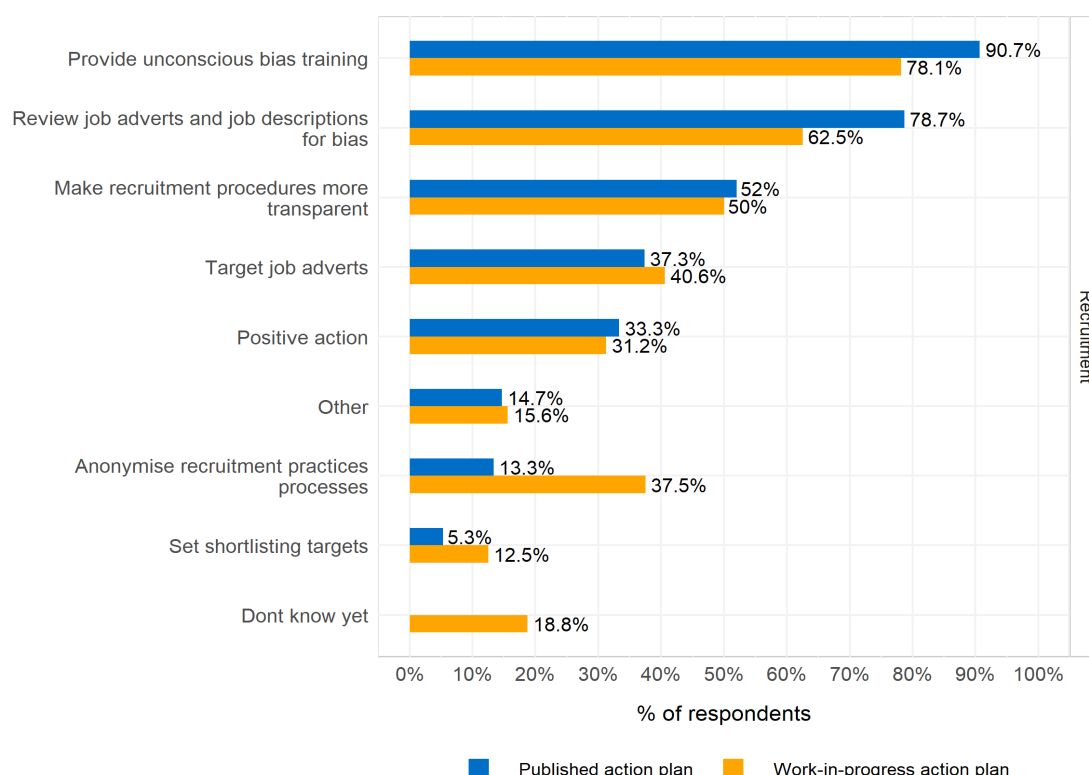
Figure 10: Most common specific actions – post-92 institutions



5.1 Recruitment

The overwhelming majority (91%) of HEIs that published an action plan are providing unconscious bias training, while 78% of institutions that are currently working on their action plan intend to do so. Reviewing job adverts and job description for bias is the second most frequent action in recruitment, for both institutions with a published or a prospective plan (79% and 63%, respectively). Making recruitment procedures more transparent is also common, with half of respondents doing so or planning to do so. While more than a third of institutions with a prospective plan intend to anonymise recruitment practices, only 13% of HEIs with a published plan are doing this – Figure 11.

Figure 11: Recruitment



The main short-term actions (i.e. those achieved or scheduled to be completed within a year) relate to reviewing job adverts and job descriptions for bias and offering unconscious bias training to recruiting managers. This is the case irrespective of institutional type (pre/post) or whether the plan is prospective or published. These areas were also the predominant focus for many action plans over the medium and longer term (one to two years and two years or longer respectively).

Short-term actions

- Achieving gender neutrality in job adverts** – Many HEIs said they use specialist software such as Gender Decoder or Textio to help ensure the wording of job adverts and related documentation is gender-neutral, while others make an active effort to use gender-neutral language. One pre-92 HEI said it had worked with focus groups to review job adverts and job descriptions for roles with a current gender imbalance and planned to evaluate any difference in outcomes after trialling different language for such vacancies. Another respondent has reviewed person specifications to remove any non-essential requirements for key roles. While most respondents appear to be carrying out these activities across the board, one pre-92 HEI stated that the review of job adverts, job descriptions and recruitment processes has focused on associate professors.
- Using unconscious bias training** – Where available, unconscious bias training is typically offered to all recruiting managers although one HEI reserves it for recruitment panel chairs. Some HEIs offer face-to-face courses while others

deliver such training online. However, the fact that some respondents said they had moved to make such training mandatory suggests that it may be optional elsewhere.

- **Targeting advertising to attract female candidates** – A handful of HEIs have already started to use targeted advertising: one pre-92 HEI said it was now using search committees and targeted advertising to attract high-quality female candidates for externally-listed appointments, particularly to higher grades, while another now advertises vacancies in a wider range of publications. More generally, several respondents have started to add positive action statements to their job advertisements or promote the opportunity for flexible working arrangements. One post-92 HEI said it was seeking to improve its recruitment material by rethinking the images it used and has started to include information about Athena SWAN in job adverts. It now also offers accommodation -related assistance to candidates applying for under-represented roles.
- **Anonymising applications to reduce bias** – Several HEIs are proposing to anonymise aspects of the recruitment process – for example, by removing first names or salary information from applications – while one has already started to pilot this in its professional services division.

Medium-term actions

Medium-term plans frequently reference **unconscious bias training**, **gender-neutral job adverts** and the **promotion of flexible working** but there is also greater mention of **targeted adverts** and **shortlisting targets**. For example, one pre-92 HEI has started to target job adverts to attract female BME applicants, while another intends to monitor all recruitment shortlists for readers and professors to ensure that, where possible, no male-only lists are provided to selection panels. The published action plan at a further pre-92 HEI, meanwhile, includes a medium-term goal to place an expectation on head-hunters as part of the tender process that they will target under-represented groups. Several published action plans also cite a more general review of recruitment practices as a medium-term objective. Among the HEIs with prospective action plans, medium-term recruitment actions are fairly generalised but two (one pre-92 and one post-92) cite the need to review starting salaries.

Long-term actions

The HEIs with published action plans were more likely to have included long-term actions of two years or more. Once again, these often picked up on the recurring themes of **unconscious bias training** and **reviewing job adverts**, while two planned to introduce **greater transparency to the recruitment process**. One pre-92 HEI said it had started to consider how to attract more women to STEM occupations, while another is seeking to increase female applications to senior roles. One pre-92 HEI, meanwhile, plans to give executive recruitment firms a target of at least 30% female shortlists and to implement aspirational targets (initially 30%) for female

representation in professorial, senior lecturer and reader roles. The published action plan at a post-92 HEI intends to investigate why men are less likely to apply for lower-grade positions and to take positive action to make such applications more attractive.

Just four HEIs with prospective action plans identified long-term objectives, and these were largely generic commitments to ensuring equality and compliance in recruitment processes.

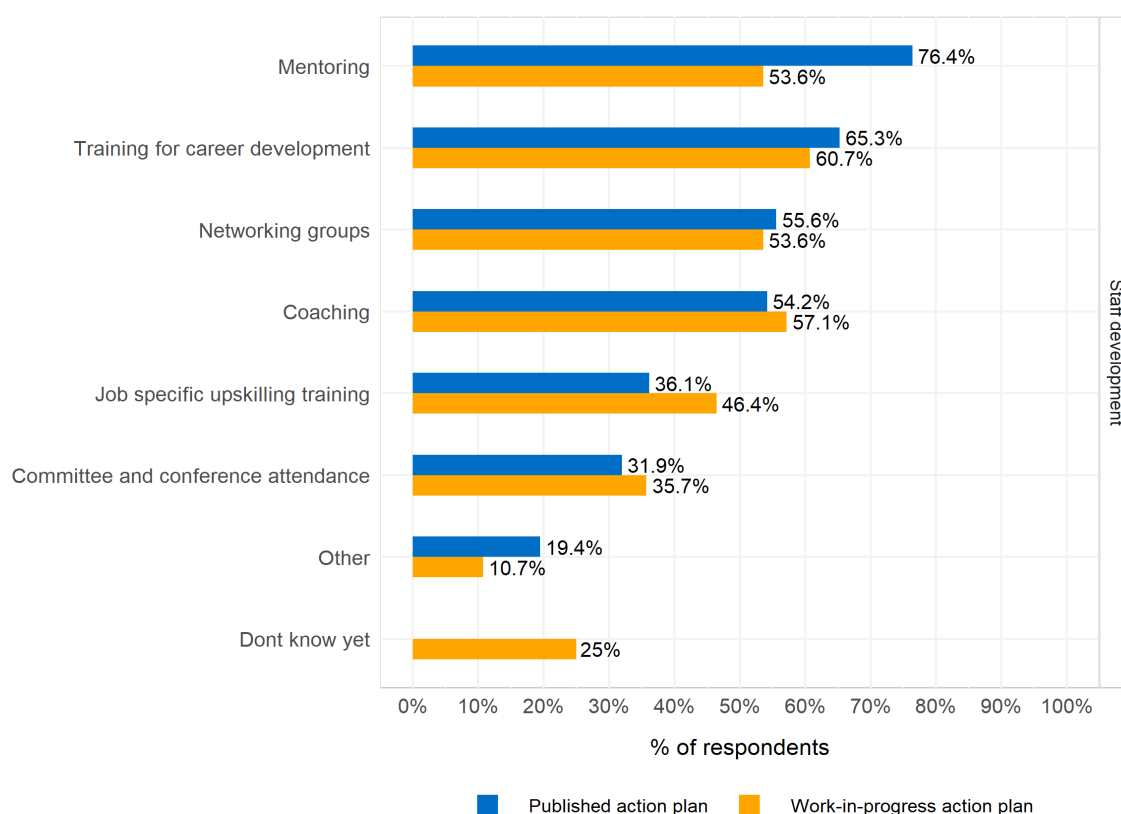
Overall trends on recruitment

Looking at trends across the sample, a number of HEIs said they had sought to **make interview panels more balanced** or intended to do so – one pre-92 HEI, for example, has compiled a database of women who can sit on interview panels. A handful of HEIs said they were looking to **make recruitment processes more transparent**. Limited detail was provided in this regard although one post-92 HEI intends to start making its selection criteria clearer in terms of required and preferred competencies. Several respondents said they **monitored applicant data** with reference to gender throughout the recruitment process or planned to make greater efforts to do so. A handful provided more detail on this – for example, two respondents (one pre-92 and one post-92 HEI) intend to review recruitment data for posts in senior grades ‘to identify at what stage we see a drop-off in females.’ Another post-92 HEI has investigated the gender balance of employees in senior academic grades and identified a need to increase the number of women at this level in the faculty of science and technology and the number of men in the faculty of health, social care and education.

5.2 Staff development

As far as staff development is concerned, around three quarters (76%) of institutions with a published action plan focus on mentoring. Other popular actions include offering training for career development (65%) and networking groups (56%). Training for career development is the most common intervention among institutions that are working on their action plan, followed closely by coaching (61% and 57%, respectively) – Figure 12.

Figure 12: Staff development



The published action plans at pre and post-92 HEIs place a broadly equal emphasis on short-term objectives, which represent about two-fifths of this sample. Action plans at post-92 HEIs contain a similar proportion of medium-term goals, whereas at pre-92 HEIs the focus is more evenly spread between medium- and longer-term plans. Within prospective action plans, actions tend to focus much more on the short-term (more than two-thirds of this much smaller sample).

Mentoring, sometimes also rolled in together with coaching, is by far the most frequently-cited area: around a fifth of all published action plans relate to commitments in this area and many of these are short-term objectives. An equally popular area of focus in the short-term is **equality, diversity and inclusion training**, closely followed by **networking groups**. Some HEIs also have short-term plans in the area of **training for career development**.

Short-term actions

- **Mentoring** – several HEIs have plans to introduce a mentoring scheme or say they plan to do more to promote their existing ones – sometimes with a particular focus on under-represented groups. For example, one pre-92 HEI says it will ‘develop case studies of male mentors so that it’s not seen as a predominantly female activity.’ At other HEIs, by contrast, mentoring programmes are focused towards women, sometimes at a senior level. A short-term goal at another HEI, meanwhile, is to reduce the time to connect mentors with mentees.

- **Equality, diversity and inclusion training** – this area was not presented as a specific survey choice but nonetheless arises frequently within short-term plans. As with recruitment, this often relates to unconscious bias training. For example, such courses or other equality, diversity and inclusion training are now offered as part of the induction process at some HEIs.
- **Networking groups** – many respondents have established (or refreshed existing) women’s networking groups to support female career development. At one HEI this is reserved for women in science, for example. Another said that their ‘group’s programme includes events and invited speakers to offer advice, support and share their experiences.’
- **Training for career development** – few HEIs provided specific detail in this regard but two HEIs reference the Springboard training programme, which one describes as ‘the award-winning work and personal development programme for women, which is currently offered to University staff’. A pre-92 HEI intends to ‘strengthen our staff development programme further with support for personal development and career progression, with a particular focus on minority groups.’
- In terms of other short-term plans, the published actions at two post-92 institutions (and three prospective action plans) include changes to their **performance appraisal/personal development review** processes. One HEI has ‘introduced a new appraisal system to allow greater transparency and opportunities,’ while another has linked PDRs to career development and academic promotions. At a further post-92 HEI, ‘training events are to be available on different days and at different times to enable those working part-time’ to engage in them.

Medium-term actions

Mentoring features even more prominently within medium-term action plans and these are often aimed at particular staff groups. For example, the programme at a pre-92 HEI focuses on associate lecturers, while another says it is ‘introducing a centrally-managed mentoring scheme for early-career researchers.’ Some respondents specifically aim their mentoring programmes at female staff and one post-92 HEI has plans to ‘increase the number of female mentors where they are under-represented in senior positions.’

Within prospective action plans, an objective at one pre-92 HEI is for ‘faculties to co-ordinate inter-School mentoring where possible, by advertising skill sets available, particularly where women are low in numbers and would like to be mentored by a senior woman.’

Coaching is also mentioned in five published action plans but with limited additional detail. However, in its prospective action plan one pre-92 HEI intends to implement 'female-only training programmes for senior academics in the professoriate, similar to coaching.'

Training for career development also arises fairly frequently as a medium-term action. One pre-92 HEI has started to 'offer career development programmes for non-management employees and is seeking to stimulate the pipeline of both genders to non-traditional areas of work'. Another says that 'a number of female-specific career development opportunities are offered, and uptake is monitored.' Looking at prospective actions in this area, one post-92 HEI says it intends to 'implement a modified version of the [Tromso Promotion Project](#) for female members of academic staff to support upward career transition and ensure that readers have a five-year development plan towards a professorial application.'

Long-term actions

Once again, **mentoring** is a priority for many institutions in their long-term action plans. Over the longer-term, HEIs variously intend to 'introduce a mentoring scheme for professional support roles', implement 'coaching and mentoring with a focus on under-represented groups in senior roles,' and continue with existing return-to-work mentoring for staff who have been on maternity leave.

One (pre-92) HEI has started the process of 'developing job families and clearly defined career pathways for professional staff, which will allow an understanding of what skills are needed to move up within a family or between families.'

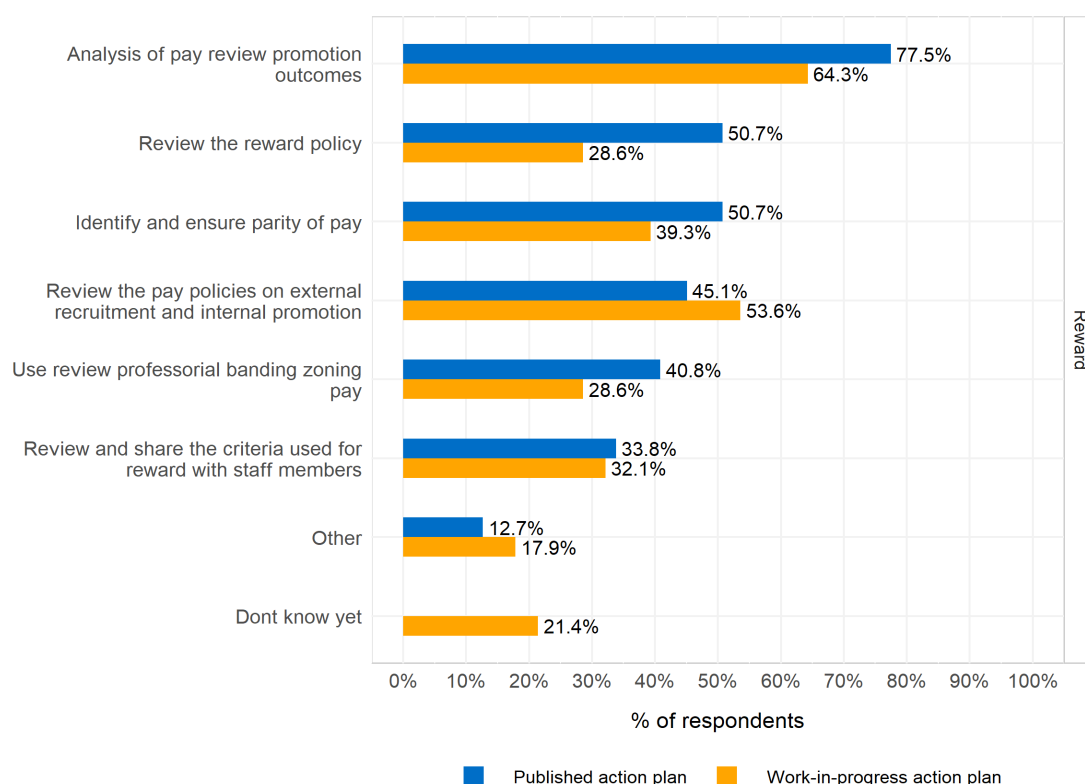
Overall trends on staff development

Across the sample, HEIs often reference **leadership development** for female staff, often achieved by funding places on the Aurora programme. Plans to establish or promote **networking groups** and **encourage attendance at committees and conferences** are also cited fairly frequently.

5.3 Reward

In relation to reward, the majority of institutions are undertaking / planning to undertake an analysis of pay review/promotion outcomes (78% and 64% respectively) – Figure 13. However, while half of the HEIs with a published action plan are focusing on reviewing the reward policy, only slightly more than a quarter of those with a prospective action plan are planning to do so. Instead, 54% of them prefer to review the policies on external recruitment and internal promotions, as this may affect gender pay gap if men are disproportionately appointed externally and women promoted internally.

Figure 13: Reward



Published action plans largely focus on short- and medium-term objectives, while around a fifth of actions concern longer-term activities (to be achieved over two years or more). The number of prospective reward-related actions is much smaller, and half of these are short-term plans.

Across the sample, the predominant themes were **reviewing the reward policy** (particularly within long-term plans) and **ensuring parity of pay**. There were no marked differences between institution types in terms of the areas of focus; however, the published action plans at pre-92 HEIs had slightly more emphasis on medium-term plans while post-92 HEIs tended to include slightly more shorter-term actions (the reverse is true of prospective action plans).

Short-term actions

- **Identifying and ensuring parity of pay** – Many HEIs highlighted their equal pay audits as a means of achieving this. In terms of more specific objectives, one post-92 HEI plans ‘to establish groupings of equivalent roles in senior management so we have a clear set of comparators and reduce risk of gender or equality pay gap.’ A pre-92 institution cited a short-term objective of ‘annually reviewing the gender pay gap by grade and comparing it to previous pay reviews’.
- **Review the reward policy** – A number of HEIs have rethought their reward strategy or plan to do so, although specific details were limited. There was some

overlap here with the area '**review and share the criteria used for reward with staff members**', with two HEIs stating that an objective of their review was to introduce greater transparency.

- **Analysis of pay review/promotion outcomes** – Several HEIs listed this as a short-term plan and the responses suggest that most have already been doing this annually as a matter of course. Little additional detail was provided on this; however, one pre-92 HEI plans to identify salary comparators for its grade ten positions as part of its efforts in this area. Another pre-92 HEI (in its prospective action plan) intends each year to 'review staff promoted, staff who applied for promotion and staff eligible to apply but haven't.'
- **Use/review professorial banding/zoning pay** – Five HEIs (roughly evenly split by institution type) had identified as an action the introduction of professorial pay bands or reviewing how these operate (or planned to do so). One (pre-92) said that, having done this in 2015, 'some further work is required to clarify progression arrangements for newly-promoted/appointed professors in Band 1, many of whom are women.'
- Other issues frequently cited in short-term plans included evaluating the use of special payments such as market supplements, leadership allowances or other such premia; starting salaries; and job evaluation or other means of reassessing role content and grading. One pre-92 HEI is currently 'consulting with a job evaluation provider to establish a process for discovering and addressing unconscious bias in their job evaluation model'. A post-92 HEI said it had 'targeted females to apply for annual pay progression process or professorship, e.g. through *Aspiring Academics*'.

Medium-term actions

HEIs' medium-term plans again focus frequently on **analysing pay review/promotion outcomes, identifying and ensuring parity of pay** and, slightly less commonly, **reviewing pay policy**. With regards to reviewing pay review/promotion outcomes, one pre-92 HEI is 'analysing senior appointments (internal and external) made within the last three years, focusing on pay on appointment and pay progression' while another is paying particular attention to staff in its grades eight to ten. In terms of pay parity, one post-92 HEI said it is working to 'establish the reasons why average female pay is peaking during their 30s whereas male pay is continuing to rise,' while a pre-92 institution is conducting analysis 'to identify targeted actions for salary setting at senior grades, and particularly for senior managerial and professional staff.'

Several HEIs are looking at **professorial pay** as part of their medium-term plans, while five respondents mentioned a need to **review starting salaries**. Three HEIs meanwhile cite plans to use **job evaluation** for certain positions, either to check grade boundaries or assess professional services roles. There was some reference to **reviewing and**

sharing the criteria used for reward with staff members, with one HEI suggesting that greater pay transparency could encourage more women to negotiate their salaries.

Within prospective action plans, other noteworthy medium-term objectives included proposals to review employee benefits for hourly-paid work at one post-92 HEI while another plans to build an equality impact assessment into its new performance and progression scheme for professors.

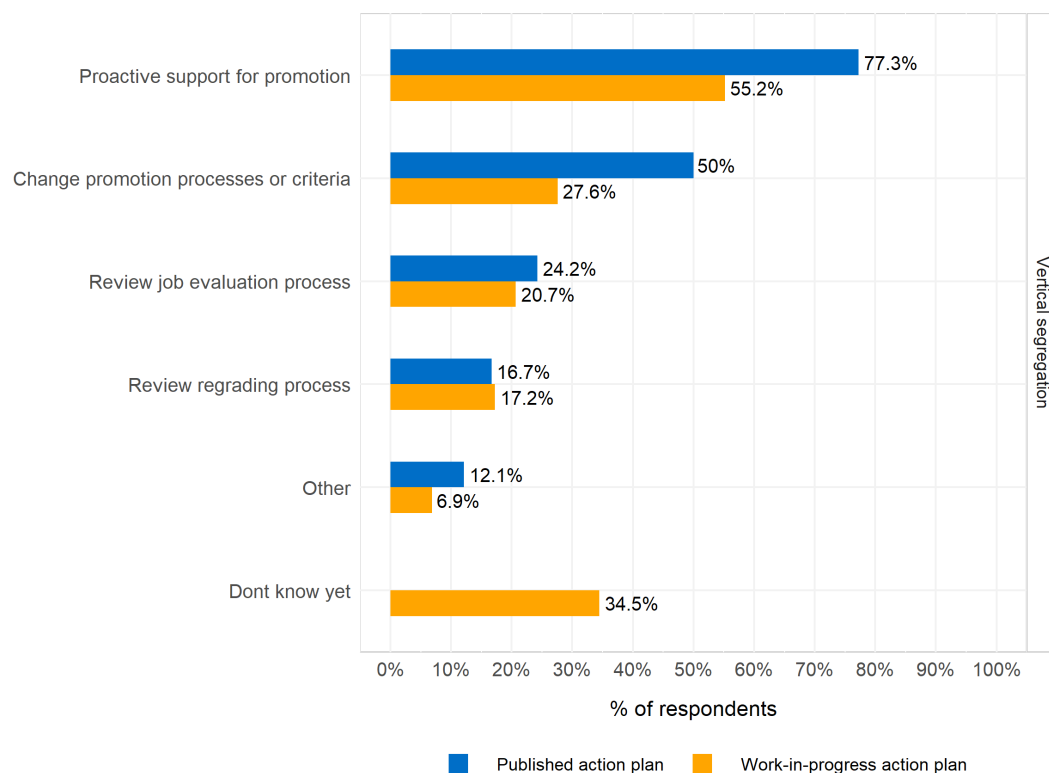
Long-term actions

As already mentioned, long-term actions only accounted for around a fifth of published or prospective objectives and these often focused on **reviews of the reward policy**. One interesting comment came from a pre-92 HEI, which is now looking to include its overseas campuses.

5.4 Vertical occupational segregation

The large majority (77%) of institutions with a published action plan provide proactive support from promotion, while 50% are also committed to changing promotion processes and criteria. Providing support for promotion is also common among HEIs with a work-in-progress action plan (55%), although 35% of them say they do not yet know how they will tackle vertical occupational segregation in an effective way – Figure 14.

Figure 14: Vertical occupational segregation



Almost half of published action plans within the area of vertical occupational segregation relate to medium-term objectives and just under a fifth are planned over

the long-term. Virtually all actions cited in prospective plans, meanwhile, are for the short or medium-term.

Proactive support for promotion (examples suggested by the survey include identifying those who may be ready to apply for promotion or identifying priorities for development in role) was the most frequently listed short-term plan in prospective plans; within published action plans this factor was closely followed by **changing promotion processes or criteria**.

Short-term actions

Proactive support for promotion – where HEIs have provided details of how they plan to offer this in the short-term, there is some overlap with areas covered under staff development, including mentoring, coaching or implementing the Aurora Women into Leadership scheme. One post-92 HEI now ‘identifies those approaching academic promotion threshold to advise of process and support applications,’ while a pre-92 HEI has been ‘undertaking annual roadshows delivered by successful role models to support individuals through the process of making appropriately timed and successful promotions applications.’ Looking at prospective action plans, one post-92 HEI said it would ‘proactively support those seeking promotion by using the performance development review process to identify staff looking to develop’ (an approach echoed by a handful of other institutions elsewhere in the sample) while a pre-92 HEI plans to run ‘gender initiative academic promotions workshops for females and offer HR-run academic promotion clinics for both genders.’

Changing promotion processes or criteria – a number of respondents across the sample said they had ‘reviewed’ promotion processes or criteria, possibly suggesting that little might fundamentally change in this area. Where institutions provided further detail, in some cases these changes related to particular roles or subject areas - for example, one pre-92 HEI says it has ‘reviewed promotion criteria for the female-dominated Learning Teaching Scholarship track to ensure parity with those on the Research and Teaching track, to address inequities in success rates.’ Another institution states that ‘the academic promotion processes have been reviewed and refreshed’ and that they are now more transparent. The HEI said that academic managers are now expected to discuss readiness for promotion with their staff as part of the annual performance and development review.

The action plans at a number of HEIs also include short-term objectives relating to **reviewing the job evaluation process**, although little additional detail is available in this regard.

Other short-term actions cited in published action plans include ‘exploring methods to identify those ready to apply for promotion and put in place appropriate support’ (at a pre-92 HEI) and ‘analysing leaver data to gain a greater understanding of any issues relating to current promotion policies’ (a post-92 HEI). Another post-92 HEI says it will pay close attention to promotions committee outcomes.

Medium-term actions

Within medium-term action plans the predominant themes once again are **changing promotion processes or criteria** and **proactive support for promotion**. In the case of the former, one post-92 HEI plans to 'develop a mechanism for identifying women candidates for senior appointments,' while another intends to 'monitor the performance of women within the academic promotion process and consider any amends to the practice and/or guidance.'

Proactive support offered by respondents includes 'annual pre-promotion workshops run by the School Dean, supported by HR' at one pre-92 HEI and 'positive action to encourage an increase in the successful applications for Professorships, Readerships and Associate Professorships by women' at a post-92 HEI.

Other medium-term actions include: 'undertaking consultation with staff eligible for promotion at certain levels and establish barriers/perceptions and when we can make better intervention' (post-92 HEI); 'creating a clear protocol to enable better identification of women approaching promotion and afford clearer, more targeted advice,' (pre-92 HEI); and 'refreshing training for promotions panels to reduce potential for bias' (post-92 HEI).

Long-term actions

Long-term actions in this area predominantly related to **proactive support for promotion**. At three pre-92 HEIs, these relate to identifying women who are candidates for promotion and providing varying degrees of help or encouragement:

All women identified at appraisals as being within two years of promotion are to be offered a mentor and/or training to help them reach required standards.

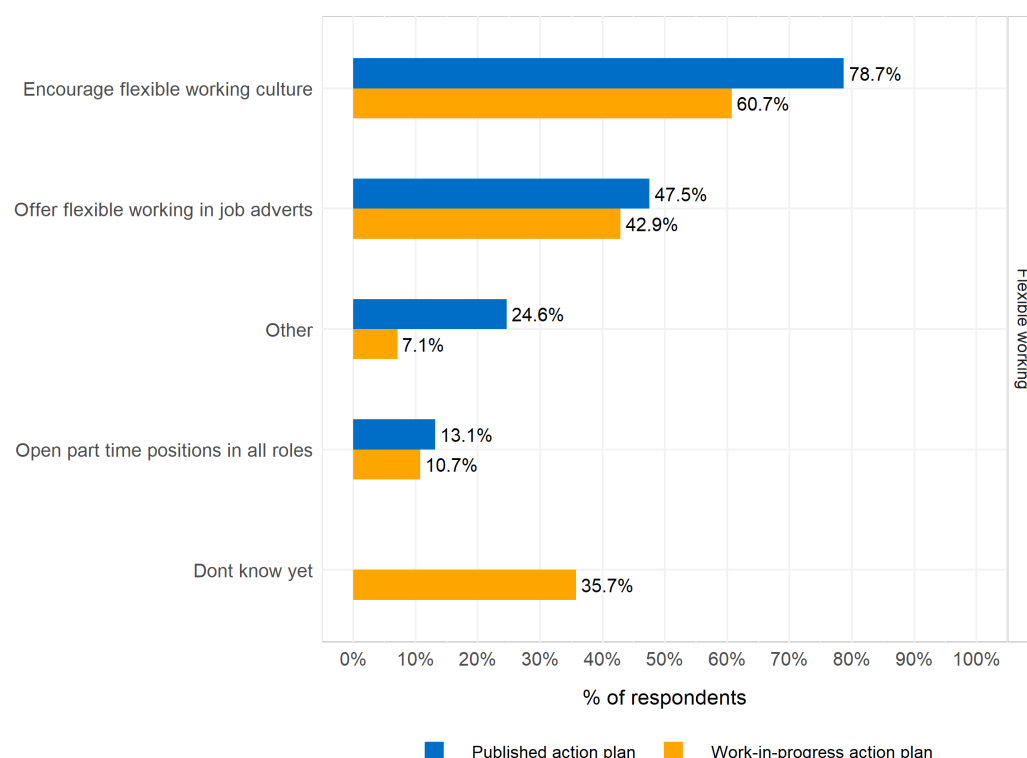
Identify female academic staff on grades nine and ten who have the potential to be promoted in the next two to three years and ensure they are aware of, and are encouraged to access, available career development support.

Undertake annual reviews of senior female academic profiles (Senior Lecturer, Reader & Professor) to identify those who may be eligible to apply for the next level and encourage them to apply.

5.5 Flexible working

A flexible working culture is one of the main areas of intervention in published action plans, with 79% of institutions currently encouraging it and 61% of institutions planning to do so. Just less than half of institutions with a published action plan also offer flexible working arrangements in job adverts. While we find a similar proportion among institutions that are currently working on their action plan, 36% of them reported to be unsure of what other actions they will take to incentivise flexible working – Figure 15.

Figure 15: Flexible working



Just over two-fifths of flexible working-related objectives in published action plans are scheduled over the short-term; a slightly smaller number relate to medium-term activities while just under a fifth are long-term plans. These proportions are broadly similar across pre- and post-92 institutions although pre-92 HEIs place slightly greater emphasis on short-term actions.

The sample of prospective actions is much smaller, and these primarily relate to pre-92 HEIs. Here, the focus is primarily on short- and medium-term actions, with just a handful of longer-term objectives.

Compared with some other areas, it is slightly harder to draw out clear themes in relation to flexible working and many published action plan points (some 14 responses) understandably overlap with the area of **family-friendly policies and initiatives**, which we discuss more fully elsewhere. However, the single most commonly cited short-term action in published and prospective action plans is **offering flexible working in job adverts**, followed by **encouraging a flexible working culture**. However, several respondents also say they plan to do more to **promote flexible working policies**, which could also be interpreted as contributing to a flexible-working culture. A small number of short-term plans feature **opening part-time positions in all roles** and a more general **review of flexible-working policies**.

Short-term actions

- **Offering flexible working in job adverts** – few respondents expand on their intentions in this area although one post-92 HEI is currently assessing the impact of its “happy to talk flexible working” strapline in job adverts.

- **Encouraging a flexible working culture, including by role modelling at senior level** – the handful of responses in this area are evenly split between pre- and post-92 HEIs and not all expressly referenced senior positions. One respondent is ‘supporting managers to think positively about flexible working and helping to reduce perceived obstacles to flexible working.’ The plan at another, meanwhile, states:

The number of female (and also male) staff working part-time shows that there is a demand for flexible working practices at the University. Each application is considered on a case-by-case basis; however, options will be reviewed to ensure they can support general progression and role access as well as affording the work/life balance they are seeking where practicable.

Other responses concern **promoting existing flexible working policies**, presumably also with a view to encouraging a flexible working culture.

Some interesting short-term plans emerged under the ‘other’ heading in the survey. While there were few clear themes, two HEIs have **removed the 26 weeks’ service criterion** from their flexible-working policies. One of these is also seeking to ‘redesign ways of working to become **flexible by default**,’ as well as ‘making flexible working arrangements easier to arrange and change’. A further HEI has conducted a **flexible working survey** to help it understand the barriers to flexible working, while another is considering ‘expanding the flexible-working options by offering a **flexi system** whereby employees will be able to take one day off a month.’

Medium-term actions

Encouraging a flexible working culture, including by role modelling at a senior level, is more frequently mentioned under medium-term actions, possibly indicating the relative complexity of such a measure compared with the comparatively ‘quick win’ of offering flexible working in job adverts (the latter was a medium-term action in just two published action plans). One HEI has established a flexible working steering group to remove barriers to flexible working and two have appointed **flexible working champions** and/or published **case studies of success stories**. Once again, several responses under this heading relate to family-friendly actions. Other, less common, themes relate to **part-time positions** (for example, a prospective action plan at a pre-92 HEI intends to ‘look at job design to increase part-time managerial opportunities where possible’), **promotion of flexible working** and a generic **review of flexible working policies**.

Several HEIs have medium-term action plan points relating to (improved) **monitoring of flexible-working requests and outcomes**. Two intend to improve guidance for line managers and a third says it will be ‘exploring why female academics are more likely to make informal arrangements rather than make a formal request.’

Long-term actions

Looking at long-term actions, which accounted for less than a fifth of such activities, **encouraging a flexible working culture** and more generally promoting flexible working were again the predominant themes, while three HEIs cite the inclusion of **flexible working in job adverts** as long-term actions, perhaps as such messages will only reach new joiners. Few prospective plans contain long-term goals in the area of flexible working although one has plans for an 'agile working' pilot.

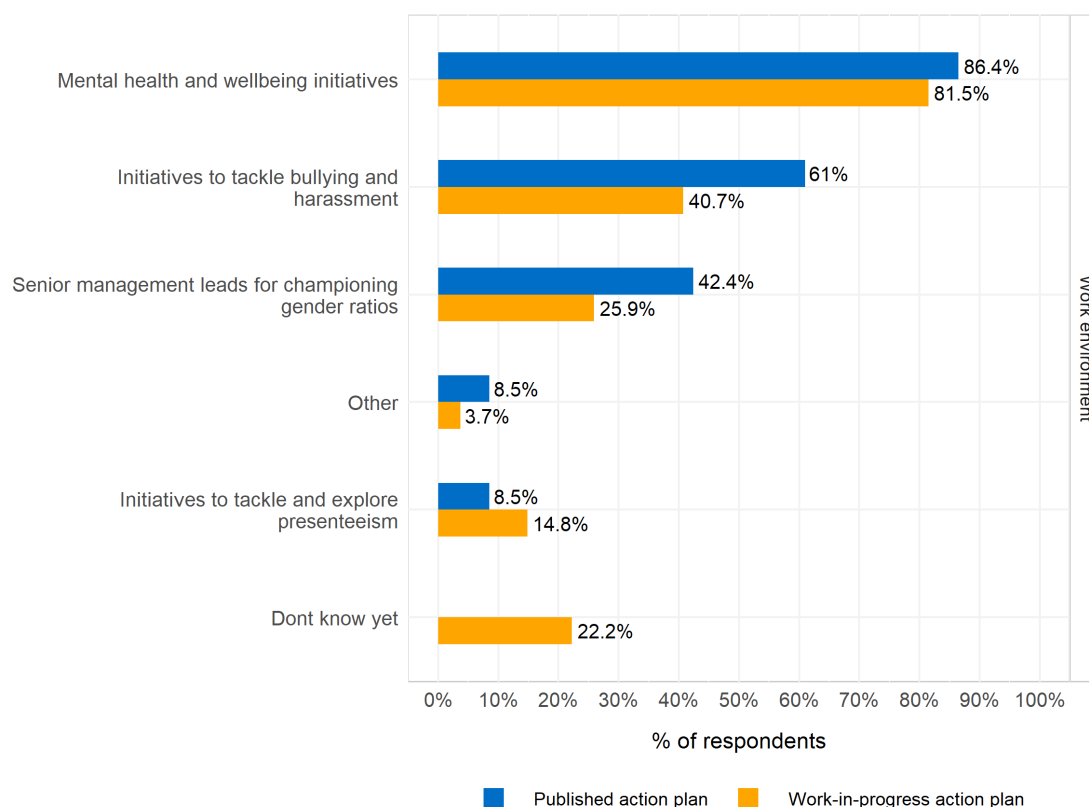
Overall trends on flexible working

In terms of other themes emerging from the survey, two respondents are considering implementing a fund to cover caring expenses for staff who attend training or conferences outside their usual working pattern.

5.6 Work environment

Mental health and wellbeing initiatives are the most frequent actions within both published and prospective action plans (86% and 82%, respectively). Over 60% of institutions with a published action plan are taking initiatives to tackle bullying and harassment, while 42% are appointing senior managers as gender diversity champions. A similar trend is found within work-in-progress action plan, albeit with lower proportions – Figure 16.

Figure 16: Work environment



Well over half of actions concerning the work environment relate to short-term objectives within published and prospective action plans alike. Looking at published action plans, post-92 HEIs are slightly more likely to make long-term plans, while the proportion of short- and medium-term objectives is slightly higher at pre-92 HEIs.

Mental health and wellbeing initiatives and **initiatives to tackle bullying and harassment** are by far the predominant themes across the sample of published action plans. Within short-term actions, the latter accounts for more than a third of responses while activities to support mental health and wellbeing represent a further quarter of short-term objectives (these proportions are flipped in prospective action plans). **Senior management leads for championing gender ratios** also features fairly prominently across the sample.

Short-term actions

- **Initiatives to tackle bullying and harassment** – some institutions have appointed designated contacts to provide advice or support to affected staff. For example, two pre-92 HEIs say they have sexual violence liaison officers and a post-92 HEI is 'developing a more robust network of dignity advisers.' Other respondents are revising policies in this area and in some cases doing more to promote them. One of the actions at one pre-92 HEI is to 'implement a Report and Support system to enable employees, workers, visitors, students and contractors to report harassment or bullying either anonymously or by requesting to speak to an adviser.'
- **Mental health and wellbeing initiatives** – several institutions say they have taken steps to support employees' mental health – for example, by appointing mental health 'first aiders'. One pre-92 HEI says it has 'delivered training and awareness sessions for staff on mental health awareness and personal resilience.' Across the sample, mental health initiatives sometimes form part of a broader focus on improving employee wellbeing. Two HEIs with prospective action plans, meanwhile, have short-term plans to offer mental health awareness training.
- **Senior management leads for championing gender ratios** – this was also a common response although few respondents expanded on what they had done in this regard. However, one pre-92 HEI has 'appointed a member of the senior management team as a gender diversity champion, who will sit on the Athena SWAN steering group and act as a role model for promoting gender equality.'
- Two respondents are seeking to **tackle and explore presenteeism**, with one pre-92 ensuring meetings avoid early mornings and late afternoons.

Medium-term actions

Medium-term actions account for just over a fifth of the sample of published action plans and again have a strong emphasis on **anti-bullying and harassment initiatives** and **mental health and wellbeing initiatives**. In the case of the former, for example,

one pre-92 HEI set out details of 'a project specifically looking at gender-based violence and sexual harassment, which will incorporate the recommendations and actions included in the "Equally Safe in Higher Education" toolkit⁴. Actions include setting up appropriate signposting for staff and students to seek guidance and raise concerns in a confidential manner as well as training and guidance for staff dealing with concerns.' Another pre-92 HEI, meanwhile, intends to 'establish and roll out a "Dignity at Work Disclosure Officer Network" with defined processes and role descriptors.

Other medium-term objectives within published action plans concern **broader wellbeing activities, senior diversity champions** (one respondent intends to appoint champions for all protected characteristics) and an intention to **tackle presenteeism** by implementing a core meeting hours policy.

Just four actions within prospective plans relate to medium-term objectives, largely focusing on mental health and wellbeing. One post-92 HEI, however, has plans to 'develop a culture of work-life balance and reduce the perception that presenteeism equals devotion.'

Long-term actions

Just under a quarter of published action plans are scheduled over the long-term and many of these focus on **senior management leads for championing gender ratios**. At one pre-92 HEI, for example, a vice president has been assigned 'responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion issues, including working with the HR Director to address performance indicators on gender distribution,' while another has appointed a Pro-Vice Chancellor for equality. **Mental health and wellbeing initiatives** remain high on the agenda. While few respondents expand on their plans in this area, one post-92 HEI plans to make mental health issues and carers the focus of its revised wellbeing policy. This may be helpful in reducing the gender pay gap as women are more likely to be carers than men.⁵

Overall trends on work environment

In terms of **mental health and wellbeing**, a number of respondents said they had signed up to the Mindful Employer service for support and resources. The importance of **acting on staff survey feedback** was also raised by several in the sample, while two HEIs are working to increase awareness of **grievance procedures**.

5.7 Family-friendly policies and initiatives

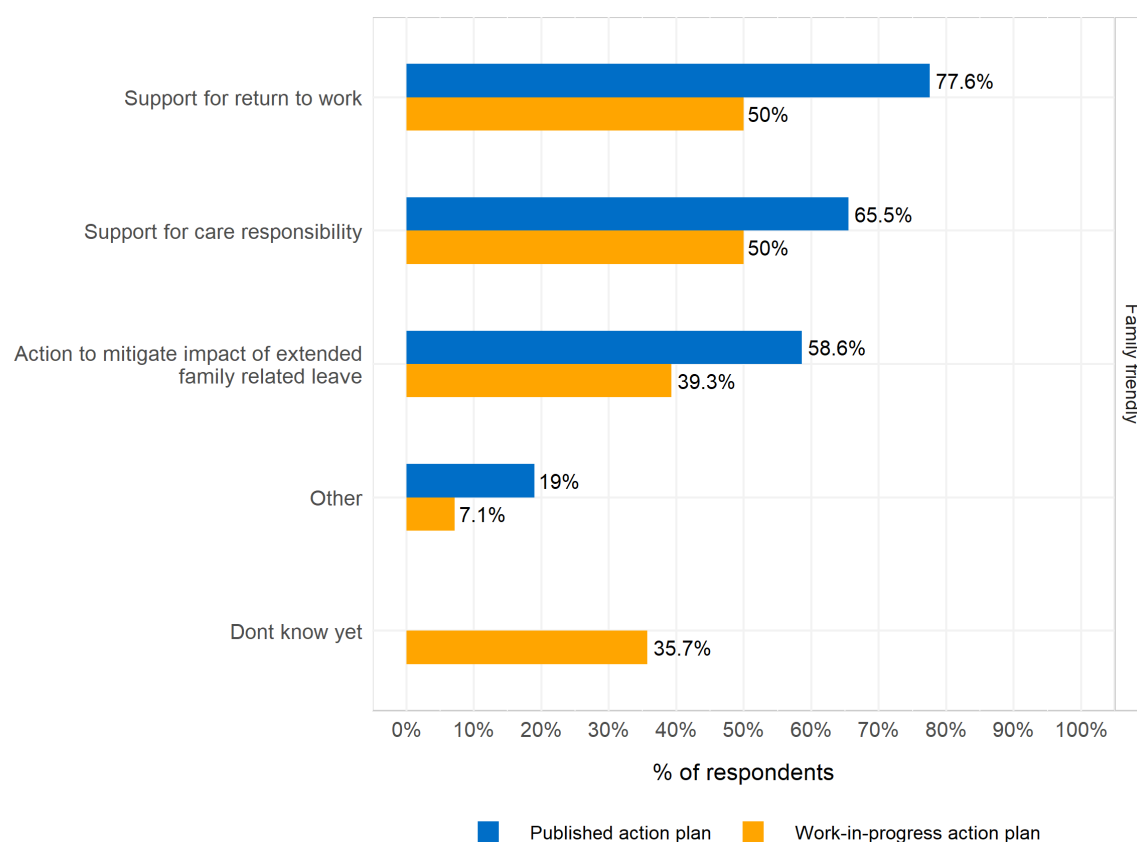
The most popular actions related to family-friendly policies are the provision of support for return to work and for care responsibility, with 78% and 66% of institutions with a published action plan providing it and half of respondents with prospective action plan aiming at doing the same. Actions that can mitigate the impact of extended/family

⁴ The [Equally Safe in Higher Education](#) toolkit has been developed for Scottish HEIs in partnership with Scottish Government.

⁵ www.carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/press-releases/facts-and-figures

related leave are also frequent (59% and 39% within published and prospective action plans, respectively) – Figure 17.

Figure 17: Family friendly policies



Within published action plans around half of actions relating to family-friendly policies and initiatives concern short-term goals (this proportion drops to around a third of prospective action plans), while just under a third of responses in this area relate to medium-term objectives.

Both across the sample as a whole and within short-term plans, the most commonly cited areas of focus are **support for return to work** and **support for caring responsibilities**. Several respondents also highlight how they have enhanced **maternity, paternity or shared parental pay** or plan to **promote shared parental leave**.

Short-term actions

- **Support for return to work** – some of the short-term actions here are aimed at specific groups of staff; for example, one pre-92 HEI has 'launched a research returners scheme to provide extra support to research-active women on return from maternity or adoption leave' while a post-92 HEI plans to 'monitor maternity return rate data by schools, departments and contracts and compare and contrast maternity return rates between academics and professional services groups.' Two respondents mention mentoring or coaching for maternity returners, while another pre-92 HEI holds a returners' lunch event four times a

year. The prospective action plan at one pre-92 HEI includes provision for a teaching-free period for academic returners from maternity.

- **Support for care responsibility** – one pre-92 HEI has started to ‘produce a carers policy, which goes beyond childcare responsibilities,’ while a post-92 HEI is ‘developing a system to assist with car parking on campus for those with caring responsibilities.’ Other short-term proposals cited include creating a carers’ network; extending eligibility criteria for the HEI’s Career Development Fund for Carers; promoting the nursery and childcare voucher scheme; and actively considering the timing of committee meetings and training sessions to reduce the impact on carers and part-time workers. Another pre-92 HEI, in its prospective action plan, says it intends to launch a ‘Carer’s Passport’⁶ and is considering introducing carers’ leave.
- **Maternity, paternity or shared parental leave or pay** – Four HEIs provided detailed actions in this area. For example, one pre-92 HEI has removed the length of service requirement from its maternity and paternity policies, ‘increased payments and removed the requirement for those resigning to pay back occupational maternity pay,’ while another has aligned its occupational shared parental leave pay with maternity leave pay.
- **General family-friendly policies** - Several short-term actions fall into the ‘other’ category and many of these relate to general reviews of family-friendly policies. However, one pre-92 HEI has introduced an entitlement to paid leave for fertility treatment, while a post-92 HEI has drawn up a ‘checklist for managers to help them understand how best to support employees going on maternity or paternity leave.’ Another post-92 HEI plans to ‘publicise examples of shared parental leave to encourage others.’

Medium-term actions

The same predominant themes of **support for return to work** and **support for caring responsibilities** can be observed within published medium-term action plans. Few respondents expand on how they propose to support maternity returners but one post-92 HEI cites such examples as sabbaticals or a phased return to work. With regard to carers, one pre-92 HEI says that:

We don’t have a specific policy on carers but would expect line managers to be flexible in line with other family-friendly policies. We tried to develop a network for carers, but it didn’t get enough interest. However, through our staff survey we identified that over 100 people identified themselves as carers, so we will be using this data to put some initiatives in place.

⁶ <https://carerspassports.uk>

Another such institution plans to 'enhance and broaden resources and financial support for colleagues who have childcare and other caring responsibilities'. This also includes making it easier for them to attend conferences and events which is important for building and maintaining professional knowledge and contacts. The decision to support carers in such a way is echoed by a post-92 HEI in its prospective action plan.

Long-term actions

A number of respondents indicate how they plan to improve **support for returners** as part of their long-term objectives. For example, one pre-92 HEI proposes to 'offer a peer mentor with experience of maternity/adoption leave before an individual goes on leave' and to mentor through pregnancy and after return where possible. A post-92 HEI says it has 'introduced a far more structured approach to support managers and colleagues in relation to maternity and parental leave provision.' There is explicit focus on what happens once individuals return to work with a structured "re-induction" programme. Another post-92 HEI intends to monitor workload allocations for those returning to work from a period of absence. A 'Returning Carers' scheme was also featured in a Pre-92 HEI's action plan.

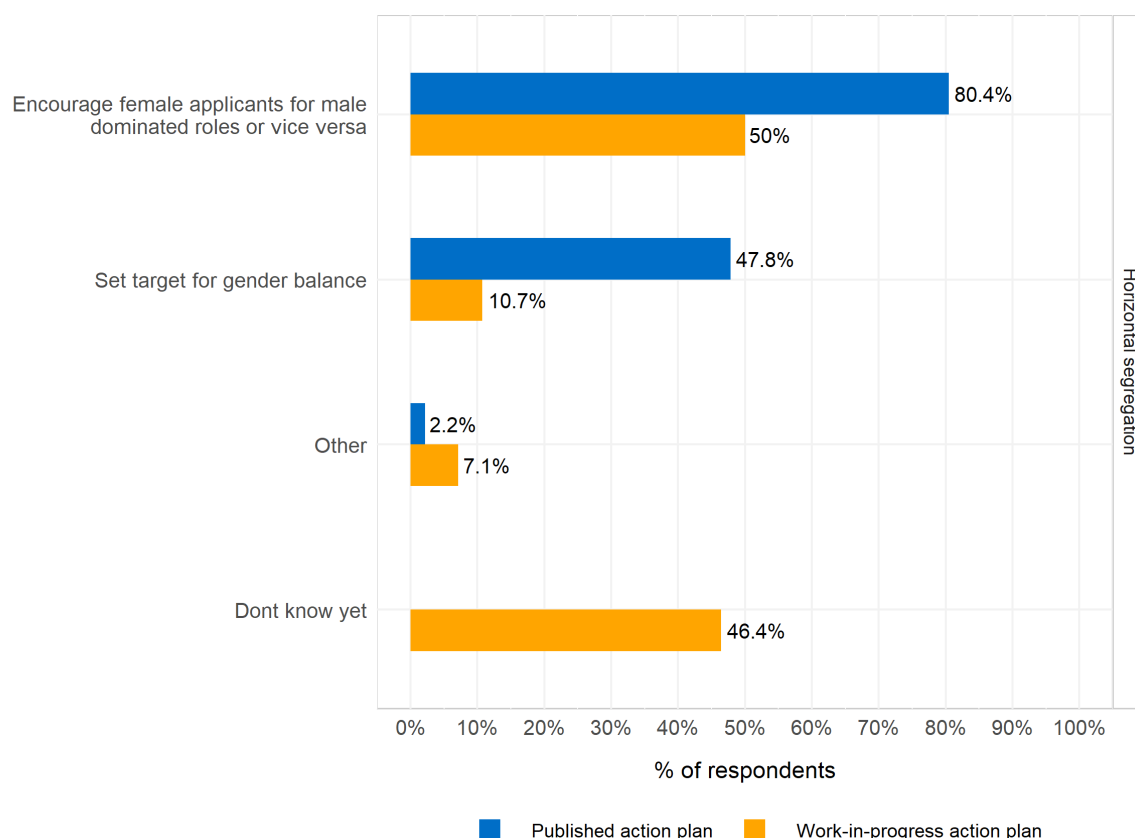
Overall trends on family-friendly policies and initiatives

The subject of enhancing or promoting shared parental leave and pay arises fairly frequently throughout the sample, as does the issue of providing financial support for carers to enable them to attend conferences or events, as mentioned above. A handful also cite the development or revision of breastfeeding policies.

5.8 Horizontal occupational segregation

The large majority (80%) of institutions with a published action plan encourage women to apply for male dominated roles and vice versa, and 48% set targets for gender balance. While encouraging application for one gender dominated role is common also among HEIs with a work-in-progress action plan (50%), 46% of them say they do not yet know how they will tackle horizontal occupational segregation in an effective way – Figure 18.

Figure 18: Horizontal occupational segregation



Action plans relating to horizontal occupational segregation are more likely to be focused on the medium to long-term. Only around a quarter of such actions are scheduled for the short-term and these arise far more frequently at post-92 HEIs.

Within published action plans, around two-fifths of short-term objectives in this area concern **encouraging female applicants for male-dominated roles or vice versa**, while most respondents appear to regard **setting a target for gender balance** as a long-term objective (around three-fifths of such responses). Just one HEI has set a short-term target for gender balance. Looking at prospective action plans, only two actions (out of a sample of 18) relate to such targets.

Short-term actions

Encouraging female applicants for male-dominated roles or vice versa – a few HEIs provided more detail regarding how they propose to go about this. For example, one pre-92 HEI is ‘producing guidelines to clarify expectations of head-hunters to find diverse talent, particularly women for STEM roles’, while senior staff and deans at a post-92 respondent now support/mentor future female leaders to apply for promotion.

Some of the ‘other’ short-term actions in this area are also linked to the encouragement of female applicants for male-dominated roles. For example, one post-92 HEI intends to ‘communicate the availability of part-time professorial positions as part of the annual promotions process,’ while two other actions relate to advertising

flexible working opportunities – for example, another post-92 HEI has started to ‘emphasise the options for part-time and flexible working at higher bands.’

Medium-term actions

Encouraging female applicants for male-dominated roles or vice versa was similarly the single most commonly cited action within both published and prospective medium-term plans. One post-92 HEI, for example, intends to ‘encourage male candidates to apply for cleaning, catering and customer service posts’ as well as ‘professional services posts graded 1 to 5 where male employees are significantly under-represented.’ Another (pre-92) respondent plans to ‘review grade 2 and grade 3 roles that are traditionally gender-biased to ensure we make them equally attractive to both male and female candidates.’ A further respondent says it will use positive action statements in job advertisements where needed.

Targets for gender balance feature slightly more frequently in medium-term plans. For example, one respondent is ‘continuing to work towards achieving our target that 40% of our Professoriate are women by 2020’, while another proposes to ‘review the disciplinary profile with regard to gender and BAME status of each appointment. If there is an under-represented group, consider potential steps such as the focus of the search or the advertising outlets used.’

In terms of other areas of focus, one pre-92 HEI plans to make available ‘equality pump-priming grants, with gender imbalance in clerical/manual/senior leadership roles as priority areas for funding,’ while a prospective action at another pre-92 HEI concerns a review of job titles to minimise segregation.

Long-term actions

As already mentioned, **targets for gender balance** tend to arise more frequently as longer-term actions, accounting for around half of published long-term actions across the sample. Targets cited include:

35% female target at professorial level and 50% target at Senior Lecturer level by 2021. (pre-92)

Aim for a workforce with an equal balance of male and female employees at each grade. (post-92)

Set target for gender balance - annual monitoring of gender composition on influential committees. Gender balance on all promotions committees. Selection committees to include at least 40% women. (pre-92)

Increase representation of males in clerical roles and the lower half of the organisation more widely (females currently accounting for over 65%). (pre-92)

A number of HEIs also continue to **encourage female applicants for male-dominated roles or vice versa** over the long-term. One pre-92 HEI plans to ‘liaise with secondary

and further education establishments to encourage female students to go into engineering disciplines,’ while another intends ‘through executive search and tailored advertisements to seek a diverse range of candidates for posts in areas where one gender currently predominates.’ Positive action statements are also referenced by one respondent, which uses them ‘to encourage female applications where disproportion favours male and vice versa; BAME in all cases.’

Overall trends on horizontal occupational segregation

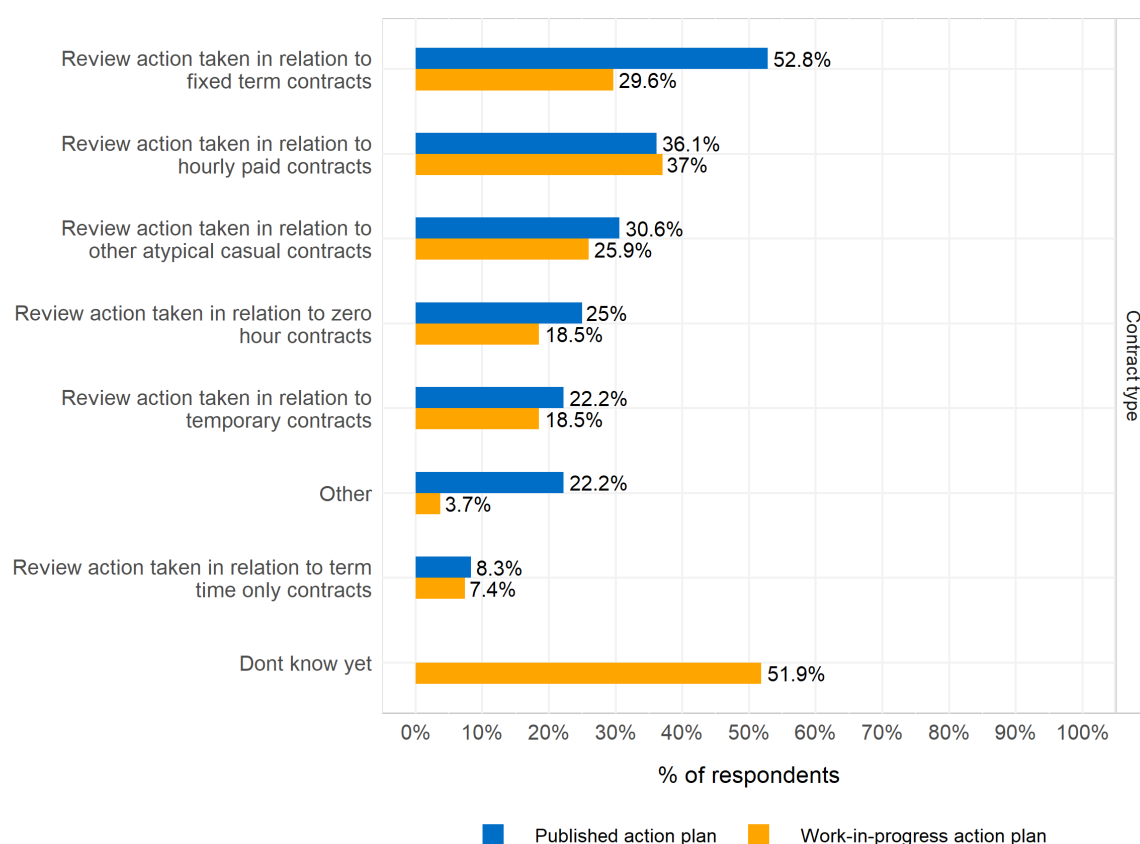
Two respondents also reference the role of achieving or working towards **Athena SWAN accreditation** in supporting their efforts in this area.

5.9 Contract type

Across the UK economy as a whole, women are more likely to be employed on fixed-term, hourly paid or zero-hour contracts than men (HESA, ONS). Among the HEIs we see that actions related to contract types have been and remain a focus in addressing the gender pay gap. Among institutions who have plans in this area, more than half are reviewing fixed-term contracts and over one third are reviewing hourly paid contracts.

Around half of institutions with a work-in-progress action plan reported they had yet to decide what actions related to contract types they would focus on – Figure 19.

Figure 19: Contract type



Published action plans concerning contracts appear to be broadly evenly split between short-term, medium-term and long-term objectives. However, post-92 HEIs were more likely to focus on short-term actions while plans at pre-92 HEIs tended to contain more long-term actions (just under half of all actions in each case).

Prospective action plans were predominantly for short-term actions (with just three medium-term plans and nothing scheduled for a period of more than two years). It should be noted that across the sample, the overall number of actions relating to contracts was much lower than for areas such as recruitment or reward.

Fixed-term contracts (FTCs) and **hourly-paid contracts** were by far the most frequently-referenced contract types being examined, accounting for around a third and a quarter of actions in published action plans respectively. The inverse was true of prospective action plans, with around a quarter of plans pertaining to FTCs and roughly a third looking at hourly-paid contracts. The survey did not ask responding HEIs what kind of contracts they use but we noted that a handful of respondents specifically mentioned action to reduce or eliminate the use of hourly-paid zero-hour contracts. For example, one pre-92 HEI reported that it had started encouraging recruiting managers to move away from these contracts to fractional and guaranteed minimum hours contracts over two years ago.

Short-term actions

- **Fixed-term contracts** – In keeping with the overall figure, around a third of HEIs that had already published an action plan said they were reviewing the use of fixed-term contracts, but no respondents provided further detail in this regard. Proportionally, post-92 HEIs were slightly more likely to be looking at FTCs.
- **Hourly-paid contracts** – Respondents with published action plans were able to provide a little more detail regarding their intentions to review the use of hourly-paid contracts (these were all post-92 HEIs). For example, one said it had conducted ‘analysis of number and type of hourly-paid workers and made a large number of conversions in one faculty alone’, while another has implemented a new IT system that will help it improve how it monitors the use of such contracts. A third HEI has changed the title it uses for sessional staff in an effort to enhance their status. Prospective action plans involving hourly-paid contracts again mostly featured at post-92 HEIs. One said it would ‘decrease reliance on hourly-paid staff and offer more guaranteed hours fixed-term roles,’ while another said it would be ‘reviewing the use of part-time hourly-paid academic staff with UCU.’

Medium-term actions

As already mentioned, just a handful of prospective action plans contain medium-term objectives (these relate to **hourly-paid** and **zero-hour contracts**). Of those respondents with published action plans, medium-term plans relating to contracts were slightly more prevalent at post-92 HEIs. Across the sample, medium-term plans again related

predominantly to **fixed-term** and **hourly-paid contracts** (around a third and a quarter of medium-term plans respectively). As with the short-term action plans, most respondents that had included an action point on FTCs tended not to expand on this beyond citing an ongoing review of the use of FTCs; however, one pre-92 HEI plans to 'analyse pay gaps identified in the analysis of fixed-term versus permanent posts to establish cause and any necessary action.'

Actions relating to hourly-paid contracts were likewise fairly general. However, one pre-92 HEI said:

We have introduced new business rules to ensure that casual working arrangements are only used where there is a legitimate business case. This will reduce the use of casual employment arrangements, although there may be an increase in fixed-term contracts and more use of annualised hours contracts.

Long-term actions

Long-term plans relating to contracts were much more prevalent at pre-92 HEIs and again the only clear themes emerging related to **fixed-term** and **hourly-paid contracts**. One post-92 HEI reported that a 'joint priority for 2018/19 with UCU is to increase the proportion of associate lecturers moving to lecturer roles under 'My Career' promotions.'

6 Evaluation

More than half of the institutions with a published action plan have metrics or targets associated with their plan. These are typically objectives related to the percentage of women at professor or senior management level to be reached by 2020 or 2021. Only a handful have determined specific targets for the mean and median gender pay gap. Some institutions are also focusing on ensuring gender-balanced candidate pools, especially for senior staff appointments. Two universities are committed to improve the proportion of jobs advertised as both full-time and part-time, one of which has also set a target related to the provision of unconscious bias training:

We have set a target of 100% completion rate of unconscious bias training for chairs of selection panels – no employee is allowed to chair a panel until they have completed the training.

Despite the wide range of initiatives undertaken by HEIs to reduce their gender pay gap, only 29% provided information on their evaluation of whether the actions implemented were effective. Part of this evaluation deficit is due to the recency of actions; institutions reported that they could not comment on the effectiveness of their actions yet either because they only recently started to enact them (45%) or because their evaluation is still under way (41%). Only two HEIs said they were unable to gather the necessary evidence to evaluate their actions.

Nearly half of the institutions that have evaluated actions were able to identify some immediate positive impact. At four HEIs, these actions relate to reviewing policies and processes:

The new annual progression and promotion process doubled the representation of female higher band professors and significantly improved the pay gap in this group.

Undertaking a specialist reward policy and job evaluation review for senior support staff resulted in the elimination of the gender pay gap for the highest paid grade and a reduction of 2 percentage points in the next highest paid grade.

Actions to amend the professorial review process have delivered some significant results amongst that group, particularly enabling some faster progression, addressing previous anomalies and balancing the spread across professorial bands.

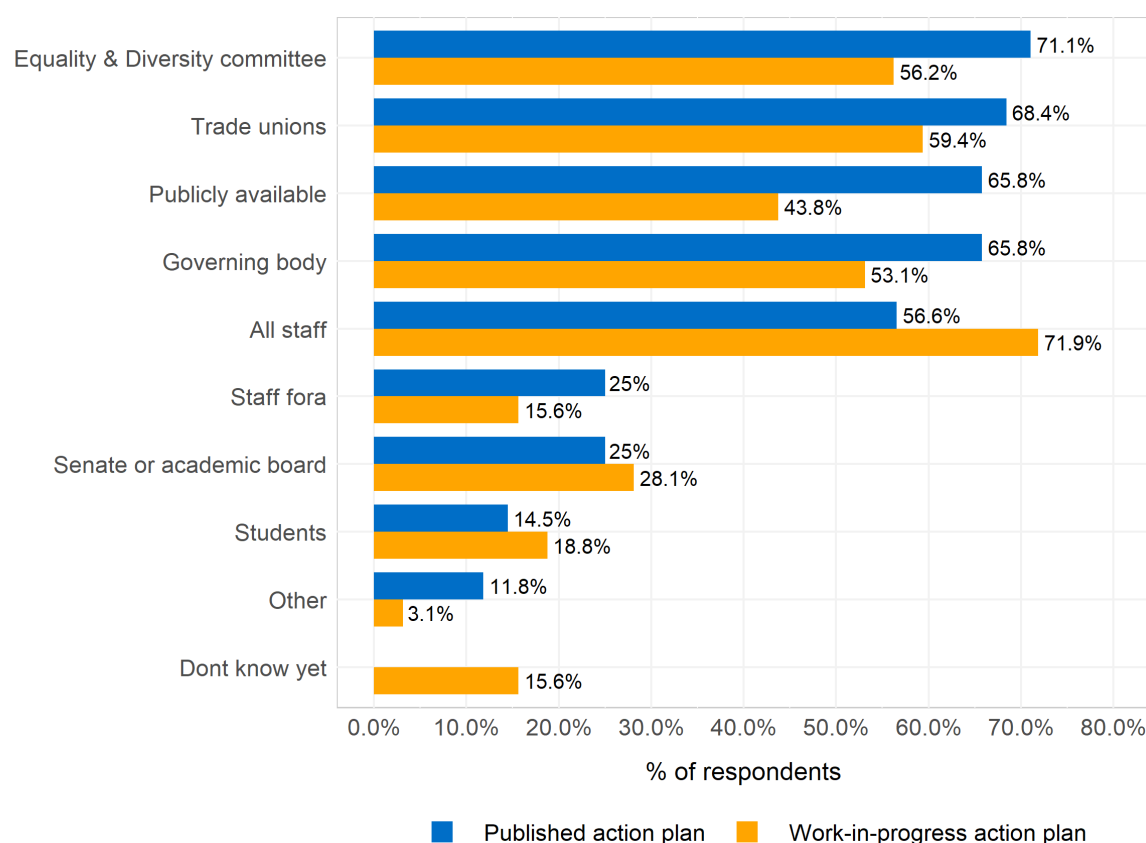
Undertaking annual reviews of senior female academic profiles to identify those who may be eligible to apply for the next level and encourage them to apply has proved effective.

It is important to also focus evaluation on identifying actions that have little or no impact. One HEI found that reviewing general positive action statements on job adverts to better reflect the needs of different groups had little impact on the gender pay gap. This may be true of their specific context but is interesting to note as positive action statements do tend to be used quite commonly.

7 Communicating plans

In terms of communicating their action plans to different stakeholders, the large majority of institutions reported sharing their published plan with their Equality and diversity committee and with trade unions (71% and 68%, respectively). More than 65% of HEIs made their action plan publicly available, and the same proportion also took steps to share it with the governing body. Institutions that have not published their plan yet indicate they will have communication plans that include: making it available to all staff (72%), trade unions (59%) and E&D committees (56%). For those with action plans in development there is a growing trend to communicate these to all staff and students but there appears to be less focus on sharing with the wider public – Figure 20. While it appears that HEIs with work-in-progress action plans are indicating a lower likelihood of communicating the published plan to their trade unions, we note that these institutions are also indicating higher levels of sustained, on-going involvement of trade unions in the development of the plan itself (Figure 5) which perhaps leads us to conclude that it is a given that the trade unions would have sight of the plan at a significantly earlier stage.

Figure 20: Communication plans



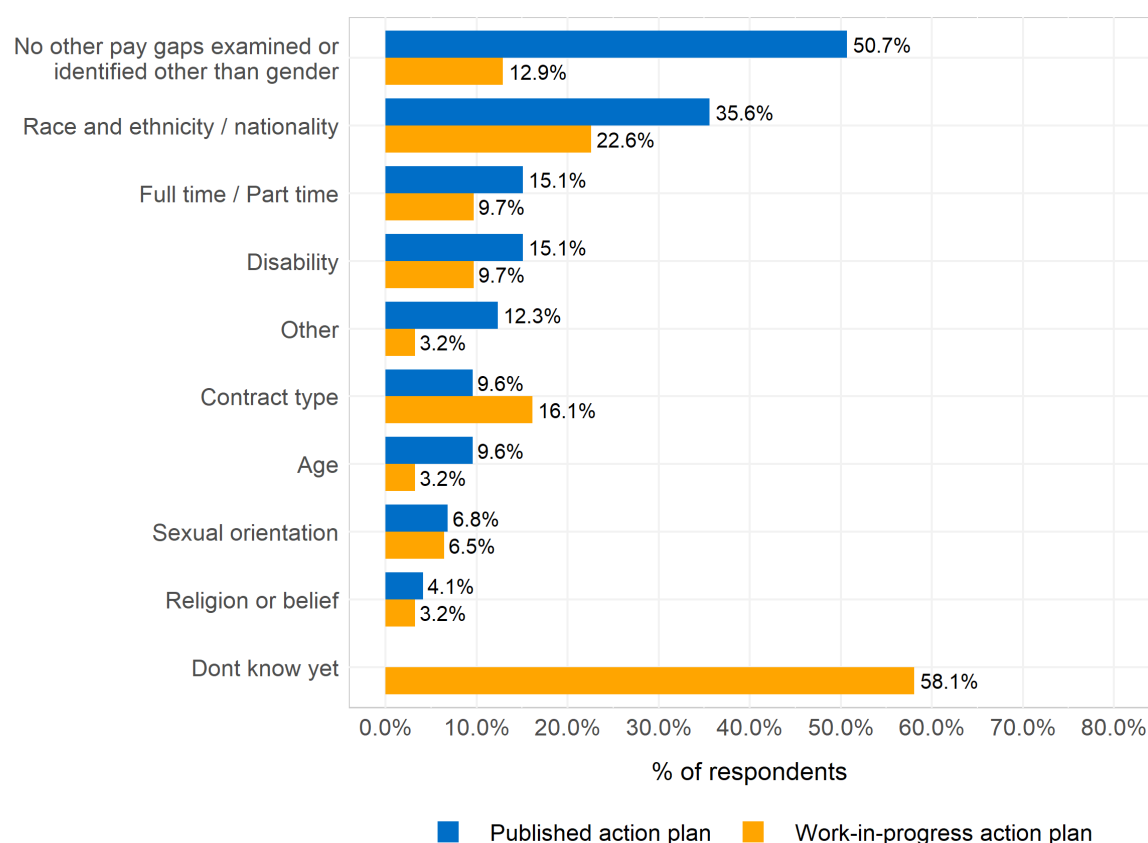
More than half of institutions with either a published or a prospective action plan are engaging with other HEIs or organisations to share progress and experiences in relation to their gender pay gap action planning. Institutions reported that sharing information and practices with regional and equality networks and having informal discussion with similar HEIs has been beneficial. One HEI said:

Sharing of gender pay gap data with other institutions pre-publication and comparing data preparation/evaluation processes provided reassurance on our own approach.

8 Other pay gaps

The majority of institutions with a published action plan (50.7%) did not examine or identify any other pay gaps other than gender. However, actions related to race, ethnicity and nationality feature in more than a third of published action plans. Other pay gaps analysed include disability and full-time/part-time modes of working. While most of institutions that are currently working on their plan do not know whether they will focus on other pay gaps other than gender, 23% will include some actions to tackle the ethnicity pay gap and 16% will also focus on contract type gaps – Figure 21.

Figure 21: Other pay gaps analysed



Race and ethnicity / nationality

Recruitment and progression of ethnic minority staff are the most frequently referenced areas of intervention in this area. Institutions are focusing on improving ethnic minority staff representation at senior levels, especially among academics. In one institution this involves reviewing job description and re-developing recruitment and selection training, while in another particular attention is paid to investigating and dismantling potential barriers faced by ethnic minority groups. Institutions reported that they are strengthening their **staff development programmes** by providing training and workshops to managers and staff to encourage under-represented groups to apply for promotions and by increasing visibility of role models for ethnic minority staff. **Reward** is also an area of intervention, with one HEI undertaking a review of grades to further investigate the ethnic pay gap amongst academic staff. Finally, three institutions reported working towards the Advance HE (formerly Equality Challenge Unit) **Race Equality Charter**.

Disability

More than one fifth of institutions that are tackling the disability pay gaps are taking steps to **improve disclosure rates** to allow for a meaningful analysis of data. Other actions include **reviewing the distribution of disabled employees across the grading structure** and developing a **positive action programme**.

Full-time / Part-time and contract type

Institutions are implementing a broad range of initiatives to provide opportunities for flexible working and close the full-time/part-time pay gap. These include making targeted efforts to identify and promote **senior role models for part-time staff** and reviewing job adverts and job descriptions for bias. In terms of actions aimed at tackling pay gaps related to contract type, institutions reported taking initiatives to ensure fixed-term and claims-based staff are aware of relevant vacancies and **encouraged to apply**.

Age

While not many action plans analysed included actions to close the age gap, some institutions are investigating their career pipeline. One institution is reviewing conditions of retirement in order to facilitate movement along the pipeline, while another is examining career pathways and length of time taken for existing professorial and senior staff to reach their current level to better understand how to intervene effectively.

8.1 Intersectionality

The concept of 'intersectionality' is used to recognise that individual characteristics – including but not limited to gender, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, and class cannot be understood in isolation from one another but interact in ways that are inextricable. The importance of intersectionality in the development of appropriate equality objectives and outcomes is widely recognised in the sector, with 63% of institutions adopting or planning to adopt an intersectional perspective.

More detailed analysis is planned as the University recognises the importance of an intersectional approach in giving consideration and a voice to the unique perspectives and experiences of individuals.

The intersection of gender and ethnicity is the most referenced, with more than one third of institutions investigating it. Some institutions are also looking at the intersection of gender with age, sexual orientation and mode of employment (full-time/part-time).

9 Athena SWAN and the HR Excellence in Research Award

Institutions that applied for or received an Athena SWAN Charter Award were asked how this has affected their action planning experience. Almost all respondents reported that their Athena SWAN action plan was aligned with their gender pay gap action plan, with 86% saying they were aligned and very similar. The majority (88%) noticed the benefit of having received an Athena SWAN Charter Award when developing their action plan. There was widespread agreement that Athena SWAN provided a useful and rigorous framework for examining policies and processes and tackle a broad range of issues in a logical and structured way. It was also reported that

Athena SWAN raised levels of awareness and engagement in several institutions and promoted the importance of an organisational commitment to gender equality. Some HEIs highlighted that the data that was gathered and analysed for their Athena SWAN applications provided the basis for the statutory gender pay gap reporting and helped to focus their actions.

Institutions that mentioned that they had received an HR Excellence in Research Award were asked to outline the actions specifically relevant to closing the gender pay gap. The majority of the actions mentioned are related to early career researchers and include mentoring and one-to-one career support to ensure gender balanced progression. Some institutions also reported using successful promoted staff as case studies or as mentors to support staff applying for promotions.

We produced and disseminated a series of case studies of recently promoted professors to inform individuals considering applying for promotion about skills development opportunities and to encourage applications, particularly from underrepresented groups.

Other initiatives implemented as part of the HR Excellence in Research award to reduce the gender pay gap include performing qualitative analysis to investigate why women wait longer to apply for academic promotion than men and evaluating mentoring schemes for women in STEMM.

10 Concluding comments

The survey results and the exceptional high response rate to the survey show that institutions take the issue of gender equality seriously and are committed to a broad range of actions to improve career and development opportunities for all staff. While HEIs cite the Equality Act 2010 and Athena SWAN as key drivers for the development of action plans, the scope of these plans as well as the involvement of stakeholder groups goes well beyond minimum statutory requirements. These action plans are typically the result of widespread consultation with stakeholders, including students and trade unions, and are usually approved by the most senior staff in the organisation.

HEIs typically take a holistic approach to tackling the gender pay gap with actions spanning a range of HR domains including recruitment, staff development and reward. This ‘bundling’ approach echoes the high-performance working practices model (Tamkin et al, 2009) where a range of different but coherent policies and practices work together to achieve a common goal. There is also an evident balance between employer-side and employee-side as well as between actions that address vertical and horizontal segregation as can be seen in Table 1 which includes examples of common actions. HEIs seeking to achieve a balanced approach could map their actions in this way to identify where their programme of actions could be bolstered.

Table 1: Gender pay gap action matrix

	Horizontal segregation	Vertical segregation
Employee support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging applicants into one gender dominated jobs • Mentoring • Gender diversity champions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring • Training for career development • Proactive support for promotion
Employer process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender neutral language in adverts • Reviewing job adverts • Set targets for gender balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjusting promotion procedures / criteria • Analysis of pay review promotion outcomes • Reviewing job evaluation / regrading processes

The diversity of actions within different HR domains is encouraging and this report provides a wealth of examples that institutions may want to consider adopting and adapting to address specific challenges within their HEI. Context is always important when considering the bundle of actions that are relevant for an institution, so having a broad toolbox of interventions for consideration is helpful. There is also scope for the HE sector to look at what has been done in other sectors.

A wide range of activity is reported to close the gender pay gap in HEIs, but more evidence on what is effective would be beneficial. As part of our survey we had hoped to collect evidence on the effectiveness of different actions, however the information provided by respondents was rather limited. Only 29% of respondents described evaluated actions that had been implemented, either because actions were only recently started or because evaluation was not yet completed. However, of those institutions that have evaluated their actions, nearly half were able to identify some immediate positive impact (see Section 6). Given the resources being committed to these actions it is important that evaluation forms a core part of the action plan process. HEIs may have access to academic evaluation specialists within their workforces who could advise.

The evidence foundation for some popular actions is mixed and caution should be exercised in choosing new interventions. While a range of documents and resources have been consulted in developing action plans, we were unable to get much information on why specific interventions had been chosen above others. It is also not clear to what extent the existing evidence base has been taken into consideration. For example, while unconscious bias training is nearly universal in the sample the evidence as to its effectiveness is mixed. The EHRC commissioned a review of evidence which found that while this training can be effective in raising awareness, it is unlikely to eliminate bias and there is limited evidence of its ability to effectively change behaviour (Atewologun, 2018). Potential backfiring effects were also identified. Similarly, research undertaken on quotas for recruitment assessment panels in higher education found that these have resulted in worse outcomes for women. A study of

French universities, which were subject to a requirement of a minimum of 40% women on recruitment panels, found that reforms ‘significantly worsened both the probability of being hired and the ranks (recruitment scoring) of women’ (Deschamps, 2018). A separate study on academic recruitment decisions in Italy and Spain found that ‘a larger number of women in evaluation committees does not increase either the quantity or the quality of female candidates who qualify’ and ‘female evaluators are not significantly more favourable toward female candidates’ (Bagues et al, 2017). Such research does not necessarily discredit these interventions but does point to the importance of review and discussion of evidence.

It is positive to see the level of transparency in the published action plans with the large majority of institutions taking steps to share their published plan with their equality and diversity committee and with trade unions. Most institutions that have not published their plan yet are planning to make it available to all staff, though only around half indicated plans to actively share with their trade unions. However, these institutions are also indicating higher levels of sustained, on-going involvement of trade unions in the development of the plan itself which would likely explain this. We encourage the general trend in HEIs to actively share their plans with a broad range of stakeholders.

Although 63% of HEIs incorporate or plan to incorporate an intersectional perspective into their pay gap analyses, the majority of institutions with a published action plan have focused specifically on gender. HEIs are encouraged to look at other data where available and consider the insights from intersectional analysis. For example, UCEA’s analysis of intersectional pay gaps in the sector (Hopkins and Salvestrini, 2018) found that Black and Asian women are significantly less likely to work part-time and posited that initiatives focused at improving flexibility and part-time opportunities are typically more likely to benefit White women.

We make the following general conclusions:

- Employers should maintain focus on their core equality objectives rather than attempting to target the absolute level of the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap can be a useful indicator but can be an unsophisticated metric and targets may be better focused, for example, on gender balance both vertically and horizontally within the organisation.
- HEIs indicate that they are keen to learn from each other and whilst learning from other HEIs may help institutions better target their resources, HEIs should continue to focus on interventions tailored to their own specific context. Sector bodies may be able to assist in the sharing of the learning.
- HEIs should continue to consider the wide range of stakeholders with whom to engage and consult in developing and carrying out their action plans.
- HEIs might consider whether they can do more to promote their employer brand and value proposition as part of conveying the attractiveness of employment in the sector in terms of flexibility and opportunity.

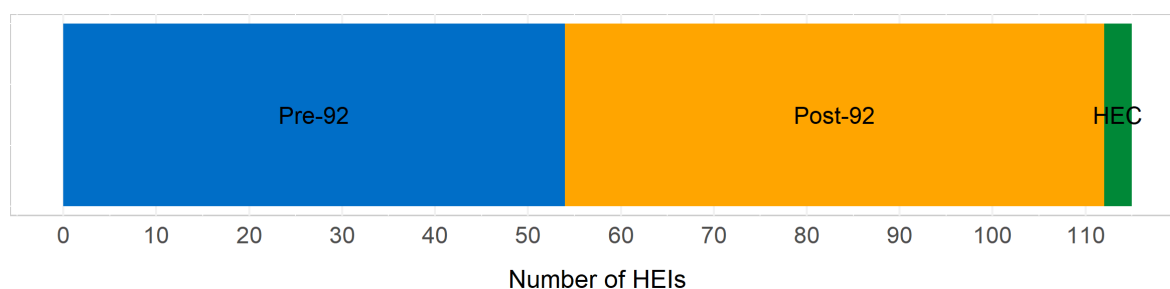
- Whilst recognising that establishing the causality relationship of various actions on the gender pay gap is not straightforward as the reasons for the gap are generally multi- factorial, HEIs should continue their efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of their actions, especially for cost-intensive interventions. Sector bodies might play a role in sharing the findings, reviewing the evidence from evaluation studies and supporting evaluation activities.
- As more employers in other sectors take steps to address gender pay gaps, HEIs might also look outside HE at what actions have been taken and what has been effective. The Government Equalities Office, for example, published a toolkit in August 2018 setting out actions employers can take to improve gender equality which provides a useful reference as to what works in other sectors and more than half of HEIs now developing a plan report making use of this.⁷
- Whilst recognising that there may be constraints especially around HEIs having meaningful data on ethnicity, intersectionality in pay gaps is an important extension of the analysis that HEIs may wish to undertake, particularly at the intersection of ethnicity and gender. The insights may be an important consideration for gender pay gap action plans. This is particularly important with the Government's plan to introduce ethnicity pay reporting.
- HEIs should consider the communication plan for their published action plans noting the need for transparency and demonstration of commitments, actions and progress. Whilst not a requirement, HEIs might wish to consider appending their gender pay gap action plan along with their statutory submissions and narrative reports.

⁷ www.gov.uk/government/publications/closing-the-gender-pay-gap-actions-for-employers

Appendix – profile of respondents

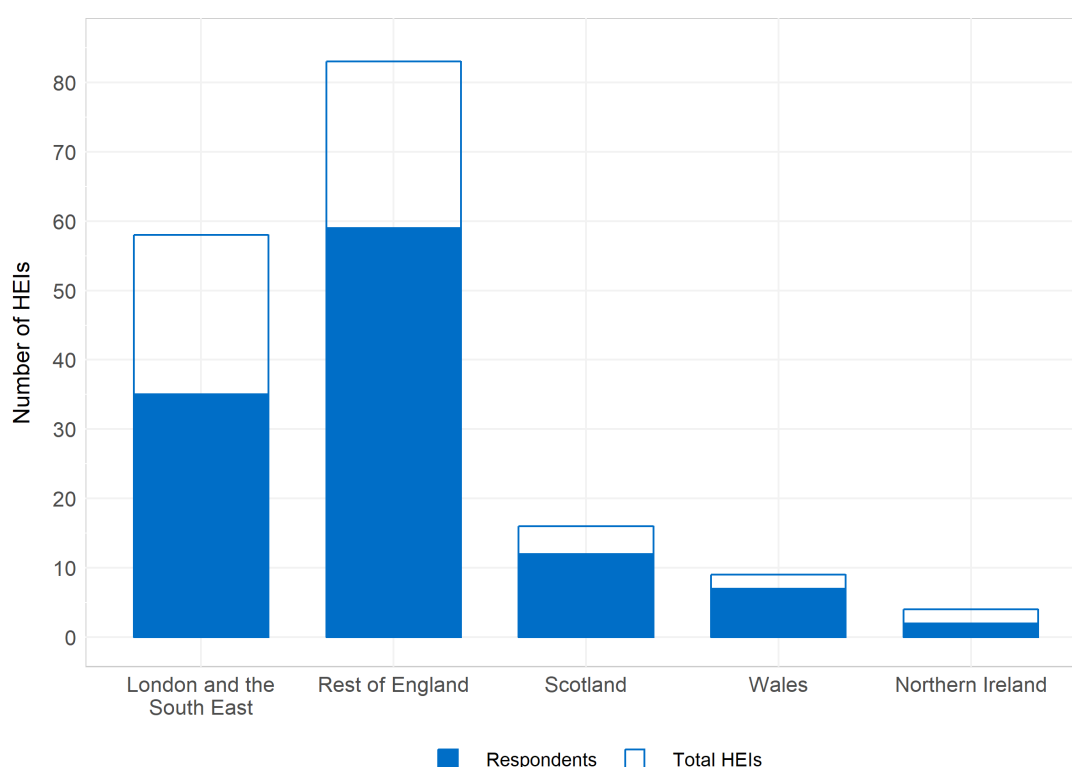
The survey received a very high level of responses from 115 institutions, evenly spread between pre-92 (50% of respondents) and post-92 institutions (47% of respondents) – Figure 22. While the analysis provides some splits of the data by these broad groups, we have not included a separate analysis for the small number of institutions now categorised as HE colleges (3% of respondents).

Figure 22: Survey respondents by institution type



Looking at respondents by region and nation, London and the South East (60%), rest of England (71%), Scotland (75%) and Wales (78%) had above average response rates and Northern Ireland had an average response rate (50%) – Figure 23.

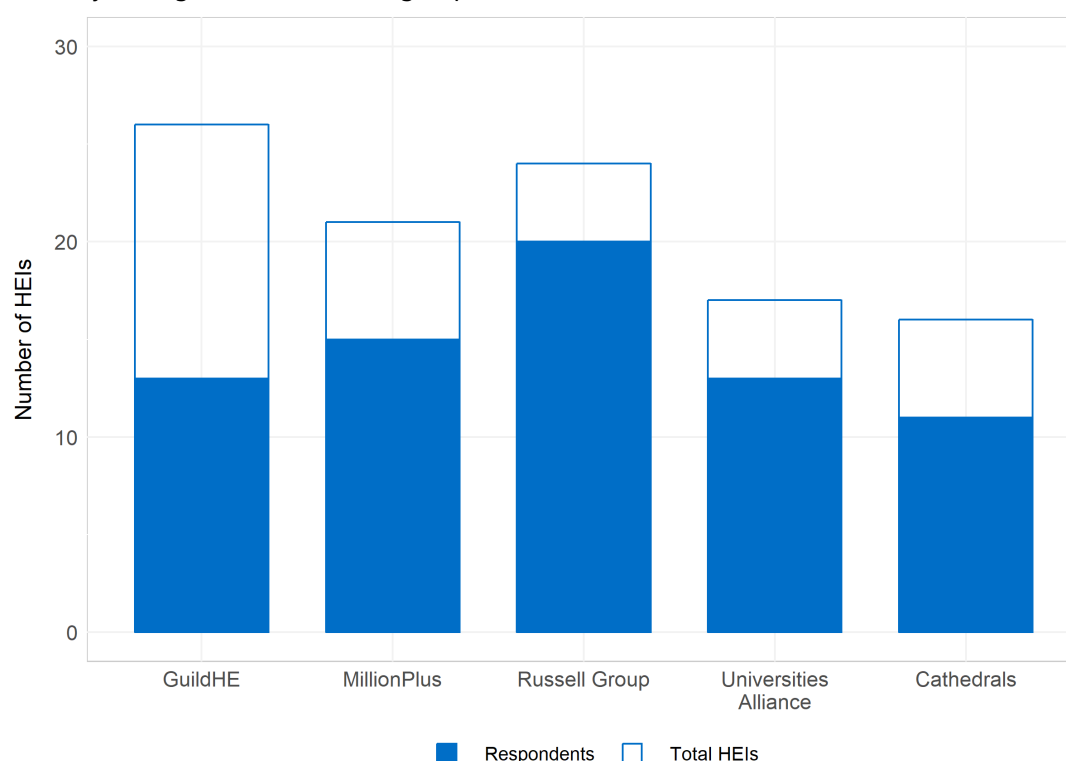
Figure 23: Survey respondents by region and nation



In terms of affiliation, each mission group had an average or above average response rate, with Russell Group being the most represented group (83%) and GuildHE the least represented group (50%) – Figure 24.

Figure 24: Survey respondents by mission/sector group

HEIs may belong to more than one group.



References

Atewologun, Doyin, Tinu Cornish and Fatima Tresh (2018). Unconscious bias training: An assessment of the evidence for effectiveness. EHRC Research report 113. London: EHRC.

Bagues, Manuel, Mauro Sylos-Labini, and Natalia Zinovyeva (2017). *Does the Gender Composition of Scientific Committees Matter?*. American Economic Review, 107 (4): 1207-38.

Deschamps, Pierre (2018). *Gender Quotas in Hiring Committees: A Boon or a Bane for Women?*. Sciences Po LIEPP Working Paper n°82, 2018-11-29.

Hopkins, Laurence and Viola Salvestrini (2018). *Caught at the Crossroads – An intersectional approach to gender and ethnicity pay gaps*. Available at www.ucea.ac.uk/en/publications/index.cfm/crossroads

Tamkin, Penny, Alexandra Albert, Laura Blazey, Laurence Hopkins and Benjamin Reid (2009). *High Performance Working: Case Studies Analytical Report*. Evidence Report 21, London: UKCES.

© UCEA January 2019

To find out more about
UCEA contact us at:

UCEA
Woburn House
20 Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9HU

Tel: 020 7383 2444

Fax: 020 7383 2666

Email: enquiries@ucea.ac.uk

www.ucea.ac.uk