

Gender Representation in the Defence Sector

September 2021

Introduction

This report presents the findings from gender data gathered between April and May 2021.

It's the first time the defence sector has collected such data. The objective was to gain a clear picture of gender representation across the entire defence sector (therefore, it included all roles, not just senior positions) to understand the current situation.

Throughout this report, it's important to consider what the data means for the sector and what can be done to encourage female representation across all levels of defence and at the senior management level.

Throughout we highlight key findings of gender representation, including trends associated with job level, tenure, age and turnover.

In addition, when signatories joined the Charter, they were asked to commit to ensuring targets were in place to increase female representation. We discuss these findings and what goals are required to achieve increased female participation in the defence sector.

Participants from the thirty-three organisations included in the study were asked to give data for mandatory fields (including male and female employee numbers, new hires, tenure etc.) to provide consistent and thorough data. The Methodology section outlines further detail.

HR DataHub

HR DataHub is an intelligence platform that helps HR professionals access data-led insights to better understand how the HR world is moving around them.

We collect HR data straight from organisations in all sectors and use that to provide reliable market analysis so that organisations can benchmark themselves against others, safely and confidentially.

We cover all the HR topics under one roof: Reward, Diversity and Inclusion, Employee Relations, Recruitment, Engagement, Talent, Learning & Development, HR Efficiency, Benefits and Pay Gaps.

Launching in January 2022 HR DataHub has developed the first data led D&I Index. Backed by leading experts and networking groups.

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WID

Women in Defence

Our Purpose – a pledge for gender balance across defence.

The Women in Defence Charter brings together organisations from across the UK's defence sector who are committed to building a more gender balanced environment. Our signatories have committed to being the very best at driving inclusion and diversity within their organisations and providing fair opportunities for women to succeed at all levels.

We aspire to see women represented and succeeding at all levels across the defence enterprise because a balanced workforce is good for government and good for business, good for customers and consumers, for profitability and workplace culture, for promoting prosperity and stability, and for showing everyone matters in building stronger and more peaceful communities.

“ Fostering equality is, of course, not just an issue for women. We all benefit from true equality and the behaviour of men is crucial in driving forward the change that is needed to drive this. Supporting the Women in Defence Charter Strategy helps enable everyone to maximise their talent, enables diversity of thought and contributes to operational effectiveness. ”

General Sir Nick Carter, Chief of the Defence Staff

“ Equality of opportunity in the UK defence sector will not happen by chance, it requires us to make a concerted effort. Our first report will set out the scale of the challenge we face. Our signatories are committed to driving the changes that will see significant improvement to gender balance over the next decade. A more balanced workforce is good for government, for business and for the communities we serve. ”

Ruth Cairnie, Chair, Babcock Industry Charter Patron

WID

Getting Involved - We Need You

The Charter is run on a voluntary basis by individuals from signatory organisations. To deliver our strategy and achieve our ambitions, we need your help.

Organisations

We are looking for signatory organisations to support us this year by:

- Meeting the commitments they made by signing the Charter.
- Sharing the Charter ambitions and activities throughout their organisation and networks to help us increase our visibility.
- Hosting a virtual event to help us build the Charter Community and promote discussion, share best practice and provide networking opportunities.

Individuals

We are looking for people to join the Charter team to help us deliver our goals for 2021. We have a number of active work packages and would welcome anyone willing to act as a work package lead or team member.

To find out more, please contact us at:

charter@womenindefenceuk.co.uk



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Forewords by the Co-Chairs



Sophie Thomas

This first progress report allows us to understand exactly where we stand today, and how much we have to do to create a more balanced workplace across the whole of defence.

I hope it will inspire our signatories to drive change in their own organisations, and enable us to measure progress as we work together to improve gender balance in the defence sector.



Morag Stuart

I am so pleased that we have reached this major milestone with the Women in Defence Charter and that the signatories have been so forward leaning in providing their data.

For the very first time we can use the data to understand the scale of the issue which, coupled with the ambition to deliver a step change in the diversity of the Defence sector in the UK, will deliver an increase in performance in this vital sector.



Angela Owen OBE

It's the 10th Anniversary of Women in Defence UK in 2021. For many of those years, we have been asked for the gender split across the defence sector. Whilst data for the MOD and Armed Forces is published regularly, this is the first time that a picture of the whole sector has been available. Whilst we would all wish that the results were better, we now have a baseline against which we can measure progress and set ambitions for the future.

Summary

Below are the key highlights from the data, and we explain what they tell us about gender representation in the defence sector:

1. **Women represent 19% of the sector.** For the first time in the history of the defence sector, we know the representation of women. It's a significant achievement to understand the current situation, review and analyse such crucial data and see how it measures against our ambition of increasing women representation in the defence sector (Fig.1).
2. **The 19% sector level of representation is not reflected at every level within the participating organisations.** For example, sector representation has been achieved at the Senior Management level and below, although not at Board/Executive and Director level (Fig.2).
3. **The sector has made good progress over the last twelve months, improving representation by 0.55%.** The increase has been achieved because of a higher proportion of women joining the sector and a lower proportion leaving.
4. **At Director level, there's been a 3.4% improvement in representation in the last 12 months.** Encouraging progress in improving representation at the higher levels has also occurred over the past year.
5. **Only a third of organisations who have submitted data have targets in place to improve representation.** However, from conversations with Charter signatories, we know that the majority have the ambition to put targets in place this year, and we will support them to do so.
6. **Increasing representation at a senior level is an ongoing aim.** Signatories will need to continue to gain a higher proportion of women in senior roles to achieve representation at all levels within the organisation.

fig. 1 All sector representation

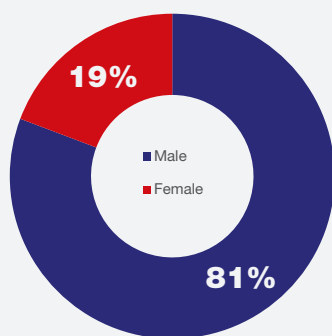
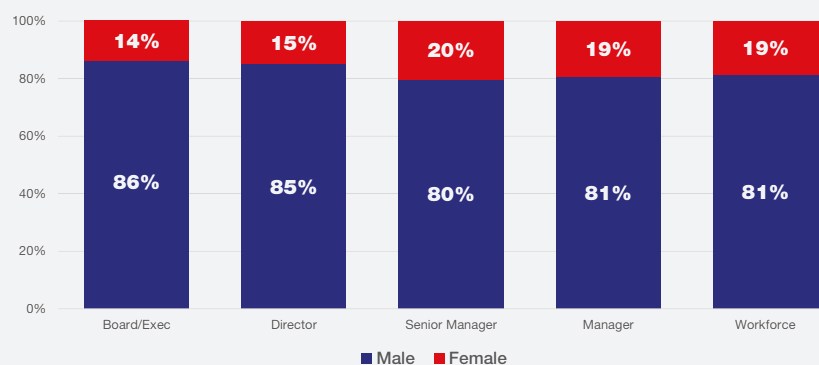


fig. 2 Representation by level



Participants

33

ORGANISATIONS

304,985

EMPLOYEES

30

PRIVATE SECTOR
COMPANIES

3

PUBLIC SECTOR
ORGANISATIONS

Organisation	Area	Employees	Submission
AACE	Private	35	Full
ADS	Private	177	Full
Airbus Def & Space	Private	2,739	Full
Airbus Ops	Private	6,737	Full
Atkins	Private	8,688	Full
Atlas Elektronik UK	Private	491	Full
Babcock	Private	22,932	Full
BAE Systems	Private	35,566	Representation Only
BMT	Private	548	Full
Boeing Defence	Private	1,160	Representation Only
Cohort - Chess	Private	185	Full
Cohort - ELAC	Private	135	Full
Cohort - Mass	Private	264	Full
Cohort - Sea	Private	240	Full
Cranfield	Private	222	Full
DE&S	Public	10,716	Full
General Dynamics	Private	1,258	Full
GKN	Private	3,770	Representation Only
JJ Churchill	Private	91	Full
Leonardo	Private	4,988	Full
Lockheed Martin	Private	1,700	Representation Only
MBDA	Private	4,000	Full
MoD Armed Forces	Public	145,337	Full
MoD Civil Service	Public	36,898	Full
MRL	Private	4	Full
Qinetiq	Private	4,836	Full
Raytheon	Private	1,977	Full
RBSL	Private	420	Full
Rolls Royce	Private	5,835	Full
Saab	Private	77	Full
Serco	Private	2,440	Full
SMI	Private	45	Full
Turner & Townsend	Private	474	Representation Only

Methodology

Typically, other studies in this area have focused only on the most senior roles, but we had the ambition to map the whole sector to truly understand representation.

The following outlines the mandatory data fields:

- **Current Total Number of Male Colleagues**
- **Current Total Number of Female Colleagues**
- **Current Male Average Tenure**
- **Current Female Average Tenure**
- **Current Male Average Age**
- **Current Female Average Age**
- **Male New Hires: 1 Jan 20 - 31 Dec 20**
- **Female New Hires: 1 Jan 20 - 31 Dec 20**
- **Total number Male Leavers: 1 Jan 20 - 31 Dec 20**
- **Total number Female Leavers: 1 Jan 20 - 31 Dec 20**

Participants submitted data in April or May 2021, and the results reflect data at that period (apart from new hires and leavers, which were measured from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020)

Twenty-eight organisations provided data for all fields, and a further five organisations provided overall representation data only (see the Sample details on page 8).

The datafields were chosen to specifically look at:

- **Gender Representation**
- **Tenure (to determine if women are leaving the sector soon after joining and if it is a factor in securing higher graded positions)**
- **Age (to determine if this is a factor that prevents progression)**
- **Talent Flow (to determine what % of women are leaving and joining the sector at each level)**

This data was submitted by level of responsibility/hierarchy using the HR DataHub grading read across.

A read across is a way of comparing roles from multiple job evaluation systems. The HR DataHub read across has been developed over 15 years of extensive testing and validation from hundreds of organisations. This allowed us to consistently compare data across the participants and at every level. Other studies in this area tend to focus just on the most senior roles but we wanted to map the whole sector to truly understand representation.

Prior to this research the HR DataHub read across did not include a reference to levels associated with the armed forces. As a result, we commissioned Brigadier (Retired) Mark Abraham OBE (ex Chief of Staff at MoD) to integrate the armed forces hierarchy into the HR Datahub read across.

level	Indicative Role	HRDH level	WTW	Mercer	Hay Level	Hay Points	Military Rank	Military Rank (Officer)	MoD CS Grade
1	Board/Exec	4 - 8	18-22	64-78	23 - 30	1261 - 5060		Chief of the Defence / Staff Admiral General / Air Chief Marshal / Vice Admiral / Lieutenant General / Air Marshal	SCS 3 to 4
2	Director	9 - 10	16 - 17	60 - 63	20 - 22	808- 1260		Rear Admiral / Major General / Air Vice Marshal / Commodore / Brigadier / Air Commodore / Captain / Royal Navy Colonel / Group Captain	B2 - SCS 2
3	Senior Manager	11 - 12	14 - 15	585- 59	18 - 20	519 - 807		Commander / Lieutenant / Colonel / Wing Commander / Lieutenant Commander / Major / Squadron Leader	C1
4	Manager	13 - 15	11 - 13	50- 54	15 - 17	314 - 518	Warrant Officer Class 1 Warrant Officer Class 2 Chief Petty Officer Colour Sergeant Staff Sergeant Flight Sergeant	Lieutenant Commander Major / Squadron Leader Lieutenant (RN) / Captain / Flight Lieutenant	D - C2
5	Supervisor / Professional	16 - 17	9 - 10	46 - 49	13 - 15	228 - 370	Petty Officer / Sergeant / Leading Hand / Corporal	Sub-Lieutenant / Lieutenant / 2nd Lieutenant / Flying Officer / Pilot Officer	E1 Skill Zone 4
6	Workforce	18 - 20	4 - 8	40 - 45	6 - 12	73 - 227	Lance Corporal / Able Rate / Private / Aircraftman		Skill Zone 1 - 3

What is the female sector representation?

Women represent 19% of the defence sector.

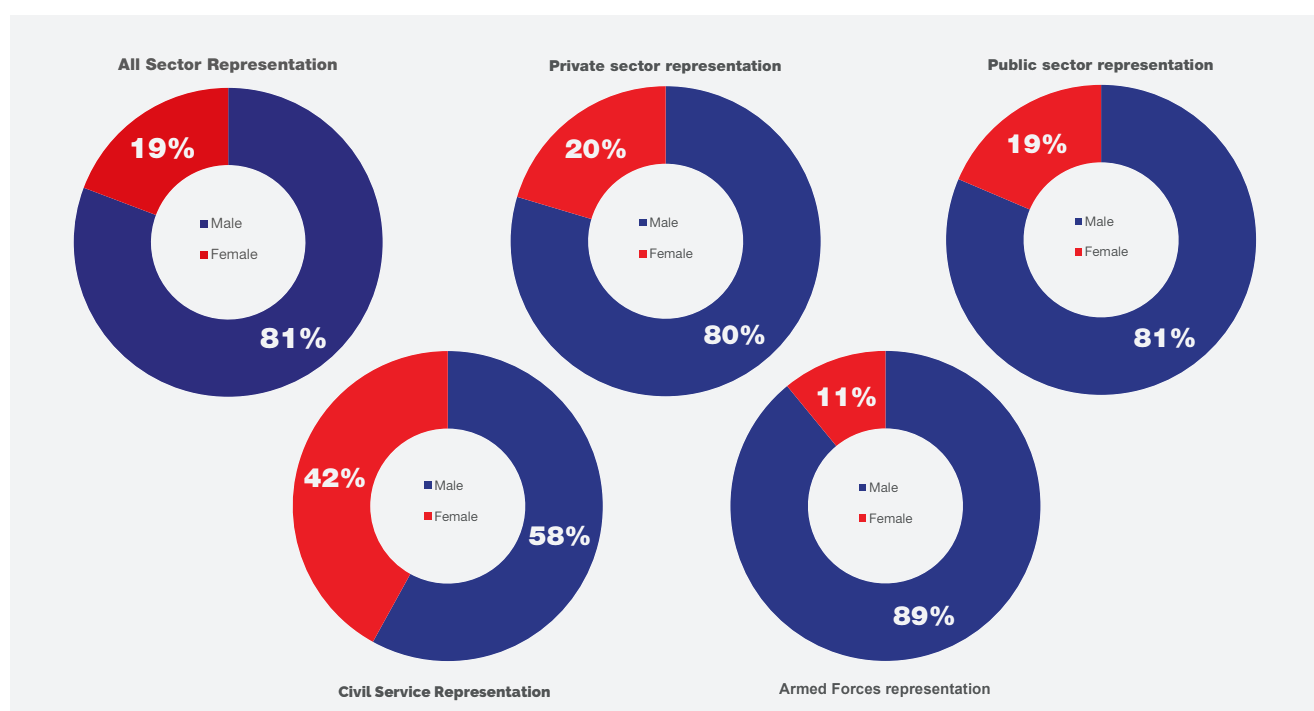
Compared to other sectors ([Source: HR DataHub](#)), the representation of women is relatively low as only in Construction/Engineering is the representation lower at 18%. However, this is to be expected in the defence sector, which has been a traditionally male sector for generations. Undoubtedly it is a considerable challenge to break from this traditional trend.

Representation does vary significantly via area within the defence sector:

- The Public Sector - Civil Service have excellent representation at 41%.
- The current representation in the Armed Forces is significantly lower at 11%.
- The Private area of the defence sector is in line with the overall representation figure at 20%.
- The combination of the Civil Service and Armed Forces brings representation to the sector average.

The bar has now been set. We must ensure that we monitor progress and continue to push for increased female representation across the defence sector.

Representation						Sector	Female Representation
Area	Total			Percentage			
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female		
Civil Service	27,626	19,988	47,614	58%	42%	Hospitality	49%
Private	89,522	22,911	112,433	80%	20%	Retail	45%
Public	157,071	35,880	192,951	81%	19%	All Sectors	38%
Armed Forces	129,445	15,892	145,337	89%	11%	Energy	35%
All	246,593	58,791	305,384	81%	19%	Logistics	27%
						Technology	24%
						Defence	19%
						Construction / Engineering	18%



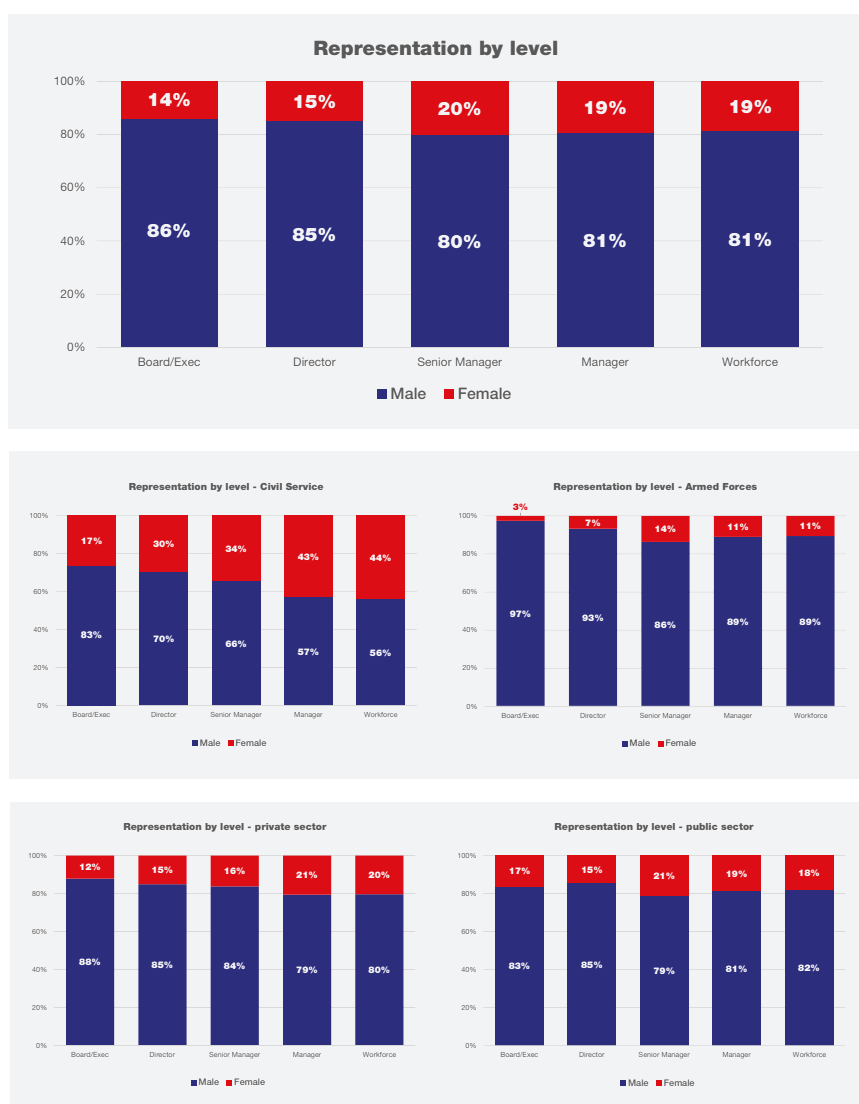
Does the sector have similar female representation at all levels?

Representation at the two most senior manager levels (Board/Executive and Director) is below the overall sector representation.

However, it is typical for most sectors to decline in representation the higher you go up in an organisation. On a positive note, compared to other sectors, the defence sector has better representation at senior levels.

If we break down the different areas:

- There is good representation in the Civil Service. However, representation does slow the further up you go in the organisation.
- Regarding the Armed Forces, the most significant proportion of representation is at the three lowest levels. There are a positive number of women in Senior Management roles and higher than the overall representation number. However, it appears that talent is not currently progressing through to the top two tiers (with Director at 7% and Board/Executive at 3%).
- In the Private sector, representation is consistent across the different levels except at Board/Exec level where it drops to 12%.
- In the Public sector, there is good representation at every level comparative to the 19% defence sector baseline.



Is the sector attracting more women and retaining them?

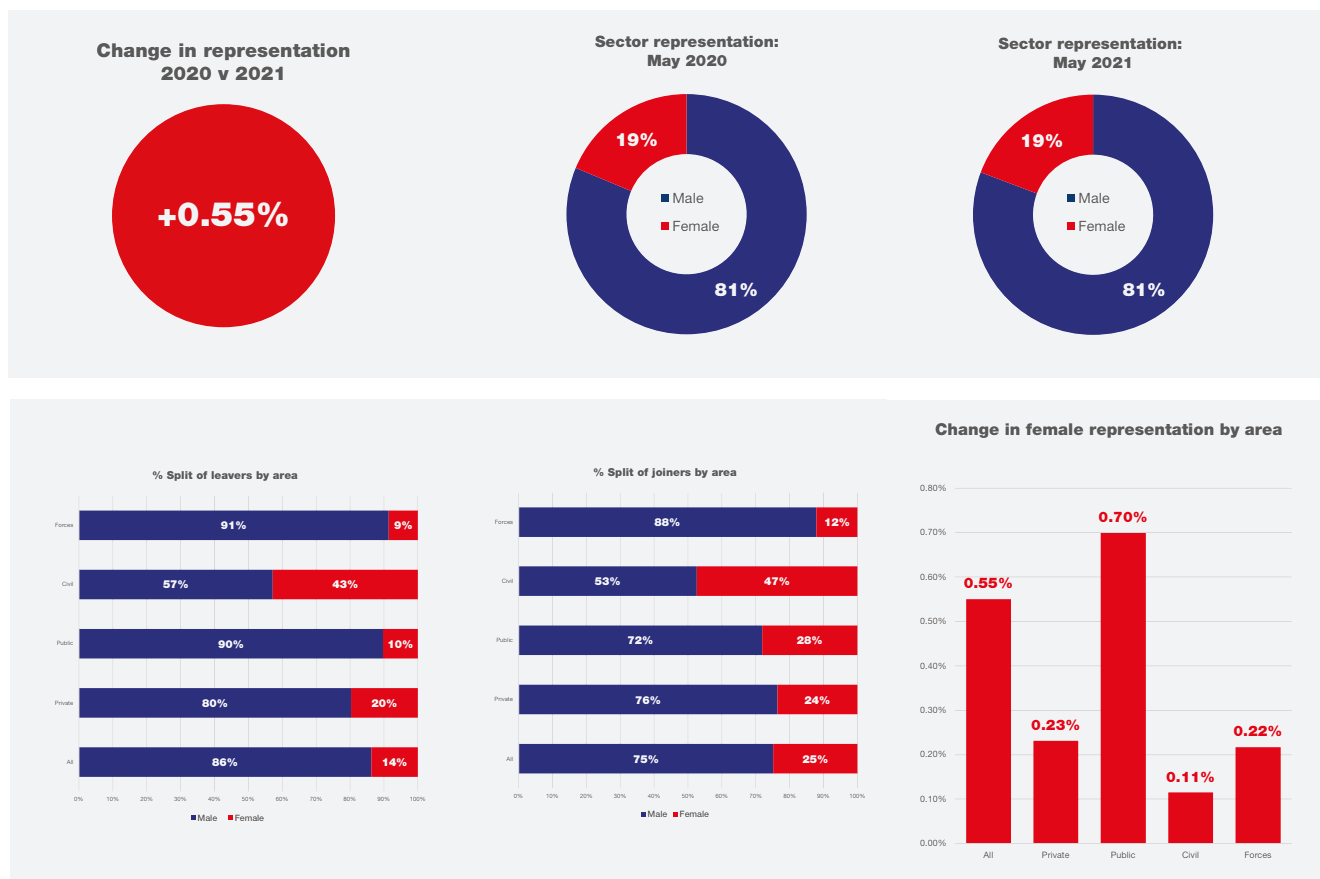
When considering joiners and leavers, the signatories have seen a talent flow of 13,000 more leavers than joiners over the past twelve months.

The good news is that proportionally fewer women have left, and more women have joined

Resulting in an increase in the overall representation of the sector of 0.55%.

All areas improved their representation in the last twelve months, with the most significant change in representation in the Public sector at 0.7%.

When looking at talent flow, the percentage of leavers from organisations must be lower than the current representation (and for joiners, it needs to be higher).



Is the sector attracting more women and retaining them at all levels?

The sector has improved representation at all levels over the past twelve months through joiners and leavers.

In particular, at Director level, we have seen an encouraging increase of 3.4%. The main concern is at Board/Executive level, where there was only a 0.5% improvement.

At all levels, there are more leavers than joiners for male and female.

Over the coming years, we expect the trend to continue, and we want to see a higher proportion of women coming into the sector at senior levels.

As the economy recovers (particularly in the Private sector), there may be opportunities to improve representation. However, organisations need to put into place actions now to create the right environment and culture in which to build representation at all levels. Similarly, they should take the time now to identify and retain talent to progress via succession plans.



Does tenure have an impact on representation at different levels?

Tenure is the length of time that a person spends with a company and is an important indicator of inclusion and fairness within each organisation and the wider sector.

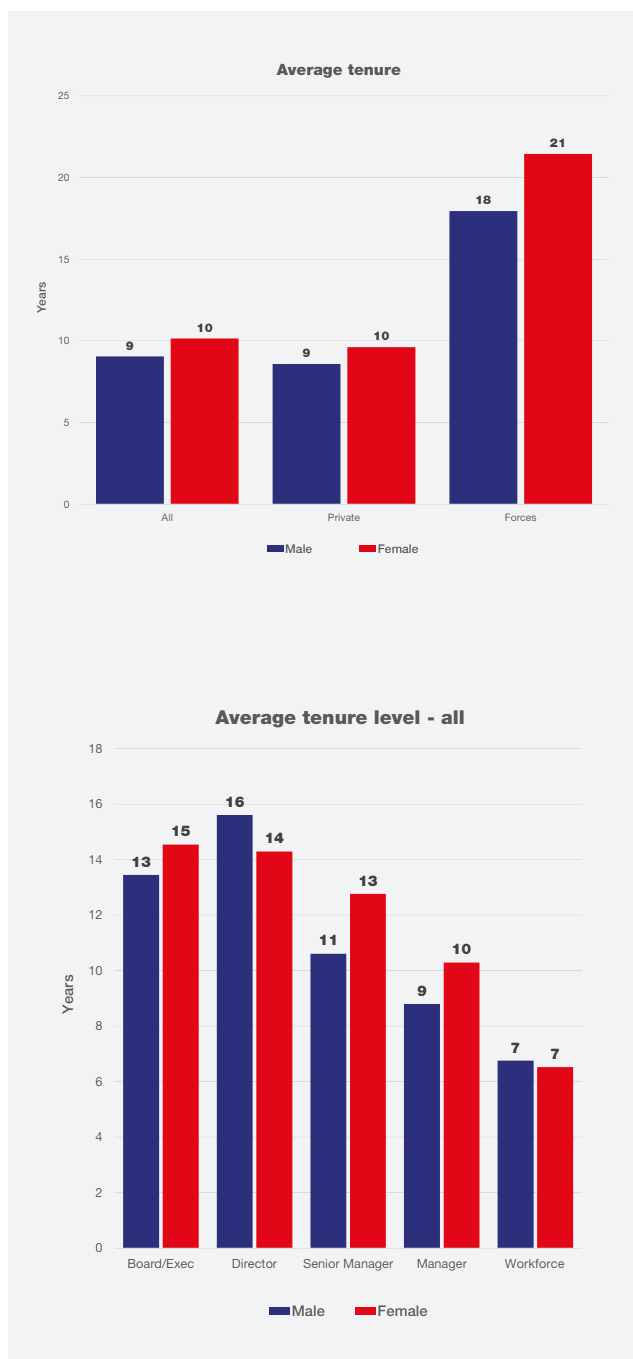
Overall, the tenure rates in the defence sector are positive, with the average being ten years for women and nine years for men. This is slightly higher than the all-sector average of 8 years (Source: HR DataHub).

In terms of inclusivity, this points to a positive experience for women as low tenure rates can signify that the culture is not inclusive, and women are joining and quickly leaving. Also, it could be a sign of unfair practices or a penalty for taking a career break if it takes women longer to be promoted to higher roles.

However, it is a different story when looking at tenure across all levels. It appears that female colleagues require two additional years at the Senior Manager level, which is a concern as at this level, the career break penalty typically has the most significant negative impact. This two-year differential is also shown at Board/Executive level but is reversed at Director.

Data was only received on tenure from the Private sector and the Armed Forces. In the Private sector, women will typically require an additional two years of tenure at each level (except Director).

As expected, the tenure levels in the Armed forces are high, and women require an additional 2-4 years of tenure across all levels. It's a worrying trend and requires further data to determine if women do pay a career break tax as they progress through their organisation's hierarchy.



Does age have an impact on representation at different levels?

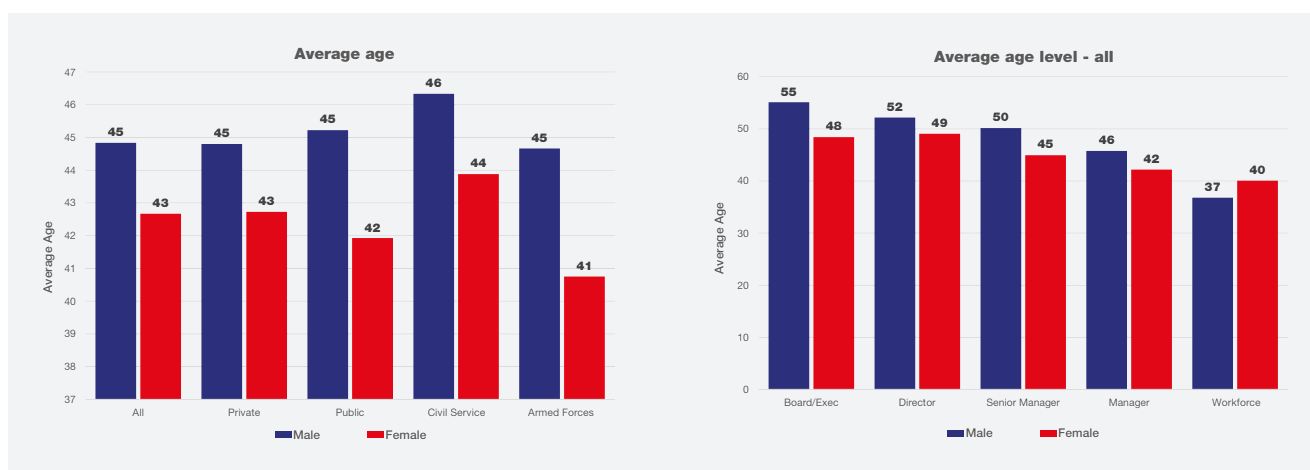
Age is also an important indicator of fairness within each organisation and the wider sector.

The average age of women in the defence sector is two years lower than men and is applicable in each area. The highest difference is in the Armed Forces, where women are typically four years younger.

Should the average of women be higher than that of men at the senior levels, this might point towards the existence of a career break penalty. It can also be a sign of the glass ceiling if the average age is far higher at the previous level of hierarchy in the organisation.

When looking at broad levels, we notice that women are typically younger than their male counterparts across the sector in all areas

An interesting area is the average age for workforce colleagues, where typically women are older than men. It could be assumed that men are promoted quicker to more senior roles and that women do not have the same opportunity (which could be as a result of a career break). Further data and analysis are required to support this assumption.



Case studies from participants

Sharing stories, successes and best practice is the true power of the charter. Identifying and implementing proven initiatives is a huge opportunity for the sector and represents the best opportunity to achieve increased female representation.

The following is a small sample of those incredible stories.



MRL® Public Sector Consultants Ltd regularly undertakes outreach activities at various universities to encourage women and BAME to apply for roles in the defence sector. For instance, we have encouraged many young girls to undertake internships in organisations within the defence sector.

We also mentor and teach 21st Century Skills for Young Leaders jointly with the **Institute for Leadership and Management (ILM)** to enable young women to develop and thrive in the workplace.



Saab has a long-standing focus on gender equality to increase the share of female managers to 30% globally by 2025. As of 2021, 24% of our UK employees are female, and we continue to move towards delivery upon our ambition.

In support of our colleagues, we regularly update our policies to ensure they are as family-friendly as possible, including offering full pay for the first 16 weeks of maternity leave, offering time off to care for dependants and family emergencies. Further to this, we are also providing employment opportunities via the Forces Families jobs site, encouraging women to apply for part-time and flexible jobs.

Case studies from participants



Serco Defence (UK) has pledged to be the very best at driving inclusion and diversity, providing fair opportunities for women to succeed at all levels.

As part of our Diversity & Inclusion strategy, we launched a network for 'Women in Defence' on International Women's Day in March 2021 to build a community which will address gender diversity both in Serco and across the wider industry. Our membership consists of colleagues from all levels who are passionate about championing the work of women in Defence. It is a network for both men and women to drive forwards proactive change and demonstrate our commitment to both colleagues and customers

- Communicate with the network members on latest gender diversity issues and/or successes.
- Encourage men to be allies of the network and help and educate them to be an effective ally.
- Celebrate the diversity of experience, insight and perspectives that sits within our female colleague base. To capture different voices and diversity of thought into the way we design and deliver services and championing the range of roles and opportunities in which women in Serco are making a difference.
- Accelerate opportunities for personal and career growth. We want to provide a platform for posing the challenging questions in tackling issues of gender disparity, addressing actual or perceived limitations and identifying opportunities to share skills and insights across our business.



AeroWomen21, an initiative to attract young women into the aerospace industry, was created by Olivia Gribler from the Leonardo graduate scheme. The event's objective is to encourage young women to consider STEM careers and ultimately increase the number of women who apply to the organisation.

The programme will invite around 70 attendees from local schools to inspire them to consider a career in Engineering. The attendees will also be offered tips on confidence and imposter syndrome, which typically impact women/girls more than men.

It's a women-only cross-generational event that aims to celebrate the women who have found success in aerospace while showing the next generation the opportunities open to them.

Due to continued restrictions, the event will be hosted online this year to a group of nearly 200 women and is promoted and hosted by Leonardo UK and The Royal Aeronautical Society.

Case studies from participants



Inspiring Women in Defence



How we achieve this:

- Ongoing and proactive talent management
- Mentoring key people, encouraging women to be both mentors and mentees
- Training to overcome subconscious discrimination

Initiative 1

AEUK promotes brilliance through continuous support to develop talent proactively. We focus on talent management and growing the very best of women working in the defence sector across many roles and disciplines. We support women to develop and hone the skills they need to maximise their collective and individual impact and improve the overall output of AEUK within the defence sector.

Initiative 2

We support Women in Defence's UK values of working proactively to demonstrate the collective impact and collaborative value women bring to the defence sector. We ensure this passion and knowledge are shared through our mentoring programme and encourage women to be mentors and mentees. Through sharing our experiences, we aspire for AEUK women to stand tall and proudly demonstrate their skills and capabilities, no matter what their level or background.

Initiative 3

AEUK promotes having uncomfortable conversations where necessary to constructively challenge the status quo. We deliver mandatory online diversity and inclusion training for all staff across the AEUK Group.

WIND

Conclusion

The data collected for this report is hugely beneficial in providing us with a current indication of gender representation in the UK defence sector.

We now know that women make up 19% of the sector, which increased by 0.55% over twelve months. In addition, we've seen good progress at Director level with a 3.4% increase, but representation at Board/Executive level needs to improve.

Overall, the findings show we're heading towards our ambition of increasing female representation in the defence sector over the coming years.

NEXT STEPS

To reach the ambition, we require ongoing improvement and commitment from the signatories:

Be bold the case studies in this report are just a sample of the excellent initiatives the signatories are implementing to increase diversity and inclusion within their workforce. We need all participants to embrace such ideas and create programmes and forward-thinking strategies to improve gender balance.

Set targets we know all signatories are committed to setting gender diversity targets within their workforce, and we support them with their strategy for growth in female representation. To increase female representation, we ask all participants to set their targets, whatever their starting point or current situation.

Data collection the data collected from participants for the survey has been key to providing the final results. We, therefore, ask all signatories to continue to update and review data so that we can ensure future surveys continue to be accurate and informative.

Be accountable we encourage all senior executives responsible for diversity and gender inclusion within their organisation to continue to drive these initiatives so that we are all working together to create change.

Finally, we'd like to thank all the signatories for their ongoing commitment to the Charter and for the data they provided. Progress is occurring, and by working together, we believe the representation ambition is achievable.



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