

# The Gender News Gap:

The Impact of Inequality  
in Journalism & Media

By



**Man  
Bites  
Dog.**

With support from

**CISION**

**COLEMAN PARKES**  
RESEARCH

**BIG HELPING**

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## FOREWORD

# Revealing the Gender News Gap

**Women in Journalism has been campaigning for representative gender balance and diversity in our industry for almost thirty years.**

When we undertook this research, we wanted to see change in the way women journalists were treated: less discrimination, more opportunities, higher pay. We hoped that women journalists of all ages and from all ethnic backgrounds were becoming more equal with their male colleagues. We wanted to see how far we had come towards gender equality in our profession and whether progress had been stalled by the pandemic. But what we found is that the gender gap still stubbornly persists. We were disappointed – and shocked – not just by the slow progress towards gender equality in journalism, but by how few male journalists recognised it.

Women journalists progress more slowly than men, have fewer career opportunities and nearly three quarters of the people who participated in our research told us they work in a culture that they see as “macho and intimidating”, which for women is difficult and for women of colour even more so. Fewer women than men hold senior positions, half our respondents complain they have experienced some sort of discrimination and many journalists are targeted with online abuse.

Things have improved. Of the 22 daily and Sunday national newspapers in the UK (excluding Scotland) eight – a third – are edited by women, one of whom is our chair, Alison Philips. But we believe

the lack of gender equality in journalism, which our report highlights, is a critical problem right at the heart of the UK media industry – and it’s a hard nut to crack.

The media is the prism through which the world sees itself. For it to be fair and accurate we need all kinds of people from a host of diverse backgrounds telling all sorts of stories. That makes great journalism. How can we, as journalists, reflect the world as it truly is when it’s viewed mainly through one lens?

Women in Journalism has fought long and hard over 27 years to rectify this and through our workshops, research and panel events we’ll continue to do so. Our job is to empower women journalists of all ages, from diverse backgrounds and from all parts of the UK. However, it requires a cultural change. We hope that by highlighting these inequalities and signposting solutions for debate we can begin to close the Gender News Gap.

We would like to call on women and men in journalism to recognise the Gender News Gap and take action in leadership, culture change and peer support to make journalism the inclusive profession our society needs.

— Women in Journalism



## FOREWORD

# Equality in journalism is the foundation of equal representation

Equality in journalism is a critical foundation for a more equal society. Public opinion and policy are shaped by the people who decide which stories are told and who tells them.

The Gender News Gap directly impacts how women and diverse communities are represented, how our experiences and concerns are reflected, and how we make our voices heard to create change.

It is remarkable that in 2021 women in journalism still face challenges of access and progression and a culture that they feel excludes them from leadership positions and influential specialisms like news, business, finance and politics. While UK journalists overwhelmingly believe that the media has a duty to reflect the diversity of the society it serves, our research shows we still have a long way to go to achieve that balance.

For some years now, I have been campaigning to close the Gender Say Gap, a term I coined to highlight the invisibility of women and other diverse groups as expert authorities in business and in public life.

Women are disproportionately the experts in our society – we are more likely to work in a high-status profession, more likely to have a degree and a further degree. But we are simply not hearing from female authorities. Female spokespeople are still outnumbered 4-1 in conferences and up to 5-1 as expert commentators in the media.<sup>1</sup>

The female experts are missing – which means we're only hearing half the story. By defaulting to white male experts, we also fail to seize the opportunity to inspire women and talent from diverse communities to enter the professions that will shape our future – from engineering to technology – because the next generation can't be what they can't see.

This lack of 'say equality' is creating huge gaps in information, representation and policy – which means that issues from discrimination to violence can go unspoken and ignored for decades.

My team at Man Bites Dog has been working with multinational boards and the public relations profession globally to audit and increase the diversity of the expert spokes people who represent organisations. But there is a critical other side to the representation equation: the media who decide who is heard.

Our research shows that female journalists and female expert spokespeople are more likely to highlight underrepresented issues and ensure we hear both sides of the story. We need all journalists to consider who they elevate as thought-leading figures of expert authority, audit the diversity of their expert contributors and help foster culture change.

We are grateful to Cision, Coleman Parkes and Big Helping for their support and would like to thank all the journalists who contributed their views to this research on inequality in journalism and its broader consequences.

We are delighted to partner with Women in Journalism on this important study and hope that by working together the journalism and communications professions can help close the gender news gap and achieve say equality for all.

*Claire Mason*

Founder & CEO, Man Bites Dog

<sup>1</sup> gendersaygap.com



# Executive Summary

The Gender News Gap is based on a major exploration of gender inequality in UK journalism and media. In this report, we examine the opinions of 1,200 UK journalists on gender diversity in journalism and its impact on female journalists, the media and society more broadly.

Although 96% of journalists in the UK<sup>2</sup> believe **the media has a duty to reflect the diversity of the society it serves**, our research reveals that **fewer than one in five (19%) female journalists believe that there is adequate gender diversity in journalism**.

This gender imbalance has a significant impact on business, editorial and content decisions, influencing which stories are told and who tells them.

## The challenges for women in journalism

Our research identifies some of the biggest challenges facing women in journalism right now, including access to the profession and career progression. **Three quarters (73%) of UK journalists believe that career progression in journalism is more difficult for women than men.**

Our research identifies a 'glass newsroom' excluding women from power. Leadership and culture in media have a significant impact: **70% of female journalists complain that the most senior roles remain dominated by men**, which may be contributing to a '**macho and intimidating culture**' in some media organisations, called out by male and female journalists alike. Eight in 10 female journalists (81%) complain that '**high status**' journalism specialisms – such as hard news, business, finance and politics – **remain male dominated**.

## Inaction on diversity and inclusion

We also expose a blind spot when it comes to discrimination. **Less than a quarter (23%) of UK journalists rate gender diversity in the media as good or excellent** and, repeatedly, it's revealed that male journalists

are seemingly unaware of the challenges experienced by their female colleagues.

How can we make these issues more visible and tangible to create greater advocacy across the media industry? It starts with measurement. **Less than a quarter** (23% respectively) of media directors and founders participating in our survey said their organisation **measures the gender or ethnic diversity** of their journalist workforce.

## COVID-19 is compounding the key issues

Looking at the impact of COVID-19, the damage is clear: **61% of female journalists experienced a negative impact on their mental health** due to domestic work, childcare and/or caring responsibilities as a result of the pandemic.

Job security was also affected, with female journalists being **more than twice as likely** to be furloughed<sup>3</sup> as male journalists, and 40% more likely to be made redundant over the course of the pandemic.

## The Gender Say Gap: Why a lack of diversity in journalism matters

95% of UK journalists believe **we need a diversity of journalists to be relevant and interesting to readers**, and nine in ten (92%) journalists believe **a balance between male and female journalists is essential to properly represent key societal issues**.

According to more than four in five women in journalism, female journalists and female experts highlight issues that would otherwise be underrepresented. But the persistent Gender News Gap is itself a key contributor to The Gender Say Gap: the lack of expert female and diverse authorities consulted by the media.

Although 96% of journalists believe that visible female experts can **inspire women** to enter professions and sectors where they may be currently underrepresented, and 84% of female journalists believe that **if we only have male experts, we will only tell half the story**, just 28% of journalists report that their organisation has set targets to improve the representation of female expert contributors.

<sup>2</sup> 'UK journalists' refers to UK journalists participating in our research.

<sup>3</sup> Furlough and redundancy figures exclude directors and founders.



Where can we go from here?

Key opportunities to make the journalism profession more inclusive and close the Gender News Gap include:

Leadership

Promoting greater diversity at the top and putting diversity on the newsroom agenda to create more inclusive cultures.

Development

Cracking the access and progression issue to ensure that diverse journalists can break into the 'glass newsroom'.

Flexibility

Seizing the opportunities created by normalised remote working to enable more diverse talent to enter the profession and make it easier for parents to return to work.

Measurement

Measuring and improving workforce diversity at every level of the media, and monitoring and improving the balance of expert spokespeople to better represent the diversity of our society.

Solidarity

Creating communities that bring female journalists together, supporting them to reach their full potential and be empowered in managing their careers.

About the study

RESEARCH:

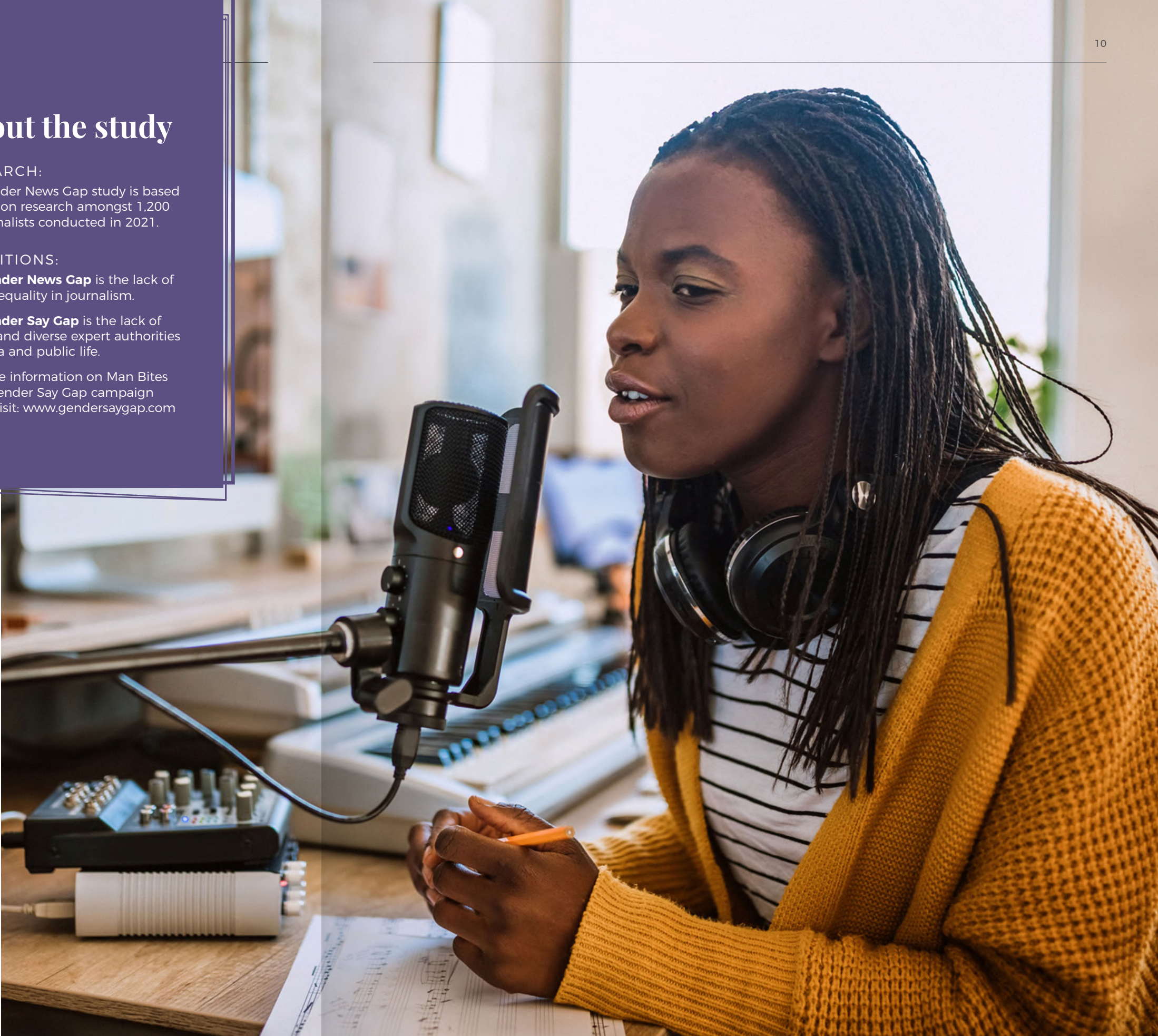
The Gender News Gap study is based on opinion research amongst 1,200 UK journalists conducted in 2021.

DEFINITIONS:

**The Gender News Gap** is the lack of gender equality in journalism.

**The Gender Say Gap** is the lack of female and diverse expert authorities in media and public life.

For more information on Man Bites Dog's Gender Say Gap campaign please visit: [www.gendersaygap.com](http://www.gendersaygap.com)





## INTRODUCTION

# The Gender News Gap

Across the industry, UK journalists believe that the media has a duty to reflect the diversity of the society it serves. **However, fewer than one in five (19%) female journalists believe there is adequate gender diversity in journalism.**

This has a significant impact on who is making business, editorial and content decisions, influencing which stories are told and who tells them.

### The Gender News Gap

The lack of gender equality in journalism is the Gender News Gap. It's the discrepancy between the number of women who should be shaping the news agenda and how many we hear from – as journalists and expert commentators.

The following report explores the challenges of career progression for women in journalism, the lack of action on gender diversity in the media, the compounding effect of Covid-19 and the impact of the Gender News Gap on female representation.

# 96%

of UK journalists believe the media has a duty to reflect the diversity of the society it serves.



# 01. Beyond the Glass Newsroom:

Exposing barriers to progression

Our research reveals a ‘glass newsroom’, where culture and leadership create barriers to career progression for women in journalism, both in general and in high-status specialisms. These barriers are all too visible to female journalists, but often unseen by their male colleagues.

Access to journalism as a profession continues to be seen as a challenge, with almost half (46%) of UK journalists believing that **access to the journalism profession** is more difficult for women than men, and nearly three in four journalists (73%) believing that it’s harder still for women from ethnic minorities.

However, what presents an even greater challenge to women in journalism is **career progression**.

### Female journalists are missing out on the top job roles

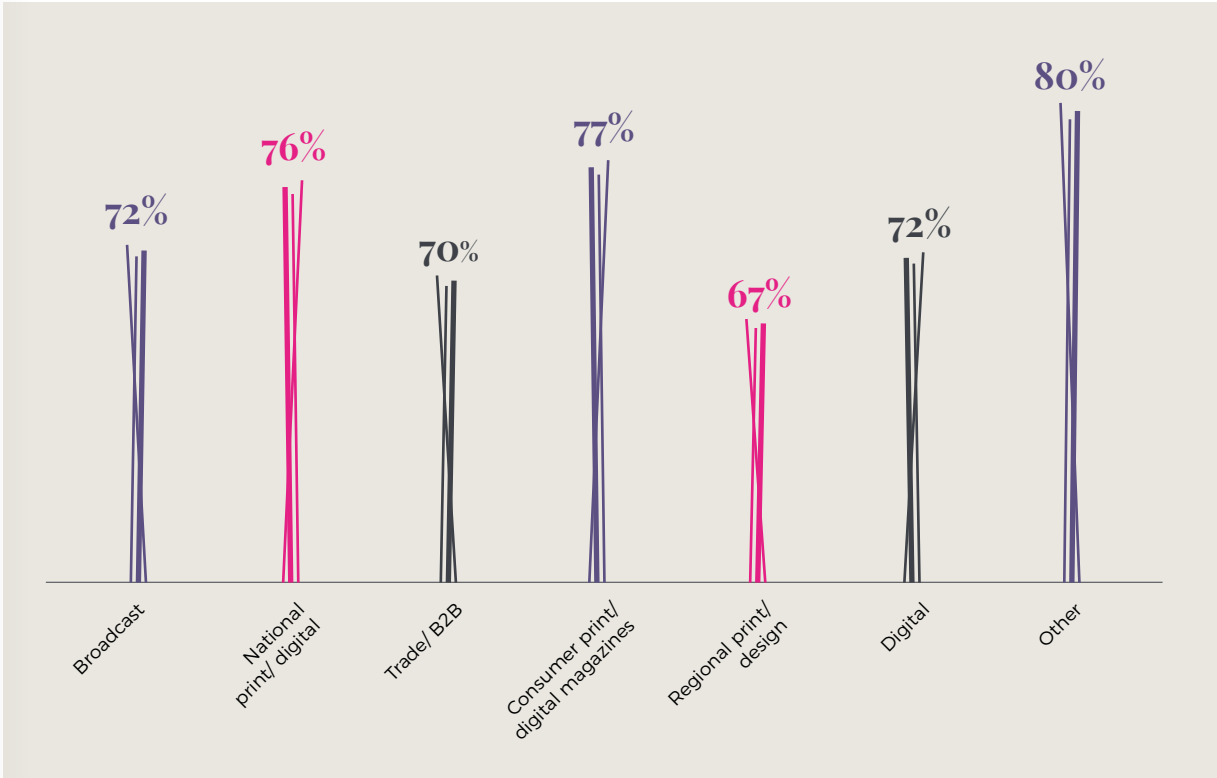
Three-quarters (73%) of journalists believe that **career progression in journalism is more difficult for women than men**, and 70% believe career progression in journalism is more difficult for women from ethnic minorities. More than half (54%) of female journalists are concerned about their own career progression.



I never thought my ethnicity would be a barrier to progression but it is, and more needs to be done to support career progression.”

UK Journalist

### Across the media, career progression in journalism is seen as more difficult for women than men.



### Men still dominate senior media roles

The relative lack of women in senior positions may be perpetuating the career progression problem: 70% of female journalists in our research complain that the most **senior roles remain dominated by men** (59% of male journalists agree). This is felt particularly strongly by journalists of both genders in digital media (69%) and consumer titles (67%).

The inequality of female representation amongst media decision-makers and in the news conference room is a major concern and raises the question of whether the media has a ‘glass newsroom’, excluding women from power. A lack of gender balance in leadership not only impacts editorial decision-making about which stories are told, but can also perpetuate a culture that fails to include and engage women in journalism.

74%

of UK journalists believe the workplace culture of some media organisations remains macho and intimidating.



Three in four (74%) UK journalists participating in our study admit that **the workplace culture of some media organisations remains ‘macho and intimidating’**. This is particularly true in national newspapers, where more than eight in 10 (81%) journalists complain about a ‘macho’ workplace culture.

Eight in 10 female journalists (81%) complain that **‘high status’ journalism specialisms** – such as hard news, business, finance and politics – **remain male dominated**.



The industry needs to work hard to create a more inclusive culture so that there are more women in decision-making roles. As editors, whatever our gender, such a culture change would enable greater diversity and inclusion and is a critical part of our role as leaders.”  
Women in Journalism

Is tokenism the main hurdle? More than half (52%) of female journalists believe that there is still a perception that **‘one token woman is enough’**. However, few men agree this is a problem – less than a quarter of male journalists (24%) believe this is the case.

This connects to another major theme uncovered by our analysis: the discrepancy between the experiences and perceptions of the genders. Many of the challenges faced by women in journalism were simply not seen by their male colleagues to the same degree.



The Gender News Gap is pervasive for women in journalism, but apparently invisible to their male colleagues. It is critical that the media industry recognises the existence of The Gender News Gap and takes action to foster more diverse and inclusive cultures.”  
Claire Mason, CEO & Founder,  
Man Bites Dog

**Working practices are limiting women’s career opportunities**

The demands of the modern media industry – like 24/7 digital coverage – make it harder to fit a journalism career around other aspects of life. While everyone would benefit from a more flexible approach to juggling work with the demands of family life, the career impact of parenthood still impacts women in journalism more than men. Four in five (83%) journalists expressed concern that industry expectations, such as inflexible schedules and unsocial hours, make it harder for women to return to work full-time after having children. This problem is especially acute in London, where 90% of journalists highlight this challenge.

Where does this leave women returning to the profession after children? It means they take jobs that don’t necessarily offer the same progression, benefits and visibility as staff roles: 83% of female journalists believe that **women are more likely to take freelance roles** due to the alternative – unsocial hours and work expectations – being incompatible with home demands (51% of male journalists agree). This was felt by more journalists in consumer publications (81%), nationals (79%) and B2B publications (79%) than in other types of media.





# 02.

## Putting diversity on the newsroom agenda:

Targeting change

In the post-pandemic labour market, the war for talent has never been greater. Journalism must compete with a range of exciting professions to attract the best talent, but it's missing out by failing to attract and develop female and diverse employees.

Diversity and inclusion may be high on the news agenda, but it's not high on the newsroom agenda. Is the industry failing to attract, support and develop the diversity of journalists it needs to thrive?

When we examine gender diversity in the journalism profession, it's clear that there's still a long way to go. **Less than a quarter (23%) of UK journalists rate gender diversity in the media as good or excellent** (although men are almost twice as likely as women to think so).

A staggering 80% of journalists believe ethnic diversity in journalism is poor or very poor.

### We cannot change what we cannot see

While our research primarily focused on journalists, our indicative sample of directors and founders suggests the need for a greater focus on diversity and inclusion in the profession.

When it comes to monitoring diversity within media organisations, just under a quarter (23% respectively) of directors and founders participating in our study confirmed their



We have to work hard – continually – to ensure that editorial offices have a diverse mix of people. At Women in Journalism we believe that the media has to be a reflective mirror of society, not a distorting lens.”

Eleanor Mills, Former WIJ Chair  
Founder and Editor-in-Chief, Noon

What gets measured gets managed. There is a clear expectation from journalists that responsible media employers should measure and improve diversity. With media so often reporting at the leading edge of diversity and inclusion issues, now it's time to turn the spotlight inwards, put diversity on the newsroom agenda and make targets for change.”

Claire Mason, Founder &  
CEO, Man Bites Dog

organisation measures the gender or ethnic diversity of their journalist workforce. This is much less than journalists expect; half of journalists believe that their organisation measures the gender and ethnic diversity of its journalists (47% and 50% respectively).

### We cannot manage what we do not measure

Our findings reveal that monitoring the diversity of journalists is not consistently treated as a priority across media organisations.

Comparing broadcast journalism and trade/b2b – the sectors with the highest and lowest levels of measurement respectively.

### Broadcast Journalism

44%

of directors and founders measure ethnic diversity.

43%

measure gender diversity.

### Trade/ B2B

17%

of directors and founders claim to measure ethnic diversity.

16%

measure gender diversity.

Broadcast journalism has the highest levels of reported workforce diversity measurement, but the figures are still lower than journalists in the field expect. Fewer journalists in B2B publications expect gender or ethnic diversity to be measured, and the number of directors and founders who reported monitoring diversity in these sectors is indeed lower.

### Silent inaction on diversity

Only a fifth (21%) of the directors and founders participating in our research say their organisation has policies and targets to **improve the representation of female journalists...** although almost a third (31%) of journalists believe their organisation has such targets and policies.

Similarly, only a quarter (26%) of those directors and founders report that their organisation has a set policy and targets to **improve the representation of journalists from ethnic minority backgrounds...** although almost half (47%) of UK journalists believe these policies and targets exist.



**Discrimination is still an issue across the media industry**

More than half (52%) of women in journalism report that they have been personally affected by discrimination in their career, compared to just 20% of male journalists.

Of the female journalists who have either experienced or witnessed discrimination, 4 in 5 (80%) identified gender discrimination as the problem. However, it's far from the only challenge; over a third (36%) of women have witnessed or been personally affected by age discrimination, and almost a quarter (23%) have experienced discrimination based on their social class.

**Pay discrepancy remains a problem in journalism**

Nearly three in five (58%) female journalists are concerned about poor pay (compared to 46% of male journalists), and 61% of female journalists have experienced pay discrimination – with more than half (52%) believing that they are paid less than male colleagues for equivalent work and performance.



I would like women in the [journalism] trade to more openly discuss salaries. That's the only way they're going to increase."  
UK Journalist





## 03. Women's work?

The impact of COVID-19  
on women in journalism

COVID-19 has compounded the challenges of being a woman in journalism, negatively impacting career progression, job security, work/life balance and mental health.

### COVID-19 is disproportionately impacting female journalists

The women that took part in our research were 56% more likely than their male counterparts to feel that domestic work, childcare and/or caring responsibilities as a result of the pandemic had a negative impact on career progression.

A third more female journalists than male journalists reported that domestic and care responsibilities as a result of the pandemic had a negative impact on their **work/life balance**. In particular, three in five (61%) female journalists experienced a negative impact on their **mental health** due to domestic work, childcare and/or caring responsibilities as a result of the pandemic – 22% more than male journalists.

### The hidden crisis: Women in journalism are more likely to be made redundant or lose work

When it comes to job security, female journalists were more than twice as likely to be furloughed<sup>4</sup> as male journalists, and 40% more likely to be made redundant over the course of the pandemic.

One in five women in our research believe that female journalists are less visible on screen and in print as a result of the pandemic. Women in journalism also complained that they were given lighter stories and expected to flex outside their specialism more than their male counterparts. For example, 40% of women in journalism complain that female journalists were more likely to be asked to cover pandemic human-interest stories, regardless of their specialism.

# 61%

of female journalists experienced a negative impact on their mental health from domestic responsibilities as a result of the pandemic.



Current conditions - where working from home has caused more women to be landed with the childcare - means women are less likely to want to go through the hassle of appearing on news programmes while already juggling home and work. And over the years, we have found that the media has frequently paid lip service to a fair showing of female experts but use excuses to fall back on same old same old. The pandemic is the latest example of this."

Professor Lis Howell, Director,  
The Expert Women Project



It's no surprise that women journalists have been hit the hardest by the pandemic. We are the ones who took on the lion's share of domestic responsibilities. But we showed we could do it all."

Women in Journalism

<sup>4</sup> Furlough and redundancy figures exclude directors or founders.



# 04. Closing the Gender News Gap:

Why women in journalism matter



Equality in journalism is a key pillar of equality of representation, filtering which stories are told and who tells them. But we are still very far from achieving gender balance in journalism – which is driving huge gaps in information, policy and representation.

The Gender News Gap – the lack of gender equality in journalism – is a critical problem at the heart of the UK media industry. As we have already seen, fewer than one in five (19%) female journalists believe there is adequate gender diversity in journalism. And, like the barriers to progress presented by the glass newsroom, the issue remains largely invisible to their male colleagues, who are almost twice as likely (35%) to rate gender diversity as excellent or good.

## Why diversity in journalism matters

There's no question that diversity in journalism matters: 96% of journalists believe **the media has a duty to reflect the diversity of the society it serves**.

UK journalists – both male and female – know that women have an important role to play in ensuring the media better represents the world we all live in. Almost all (95%) UK journalists participating in our research believe that **the media needs a diversity of journalists to be relevant and interesting to readers**, and nine in ten (92%) journalists believe a balance between male and female journalists is essential to **properly represent key societal issues** and issues that concern audiences.

Four in five (81%) women in journalism believe that **female journalists highlight issues that would otherwise be underrepresented** (57% of male journalists agree). Nearly three-

quarters of women in journalism (71%) also believe that female journalists may be **more likely to champion diversity more generally** (45% of male journalists agree).



Recent movements like Me Too, Black Lives Matter, the Everyday Sexism Project, Everyone's Invited and Reclaim These Streets have spotlighted issues including harassment, discrimination, violence and safety that have been underrepresented in mainstream media. Increasing the diversity of journalists and editors and changing culture is critical to surfacing these issues, generating understanding and empathy, and influencing policy and social change."

Claire Mason, Founder & CEO, Man Bites Dog

## The Gender News Gap drives The Gender Say Gap

But the Gender News Gap goes beyond selecting which stories are told – it also influences who tells them.

Journalists turn to **expert authorities** for insights on a huge range of subjects, and the diversity of those experts is directly impacted by the diversity of the journalism profession. The Gender News Gap is a key contributor to The Gender Say Gap<sup>5</sup> – the invisibility of women and diverse experts as authorities in business and in public life.

For the last decade, women have outnumbered men in high-status professions. Despite being disproportionately the experts in the room, there continues to be a marked absence of expert female voices in the media.

Closing this Gender Say Gap is essential to harness the full potential of female experts and ensure that society can benefit from their ideas and insights.

## Diverse expert contributors are important

Almost all (96%) UK journalists believe that **visible female experts can inspire women** to enter professions and sectors where they may be currently underrepresented. More than eight in 10 (84%) female journalists argue that **if we only have male experts, we will only tell half the story** (66% of male journalists agree). Four in five (82%) female journalists argue that **female experts highlight issues that would otherwise be underrepresented** (64% of male journalists agree).

Two-thirds (65%) of UK broadcast journalists complain that their organisation features **more male experts than female experts**. And it's not only the number of expert commentators, it's what they are asked to comment on. Nearly half (46%) of female journalists believe that there is a tendency to ask men, rather than women, about strategy and policy.

A third (33%) of female journalists report that editors regard men as more powerful and authoritative, and 28% of women in journalism believe that women are seen as less authoritative by media audiences.

Journalists also believe that **female experts are more likely to be publicly criticised or trolled** – especially those in digital media (66%) and consumer media (62%).

# 84%

of female journalists argue that if we only have male experts, we will only tell half the story.

<sup>5</sup> gendersaygap.com





Say equality – hearing from a diversity of experts – is critical to shaping a more inclusive society. We need a coalition of change to bring together demand for diverse experts (from media and journalists) and supply of diverse experts (from public and private sector organisations and the public relations professionals who represent them). If we measure say equality and action targets for change, we will increase the visibility of diverse experts as thought leaders. Together we can close the Gender Say Gap.”

Claire Mason, Founder & CEO, Man Bites Dog

Despite a big improvement over the last eight years of Expert Women Project monitoring, the male expert is still the norm. The number of women appearing on flagship news programmes as authority figures has gone from a ratio of nearly 5 to one, to 2 to one. But women still do not often feature as top experts as frequently as men.

There seems to be some evidence that stories deemed to be of interest to men - such as sports - gain more airtime, and that male experts will be used more and for longer on stories of interest to men, than female experts on stories of interest to women. We need to continue to apply pressure so that there is a fairer representation of diverse authority figures.”

Professor Lis Howell, Director, The Expert Women Project

Closing the Gender Say Gap

To hear more female voices, diversity and inclusion must extend beyond the media workforce to include the experts and commentators that are featured in news and content. Just one in five UK journalists believe that the gender (23%) or ethnic diversity (23%) of expert contributors is *not* important to their organisation – but where is the action for change?

Less than a third of journalists report that their organisation has set targets to **improve the representation of female expert contributors** (28%) or expert contributors from ethnic minority backgrounds (30%).

Some media sectors have further to go than others; only 17% of journalists in national media and 12% in regional titles report that their organisation has set targets to improve the representation of female expert contributors. On the other hand, broadcast journalism is the exception to general trends – for example, 61% of broadcast journalists report their organisation has targets for female expert contributors and the sector is home to a number of high-profile initiatives including the BBC’s 50:50 Equality Initiative<sup>6</sup>.



In my line of work I meet many women who are getting death threats, online hate and risking their physical and mental health.”

UK Journalist

From our own correspondent:

Raising the profile of female journalists as expert contributors

Female journalists have huge potential to close the Gender Say Gap by stepping forward as expert contributors in their own right.

However, fear of online harassment – and the potential lack of support from employers when this happens – is a significant barrier.

Just half (55%) of female journalists are comfortable with a public profile as a commentator on their specialist subject, compared with two-thirds (67%) of male journalists. This aligns with the two-thirds (68%) of female journalists that have hesitated before posting work online due to concerns about receiving abuse – with particularly high levels of trepidation from journalists in politics (82%) and sport (82%).

This fear of online abuse isn’t unfounded. Four in 10 (41%) UK journalists have been a victim of online hate as a result of their work being posted online, and a significant 41% of journalists who have been the victim of online hate did not receive any support from their employer afterwards. Although the majority (71%) of journalists said they did not report their experience of online hate to the relevant platform, of the 28% who did, 72% felt the response was inadequate.

There is a clear opportunity for media to provide journalists with training to represent their organisation as expert commentators, and an unmet demand from journalists of both genders for greater support with online abuse.

<sup>6</sup> www.bbc.co.uk/5050





## Where can we go from here?

*The Gender News Gap delivers a snapshot of how UK journalists have been impacted over the last year due to the pandemic, and how they feel about equality and diversity in the media in 2021.*

**In hearing their stories and concerns, five opportunities for change become clear.**

### 01. Leadership:

**Promote greater diversity at the top and put diversity and inclusion on the newsroom agenda**

The right leadership is critical to creating inclusive cultures; **three in five (61%) journalists would value and feel empowered by greater diversity at board level.** This was felt most strongly in London (66%) and in digital media (66%). It's clear that there's an opportunity for leaders of both genders to embrace change, and ensure there is a diverse talent pipeline to take on top roles.

### 02. Development:

**Crack the access and progression issue**

The industry must make progress on progression. By investing more energy in nurturing a diverse talent pipeline, organisations can ensure female journalists, and those from ethnic minorities, are not excluded from the 'glass newsroom', and are able to advance in their careers. This includes actively tackling gender discrimination, age discrimination and the concerns about poor pay raised by women in journalism.

### 03. Flexibility:

**Seize the opportunities created by normalised remote working**

Despite the strain on mental health and work/life balance, the changes to working practices implemented in response to the pandemic present an opportunity for more diverse talent to enter the profession and could make it easier for parents to return to work without compromising their career ambitions.

Looking to the future, 87% of journalists believe that flexible and remote working introduced as a result of COVID-19 should make it easier for journalists living in suburban and rural areas to access the profession, and eight in 10 (82%) journalists believe flexible and remote working should make it easier for women to return to the profession post maternity leave or after a career break.

### 04. Measurement:

**Close the Gender Say Gap and enable equality**

The current lack of female voices highlights how the Gender News Gap is driving gaps in representation. It's time to see greater demand for female and diverse expert insight from the media, and better supply of female and diverse expert commentators from business and public sector organisations.

Business and the public relations profession can play a key role in bridging the Gender Say Gap by providing more women and diverse experts to ensure greater balance. At the same time, media must measure their gender say gap and seek out expert spokespeople who represent the rich diversity of our society. Finally, we as individuals should be more prepared to step forward and have our say, including women in journalism who have so much expert insight to share.

### 05. Solidarity:

**Create communities that bring female journalists together**

Women in Journalism aims to promote great journalism through its panel events, workshops and research. It campaigns for representative gender balance and diversity at every level of the industry to help better represent all women in society, and supports women journalists in the UK to reach their full potential and be empowered in managing their careers.

Having a network where women can share their experiences, find professional support and develop their career skills is a core part of closing the Gender News Gap and spotlighting more female stories.



# What Women in Journalism want:

Here are some of the types of support valued by the journalists we spoke to:



How women can break into male dominated areas, i.e., sport/football reporting, advice on confidence building and how to cope with 'imposter syndrome'."



Practical tips on how to negotiate salaries, how to prepare for interviews and how to protect yourself when out reporting."



Imposter syndrome and the extra difficulties faced by women from lower socio-economic backgrounds."



Interaction with other women journalists, sharing of ideas and strategies and expert advice at seminars."



Solidarity from others in my profession. This is a lonely trade for many women."



How to reignite your career and be taken seriously as a woman journalist after having children/getting older."



Dealing with tokenism and pay discrimination without getting the reputation of being pushy/aggressive. It's called assertive, dammit!"



Confidence talks, balancing working within publishing alongside childcare, other talks on progression within the industry."





# Credits

The Gender News Gap: The Impact of Inequality in Journalism & Media report reflects a study by Women in Journalism and Man Bites Dog, with research design, data analysis and copywriting by Man Bites Dog. Research fieldwork was conducted by Coleman Parkes using Cision's journalist database and design was provided by Big Helping. We would like to thank all parties for their pro bono support.

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Founded by Eve Pollard in 1992, Women in Journalism is a not-for-profit organisation that provides guidance and support for its members. They are from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds, at every stage of their careers, and work across all platforms around the UK and overseas.

For more information, visit  
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# Man Bites Dog.

Man Bites Dog is an award-winning global thought leadership consultancy specialising in compelling content, campaigns and communications to tell your story. We develop future thinking for intelligent brands to position them as leaders in the next economy.

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# Journalists' Charity

Supporting journalists nationwide

Did you know The Journalists' Charity helped prevent dozens of families from becoming homeless during COVID-19, giving financial assistance to hundreds of journalists of all ages and backgrounds whose lives were turned upside down by the pandemic? The Journalists' Charity is here to help every journalist from every sector, nationwide.

Journalists' Charity is the working name of the Newspaper Press Fund and is a registered charity in England and Wales (208215) and Scotland (SC042405). Read our email disclaimer.

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