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# Why has progress on gender diversity stalled?

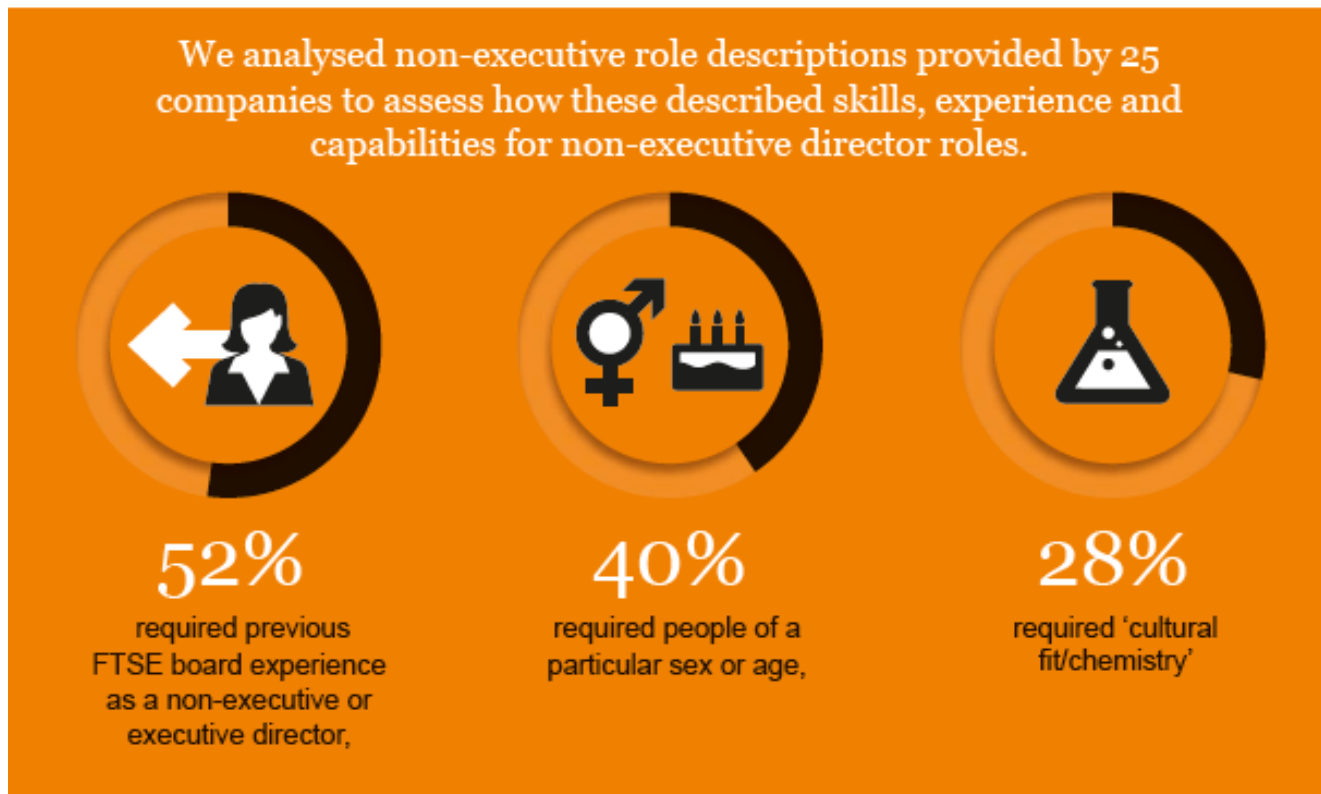
## ICSA: Annual Conference

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# EHRC Inquiry



## Role descriptions



## The search process

- Virtually no open advertising of board roles, nor advertising targeted at women to encourage them to apply.
- Still reliance on personal networks to identify people for board roles.
  - 58% of companies with no women on their boards used personal networks for non-executive director appointments and 33% used them for executive director roles.
- Overlook women without board experience, with a different skill set, or without a sponsor

‘Relying on personal networks to identify potential candidates, or not advertising a role, will limit the diversity of the candidate pool.’

## Instructions to search firms

Of 165 companies that described their instructions to executive search firms about their gender aspirations or requirements:

**41** instructed or discussed their diversity aspirations with the executive search firm

**37** gave instructions about the gender composition of the list

**22** provided an explanation or copy of their board or diversity policy

**10** stated a preference for a female candidate with particular skills, and a very small number specified the name and gender or the gender and location of specific candidates

**It would be unlawful for a company to instruct an executive search firm to find a female non-executive director or to fulfil a target or quota where that means treating better qualified candidates with the protected characteristic less favourably.**

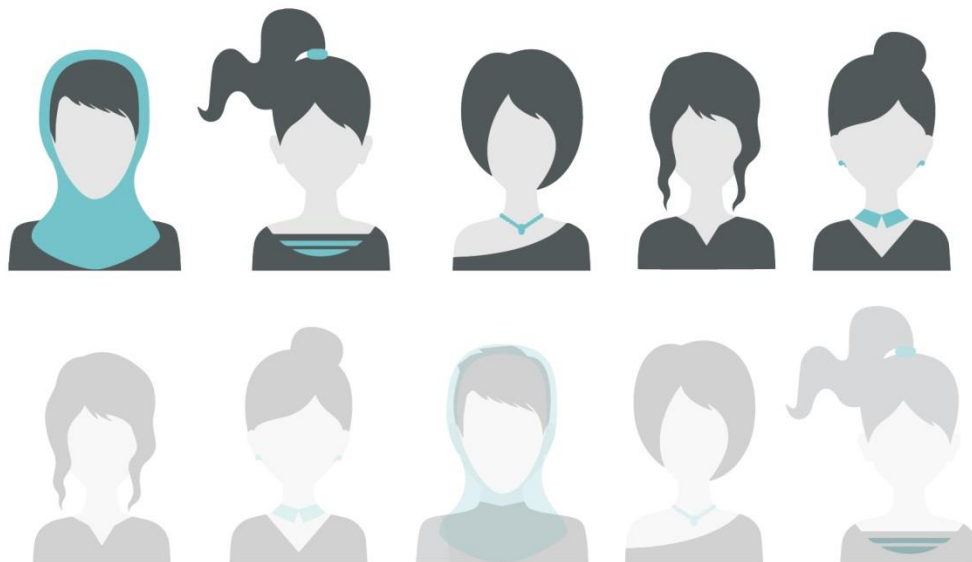
# Experiences of new mothers at work



of mothers say they have received a negative or possible discriminatory experience at work according to our research.



If scaling up to the general population, this would mean a total of 390,000 women are affected each year



## Half of mothers

who had a flexible working request approved said it resulted in negative consequences

Yet, only **4 per cent** of employers had sought information on dealing with flexible working requests.

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# Accelerating progress





## Six steps to better board diversity

1. Create job profiles and person specifications which attract the widest possible pool of candidates.
2. Use a range of recruitment methods including targeted advertising of underrepresented groups, searching for suitable candidates from other sectors such as the professions or not for profit sectors.
3. Set a clear brief and diversity targets to agencies and search firms.
4. Use a formal selection process which is transparent and rigorous. Provide training for those involved on the equality legislation and unconscious bias.
5. Encourage diversity in succession planning and the talent pipeline. Monitor and report on progress in meeting diversity policy and targets.
6. Take positive action – such as reserving places on training/development courses - to encourage individuals to apply for roles or to gain skills to help them compete on merit.

‘Setting aspirational targets for increasing the proportion of an under-represented group in a specified timescale can be a form of positive action permitted by the Act.’



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# Working Forward



“ It’s not about what role you’re in or level you are at. It’s about having the communication and support to put your career plan in place and know it’s being heard.”



[www.equalityhumanrights.com/workingforward](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/workingforward)

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“ Leaders at every level should take time to explore the commercial opportunities that a diverse workforce and customer base presents ”

*John Lewis Partnership*

# Thank you

Any questions?

## Contact us

- **Email:** [sue.coe@equalityhumanrights.com](mailto:sue.coe@equalityhumanrights.com)
- **Website:** [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)