



Women in Business

Annual Impact Report 2021-2022

Prepared by the Bristol
Women in Business CIC

www.bristolwomeninbusinesscharter.org

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Executive Summary

This Bristol Women in Business Charter annual impact report provides a summary of the impact the Charter has had in the last year. Significant progress has been made once more by our signatories during another challenging year for businesses. We recognise their continual commitment towards creating a gender equal workforce. The report also provides an overview of our financial position and details of our future plans for the Charter.

The Bristol Women in Business Charter aims to recognise and support businesses in Bristol and the surrounding areas that are making progress towards gender equality. Our work and the work of the Charter signatories brings benefits for women, the businesses they work in and the communities they live in.

Another year subject to the restrictions and controls resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic saw the Bristol Women in Business CIC Team continue its work towards gender equality. We attracted some new signatories. A total of 38 employers, with over 35,000 full time equivalent employees in the Bristol area, are currently signed up to the Charter. Their workforces range from over 7000 employees to just 5 and all are welcome.

Although it has been a challenging year for our signatories, whilst they try to build back from the pandemic, we have seen them continue to make progress on all aspects of gender equality, not just their selected goals for the last 12 months.

This Impact Report shares the progress reported to us by Charter signatories between April 2021 and March 2022.

We have been informed of many success stories, progress and action signatories are taking towards a gendered balanced workforce.

We have seen organisations reporting that although they have great passion for D&I, it has been difficult to find the time and resource capacity to focus on D&I and on specific initiatives. This did result in some delays with reporting on progress for some of our signatories, but we have seen a number of organisations start to address the lack of resources and actively recruit for new team members with a specific remit for D&I.

Although there are many positives that have been achieved from the move to online meetings and events, some organisations have also noticed the impact of not having the same opportunities to network with like-minded people over the last year. They feel that we have all missed out on chances to share best practice and new ideas. They have thanked the charter for providing some opportunities to do this remotely, but also look forward to being able to hopefully do this face to face again in the future.

We have seen organisations start to promote intersectional dialogue to better understand the needs of different groups of women (and people more generally) across the business.



Executive Summary

We have also seen organisations restructure and downsize their businesses, which have impacted on their future plans, ambitions and cause them to refocus and to rebuild. The knock-on impact experienced by some organisations has been disruptive to both financial plans and the delivery plans for the ED&I agenda for the year, and as a result they have had to adapt to alternative plans other than that set out to initially achieve. In particular the restrictions in growth plans, significantly prevented opportunities for progression within organisations which have had a direct impact on women and the gender pay gap. The current pandemic has also meant a pause to some initiatives as priorities have had to be re-established, but businesses are hoping to pick up again on those initiatives soon (such as mentoring) For many businesses, the present is all about surviving the crisis and that's understandable.

In a report commissioned by the charter and produced by Sophia James, a UWE MSc student, as part of her conducted research interviews with a number of representatives of organisations that are signatories to the Charter.

When asked what advice they would give to other organisations looking to improve their gender equality practices, the Charter signatories interviewed emphasized the need to celebrate successes. That's great advice. It's easy to focus on all that remains to be done, and with the gender pay gap still forecast to take another 217 years to close, there is a lot to be done by UK employers! Recognising and celebrating progress is an important way to maintain the energy, momentum and appetite for change.

The Charter is an effective long-term lever to support the move to gender equality. We aim to recognise, support and accelerate the progress businesses are making. We encourage employers of all sizes in Bristol and the surrounding area to sign the Charter and make progress on gender equality. By working together on this important issue, we will achieve our ambition to make Bristol the first gender equal city in the UK.



The charter team would like to thank Isobel Wholley our previous Marketing manager for all her hard work during the last two years and wish her well in her new role

The purpose of this report

This Bristol Women in Business Charter annual impact report provides a summary of the impact the Charter has had in the last year. Significant progress has been made once more by our signatories during another challenging year for businesses. We recognise their continual commitment towards creating a gender equal workforce. The report also provides an overview of our financial position and details of our future plans for the Charter.



Who we are and why we exist

The Charter was launched by the Women in Business Task Group, a group of volunteers and part of the Bristol Women's Commission in March 2019.

They wanted to ensure the Charter would have longevity and be sustainable. They knew it would take time to achieve our aims and ambitions and that the Charter was a long-term project. The Charter's ambition to help accelerate the pace of change that will benefit women, the businesses they work in and the communities they live in is huge and as we build the Charter community, we welcome businesses of all kinds to the collaborative effort.

In April 2020, a Community Interest Company (the Bristol Women in Business CIC) was established to operate the Charter. It's a not-for-profit, community-serving business. The founding directors of the CIC were Sandra Gordon and Jane Ginnever.



Our purpose and ambitions



Our belief is that businesses cannot reach their full potential if they fail to recruit and retain a gender-balanced workforce. The Bristol Women in Business Charter aims to recognise and support businesses in Bristol and the surrounding areas that are making progress towards gender equality. Our work and the work of the Charter signatories brings benefits for women, the businesses they work in and the communities they live in.

The Charter is an effective long-term lever to support the move to greater gender equality. The seven goals of the Charter are evidence-based and were carefully selected to act as a framework that would guide businesses to make progress and focus on the actions that will get results. You can find out more about why the goals were selected in our blog [here](#).

Only by working together on this important issue will we achieve our ambition to make Bristol the first gender equal city in the UK. We want to encourage all businesses in Bristol and the surrounding area (BS postcodes) to sign the Charter and make progress in their own way toward gender equality.



A wide-angle photograph of the Clifton Suspension Bridge in Bristol, England, spanning a deep gorge. The bridge is a suspension bridge with two large stone towers and a network of cables. The surrounding area is lush with green trees and vegetation. The sky is blue with some white clouds.

What we have done to help deliver for and businesses in 2021-22

Another year subject to the restrictions and controls resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic saw the Bristol Women in Business CIC Team continue its work towards gender equality.

We attracted some new signatories. A total of 38 employers, with over 35,000 full time equivalent employees in the Bristol area, are currently signed up to the Charter. Their workforces range from over 7000 employees to just 5 and all are welcome. We will continue to welcome employers of all sizes based in Bristol and the surrounding area as there are a huge number of people employed by small businesses in Bristol and the surrounding areas and many of those businesses are looking to make more progress on gender equality. Our annual fee structure is designed to make that feasible, with an annual fee of just £50 for companies with fewer than 20 full-time equivalent employees.

One of the key purposes of the Charter is to bring companies together to share their experiences and knowledge and to learn from each other through regular events. We have been able to host 5 events this year, all of which were online. We do hope that we can finally get together again in person in the coming year! Four of the events this year were for Charter signatories only, which included lively and open discussions about progress made and challenges faced. One of the events was open to the public and attracted a large audience, as we focused on intersectionality and sharing lived experience. You can read more about these events in this report.

Many of the Charter signatories have now reported their progress on gender equality for the second year. Their reports show significant progression towards creating a gender balanced workforce by those companies. Sharing the details of that progress, with many great examples, is one of the main aims of this report.

In addition to bringing signatories together at events, we have been trying for some time to enable people to come together online so the discussions and sharing of resources can continue throughout the year. Having tried a meetup.com group format, we've now moved to a LinkedIn group, which will hopefully be easier for those within more corporate settings to access. If you work for a Charter signatory company and would like to join that group please get in touch with us at info@bristolwomeninbusinesscharter.org and we'll send you an invitation to this private group.

Our three Charter Ambassadors have been active advocates for the work of the Charter again this year and have helped us to fly the flag and increase awareness of the Charter and its goals within the local business community. We invite you to consider whether you would like to get involved. If you would like to become a Charter Ambassador, do get in touch with us at info@bristolwomeninbusinesscharter.org.

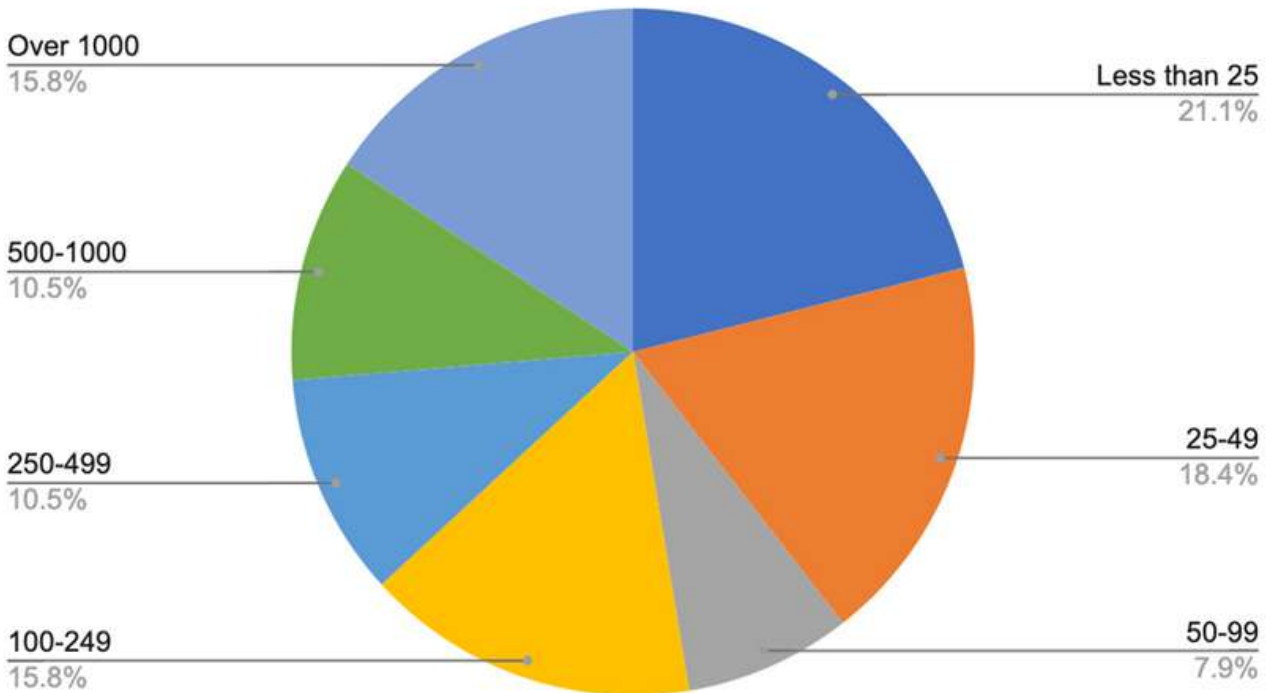
What has been achieved



Numbers of people employed

The Charter's current signatory companies employ more than 35,000 people in Bristol and the surrounding area. This chart shows the varying size of those companies. We welcome companies that employ 3 or more people.

How many employees do Charter signatories have (Bristol-based FTE)?



Why companies selected the goals they did in 2021

Both new applicants and current signatories are expected to set targets against one or more of the goals of the Charter. In addition, signatories are asked to explain why the goals they have chosen are important to their business. The answers demonstrate both the employer's values and the importance of the issue of gender equality to the business. Here are some of the answers we received:

From new applicants:

“We have identified a need to ensure that female employees are represented at senior level and form a significant part of our governing corporation.”

Bristol City College

“By more evenly representing women in our business we can make inroads to the perception in younger women that jobs in tech are not for them” Ghyston

“To develop the opportunities and support for progression for our employees,”

Bristol Credit Union

“we are very lucky to have a high number of women in senior roles and on our executive team, so we want to turn our focus to supporting women in lower paid/skilled roles so that we can provide support and progression to help them progress.” Chorus

“We are growing our business and recognise the strengths that women have to help shape the culture and feel of the business” Amba

And from existing signatories...

“The representation of women in senior professional services grades has decreased” Ian Williams

“...would like to take this opportunity to improve specific areas of the business where our gender balance and gender pay gap is not as progressive as the rest of the business” Pelican

“It's also important that we make it clear that there are routes into leadership and management for people of all genders, not just men” Western Global





The challenges businesses face when trying to make progress on equality

We have seen the continual impact of the pandemic and the pressure experienced by a variety of our signatories on their workforce.

Organisations have tried to ensure they were well placed with their progressive practices and inclusive culture to respond in a flexible and engaging way. Adapting the way in which they communicate with their teams, using video as a medium to replace face-to-face meetings, but maintaining an interactive style that encourages questions to be raised and staff feeling supported. We have seen organisations reporting that although they have great passion for D&I, it has been difficult to find the time and resource capacity to focus on D&I and on specific initiatives. This did result in some delays with reporting on progress for some of our signatories, but we have seen a number of organisations start to address the lack of resources and actively recruit for new team members with a specific remit for D&I.

Although there are many positives that have been achieved from the move to online meetings and events, some organisations have also noticed the impact of not having the same opportunities to network with like minded people over the last year. They feel that we have all missed out on chances to share best practice and new ideas. Thanks to the charter for providing some opportunities to do this remotely, but they look forward to being able to hopefully do this face to face again in the future.

We have seen organisations restructure and downsize their businesses, which have impacted on their future plans, ambitions and cause them to refocus and to rebuild. The knock-on impact seen by some organisations has been disruptive to both financial plans and the delivery plans for the ED&I agenda for the year, and thus they have had to adapt to different plans other than that set out to initially achieve. The restrictions in growth plans significantly prevented opportunities for progression within organisations which have had a direct impact on women and the gender pay gap.

The current pandemic has meant a pause to some initiatives as priorities have had to be re-established, but businesses are hoping to pick up again on those initiatives soon (such as mentoring)

A photograph of a curved pedestrian bridge over a canal. A yellow boat with a canopy is in the water, and a person is walking on the bridge. The text 'Other Progress made' is overlaid on the image.

Other Progress made

Although it has been a challenging year for our signatories, as they try to build back from the pandemic, we have seen continued progress on all aspects of gender equality, not just their selected goals for the last 12 months. We have been informed of many success stories, progress and action. Signatories are taking towards a gendered balanced workforce.

Thanks to a revamped gender equality network (OVO Engender) they have seen increased engagement on this issue across the business and very senior support, including from the Chair of our Retail Board and our COO who both joined a panel to discuss the ongoing conversations on how we can all challenge gender inequalities, including the pay gap. This has been consolidated with workshop coaching for inspiring female leaders.

We have seen organisations start to promote intersectional dialogue to better understand the needs of different groups of women (and people more generally) across the business.

There has been a focus on HR practices including reviewing of people policies, with an intent to move to gender neutral and more inclusive policies, for example in relation to parental leave (instead of traditional maternity / paternity / adoption) by Ovo energy.

Pelican surveyed all our working parents to understand their childcare needs to ensure they were able to offer tailored solutions to enable them to combine childcare and work. These options were available to all our employees, but predominantly taken up by their female team members. Their proactive and agile response to the pandemic resulted in a very high retention rate among existing team members and an overall employee engagement score of 92.4%, and similar results in Water2business at 96.9% and Flipper at 100%.

Pelican (Flipper, Water2business) have introduced fully flexible working for all non-operational colleagues, empowering them to work when and where they choose. They have introduced a welcome pack for maternity returners, including a voucher to spend on themselves. Also, they have raised awareness of the menopause for line managers, and the impact it can have on female employees (and male partners of sufferers).

They have developed a focus on 'Healthy Conversations', where they work together to break the taboo of discussing perceived 'difficult' topics related to our bodies, our health and our wellbeing.

Hargreaves Lansdown has undertaken and made progress in a number of different areas including, having a female Chair and three women on the Board, they are a member of the 30% club and has signed the Women in Finance Charter, both committing to increase the number of women in senior positions.

Research Findings 2021

In summer 2021, Sophia James, a UWE MSc student, conducted research interviews with a number of representatives of organisations that are signatories to the Charter. Her research focused on the Charter goals, the experience of current signatories and the topic of intersectionality.

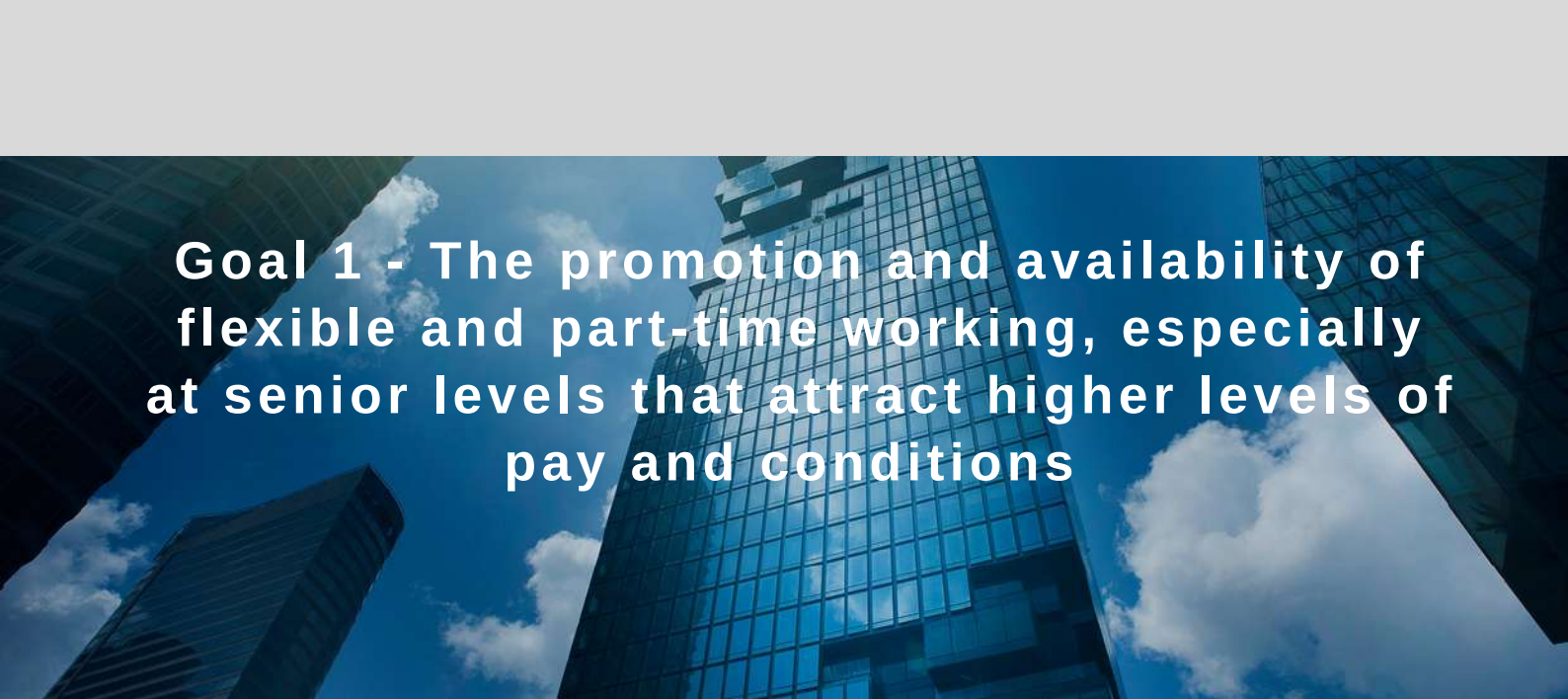
Sophia's research highlighted the fact that, contrary to previous research (Woodhams and Lupton (2006)) that indicated that larger enterprises perform better with regards to gender equality practices than SMEs, as they are more likely to have dedicated employees to implement them successfully, the smaller companies that are signatories of the Charter were also able to demonstrate a variety of ways in which they used good equality practices.

When asked what advice they would give to other organisations looking to improve their gender equality practices, the Charter signatories interviewed emphasised the need to celebrate successes. That's great advice. It's easy to focus on all that remains to be done, and with the gender pay gap still forecast to take another 217 years to close, there is a lot to be done by UK employers! Recognising and celebrating progress is an important way to maintain the energy, momentum and appetite for change.

With regards to the question of intersectionality, Sophia found that there was no improvement in opportunities for those from intersectional backgrounds specifically and there remained a lack of senior representation for those of Black and Brown communities or disabled backgrounds for example amongst the signatories that participated.

It is worth noting though that by addressing issues with representation at the recruitment stage, change can be made. One Charter signatory business was able to improve their recruitment of ethnic minority individuals from 12% to 36% in twelve months. Several respondents also participated in Bristol's Stepping Up programme, an award-winning local talent development programme creating a pipeline for those groups that are currently under-represented to enter leadership.





Goal 1 - The promotion and availability of flexible and part-time working, especially at senior levels that attract higher levels of pay and conditions

As you might anticipate in the second year of the pandemic, much progress has been made on this goal. The forced rethinking of whether work is something we do or a place we go to has been grasped as an opportunity by many of the Charter signatories, regardless of how they were working pre-Covid. Stride Treglown for example have further reduced their core working hours to enable more flexibility and Bishop Fleming have been actively promoting flexible working through intranet posts by those people around the firm who have positive experiences of working flexibly, including senior leaders.

At Clarke Willmott, they now enable an open discussion about flexible and part time working for all new roles and vacancies including senior level roles. ADLIB have introduced a fully flexible working pattern throughout the business which is inclusive of reduced hours. As a direct result they have been able to hire and promote to a management role a woman who has worked part-time throughout her employment to date.

TLT have been planning for a future way of working which includes a no-parameters approach to flexible working which will allow colleagues to choose their hours, their location and their work environment. The National Composite Centre has been experimenting, having given all employees control over where and when they work in a 6 months trial. Research was conducted by UWE into the fulfilment of senior roles whilst working reduced hours this year. We look forward to sharing the findings with Charter signatories once they've been published.



Goal 2 - A commitment to increase the numbers of women at senior levels and on the board

This goal has continued to demonstrate the commitment towards ensuring that gender equality is obtained and driven from the top of the organisation. There have been some notable areas of progress from our signatories during the reporting year, OVO have continued to focus on female representation in leadership hiring and are seeing good progress towards achieving gender equality in leadership in the future. As of May 2021, 35.82% of our 201 leaders (Heads of Department and above) were female.

TLT decided to stay committed to this goal as this aligns with an area of focus for them since 2019 when they set a target of achieving 33% female partners by 2025. They are delighted to report an increase in representation in the number of female partners at TLT which has increased from 25.5% (as per our last report) to 28% as at May 2021. This was due in a large part to their recent round of partner-promotions of which 80% were female, which evidences their continued focus on progressing and developing female colleagues across all levels of the organisation.

SR2 - Socially Responsible Recruitment has increased the number of women at senior levels by 50% and on the board.

Burges Salmon have seen success through actively manages the pipeline of individuals put forward for partnership each year, and in a three-year period 48% of partner promotions were female. 48% of Directors are now female and 71% of our Heads of Business Services are also female. The development of the Gender Action Plan, which includes several objectives on gender balanced recruitment and supporting women into leadership positions, is also being championed by their entire partnership and Board to enact the longer-term changes needed to facilitate gender balanced leadership.

Organisations such as Hargreaves Lansdown have been very clear through their internal and external communications that they are committed to increasing senior female representation. They have a Board Diversity policy on their website which outlines their commitment to Board diversity and are proud to have a female Chair and to have exceeded the Hampton Alexander target for women on Boards for the 4th year in a row. The Talent Acquisition team and hiring managers are challenging recruitment agencies and search firms where candidate lists are not suitably diverse without a sufficient reason.

Goal 3 - Making at least one member of the senior executive team responsible for reporting on gender equality and inclusion



This goal centres around signatories appointing senior board members to take responsibility for reporting on the topic of gender equality and inclusivity. McKinsey’s 2021 report on Women in the Workplace found that women leaders are up to twice as likely to spend substantial time on DEI work that falls outside their formal job responsibilities.

At the same time, women are less likely to be promoted to mid level management roles and therefore have a lesser chance of reaching the senior positions. Calling this the “broken rung”.

There has been progress in this area for some Charter signatories and steps put in place to implement specific roles to ensure the necessary focus on this topic.

Clarke Wilmot have set up an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee with 2 senior members being part of this group. The National Composite Centre is hoping to implement management training in 2022 to ensure there is consistent messaging from the top down for bias awareness.



Goal 4 - Encouraging and supporting female employees in lower paid and lower skilled occupations to progress through the organisation, through appropriate training and other on-going support

The slowdown in growth due to the pandemic and the restrictions in opportunities has made it challenging for some organisations to provide the opportunities and support for women to progress through the organisation. We are pleased to note that for many of our signatories continual progression has been undertaken despite the challenges of the last year. Nonetheless we have seen those businesses like TLT have continued to offer Legal Assistant and Secretarial roles, predominantly occupied by women, the chance to qualify as lawyers through a non-traditional route.

Adlib's promotion of 4 females directly contributed to their ongoing support and training, with continued growth to management and progression towards board level positions in the future.

For other organisations such as Clarke Wilmott this will continue to be a focus of the ED&I group going forward as they look at priorities surrounding gender over the next 12-18 months, with forming a peer network for the advancement of gender equality across the firm.

Key partnerships, such as the ones with Burges Salmon, and Simitive have with the Women's Work Lab, a community collaboration that supports unemployed mums, aged 25+ has provided meaningful work experience.

Burges Salmon have clearly defined contribution frameworks for every role within their organisation and this feeds directly into their progression and review processes to ensure career conversations with managers are guided and conducted in a fair and equal manner.

Hargreaves Lansdown launched a pilot Sponsorship program for mid-level female and ethnic minority talent to support their progression through to more senior levels.

As part of their Personal Development Review Process Global Western have implemented a career development plan section which is tailored for everyone to better understand their aspirations and support their potential progression into more senior roles.

SR2 have promoted 3 females within the business, this was through on the job-training and female management supporting these employees.

The continual focus on positive action programmes to target and attract candidates to roles where there is under representation of women, was implemented by Bristol City Council. They have also introduced an online diversity dashboard which enables managers to quickly identify gaps in representation.



Goal 5 - A commitment to close the gender pay gap

The Gender Pay Gap, unfortunately, is still a relevant topic of conversation in gender equality, The Office of National Statistics 2021 report has shown the gender pay gap is widening.

In the UK organisations with over 250 employees are required to publish their Gender Pay Gap. The Gender Pay Gap is the difference in average gross hourly earnings between women and men. The report shows:

- The average UK gender pay gap is now 15.4% in favour of men. The South West average is 16.6% with women being paid 83p for every £1 earned by male counterparts.**
- This is partially impacted by the lack of women in senior/higher paid roles, however even in similar roles women and men not being paid equally.**

We know reducing the gender pay gap requires time and overseeing the business on many levels. OVO were keen to focus on both the gender and pay gap within their organisations. Exploring their own internal data to try and see where they could find out more. Rather than review on an annual basis, GCP Architects are utilising their board meetings to have regular check points.

Stride Treglown have reported a reduction in the gender pay gap. Reviewing role groups and pay structures has assisted them to plan where to make improvements. The pandemic has impacted statistics with staff on furlough however the gap has reduced and may it continue through 2022. Similarly, Hargreaves Lansdown shared the benefits of keeping close to pay processes to ensure they are robust and fair for all.



Goal 6 - A focus on implementing recruitment, appraisal, personal development and promotion processes that are non-discriminatory towards women and are free from unconscious bias

We saw less engagement with this goal in 2021 than in previous years, but the feedback from the signatories that chose to focus on this was extensive. The changes they have brought about reflect a real shift in the way these companies are thinking about the potential for bias.

Manor Community continued to support the careers of female carers, and saw three female colleagues trained, qualified and promoted into senior levels roles. They ran apprenticeships and continued to develop personalised career training plans for all female care staff.

Bristol City Council introduced an online diversity dashboard which enables managers to quickly identify gaps in representation. After reflecting on the data they were collecting around the number of women in roles at different levels in the partnership, TLT LLP developed their promotion process to ensure they were vigilant to bias and bring greater objectivity and transparency in their approach to promotion-nominations.

Pelican Business Services conducted a follow up workshop with female meter readers recruited into a traditionally male team, to gain feedback and ideas about how to encourage more female applicants. One of the actions that resulted was the creation of a video of one of our female meter readers in action, to share during the next recruitment drive to publicise the inclusive nature of those opportunities and showcase women in roles historically filled by men. At Ian Williams Ltd, who also have the ambition of attracting more women to traditionally male roles, they have advertised site-based roles on a part time, term time and compressed hours basis for the first time. They have also changed their bonus scheme to open it up to more employees, reaching more women as a result which will have a positive impact on their gender pay gap in time.

Simitive continues to provide support and mentoring to female staff to enable them to achieve their ambitions without limitation and have already achieved gender balance in their senior team and amongst team leaders. Not ones to rest on their laurels though, they are working to develop a more gender-balanced software development team, through the development of female engineers.

Bishop Fleming assessed their recruitment processes for bias and as a result introduced gender balanced interview panels. All interviewers must undergo their tailored assessor training.



Goal 7 - Supporting women where they are underrepresented, through mentoring and women's networks

We have seen the value and dedication by our signatories to ensure that women continue to be supported especially where they are underrepresented through mentoring and women's networks.

Pelican's mentoring initiative (IMentor) was relaunched this year and they are delighted that 53% of our available mentors are women, with representation from all key departments in the business.

In early 2021, TLT's Women's Network launched a new mentoring programme to empower women across the firm to set out and find a mentor through practical guidance including a podcast, contract, action plan and a mentee/mentor "how to" guide.

UWE are continuing to create opportunities for women to see role models through staff led groups (Women's network, Women in Leadership, Women Researchers Mentoring Group) and through our Distinguished Leaders Addresses. The Women's Staff Network and Women Researchers mentoring group continue to provide a range of opportunities for staff to connect and access role models. The HE sector's women leadership programme Aurora, has attendees from each year, and a participant led alumni network that provides female staff with opportunities to connect and build alliances and support.

Despite the pandemics' challenging conditions, Burges Salmon setup BBalanced, a people-led gender balance network. Since its inception the group has provided support and inspiration for our people by organising a panel event discussing different routes to leadership roles, presentations from speaking coaches and mental health experts and is currently setting up a research process to better understand barriers to female progression and how they can be overcome.

Simitive continued to provide support and mentoring to female staff to enable them to achieve their ambitions without limitation. To this end they have a new female leader for their Projects Team, a new junior female project manager (who has moved from our implementation team). As well as four new female implementers and a new female training Team Lead.

We have seen organisations such as Hargreaves Lansdown increase participation in the Career Confidence Mentor Scheme - the scheme focuses on increasing career confidence.

What we've heard from our Charter community

We have continued to listen to the needs and suggestions from our Charter community throughout this year, to help improve the value of being a signatory and ultimately to achieve the aims of the Charter. We value all feedback and the recommendations we have received.

Our signatories continue to have a real appetite to share and learn from each other. This is an example of the feedback we received on this: “Keep offering great events and being able to learn from each other and share experiences”. Practical advice and the sharing of experiences is a core part of our signatory-only quarterly events, and we will continue to hold them and to welcome all signatories throughout the coming year. Additionally, we hope the LinkedIn group will enable signatories to share and learn from each other’s experiences via online conversations.

Signatories are also looking to connect directly with other businesses facing similar challenges. We have a broad range of sectors represented within the Charter community, so it presents a real opportunity to connect with businesses that they can learn from but don’t necessarily bump up against in the usual course of business. One of the signatories made this specific request: “Support us in identifying and buddying with other Charter signatories who have been successful in the past two years in achieving the goals we have identified as our goals for the next twelve months.” and we’ll be looking at how to facilitate that this year.

Some signatories were also interested in accessing mentors in the local business for their female employees, so we will explore the cross-matching of mentors and mentees across the Charter community. We also heard that signatories appreciate our promotion via social media channels of other relevant events locally. We thank all our signatories for their feedback on the work we are doing and how we can continue to add value to their work on equality.



Our Ambassadors and appointments

The charter Ambassadors have continued to actively advocate for the work of the Charter and for gender equality in Bristol. They have helped us to fly the flag and increase awareness of the Charter and its goals within the local business community. We have valued their expertise, passion, and commitment to the work of the charter during the last year and would like to thank them for their continuing commitment. Our 2021-2022 Ambassadors.

Add Annie Budd is a professional recruiter, working at Sharkfin, where her role focuses not only on working with clients to recruit great talent but also how to improve their Diversity and Inclusion practices and ensure that they are able to provide an environment that marries the right people and businesses together.



Serrie Chapman is the co-founder of Women's Tech Hub which was set up to encourage local women in tech and find ways that they can develop their careers.

Kristal McNamara with a corporate background as a senior business leader, is qualified and experienced in Change and Programme Management. Kristal now leads Work Well, a HR Change consultancy, to create work that works for Businesses of all sizes.



We would like to welcome Kiki Paddy, the latest member to our ambassador team.

Kiki has extensive experience in strategy and operations, with her career spanning across several industries including housing, legal, social enterprise, and technology. As the acclaimed voice of the Black Professionals Network, she champions a vision to empower all black and ethnic minority professionals to advance in their careers and reach their full potential.



We would like to say a big thank you to Traci Lewis who supports purpose-led women and businesses to be sustainable and successful, through Sustain-Live Consulting Ltd, and Catalyse Change CIC who stepped down from the role last year.

Our Events

One of the benefits of being a Charter signatory is creating the opportunity to bring companies together to share their experience and knowledge and learn from each other through regular events. Since March 2020, we have run our events online. With the restrictions being lifted for 2022, we hope that we can plan an in person event.

We have held 6 online events since our last Charter anniversary. We started 2022 looking at our 1st charter goal. Enabling flexible and part-time working in senior level roles. Flexible working has been incorporated in many companies since the pandemic, with lots of debate around what works and to whose benefit this may be. Many say this is a positive outcome for women who are often impacted by the lack of flexible opportunities. To bring this conversation to life, our expert speakers Katherine Finn from PwC and Kristal McNamara from WorkWell discussed experiences and challenges with trying to achieve flexible approaches.



We went into the summer wondering Does Size Matter? For this event we diverged from our usual focus on a single Charter goal. Instead, we wanted to hear what employers have to learn from each other on gender equality, regardless of their size with the intention of supporting our smaller companies and explore how they are achieving progress in gender equality. Our speakers for this event were Emma Sexton founder of agency Hands Up and Paul Sheppard from our signatory company Simitive.

With the conversations around gender equality often overlapping with themes within other protected characteristics. We wanted to take a closer look at Equality Diversity and Inclusion through an intersectional lens. In October 2021, we held a public event of the same name, which was an amazing conversation from start to finish. With great expertise sharing their knowledge.

Guest speaker, Vanda Papafilippoi, senior lecturer in Human Resources Management at UWE and a large research history focusing on gender and race inequality in the workplace.



Our Events

Panellists Raggi Kotak, founder and Director of JEDI Consultancy (JEDI - justice, equity, diversity and inclusion and human rights barrister who provides training, coaching and mentoring to both individuals and groups. Creating space for dialogue and change in creative ways. Bethany Stephenson an administrator for Bristol Disability Equality Forum and a freelance social media marketer. As a young woman with Disabilities gave us a view on her experiences and would like to see more companies understand neurodiversity and help businesses better their diversity and inclusion. Melissa Toney Head of the Regulatory and Licensing Department at GL Law. Melissa is a Board Member for the Women's Work Lab, which works with unemployed mums putting them back into employment. Sharon Woma, a diversity and inclusion practitioner who works for the NHS at Bristol, North Somerset & South Gloucestershire CCG. Acting as an advisor, developing, and delivering D&I training and supporting the organisation to fulfil its mandatory and statutory duties. Sharon also sits on the organisation's Inclusion Council who strategically drives the D&I agenda.



Many of us dread days off for the work we have to come back to after a period of leave. Clare Freshwater-Turner and Annabelle Richards are job share specialists from The Jobshare Coach spoke to signatories about the benefits of job sharing and how to help empower colleagues in the process. Clare and Annabelle discussed how they have achieved their career aspirations in this way.



Kicking off 2022 and continuing the intersectionality conversation. We considered how to approach the gender pay gap in businesses with an intersectional approach. Dr. Zara Nanu spoke to signatories about the need to build more inclusive workplaces. Starting her career comparing human trafficking and campaigning on women's rights. A passionate discussion.

All our events are available to view online at www.bristolwomeninbusinesscharter.org.





Future plans

Community platform

Increasing the opportunity for signatories to communicate with each other outside of the signatory events, continues to be a focus for us. During the last year we have been trialing the Meetup.com platform to promote upcoming events and to give our signatories the facility to start discussion and conversations. Some organisations have experienced problems using this platform due to IT restrictions and compatibility. Other feedback received has indicated that organisations already have a number of different systems to access, so they would prefer to use something already in existence to an additional system. We have looked at the usage of Meetup.com during the last year and taken on board the feedback received and decided not to renew the subscription. We have instead created a LinkedIn group for all our signatories, this will be used to promote upcoming events as well as a platform for our signatories to build networks with other organisations who are working on similar topics or goals. We hope that this will help to organise/encourage connections between the larger and smaller signatories and the cross sharing of resources and experiences towards the achievement of the charter goals.

We will use the platform to share case studies of both of our signatories and other organisations who are making real progress towards achieving the charter goals and gender equality within their workplaces.

Buddy System

A few of our signatories have expressed a wish for a buddy system to be introduced whereby they can share best practice between businesses and organisations across Bristol. The suggestions have included to buddy up signatory companies by size so contacts can swap notes on progress and support one another. Also, identify and buddy with other Charter signatories who have been successful in the past two years, in achieving the goals they have identified as their goals for the next twelve months, who can support them.

We will explore these possibilities of implementing a buddying process for our signatories and will involve you as part of the decision-making process. In the meantime we will continue to use our LinkedIn group to let signatories connect

Review of the Charter with the Women in business task group

2022 will mark 3 years since we commenced the Bristol Women in Business Charter. The last two years have seen a massive shift in the world of work and the knock-on impact on women and gender equality in the workplace. During the next 12 months we will be taking the opportunity to take the charter back to the Women in Business task group, to evaluate progress to date, review the changing landscape for women at work, and to ensure the charter is focusing on and addressing the key needs to ensure a gendered balanced workforce for the future.



Intersectionality

One of the key areas of focus during the last 12 months has been the charter's aim and intention to view our goals through an intersectional lens.

As previously stated, we recognise that it is the voices of the most marginalised that are often silenced. It is therefore critical that the work of the charter considers issues of intersectionality.

This includes a range of diverse women, their needs, and priorities to inform our work.

It is important the charter supports the progression towards a gender balanced workplace for everyone who identifies as a woman. This explicitly includes women who are also classified from one of the protected characteristics. We had made the decision not to include an eight goal that incorporates the diversity of women who work within businesses. This only adds to the segregation and 'othering' of those women, and we are striving for an inclusive, gender workplace where all women are involved in all their diversities, and we are seeing the whole person.

We had galvanised some feedback from our signatories as part of our intern Sophie's James report she had produced for the charter.

We held a very successful online event on the 27th October 2021 which was accessible to non-signatories, where we focused on the lived experience of those women who would be classified under one or more of the protected characteristics. This event has provided many of our signatories with an opportunity to look at diversity and gender equality through a different lens and consider the approach they are using within their own organisations. The event was the start of the conversation around an intersectional lens and what potential directions organisations should be taking, moving forward.

The charter will be starting that journey for our 2022/2023 progress reporting period. We will be asking all our signatories to be more explicit in providing us detail around the makeup of those women where progress has been made. We appreciate that not all organisations will have that information readily available, but we hope that they will start to monitor and report this throughout the year.

We will continue to work with all our signatories during the coming year to understand how best to achieve this aim.



Future events



We will continue to run our events online for the next few months but hope to provide an in-person event towards the end of the year. We will continue to hold our valuable quarterly events for signatories, focusing each time on one of the goals of the Charter. Opportunities to share learning, meet and connect with other signatories has been fed back as a key benefit of signing up to the Charter.

Future dates are:

Thu 12 May 2022 (12noon-1.30pm): Focus on implementing unbiased processes

Wed 7 Sep 2022 (9.30-11.00am): Key trend identified in progress reports focusing on a particular charter goal

Tue 25 Oct 2022 (12.00-1.00pm): Public event (Topic tbc)

Thu 1 Dec 2022 (9.30-11.30am): Making at least one member of senior exec responsible for reporting on gender



Engagement with stakeholders (as a group):

We established the Women in Business CIC to operate the Charter with the intention to engage with all of our stakeholders. We will be establishing ways of doing that over the coming months. We aim to work openly and be accessible. We welcome contact and feedback from stakeholders. For more information about who our stakeholders are, see below.

Requesting mid-year feedback and conversations with Charter signatories:

We had hoped to engage with all of our signatories, hear about their progress on gender equality months we will endeavour to reach out more to our signatories in between their annual progress reporting period. We hope that this will enable signatories to take full advantage of the benefits to being part of this progressive community.



How we work with stakeholders (and who they are)

The Charter was created and launched by the Women in Business Task Group, part of the Bristol Women's Commission. They, along with the organisations that are signatories of the Charter, are our key stakeholders..

One of our Directors, Sandra Gordon, continues to hold a seat on the Women in Business Task Group. We also contribute to the Women's Commission's annual report to Bristol City Council on progress on gender equality.

We have increased our dialogue with Charter signatories beyond the reporting process this year and look forward to having ongoing, asynchronous communication through the LinkedIn group we have set up for Charter signatory companies. We continue to be inspired by the progress that's being made on gender equality by Charter signatories. Their focus on this issue is commendable.

Finances

We have now been operating the Charter through the vehicle of the Bristol Women in Business CIC for two years, having launched and run the Charter through the Women in Business Task Group on a voluntary basis until April 2020.

The purpose of the CIC is to support the Women in Business Charter's long-term future and accelerate the achievement of its aims.

We charge signatory companies an annual fee. Depending on the number of people employed (based on the Full-Time Equivalent number of employees) this has been between £50 and £750 for the last 2 years. We charge the fee on this sliding scale basis to ensure businesses of all sizes can afford to sign up to the Charter and be supported in their progress towards gender equality. We base the fee on the FTE, rather than the headcount, to ensure companies that have lots of part-time roles available are not penalised.

We have a small, paid team to run the CIC and operate the Charter. The CIC is not for profit and any surplus income in future will be used to support the Charter's goals.

We aim to work transparently and are happy to evidence full details of how we have spent the income received through signatories annual fees paid between April 2021-March 2022. The annual fee is reviewed on a yearly basis and revised as necessary. We aim to ensure that the CIC covers its costs but does not generate an excessive surplus.

	2020-21	2021-22
Revenue	£6,699	£5,225
Renewal fees	£5,699	£4,975
New applicants	£1,000	£250
Directors Loans	0	£750
Expenditure	£6,595	£5,646
Salaries (including PAYE)	£5,947	£304
Software subscriptions	£185	£16
Bank fees	£9	0
Companies House set up fee	£27	£1,248
Professional fees (payroll, accountants)	£216	£35
ICO registration	£35	£58
Website & domain name	£100	0
Equipment	£76	£207
Insurance	0	£500
Use of images	0	

Impact of covid

Impact of Covid-19

We have seen the continuing impact of the Covid pandemic felt by our signatories and the consequence this has had on women as a result. The stopping of furlough working, and the slow encouragement of getting staff back into the work environment, has meant that the flexibility of balancing home and work life, which was welcomed by some women, has now been reduced. The stricter isolation rules for both employers trying to manage the day to day running of their organisations and for those parents who had to react sometimes at short notice to children being sent home because of pupils testing positive, has proved to be very challenging especially for female employees.

Gender Pay Gap Reporting

For the 2020/2021 period, companies were given a six-month extension until 5 October to report their pay gap before the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) would take legal action. Speaking at the time, EHRC chair Kishwer Falkner said the commission had delayed its legal enforcement to strike a balance between “supporting businesses and enforcing their obligations”, adding that firms which fail to report the gender pay gap “risk letting down the women who work for them and damaging their reputation”.

For the past two years, gender equality charity The Fawcett Society has challenged the veracity of the government figures, arguing the pandemic has had a “disproportionate impact on women” and driven persistent inequality in the labour market.

Whilst the statistics suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic has had / is having a disproportionate impact on women, it is important to emphasise that COVID-19 has only exacerbated an existing problem in so far as gender equality is concerned; it hasn't caused it. Prior to the pandemic, the gender pay gap among all employees was 17.3% (in 2019).

The results from the 2021 submissions have shown that the gender pay gap has been declining slowly over time; over the last decade it has fallen by approximately a quarter among both full-time employees and all employees.

In 2021, the gap among full-time employees was 7.9%, up from 7.0% in 2020. This is still below the gap of 9.0% before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in 2019, and so the downward trend is continuing. They recommend looking at the longer-term trend. Among all employees, the gender pay gap increased to 15.4%, from 14.9% in 2020, but is still down from 17.4% in 2019.

The next reporting deadlines are:

- 30 March 2022 – this is for most public authority employers
- 4 April 2022 – this is for private, voluntary and all other public authority employers

We wait in anticipation to see the ongoing impacts that have occurred in organisations being given an extension to their reporting and the slow return for many organisations to pre pandemic working conditions.



What can employers do and what do they need to be aware of?

For many businesses, the present is all about surviving the crisis and that's understandable. However, companies do need to be mindful of two things:

Firstly, if any of the actions which they have taken during the pandemic are found to have a greater negative impact on female employees, then there is a risk that these will be found to be indirectly discriminatory on the grounds of sex.

Secondly, many businesses now strive to be “employers of choice” and want to build their brand so that they attract and maintain the best talent. Employers who aren't seen to be taking steps to support their female employees – or indeed, are seen to not treat employees respectfully during challenging times – may well struggle with both attraction and retention in the future.

As a starting point, it would be advisable for employers to ensure that they have sound flexible working policies in place and that managers are trained on how to deal with such requests.

Businesses should also consider whether greater flexibility can be offered, for example, can an employee work from home more regularly? Can greater flexibility be offered to allow, particularly women, to juggle their personal and work commitments? Can working hours be adjusted within a working day as needed? Developing a culture of trust will be imperative in businesses which are now working more flexibly, so that employees feel able, and supported, to get the job done in a way that works with their other responsibilities

Employers should also make sure that their return-to-office approaches are inclusive, and don't inadvertently exclude women. For example, by ensuring that meetings are arranged at times which fit with different schedules and providing options so that those still working from home are able to participate equally.

Whilst there is a lot of commentary more generally on the impact of performance targets/bonus criteria on women, for current purposes, it would also be wise for employers to consider any promotion or bonus criteria to ensure that women aren't disadvantaged as a result of the pandemic. For example, a woman who is unable to work the same hours as a result of having to home-school during lockdown may well be able to argue that any bonus

The new ways of working are an opportunity to engage more meaningfully and support women in their organisation in order to create a workplace where both men and women can thrive.

Extracts from (<https://www.shoosmiths.co.uk/insights/articles/covid19/covid-19-and-its-impact-on-women-at-work>)

Thank you for taking the time to read our Impact report.

Signatories



- ADLIB
- Amba People Limited
- Avon and Somerset Police
- Bishop Fleming LLP
- Bristol Airport
- Bristol City Council
- Bristol Credit Union
- Burgess Salmon LLP
- Business West
- Centre for Modelling and Simulation
- Chorus
- City of Bristol College
- Clarke Willmott LLP
- GCP Chartered Architects
- Ghyston
- Hargreaves Lansdown
- Ian Williams Ltd
- KETS Quantum Security Ltd
- Manor Community
- Moon Executive Search
- National Composites Centre
- OVO Energy
- Pelican Business Services
- Redington
- Rolls-Royce
- Signature Recruitment Ltd
- Simitive
- Socius
- SR2 Recruitment
- Stride Treglown Ltd
- TLT LLP
- Triodos Bank UK
- University of Bristol
- University of West of England
- water2business
- Wessex Water Enterprises Limited
- Western Global





**THE BRISTOL WOMEN IN BUSINESS
CHARTER PREPARED BY
BRISTOL WOMEN IN BUSINESS CIC**

**www.bristolwomeninbusinesscharter.org
info@bristolwomeninbusinesscharter.org
Find us on LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram
[@wibcharter](#)**