

25x25 Press Release
18 November, 2021

25x25 launches targeting 25 women FTSE100 CEOs by 2025

[25x25](#) is an initiative led by corporates and designed to tackle gender-imbalance at senior executive levels. Its target is simple: 25 women CEOs in the FTSE100 by 2025 and 25% of the FTSE thereafter, with an aim of increasing the overall number of women CEOs in UK business.

Founded by its sponsors and members **BAE Systems, Baker & McKenzie, bp, Deloitte, GSK, IG Group, ITV, Linklaters, Lombard Odier, Morgan Stanley International, NatWest Group, Pennon Group, the Royal Air Force and Unilever**, with each being represented by its CEO or equivalent as a 25x25 Ambassador.

For many years now, women have made up approximately 50% of the UK workforce and 50% of many firms' management programmes, yet few make it to CEO – there are currently only 9 women CEOs in the FTSE100. These companies and organisations have therefore joined 25x25 to signal their commitment to ensuring women are given the right opportunities at the right time in their career progression.

To address the low number of CEOs in UK business, 25x25 in consultation with the CEOs, Chairs and Chief People Officers of over 200 corporates (including **90% of the FTSE100**), has developed a framework based on best practices regarding succession planning and talent management; analysis of the pathways to CEO; accountability and targets (both internal and external); and support measures.

Early findings indicate that where companies have provided clear progression routes and mapped out the pathways to CEO, senior executive women have thrived, as many need this clarity of structure to be able to plan their career, balance their lives, and ultimately take on a CEO role.

In addition to the 25x25 Framework, which is based on company case studies and the input of the Chairs, CEOs and CPOs of over 200 corporates, 25x25 will develop two data tools: a public data tool which will encourage companies, shareholders, stock-market indices and other organisations to track metrics regarding progression of gender-balance at executive leadership levels; and a private benchmarking tool designed for exclusive use of its members. In time, the public data tool might be used to support ESG-Gender Indices.

Tara Cemlyn-Jones, Coordinator and Director of 25x25 Limited said:

“We have been delighted by the response from the companies and organisations we have approached so far and the commitment of our founding members. We recognise however that different companies are at different stages of development in terms of gender-balance at executive leadership levels. The 25x25 framework works for all companies, including those

who may not have any women at their most senior levels at the moment, and therefore we welcome every corporate and organisation to join us.”

Bernard Looney, CEO of bp, said:

“We’ve made good progress on our goal of gender parity among our top 120 leaders by 2025 – but we still have more work to hit the target and that’s why we’re teaming up with 25x25. Their approach isn’t theoretical, they offer practical support to drive real progress. If we can address gender imbalance in the corporate world, we’ll not only make the system fairer, but also deliver better business results.”

Alison Rose, CEO of Natwest, said:

“We have strong female representation at the most senior levels of the bank. This has been achieved through focusing on succession plans and building a robust talent pipeline. But our progress does not stop there, we continue to focus on recruiting, advancing and retaining women and working towards our strategic targets to achieve gender balance at the highest levels.”

Alan Jope CEO of Unilever, said:

“In 2019, a year ahead of our own target, we achieved gender balance across our 14,000 managers - and within our Non-Executive Board. But that’s only the start. We’re constantly learning from others, on how to support more women and appoint them into our most senior ranks – and ultimately to CEO. We have an aspiration to reach gender balance in our Top 500 senior positions by 2025, and are keen to learn how we can do even better through partnerships like 25x25.”

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Notes to editors

To arrange an interview or for further information, please contact:

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Key facts:

As per latest ONS data, women make-up 51%^[1] of the UK Workforce and for several years now, approximately 50% of many firms management programmes^[2]. Yet as of November 17th, there are only 9 women CEOs in the FTSE100 and 9 in the FTSE250^[3].

According to Hampton-Alexander, within the FTSE350 companies there were ca. 680 women at Executive Committee level (i.e.: **24% of total**) and ca 5,320 at direct report level (i.e.: **30% of total**) as at 30th June 2020^[4].

[1] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/>

[2] Based on public company data

[3] BoardEx data as at 17th November 2021

[4] <https://ftsewomenleaders.com/latest-reports/>

About 25x25.uk

25x25 is the initiative to increase the number of women CEOs in UK business. Founded by its sponsors, 25x25 hopes all UK corporates and public bodies will join as members. 25x25's mission is to encourage UK business to deliver gender-balance at executive leadership, as every person regardless of background should be given the opportunity to progress their career without prejudice.

The non-profit support structure 25x25 Limited has been established to support members using case studies and specifically designed [data tools](#) currently under development - see - to help companies adopt the best practices outlined in [the framework](#).

Membership includes: Admiral Group, BAE Systems, Baker & McKenzie, bp, Deloitte, GSK, IG Group, ITV, Linklaters, Lombard Odier, Morgan Stanley International, NatWest Group, Pennon Group, the Royal Air Force and Unilever.

For more details on membership, please register [here](#).