

ABHI

**CAPTURING GENDER
EQUALITY IN HEALTHTECH**



ABOUT ABHI

ABHI is the UK's leading industry association for health technology (HealthTech).

ABHI supports the HealthTech community to save and enhance lives. Members, including both multinationals and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), supply products from syringes and wound dressings to surgical robots and digitally enhanced technologies. We represent the industry to stakeholders, such as the government, NHS and regulators. HealthTech plays a key role in supporting delivery of healthcare and is a significant contributor to the UK's economic growth. HealthTech is the largest employer in the broader Life Sciences sector, employing 145,700 people in 4,300 companies, with a combined turnover of £30bn. The industry has enjoyed growth of around 5% in recent years. ABHI's 400 members account for approximately 80% of the sector by value.

WHY IS GENDER EQUALITY IMPORTANT?



The economic cost of workplace discrimination to the UK Economy is **£127 billion**, of which **£123 billion** is due to gender discrimination.

The UK's most diverse workplaces are **12%** more likely to financially outperform their industry average than the least diverse firms.



Firms with the most developed diversity policy are **15%** more likely to financially outperform those with less focus on diversity.



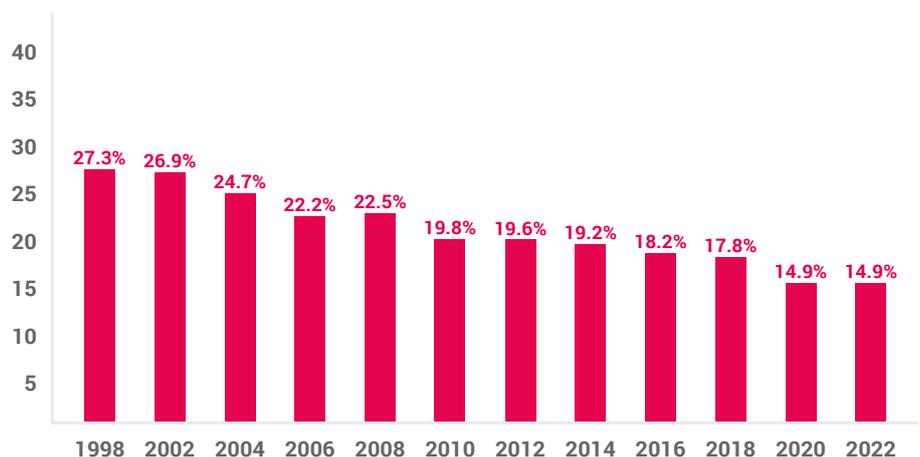
Closing the gender gap in the workforce could add a staggering **\$28 trillion** to the global GDP.



If women's participation in the workforce matched men, there would be a **10% boost** to the UK's GDP.

The UK has a gender pay gap of 14.9%.

This is declining slowly, but more work needs to be done.





INTRODUCTION

Parity of healthcare access and treatment, irrespective of a person's background, is a fundamental, and so it is incumbent on all of us to ensure that our industry is representative of the people it serves. As such, the HealthTech industry has an important role to play in supporting strategies that enhance greater equality within life sciences, and to lead by example.

This report focusses on gender equality, but we also recognise that there are many facets to diversity. This includes racial and cultural, to age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion and those with disabilities, to name a few. How these distinctions intersect with one another must also be recognised, and it is important that we do not lose the lived experiences of individuals when talking about broad initiatives like gender equality.

With this said, the cost of workplace discrimination to the UK economy is £127 billion, of which 97% of that figure is due to gender discrimination. There is no diversity hierarchy, and gender is by no means 'the most important' element of an equal society, but there are clearly significant economic and health benefits to the UK, and indeed the world, if we can close that gender divide.

By being transparent, and sharing experiences, we can make collective change. But first, we need a benchmark, which is why, this International Women's Day, we launched a gender equality survey, specific to the HealthTech industry. Our intention was to capture data to inform this report, and to provide a snapshot for where the industry is currently at.

87 people responded to this survey, and we plan to repeat this work on an annual basis, so that we can track changes over time.

Those who have seen success in their careers cite ambition, determination and a passion for what they do as driving factors in their resilience and success. These are all attributes employers all want to see in their workforce.

Fundamentally, gender equality is the right thing to do, but the business case for a more diverse workforce has also been proven, with many tangible benefits for the employer, employee, economy and wider society.

We hope you find this report to be a helpful resource in aiding you and your organisation work towards greater equality.

**JANE LEWIS,
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, ABHI**

LEADERSHIP TECHNIQUES AND BARRIERS

Almost half encourage team collaboration.

Nearly half (45%) of HealthTech workers encourage collaboration from team members to reach consensus decisions, whilst two fifths (40%) lead by example to motivate and inspire their team. Though there are small sample sizes split by gender, it appears women are much more likely than men to describe their leadership style as “Lead by example to motivate and inspire my team” (49% vs 17% respectively).

Additionally, 37% of respondents give their team the freedom to work independently and make their own decisions, whilst a quarter (26%) provide a vision to motivate and inspire the team to succeed.

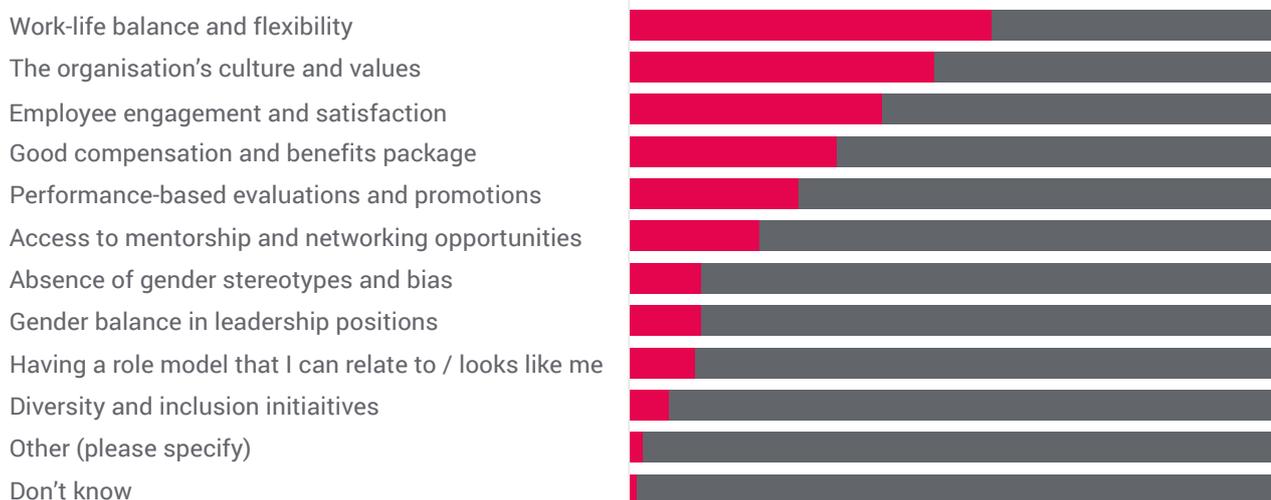
Over half consider work-life balance the most important factor in leadership success.

Work-life balance and flexibility are the most commonly cited factors (56%) in succeeding as a leader in the HealthTech industry. This is even more important in the 18-39 age category where 63% responded this was critical to success.

Nearly half of respondents (47%) emphasise the organisation’s culture and values, while 39% highlight employee engagement and satisfaction. A third (32%) also value good compensation and benefits packages.

When it comes to professional development, access to mentorship and networking opportunities (20%) and performance-based evaluations and promotions (26%) are mentioned. Respondents also value representation and inclusion, with 11% highlighting the absence of gender stereotypes and bias, 11% seeking gender balance in leadership positions, and 10% looking for a role model they can relate to/ looks like them.

% for whom the following are important in helping succeed as a leader



WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Over three fifths cite diverse leadership styles as being a benefit of women in leadership.

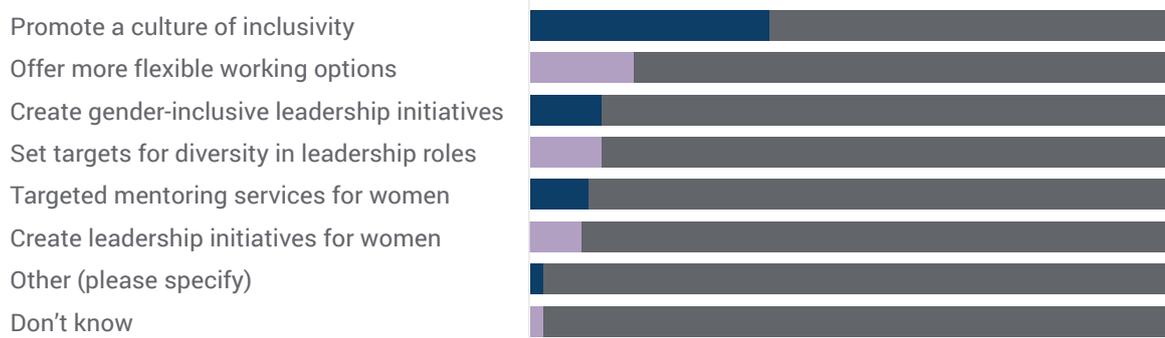
Diverse leadership styles and approaches are the main benefits of having women in leadership positions in the HealthTech industry, with almost two thirds (62%) of respondents highlighting this factor. The second most cited benefit is the increased representation and role modelling for other women in the workplace, with 52% of respondents noting this advantage. Additionally, nearly a third of respondents (29%) mentioned the emotional intelligence that women leaders bring to the table.

Balancing work and personal life is the most significant barrier to female leadership.

Over two fifths (43%) highlight balancing work and personal life as one of the most significant barriers to female leadership in the industry. Family and caregiving responsibilities are also seen as a significant barrier, with 38% of respondents citing this issue. Gender bias and stereotypes are identified by a third (34%) of respondents as a barrier to female leadership, while 32% note the lack of diverse representation on leadership teams as a significant obstacle.

Other barriers identified by a smaller percentage of respondents include the lack of flexible working opportunities at senior levels, the gender pay gap and unequal compensation, and limited access to networking and mentorship opportunities.

% who think the following is the best way to raise awareness of issues facing women in leadership.



What are the most common issues you have seen derail female leaders' careers?

A snapshot of our responses...

Family and caregiving responsibilities having to take priority over workplace tasks.

Childcare.

I feel women can over-think or try too hard, whereas men may let a project go forward with less 'perfectionism' - maybe women still feel the need to prove themselves?

Irrespective of what the law says, a female's career is put on hold whilst she is caring for children in those precious few years. Business continues at its usual pace. Most of us feel disconnected and need a couple of weeks of catch up after a two-week holiday. How is anybody expected to quickly get back in the game realistically after a 12-month absence?

This is not to say it does not happen, but it is not something I see regularly (if at all), to give any meaningful insight.

Becoming a parent.

Society.

The time out needed to raise a family, and the expectations that you will answer emails at all hours.

The inflexibility of working patterns.

Burn-out. Having to balance too many responsibilities.

When reviewing the comments, 10/40 mention maternity leave and career breaks as a barrier to progress, with caregiving falling mainly to women in a further 17/40 comments.

PROMOTING A MORE INCLUSIVE CULTURE COULD RAISE AWARENESS OF WOMEN'S ISSUES IN LEADERSHIP

Just under two in five (37%) feel promoting a culture of inclusivity throughout the company is the best way to help raise awareness of issues facing women in leadership. Other options include offering more flexible working options for both senior men and women (16%), creating leadership initiatives for both men and women (11%), setting targets for diversity in leadership roles with measurable achievements and timelines (11%), providing targeted mentoring services for women (9%), and creating leadership initiatives specifically for women (8%).

When asked about tracking positive impacts of having women in the organisation, one theme was the need for balanced and differing approaches to leadership. One respondent suggested, *"During the annual performance review, give the employee the option if she wants a leadership position as part of her professional development plans."* Another theme was the importance of communication, with one respondent noting, *"Good communication and awareness of women within the business"* as key to tracking positive impacts.

How do you think the positive impacts of having women in the organisation can best be tracked and measured?

A snapshot of our responses...

Comparison of performance metrics before and after including more women at board level.

Success stories of careers. Lead by example.

Employee satisfaction surveys. Particularly those that capture inclusivity and the sense of belonging.

Company 360 assessments, culture in teams, staff turnover, sales performance (if in a sales role).

I do not think it can be accurately tracked and measured. Remove the bias and women will receive equal opportunity to perform. Measure the success of a woman in the same way you would a man.

I do not want to see this. It undermines me and many of my female colleagues.

During the annual performance review, give the employee the option if she wants a leadership position as part of her professional development plans. If she expresses an interest, then the management should provide the necessary trainings to achieve this with measurable results. In exchange to this company provision, the employee should deliver the agreed expectations within the agreed timeline. This is a win-win situation because the company invested to the employee, while the employee will deliver what the company set as expectations.

Mentorship and leadership programmes. Succession planning for the future. Flexible working and support around childcare costs.

Gender ratios at all levels in the organisation.

The same way as you do for men - with role specific objectives and KPIs. Regularly track progress against these.

Family and caregiving responsibilities are the most significant barriers in the career of women.

Family and caregiving responsibilities, and balancing work and personal life, were identified as the most significant barriers in respondents' careers, with 35% of women in HealthTech selecting each of these options. Limited access to leadership development programmes and lack of diverse representation on leadership teams were also seen as significant barriers, with a quarter (25%) of respondents selecting each of these options.

When asked about the most common issues that derail female leaders' careers, the responses fell into several themes. One recurring issue mentioned was a lack of confidence or self-doubt, with comments such as "women not

believing in themselves enough" and "women not owning their successes and downplaying their accomplishments." Another issue mentioned was a lack of support and mentorship, with responses like "not having strong mentors or sponsors" and "not receiving the same level of support and guidance as male counterparts." Additionally, some respondents cited gender bias and discrimination as a significant issue, such as "systemic discrimination and bias against women in leadership positions" and "being judged differently than men for the same behaviours or actions."

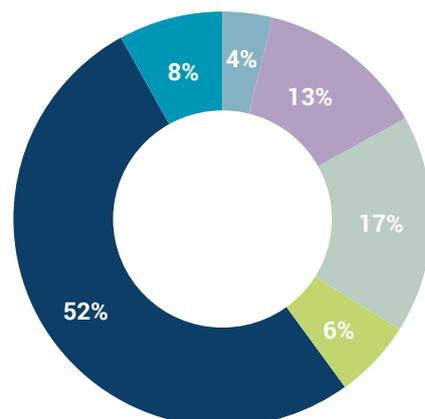
A quarter of women in HealthTech have been treated differently due to their gender.

Two fifths (44%) of women in the HealthTech industry indicated that they have been in a leadership position where they were treated differently than their colleagues. Out of those who said yes, a quarter (24%) stated that they were treated differently due to their gender, while 17% were unsure if it was because of their gender. Only 3% said they were treated differently, but not because of their gender. Another two fifths (41%) stated they were not treated differently at all.

Women find more gender-based resistance when leading men, than vice versa.

The survey found that 36% of respondents have experienced resistance when leading men, with 13% stating that it was due to their gender. On the other hand, 52% of respondents have not experienced any resistance when leading men, while 8% did not know and 3% preferred not to say. In comparison, a greater percentage of men had experienced resistance when leading women (44%) but only 8% said that this was based on gender.

For women who claimed they experienced resistance in leading other women, some mentioned age or experience as a factor, such as "perception that as I was younger than the team, I was less experienced and didn't know as much as they did" and "possibly age or experience related." Others felt that women were sabotaging their efforts, such as "it felt like women were sabotaging me and the systems I was trying to implement" and "women have taken what I have said and gone to male managers to confirm if what I have advised is correct."



IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Definition: Imposter syndrome is loosely defined as doubting your abilities and feeling like a fraud. It disproportionately affects high-achieving people, who find it difficult to accept their accomplishments. Many question whether they are deserving of accolades.

Harvard Business Review

How do you overcome it or deal with it?

A snapshot of our responses...

Rationalise it, come to a mindset I am comfortable with, then forget it and move one.

Try to re-frame my mindset and think to what I have achieved, and that I do deserve to be doing this.

Work through it with the help of my colleagues and by meditating.

I still feel it.

Work through it with the help of my colleagues and by meditating.

I give 100% and trust that my contribution is a positive one.

Keep giving women positions that are out of their comfort zone, to see the successes and share. Changing roles every two-three years can be hugely beneficial.

I remind myself that I would not have been given the opportunities that I have been given if I was not capable of doing a good job.

Remind myself I have the same opportunities as the person next to me. I have earned my place to be in the organisation.

EIGHT IN TEN HAVE REPORTED FEELING IMPOSTER SYNDROME.

A large majority of those in HealthTech (82%) reported experiencing imposter syndrome to some extent. A third (32%) of respondents reported experiencing imposter syndrome frequently, whilst almost another third (29%) reported experiencing it occasionally. Another fifth (21%) reported experiencing it rarely, while a minority (16%) reported never experiencing imposter syndrome.

When asked how they deal with imposter syndrome, respondents gave a variety of strategies. Some talked about changing their perception of fear and proving to themselves that they are capable, such as *"leaning in to the fear and changing perception of it being bad to showing proof that I am challenging myself"* and *"keep pretending until you relax into the task."*

Others mentioned the importance of believing in themselves and their abilities, with quotes like *"believe in myself and my abilities"* and *"give myself a talking to and remind myself that I have worked hard to get here and lots of people believe in my ability."*

To overcome imposter syndrome, some talked about changing their perception of fear and proving to themselves that they are capable, such as *"digging deep to overcome my fear and getting on with the job at hand"* and *"trying to see it as a force for good or motivator to continue to improve."* Others mentioned the importance of believing in themselves and their abilities, with quotes like *"focus on believing in myself and my abilities"* and *"reminding myself that I earned my opportunities and reflect on my work to ensure I see the benefit I have on my team/company."*



LEADERSHIP BENEFITS

A majority imagined themselves in leadership roles at the start of their career.

Over half of the respondents (54%) imagined that they would have reached a leadership role within their industry or organisation at the start of their career. Whilst 42% said they probably would, only 13% said they definitely would. On the other hand, 38% of respondents said they probably would not, and 8% said they definitely would not. The remaining respondents either did not know or preferred not to say.

When asked what motivated individuals to progress to their current level, a few key themes emerged. Ambition, determination, and the desire to prove oneself are common themes, with one person stating, *"I want to challenge myself to see how far I can go if I work hard."* Others cite financial rewards and job satisfaction, as well as a passion for their subject matter, with one respondent stating *"I enjoy the role, challenge and financial rewards"*.

When also asked if there were any differences in how they navigate their organisation now, compared to early in their career, there are several important patterns. One theme that emerges is an increased confidence in their own abilities and opinions. As one respondent states, *"I now have more confidence in my own opinion"* and another adds, *"I've become more comfortable with my own way of working and asking people to accept this rather than just trying to fit in with them."* This confidence has led to a greater willingness to challenge others, with one respondent noting, *"As I gained experience I have started to challenge this more frequently."*

Top benefit to leadership is greater understanding of others' perspectives.

When asked about the benefits they have received from their leadership experiences, a majority of respondents cited a greater understanding of other people's perspectives (58%), followed closely by a greater capacity to make decisions (54%), and increased self-confidence (50%). A third (33%) cited a greater ability to collaborate with others (33%), whilst a quarter (25% each) cited improved communication skills and a greater ability to problem-solve.



LESSONS LEARNT

In many ways, the data captured within our survey will not be a surprise. However, a gut feeling is very different to quantitative data, and in this report we have been able to capture, for the first time, **sentiment from across our industry.**

What stands out is the importance of **work-life balance**, and how this can be a blocker, or enabler, of leadership success. This area was called out, more than any other, as the most common reason for derailing female leaders' careers. Clearly then, more needs to be done to support a more flexible approach to work, and accommodate colleagues at different stages of their careers.

Perhaps the starkest statistic was that four out of every five respondents stated they have experienced **imposter syndrome.** If this survey reveals one thing, it is that for the vast majority of us, we have all experienced that feeling of not belonging or deserving something. We can, however, take comfort in the fact that most of us have felt this way at some point in our career, and the fact of the matter is you are in a position of leadership on merit. You would not have been given these opportunities if you were not ready or good enough in the first place.

Whilst there is of course work to be done in making our respective places of work more inclusive, things are improving. Indeed, the UK's **gender pay gap has halved** over the past 25 years, but how do we bring that 14.9% pay gap discrepancy closer to zero, and how do we track progress within our own organisations? There are of course metrics which can be applied, such as staff turnover, and gender ratios across all levels of a business, but this is not without its own downsides. A number of respondents felt that certain proactive actions **undermined the efforts of women**, and performance metrics should not be gender related.

That said, one thing that can be agreed on is the importance of **culture and leading by example.** With appreciation that diverse leadership styles and approaches are the main benefits of having women in leadership positions, female leaders create more female leaders. After all, representation matters, and mentorship schemes can compliment this and breed a culture of inclusivity.

We would love to know what you think of this report.

Do the findings resonate with your own experiences? Has this prompted you to think about your own career, or how you may be able to help support those around you? When we issue this survey next year, are there any additional questions you would like to see asked? If so, please send to enquiries@abhi.org.uk with the heading 'Gender Equality in HealthTech'





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