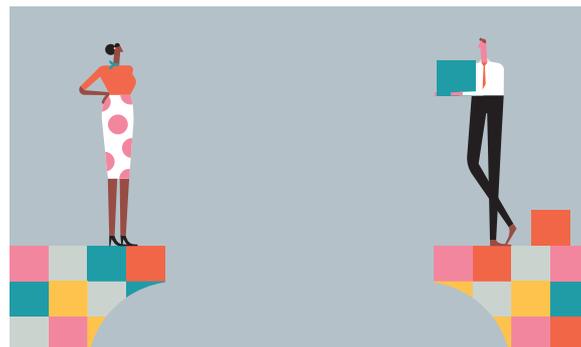


# UNENTITLED MINDSET

## **Women at Work: Breaking Free of The ‘Unentitled Mindset’**

### **Recommendations**

Research by Dr Terri Apter for The Female Lead



**Close The #EntitlementGap**

## FOREWORD FROM EDWINA DUNN

# Composing A Fulfilled Life



**W**hen I started *The Female Lead*, I wanted to help girls, still at school, still forming their vision and self-belief, to be exposed to stories of real and inspiring women, shaping the world around them today. It's been a joy to share so many fascinating voices and tales of achievement over the last 5 years and to know that we have stimulated the growth of societies and debates in schools and colleges, all across the world.

I am proud that our research into social media and teen mental wellness enabled us to create the '*Disrupt Your Feed*' campaign. By disrupting the algorithms of the social media platforms, we have been able to turn, what sometimes become 'toxic binge-fests' for young girls, into a more balanced diet, offsetting 'airbrushed celebrity lives' with those of real, high achieving women. The results have been astounding and uplifting.

What I didn't expect to happen was that by creating our first book, we opened the door for women of all ages, who were hungry for inspiration and who wanted to learn how to navigate what is still an uneven playing field in gender. Women responded to our content and our messages in their millions. We started to build our data and evidence and working alongside our expert psychologist, Dr Terri Apter, discovered that women's expectations vary. We enhanced our deep research and went on to measure aspiration versus reality (as perceived) across different measures of fulfilment. From this, we revealed the big questions that we have used to frame this research and our new book, to be published later this year.

Our ambition for 2021 and beyond, is to help women to develop greater self-awareness and to invest in building knowledge and skills in order to enhance

their ability to navigate what is clearly an uneven gender bias at work today. Importantly, *The Female Lead* does not believe that it is women who need 'fixing'. We find women smart, ambitious and passionate about finding fulfilment.

So, what stops women performing as well as men in the mid-career years?

The role of females in the workplace has changed over the last few decades but has not yet reached parity. There is still a bias in many institutional policies and practices because they were originally designed for, and by, males. This may be unintentional but, they do exist. We see many influences and changes that are encouraging but not enough to give women an equal chance to perform and to sustain their careers over the years, especially where other factors come into play, making mid-career trajectories

look very poor in comparison to men's.

Men and women need to work together to eliminate the bias of working practice 'norms' that we have named the 'unentitled mindset'. This is our new mission. We want to

create a clearer, better path for girls and women seeking inspiring, ambitious careers and fulfilment.

We can learn from women who've successfully navigated careers and achieved fulfilment, despite the extra challenges. We can learn from those businesses who've created new and better norms. And finally, we can work together with men, with all leaders, to ensure we eliminate or balance the 'unentitled mindset'.

Only then, can women be equal and contribute the full economic value they represent. In these COVID-19 recovery years, never has this been more necessary and perhaps never before has our workplace been so disrupted, giving us a chance to build back better.

**EDWINA DUNN**

*Founder of The Female Lead*

**“The Female Lead does not believe that it is women who need 'fixing'. We find women smart, ambitious and passionate about finding fulfilment.”**

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**P&G is a valued supporter of *The Female Lead* and its research-based mission to identify both the persistent barriers and proven solutions to advance gender equality for Women at Work.**

## BREAKING FREE OF THE ‘UNENTITLED MINDSET’

# Executive Summary

### Introduction

The Female Lead’s *Women at Work* Research performs a deep dive into a surprisingly under-researched area – the context and complex processes by which women make career-shaping decisions, with particular focus on mid-stage career where female progression typically plateaus whilst male progression continues to ascend.

Prior to 2021, a lack of qualitative data in this area has limited the scope of our understanding of the driving forces behind persistent inequalities in gender pay and career progression. This knowledge gap limits the effectiveness of both legislation and workplace initiatives designed to promote women’s progression, since, as our findings illustrate, these are based in part on outdated presumptions of the most pressing challenges. *Women at Work* sharpens the focus on the most persistent problems, and tracks the progress being made, by comparing these findings to those of an aligned study conducted more than two decades ago.

*Women at Work* goes on to unpick existing dynamics and reveals how these impede the efficient progress of women in the workplace – even when most businesses want to increase economic activity, workforce diversity and the proportion of women in senior positions. This report highlights areas of significant progress, identifies persistent sticking points, and recommends better paths towards gender parity.

**TERRI APTER**

*Author, Women at Work:  
Breaking Free of The ‘Unentitled Mindset’*



### Methodology

The study is based on 70 confidential, in-depth interviews with women (and including 4 men) at mid-stage career working in finance, engineering, media, communications and arts (in both the private and public sector), as well as the self-employed and entrepreneurs. Drawn from diverse geographical, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, the sample also included HR and employment law professionals to determine how individual, cultural and workplace norms have evolved over time leading to positive progress and where persistent problems remain. This study was designed, and the rich data set was analysed, by Psychologist Dr Terri Apter, who evaluated it against a 1994 cohort of working women interviewed for her book *Working Women Don’t Have Wives*.

### Findings

“Women have been socially conditioned to feel less entitled than men in all areas of their lives and this has created a big entitlement gap between men and women. So our new mission at The Female Lead is to Close The #EntitlementGap”

**EDWINA DUNN**

*Founder of The Female Lead*

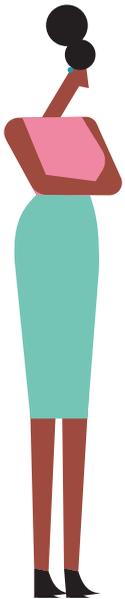


The Female Lead's *Women at Work* Research revealed that there are myths and outdated assumptions about who women are and what they want, but also about the kinds of bias they are likely to face in the workplace. Significant progress has been made in tackling both explicit bias and in the development of women's own self-belief. The *Women at Work* insight suggests that energy and focus be directed away from these 'outdated presumptions' to ensure genuine progress is achieved.

## Outdated Presumptions

### 1 Women resist the term 'ambitious' and suffer inner conflict about being career focused

All participants were ambitious, valued independence and were dedicated to useful, high impact and challenging work. There was no ambivalence about ambition among the 2020 participants. Ambition was seen as something to embrace with pride. This operates in stark contrast to the 1994 findings Terri Apter reported in *Working Women Don't Have Wives* which evidenced that women were often conflicted about ambition, competition, career identity and independence.



### 2 Motherhood trumps all else and shifts career and professional identity to a backseat

All participants (whether they were mothers or not) cited career as fundamental to their sense of self and purpose in life. In fact, every single woman in the study replied to the question, "To what extent does your career contribute to your sense of self?" with some version of, "A lot." "Massively," was the most common response and their career was clearly seen as a large part of their personal identity and satisfaction

### 3 Women are uncomfortable earning more than their partners and place less value on their earning power

All participants put a very high value on financial independence. When asked what symbolic meaning money had, the most common answer was, "It provides independence." That financial independence also represented personal power, the power to claim equality in a relationship, and the power to leave an uncomfortable relationship. They valued job satisfaction more than increased income but wanted to be fairly and equally recognised via their pay packet.



“The myth busting in here is incredibly valuable and helps to focus on the real issues that need to be addressed. These issues are not for women to solve for ourselves – our ambition, capabilities, commitment are not in question – but about dismantling some entrenched, limiting biases that still exist in the workplace and beyond.”

**LUCY DAVIS**  
Marketing at Google UK

**4** Imposter syndrome is a significant inhibitor to job performance and drive

While 26% of the participants described a time when they experienced imposter syndrome, they were not deterred by imposter syndrome, but worked through it by taking up the challenge to learn new skills. Imposter syndrome had the beneficial effect of increasing commitment and drive. Women worked through imposter syndrome by embracing a capability mindset, which means they learned to work to their strengths and dedicated themselves to learning what they didn't yet know.



**5** That female workers (particularly mothers) are more averse to embracing new challenges and risks

Changing jobs, from one firm to another, or from employee to entrepreneur was always daunting, but the women's willingness to make such changes and take such chances was important in finding satisfying work conditions. Satisfaction in a job was generally linked to finding it challenging, feeling comfortable in the workplace culture and having opportunities to make a positive impact and to grow. When asked to envisage a more positive future in 5 years' time, the participants did not show any desire to step away from work, rather to embrace a job that gave them a sense of purpose, flexibility, control and balance. There was also high satisfaction among the women who had started their own companies, evidencing that high-demand, high-stakes jobs are not problematic in themselves, but only become feasible when you are able to exert greater control over your working patterns



Critically, our *Women at Work* Research identified a series of major sticking points that continue to inhibit female progress. All of these 'persistent problems' were underpinned by one unifying theme – that of the 'unentitled mindset'. Closing the entitlement gap requires a two-pronged approach addressing the embedded structures in the workplace and in society that prevent women accessing equal entitlement, as well as promoting greater self-awareness and removing internal barriers to women developing a healthy sense of their entitlement.

“This research has put a name to a ‘syndrome’, like in medicine. There will be a group of symptoms that come together, such as the sense of being undermined because of historic career paths or what the expectations have been. These symptoms cluster together and cause the ‘unentitled mindset’ – a syndrome that all organisations, individuals and legislators need to know about.”

**YASMINE CHINWALA OBE**  
Partner at New Financial LLP

## Persistent Problems

# UNENTITLED MINDSET

### 1 An ‘unentitled mindset’ persists at the pay negotiation table

One highly specific example of internalised bias is lack of confidence in negotiating pay increases and promotion. Participants described an ‘unentitled mindset’, whereby their workplace experience leaves them feeling unsure of their entitlement to promotion, to more family friendly conditions or increased pay.

Women also expended significant energy considering whether their case was watertight, before making requests, and they reported feeling unsure of the rules of negotiation or the parameters of success. Training and development are needed on both sides to understand and change the context in which promotion and pay raises are discussed.

### 2 Intersectionality offers fewer escapes routes from persistent bias

The 1994 study of working women’s experiences revealed that most participants viewed overt gender bias as something they had to live with. The 2020 cohort described a clear shift with women now resisting overt bias, showing a willingness to challenge, wherever it occurred.

However, overt bias was intensified

and amplified when it intersected with bias towards race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion. Women of colour described how bias shifted, arising in different ways in different contexts. One moment gender bias would be salient, and in the next moment, racial bias would be salient. There were fewer pockets of comfort and fewer escape routes from bias, particularly because calling it out was more difficult if it wasn’t shared.

### 3 Persistent bias towards returning mothers from maternity

Participants in the *Women at Work* Research reported that overall bias against women in most workplaces was on the ebb (in stark contrast to 1994 study). In many cases it was manageable, or on the margins of the women’s working lives.

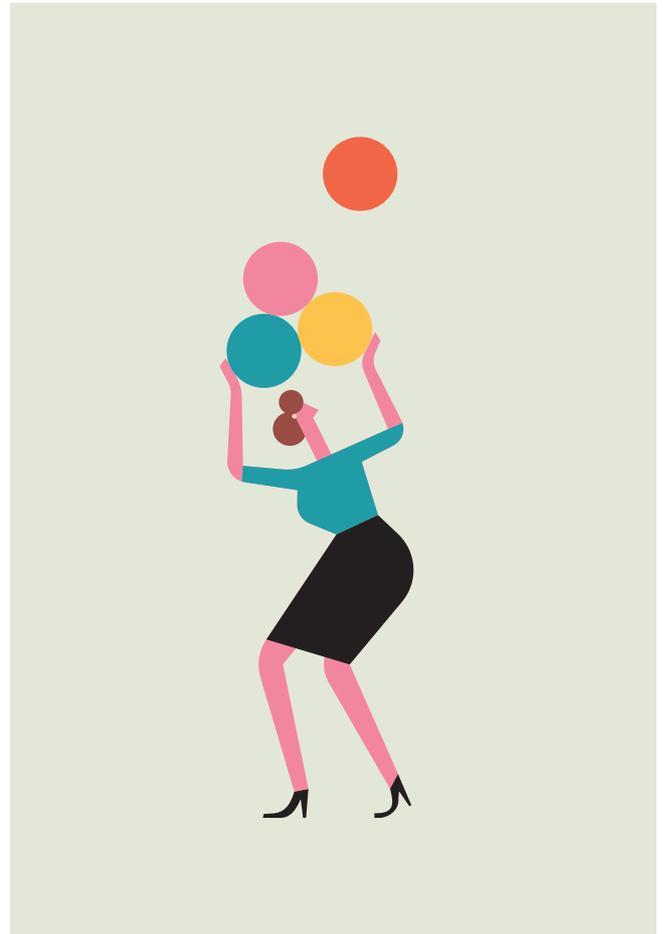
The one type of bias that continues to endanger career progression is expectation bias directed towards women returning from maternity leave, which directly contributes to an ‘unentitled mindset’. This bias directly led to lower expectations of a woman’s contributions to the firm, commitment and ability to take on responsibilities and challenges. Women who had experienced this bias themselves and those who did not have children, but observed other women suffer this bias, saw this as a significant impediment to career progress. This issue was further exacerbated by a lack of visible senior working mothers ‘making it work’ which had a disabling effect on younger childless females, pregnant mothers and recent returners.



**4** A ‘flexibility penalty’ exists for both part-time work, and full-time workers who enjoy a degree of freedom around their work schedule. Participants observed that even full-time work, when done flexibly, incurs a career penalty and contributes significantly to the ‘entitlement’ gap, even when the flexibility allowed is marginal and only negates the requirement to work over-time. All types of flexible working including part-time work, time-shifted or compressed hours, or the option to work remotely positions the women who adopt it as ‘less than’ other employees. Participants report that this flexibility penalty lasts longer than the duration of the flexible arrangement, having a long-reaching impact over the length of a woman’s career.

“What is evident in the *Women at Work* Research is that it’s really important to create spaces for dialogue between senior managers, middle managers and employees themselves. To make flexible working arrangements work, you need to not only implement them but design jobs around them, and that will be different for every workplace and every employee.”

**LAURA JONES**  
*Research Associate, King’s College London, Global Institute for Women’s Leadership*



**5** **The burden of the Mental Load**  
Even where household (and childcare) tasks were relatively evenly split in a relationship, the responsibility or ‘mental load’ still fell to the woman in the vast majority of cases. The complex daily organisation of all caring and household responsibilities while parents are at work, fell predominantly to the women. This was a huge issue in the 1994 study and while there has been significant improvement in men’s contributions and in their expectations of what partnership and fatherhood demands of them, most of the participating women who had children or stepchildren, nonetheless, reported that far more childcare tasks fell to them. Indeed, several women without children cited this anticipated imbalance as a contributing factor in their decision not to have children.

## BREAKING FREE OF THE ‘UNENTITLED MINDSET’ The Way Forward

### **Covid-19:** A crisis that could herald unprecedented workplace change

The *Women at Work* Research interviews were held during the pandemic crisis, and participants perceived opportunities in the ‘game-changing’ situation in which both women and men worked remotely. While most contemporaneous discussions focus on the risks remote working poses to women, the *Women at Work* Research participants spoke of the benefits of a situation which forcibly challenged the association between flexibility and homework with *women’s* work. If remote work is normalised, the ‘myth’ that those who worked from home, or on flexible hours, were less efficient and less committed and less likely leaders, could be ‘busted’.

Participants hoped 2021 could be a significant turning point for workplace cultural norms.

“This *Women at Work* Research is a must read for all employers across the UK, particularly now. There is a real opportunity for leaders who want to think about a more gender equal future to look at what has worked during the pandemic and how best to take those learnings into the new working world.”

**LUCY WARWICK-CHING**  
*FT Communities Editor*

### **The Female Lead Advisory Group**

The Female Lead convened a *Women at Work* Advisory Group to shape practical recommendations and solutions from the insights uncovered by our study. These clear recommendations and solutions – for business, for individuals and for legislators – drive forward a shared goal of gender parity in the workplace, in the home and in society at large.



**HANNAH FELDMAN**  
*Co-founder of Kidadl*



**JANE FROST CBE**  
*CEO of Market Research Society*



**LAURA JONES**  
*Research Associate, King’s College London, Global Institute for Women’s Leadership*



**LUCY DAVIS**  
*Marketing, Google UK*



**LUCY WARWICK-CHING**  
*FT Communities Editor*



**MARTIN McCOURT**  
*NED, Former Dyson CEO*



**VANESSA SANYAUKE**  
*Founder of Girls Talk London*



**YASMINE CHINWALA OBE**  
*Partner at New Financial LLP*

# Exploding The Myths

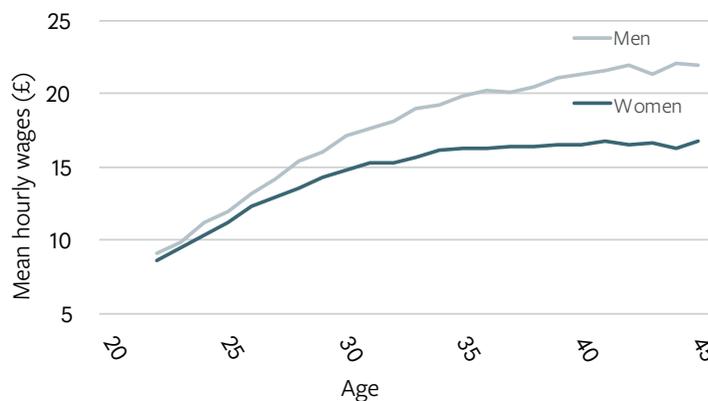
## Background

The Female Lead with expert psychologist Dr Terri Apter investigates the hurdles and barriers women face when trying to achieve equal pay and progression in the workplace. The *Women at Work* Research:

- explodes outdated myths and assumptions around what holds women back
  - highlights persistent problems and trigger points that limit much needed progress to parity
- The Female Lead has developed *Fulfilment Finder* to understand what drives fulfilment for women in their life and career. This has allowed us to explore the space between aspiration vs reality and to offer even greater insight in developing effective work place solutions for both individuals and organisations.

**Mid-career trajectories:**  
**Female progression typically plateaus**  
**Male progression continues to ascend**

**MEAN HOURLY WAGES ACROSS THE LIFE CYCLE BY GENDER**



*The crucial period of mid-stage career between, roughly, 27 and 42 years of age*

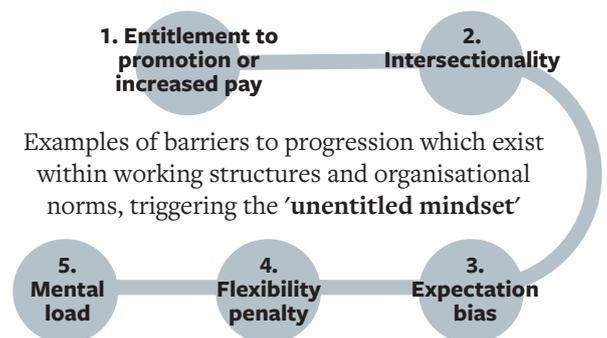
*Ref: Institute for Fiscal Studies*

## Qualitative Research: The Female Lead *Women at Work*

### Outdated Myths

- 1 Women resist the term '**ambitious**' and suffer inner conflict about being career focused
- 2 Motherhood trumps all else and shifts career and **professional identity** to a backseat
- 3 Women are **uncomfortable earning more** than their partners and place less value on their earning power
- 4 **Imposter syndrome** is a significant inhibitor to job performance and drive
- 5 Female workers (particularly mothers) are more **averse to embracing new challenges** and risks

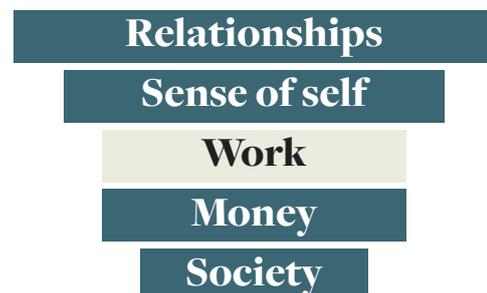
### Persistent Problems



## Quantitative Research: The Female Lead Implicit Research Study

Insights from neuroscience-based implicit research show what drives fulfilment at both an emotional and lifestyle level and where gaps exist

- Fulfilment for working women is primarily driven by emotions of **Enjoyment/Happiness** and a **sense of Power from feeling Confident and Successful**.
- The key lifestyle dimensions which affect our sense of fulfilment are **Relationships, followed by a Sense of Self, Work, Money** and least of all **Society**.

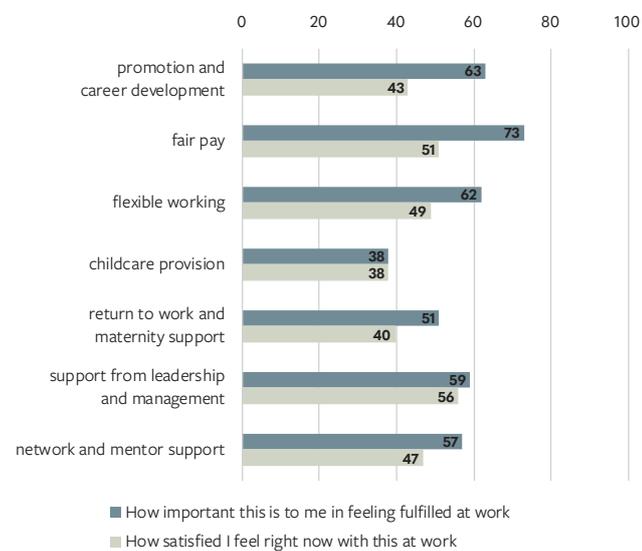


# Work

## The Persistent Problems: Barriers to Ambition and Fulfilment

### 1. Entitlement to Promotion or Increased Pay

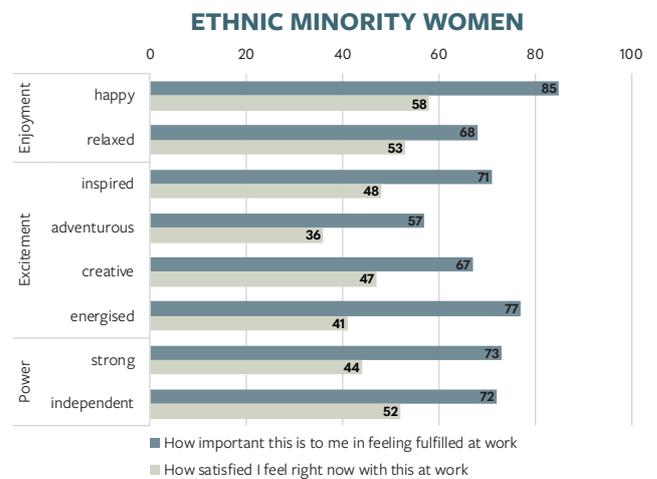
The two biggest gaps in terms of fulfilment in the work place are fair pay and promotion and career development.



Ref: The Female Lead Implicit Research Study

### 2. Intersectionality

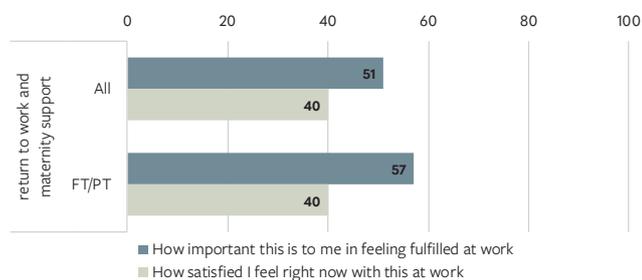
Female ethnic minorities feel disconnected at work and low satisfaction in enjoyment, excitement and power.



Ref: The Female Lead Implicit Research Study

### 3. Expectation Bias

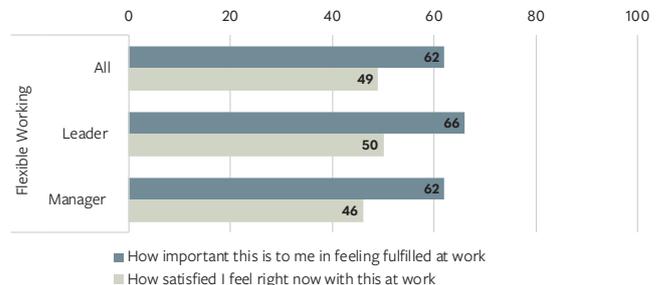
Working women have low satisfaction when it comes to return to work and maternity support.



Ref: The Female Lead Implicit Research Study

### 4. Flexibility Penalty

Women are not satisfied with flexible working, especially leaders and managers

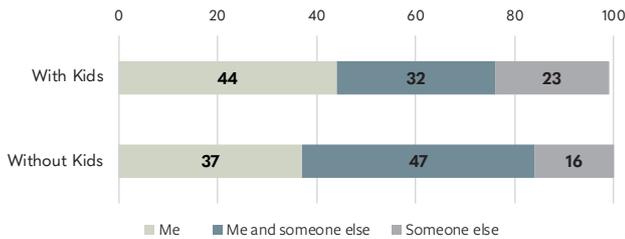


Ref: The Female Lead Implicit Research Study

## 5. Mental Load

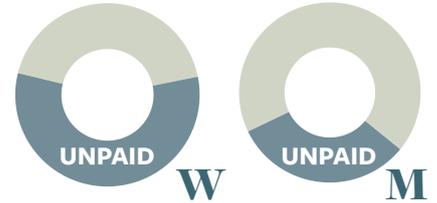
Women in a relationship and with children are more likely to be solely responsible for household finances

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR FINANCIAL PLANNING/CONTROL?

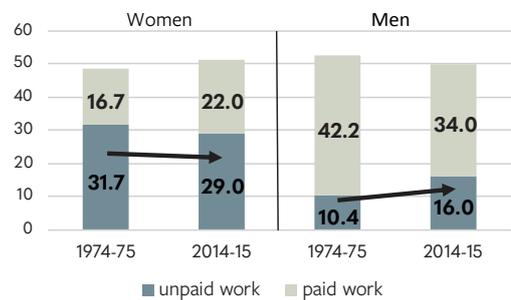


Ref: The Female Lead Implicit Research Study

Since 1975, women do less unpaid hours but still nearly twice as much as men



### PAID VS UNPAID HOURS PER WEEK



Ref: Resolution Foundation

### REFERENCES:

Terri Apter, Vervan Dexter. 2021. The Female Lead *Women at Work* research.

Sandy Groves, 2020. The Female Lead Implicit Research Study. Sample of 1,286 working women in the UK.

- This study has informed the development of The Female Lead Fulfilment Finder
- Financial planning responsibility includes household budgeting, monthly bills, pension planning, mortgages, investments / personal wealth, future financial planning

Monica Costa Dias. 2019. Women's Progression in the Workplace. Institute for Fiscal Studies. P.14. Uploaded 12/01/2021.

- Data from the Labour Force Survey, British Household Panel Survey and Understanding Society from 1991-2015.
- Education: Includes women and men at degree level.

George Bangham, Maja Gustagsson. 2020. The Time Of your Life. Resolution Foundation. Uploaded 12/01/2021



Look out for our social campaign  
**Close The #EntitlementGap**



## Recommendations & Next Steps

“Top of my list is for companies to be very clear that they do not wish to have anything other than a level playing field for their women and men workers. This needs to be set as policy by the Board and carried like a torch throughout the organisation, with constant reference and assessment to validate whether it is truly happening.”

**MARTIN MCCOURT**

*Chairman, NED, Former Dyson CEO*

The *Women at Work* Research highlights a series of specific recommendations and areas of renewed focus to drive forward our goal of gender parity, fully informed by the insights and contributions of the Advisory Group.

In 2021, The Female Lead will address the findings of the *Women at Work* Research with an ambitious agenda specifically designed to tackle the consequences of the ‘Entitlement Gap’. The Female Lead recognises that these ‘persistent problems’ cannot be resolved by ‘fixing the women’.

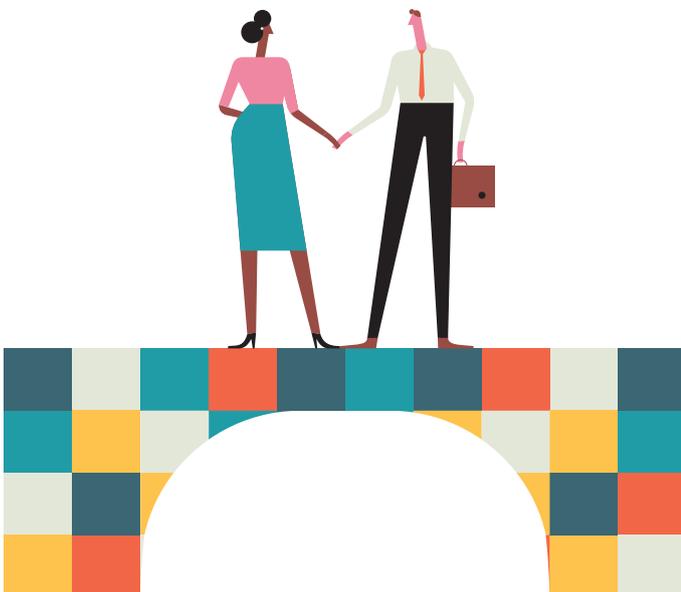
Sustained progress towards gender parity requires a multi-faceted approach: addressing embedded structures in the workplace and society to drive long-term change, whilst enabling women to upskill and break free of the ‘unentitled mindset’ in the situations in which it still triggered today. Priority actions include:

- 1** Develop and suggest personalised self-service content and resources to help women and girls build skills, resilience and self-awareness to combat the effects of the ‘unentitled mindset’
- 2** Drive awareness of the ‘unentitled mindset’ to help leaders address the embedded structures and processes that inhibit progress and equality for women and minorities
- 3** Work with businesses and stakeholder organisations to highlight the opportunity to design high-value jobs that break the traditional model of lifetime full-time employment.

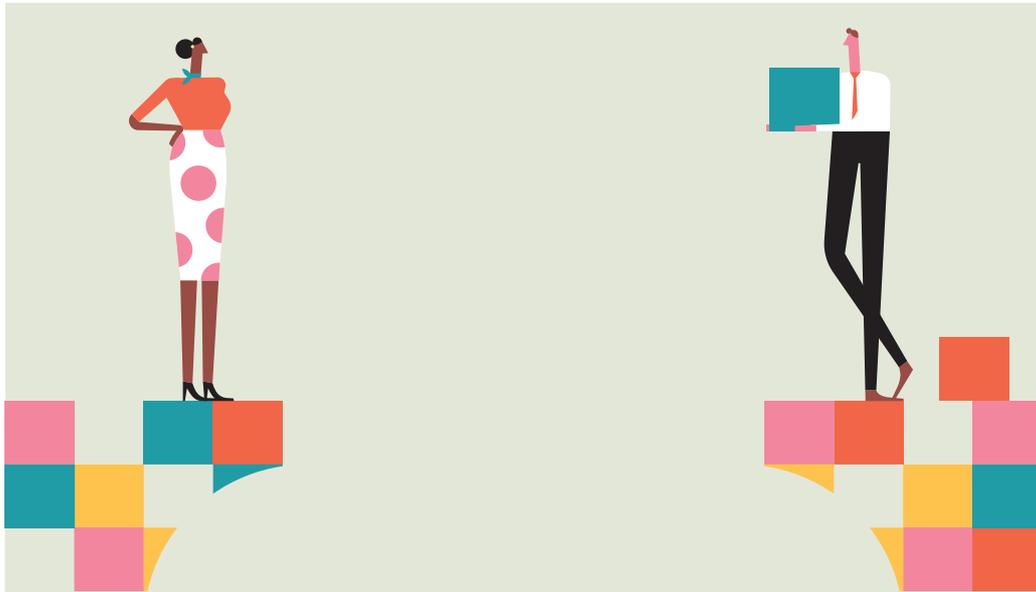
“Now more than ever we must avoid assumptions. This last year must surely have stood old certainties on their head. This is why a significant piece of research such as this is so important in looking at what has been achieved so far and how much is still to do in achieving gender equality in the workplace. We need research like this to provide the evidence on which to base our priorities.”

**JANE FROST CBE**

*CEO of Market Research Society*



## Moving Forward: Close The #EntitlementGap



One of the most potent and original ideas uncovered by the Report is that of the 'unentitled mindset'. A persistent problem that women face in their careers, this toxic internalised bias leads to a lack of confidence at work, especially in negotiating pay increases, asking for flexibility and promotion. Many women in the study described this as a mindset where they were unsure whether they deserved better conditions. As Dr Terri Apter puts it:

“They *knew* they were worth more, in terms of pay and flexibility, they felt unsure of their claim.”

The Female Lead has recognised this particular finding as vital for the advancement of women, and one that we have chosen to highlight in a media campaign we are calling **The Entitlement Gap**.

A crucial aspect of the 'unentitled mindset' is that it is not just something that impacts women in their work. When we looked closer at the concept, we found it at the root of many troubles

throughout women's lives and a vital part of what keeps women in a less privileged position in society. If women expect less, then they will not complain about having less.

Once you know about the 'unentitled mindset', you will see it everywhere – from 'manspreading' on the train, to women's unequal domestic load, and in the huge amount of unpaid female work globally.

The 'unentitled mindset' is firmly part of our patriarchal structures and by calling this a 'mindset' we should not suggest that the problem lies entirely within women's heads.

This is not just an obstacle for women to fix by changing the way they think, for the entitlement gap does not arise in a vacuum. Women are not born with an 'unentitled mindset'; it is learned behaviour. It evolves from experiences and conditioning which encourages women to expect less, not to take up too much space, not to demand more. Our system exploits and benefits from this entitlement gap, which widens when we consider intersectionality and women from marginalised backgrounds.

## How can we create change?

Embedded societal structures and privilege cannot be resolved by encouraging the ‘less privileged’ to feel more confident. Sustained progress towards gender parity requires a two-pronged approach and we have recommended the following:

### **1 Addressing the embedded structures in the workplace that prevent women accessing equal opportunity, to drive long-term change**

Dr Apter recommends the following actions for changing the ‘unentitled mindset’ at work, specifically in the areas that it most impacts – pay and flexibility:

#### **● Highlight positive policies:**

Women’s experience teaches them, for example, that flexibility is rare, and that if offered, then asking for more – such as higher pay or status or responsibility – would risk their employer’s good will, and possibly even their job. To change the environment, organisations simply need to make their willingness to embrace flexibility salient.

“A finding that stopped me in my tracks was the idea of the ongoing flexibility penalty, where women who work flexibly or take a career break after having children suffer long term consequences which can impact them for up to 6 years. Yet we’ve learnt that workplaces offering flexibility as the norm for both men and women can counter these outcomes, highlighting the need for organisations to step forward and promote lasting change.”

**HANNAH FELDMAN**

*Co-founder of Kidadl*

#### **● Proactively invite pay discussions:**

Organisations need to understand how the environment (as opposed to the attitude of anyone in the organisation) triggers the ‘unentitled mindset’, but they can correct it. Inviting pay discussions, clarifying the possible outcomes, explaining how and when and with whom these discussions should be held, goes a long way towards reducing the ambiguity in which women are more likely to experience an ‘unentitled mindset’.

### **2 Enable women to upskill, to level the playing field when they are faced with persistent and embedded issues, in the here and now**

Off the back of this research, The Female Lead will create and curate recommended content for women who want to build self-awareness, enhance their skills and learn to minimise the ‘unentitled mindset’. The new Female Lead platform will open up free-to-use, powerful learning environments, accredited and tailored to women striving to fulfil their personal goals and ambitions.

## Closing The Entitlement Gap Campaign

We know that the majority of workplaces and organisations want to create an environment where women are held equal. This study reveals the current hidden blocker. The challenge, so far unnamed, is the ‘unentitled mindset’. Based on this, our recommendation is not to ‘fix women’. Women are clearly skilled and ambitious, but The Female Lead recognises that this hidden mindset is part of our inheritance and legacy today. It still forms part of long held societal beliefs and workplace processes, unspoken and unearned. Both men and women now need to adjust this nearly revealed perception. Now it is visible and named, we can move to change it.

Collaboration is the solution, says Dr Apter, at the close of the report: “Instead of the directive to ‘lean in’, economic recovery requires a dynamic collaboration. Our ‘Close The

Entitlement Gap’ campaign speaks to that call and collaboration.”

The Female Lead will spearhead the Entitlement Gap Campaign to a broad social audience. The visual representation will show men and women standing on each side of the promotion and benefits ladder. Both hold the means to fix the gap but must work together, as leaders and colleagues to make it happen. The campaign will be active across our social platforms and seen by millions of Female Lead followers. Through a targeted press and media campaign, we will stimulate further debate and introduce the concept far and wide.

In 2021, we focus on our Female Lead on-line platform, designed to stimulate women’s self-awareness and skills, until we close the entitlement gap and open up the talent pool for girls and future female leaders.

“The *Women at Work* Research demonstrates that women do not lack ambition, skills or a sense of purpose. What we need is a shift in culture and policy to ensure that women are valued when it comes to areas such as pay, progression and work life blend, so they do not have to forfeit one for the other. The only way we can achieve this is through collaboration, action and changing the ‘unentitled mindset’.”

**VANESSA SANYAUKE**  
Founder of Girls Talk London



## The Research Team

### DR TERRI APTER

*Women at Work Author*

Dr Apter is a psychologist, writer and Fellow Emerita of Newnham College Cambridge. She has published a wide range of research on the hidden patterns of women’s decision-making throughout their lives (*Secret Paths: Women in the New Midlife*) and the maze of challenges women confront in their careers (*Working Women Don’t Have Wives*). Her book *Altered Loves: mothers and daughters during adolescence* was a New York Times Notable Book of the Year and *The Confident Child* was awarded the Delta Kappa Gamma International Educator’s Prize. She presented her work on young people’s aspirations to the UK Treasury and her most recent book, *‘Passing Judgment: praise and blame in everyday life’* highlights how daily exposure to praise and blame impacts on our relationships, from social media to marriage.

Dr Apter led The Female Lead’s research into teen girls and social media for the *Disrupt Your Feed* campaign, and again joined forces with The Female Lead for the *Women at Work* Research.

Read the Full Academic report here:  
[www.thefemalelead.com/research](http://www.thefemalelead.com/research)

### VERYAN DEXTER

*Research Lead at The Female Lead*

Veryan Dexter is a communications strategist with over two decades of experience managing marketing, communications and insight-led campaigns. A member of The Female Lead team since 2015, Veryan has worked to shape The Female Lead’s ongoing research strategy, tackling traditionally under-researched areas that address the most pressing issues facing girls and women today.

Working alongside Dr Apter, Veryan spearheaded The Female Lead’s 2019 *Disrupt Your Feed* campaign investigating how teen girl’s experience of social media could be enhanced by introducing new, positive role models into their feeds.

*Disrupt Your Feed* presented fresh insights into how we can alter social media usage to achieve positive mental health benefits with simple, easily adoptable interventions. The *Disrupt Your Feed* campaign reached

20 million people globally and 330 million impressions.

### EDWINA DUNN

*Founder of The Female Lead*

Edwina Dunn OBE is a data science entrepreneur who has always been fascinated by people’s stories and motivations. As the co-founder of worldwide loyalty programmes like Tesco’s Clubcard, Edwina knows first-hand what it feels like to work in a male-dominated industry and what it takes to navigate the many obstacles women have faced. Edwina started The Female Lead as a campaign that celebrates women’s stories, and showcases the lesser-known successes of women, in order to support and encourage the next generation.

Edwina created The Female Lead to work across a variety of platforms; through short films, a book of 60 remarkable women donated free to 18,000 UK and US schools, social media content reaching millions of followers worldwide and an educational programme in schools in the UK and US.

## Acknowledgements

### THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Thank you to all of our participants who shared invaluable insight and experience. You gave us new visibility into the mindsets and challenges women face in the workplace today and trusted us with your voice in the hope and expectation that together, we will encourage, inform and shape change. You referenced good and bad practices but importantly, shared first-hand examples of where businesses, individuals and legislators have designed a better environment, where new policies and processes create balance and gender equality.

“It is our wish, our mission, at The Female Lead, to share where good has been done and seen to be done, where successful pathways and support has

been created and to make this a model and framework for others to follow.”

### WOMEN AT WORK ADVISORY BOARD

We are grateful for the wisdom and experience of our Advisory Board, appointed in 2020, to help layer the revealing insights from our study with practical recommendations and solutions for business, for individuals and for legislators. The board has separately and collectively shared their opinions and comments on the *Women at Work* Research and our findings.

The board comprises business leaders and experts whose multi-sector experience helps guide and inform The Female Lead’s research, work and objectives.

### VALUED SUPPORTERS

The Female Lead conducted all research **independently**, in partnership with Dr Terri Apter who also authored their last research study: *The Impact of Social Media on 14-17 year olds’ Mental Health*.

We acknowledge and celebrate our 11 world leading brands and valued supporters (P&G, No7, KCC, General Mills, Hormel Foods, Allen&Overy, BT, Barclays, HSBC, RBC and SJP) who have agreed to help The Female Lead’s mission in 2021. This is our most exciting year yet; one where we join forces and help to unlock the constraints and thereby enable millions of women to achieve a more balanced and fulfilled career.

“If 2020 taught us anything, it is that we can lead, influence and progress work virtually – busting one of the biggest myths disproportionately impacting women in the workforce. The Female Lead’s *Women at Work* Research takes a big step forward in addressing this and other outdated biases and false narratives about women and work. Importantly, the study highlights real systemic and social barriers that persist in the public and private sectors that continue to hold women back, and offers meaningful steps we can all take to retain and advance women. Addressing these barriers is critical if we are to continue to make bold progress in advancing gender equality”.

**DEANNA BASS**  
*Vice-President – Global Equality & Inclusion, P&G*

“While the *Women at Work* Research includes some heartening evidence that attitudes are shifting, it also reminds us that the barriers are real and that the barriers remain. The content of the report helps to bust some of the myths that persist around how women view themselves and their careers as well as highlighting deep-rooted biases in our organisations that have not changed over time. This report will be invaluable in informing the dialogue at A&O as we continue our work toward better gender equality.”

**DENISE GIBSON**  
*Partner, Allen & Overy*

“At Hormel Foods, we pride ourselves on being one of the best workplaces in the world. In fact, we were named one of the World’s Best Employers by Forbes in 2019, and have been recognized as one of America’s Most Responsible Companies by Newsweek for two consecutive years. We are committed to supporting and growing the careers of all of our team members. The Female Lead provides valuable insights on how organizations can best support the career progression of women, and we are excited to review and use this information to help advance our efforts even more at Hormel Foods.”

**JANET HOGAN**  
*Senior Vice President of Human Resources,  
 Hormel Foods*

“General Mills is focused on empowering an inclusive, supportive culture that visibly and equitably recognizes all women. We are excited to partner with The Female Lead on both their platform and research to advance the initiatives to which we are both aligned. In particular, we are energized to put into action key findings of the *Women at Work* Research, to improve our own initiatives to empower and advance women through our organization and beyond.”

**JASON RESCH**  
*Customer Vice President General Mills*

“The *Women at Work* Research gives us important insights into women’s experiences in the workplace and highlights the vital need for organisations and businesses to do more to tackle the recurring issues that women face.

The discovery of the ‘unentitled mindset’ clearly demonstrates the need to better empower women to pursue their career ambitions with confidence and free of damaging stereotypes. Whilst we are already making changes within our own business there is still a lot of work to be done at societal and organisational levels and by using our combined efforts we can, and will, do more. It’s so important that we all learn from this research and take action to cultivate and grow the enormous talent, ambition, drive and passion that women have for their careers.”

**ANNIE MURPHY**

*SVP, Global Chief Commercial Brands Officer and International Retail, Walgreens Boots Alliance, on behalf of No7.*

“The *Women at Work* Research highlights the misconceptions and socially conditioned mindsets that are demonstrable within the gender pay and pensions gaps and female career progression. It is clear that whilst progress is being made, there is more than we can all do. St. James’s Place signed the Women in Finance Charter in 2018 and hope to exceed the target of 30% of women in senior roles by 2023. We are developing our Advice for Women proposition and will use the *Women at Work* Research to inform our Partnership and develop materials for them to best support female clients.”

**CLAIRE BLACKWELL**

*Director of Marketing, St James’s Place*

“The Female Lead has made a real, tangible difference to thousands of lives and we are immensely proud to partner and support this important work. This latest research shines a light on the issues facing our society, and together we must look for solutions at this critical juncture in women’s careers. At BT we also want to help women by supporting them in the digital workplace. Our BT Skills for Tomorrow programme aims to empower 10 million people by giving them the skills they need to make the most of life in a digital world.”

**PROFESSOR KERENSA JENNINGS**

*BT Digital Impact Director*

“RBC already has a robust strategy around addressing diversity and inclusion across the enterprise. Our efforts have most recently been recognised through the 2021 Catalyst Award, honouring global businesses dedicated to increasing the representation of women in leadership and promoting equal access to career opportunities. The advancement of women at RBC is a business imperative. Women are in many critical roles across our VP, SVP and EVP population, and represented 51% of new hires and 52% of promotions last year. And since 2015, RBC increased the representation of female executives from 38% to 46%. Recognising there is still plenty of work to be done, we continue to build a culture rooted in our values of which diversity is a key tenet and The Female Lead’s *Women at Work* Research will help advance our initiatives even more.

**PRUE THOMPSON**

*Head of Marketing & Client Engagement, RBC Wealth Management International*

**The Female Lead  
wants to thank warmly  
its valued supporters:**



**ALLEN & OVERY**



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