

Women in Public Affairs

Public Affairs Census 2022



An introduction to the key findings of the
2022 Women in Public Affairs Census

January 2023

About Opinium

OPINIUM is an award-winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on the pulse of what people **think**, **feel** and **do**. Creative and inquisitive, we are passionate about empowering our clients to make the decisions that matter. We work with organisations to define and overcome strategic challenges – helping them to get to grips with the world in which their brands operate. We use the right approach and methodology to deliver robust insights, strategic counsel and targeted recommendations that generate change and positive outcomes.

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About Women in Public Affairs

Women in Public Affairs was launched in 2012 by Ella Fallows and Laura Gilmore as an opportunity for women from across the industry to come together in an informal setting to share experiences, offer advice and support, and explore how we can work together to build a more diverse and representative public affairs industry.

Now in its eleventh year, Women in Public Affairs is a well-established forum for women at all stages of their careers in public affairs.

We continue to focus on providing useful and interesting events with outstanding speakers which inform, inspire and support public affairs practitioners throughout their careers.

www.womeninpa.co.uk | [@WomeninPA](https://twitter.com/WomeninPA)

About the Research

This research was conducted between 21 October to 21 November 2022 via an online survey with a sample of 359 people who identify as women who work in the public affairs industry. The survey was also completed by 11 people who identify as men, two who have identified as 'other' and one that preferred not to say, but their data is not included in the report due to the number being too small to be statistically viable. The survey was publicised online via WiPA's website and promoted via WiPA and Opinium's social media accounts.

Company policies in the industry

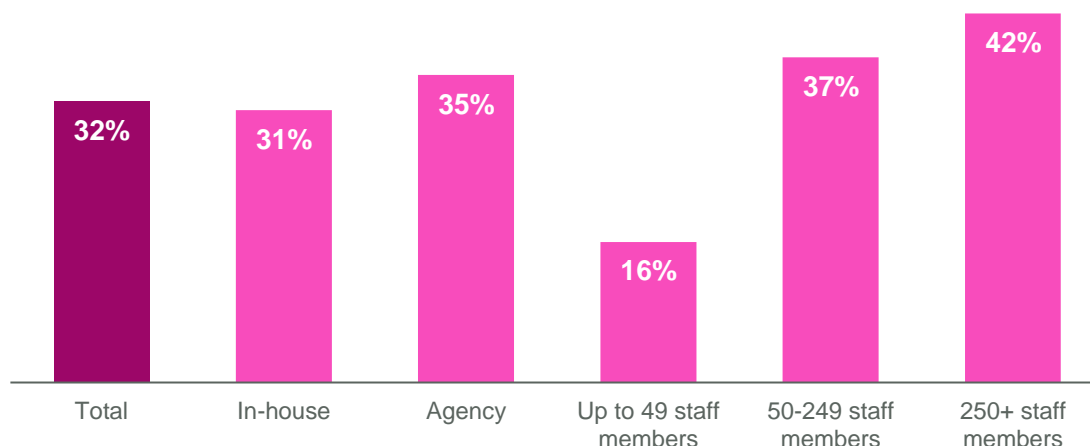
More than half of women surveyed feel that their company is not transparent about progression and pay

Transparency in the industry over pay and progression has not improved significantly from last year. The most striking change has been seen with transparency on salaries advertised in job adverts, with an 11% increase in adverts not disclosing salaries compared to last year (48% and 59% respectively). The supply of information has increased slightly in companies publishing maternity policies and salary bands, but has decreased in publishing paternity leave, having diversity managers, and including salaries in adverts as previously stated. The research found that less than half of public affairs companies publish maternity and paternity policies, as well as companies' gender pay gap and salary bands:

- 48% include salary on job adverts vs. 59% last year
- 50% produce maternity policies vs. 48% last year
- 42% publish paternity policies vs. 44% last year
- 45% have diversity managers/taskforce vs. 46% last year
- 27% publish salary bands vs. 25% last year

A third (32%) of women believe that pay differs for men and women at the same level, particularly in larger companies, with 16% of those working for companies with 50-249 staff members and 42% of those working for companies with 250+ staff members agreeing (compared to 49% and 43% last year respectively). A third (34%) also say their company publishes gender pay versus 30% last year.

% of women in public affairs who think that pay differs for men and women at their level in the company



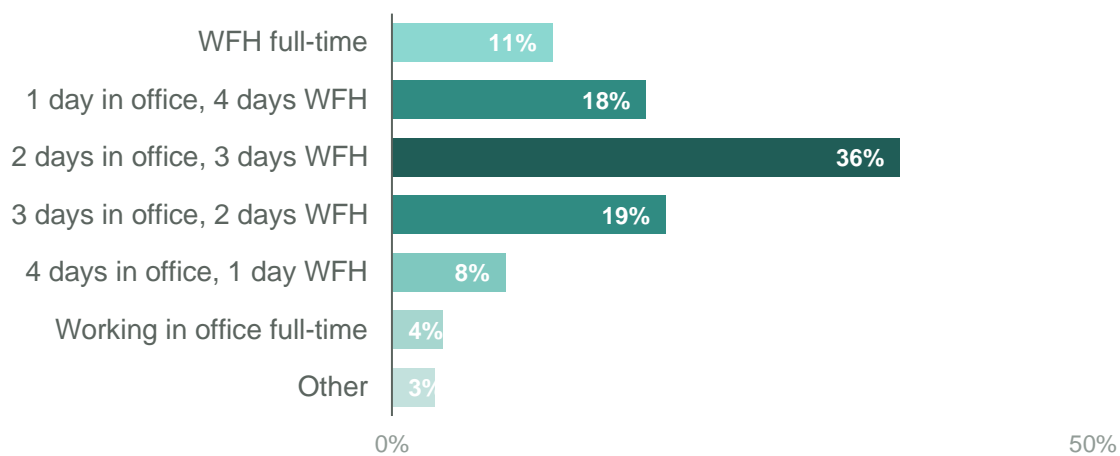
However, when comparing agencies and in-house, only 15% of women working in agencies say it gets published while in-house this number stands at 45%.

The current state of play & the cost-of-living crisis

Seven in ten women are working from home in some capacity

Hybrid working is here to stay, with seven in ten (93%) women in public affairs working from home in some capacity. Those older, outside of London and working in-house are more likely to spend more time working at home. Meanwhile, many larger companies have a '2 days in the office' policy, with smaller ones having a more mixed pattern.

Days spent working from home vs in the office

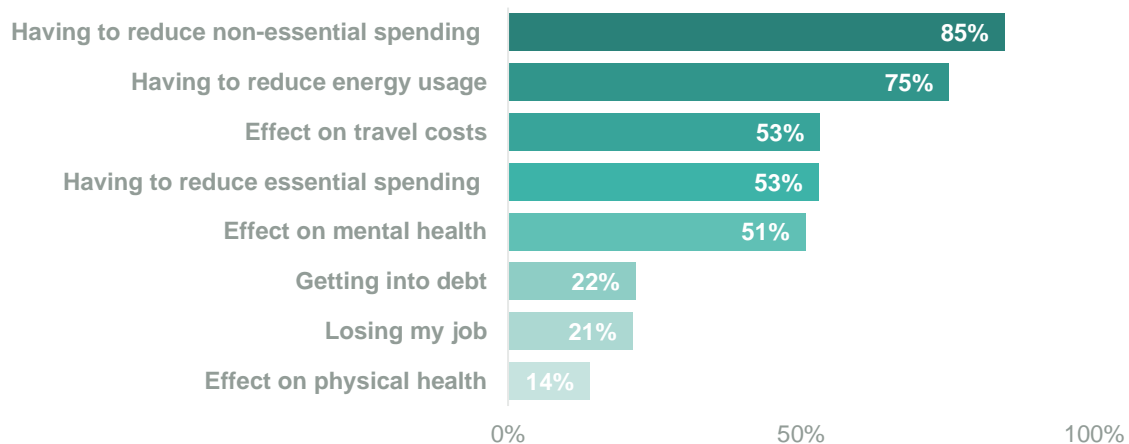


Concerns over cost-of-living crisis are driving women in public affairs to reduce spending in all areas of life

Nearly all women in public affairs are concerned about the cost-of-living crisis (96%) – 42% being very concerned. Increases in those who are very concerned about the crisis can be seen amongst women who self-identify as a minority (53%), especially those with disabilities (63%), religious minorities (65%), and those from a disadvantaged socio-economic background (57%) – although these should be taken as indicative due to small numbers in each of these groups.

The primary concern arising from the cost-of-living crisis is having to reduce non-essential spending (85%), rising to 89% of 18 to 34-year-olds compared to 77% of those aged 35-54. Furthermore, cuts to essential spending concern over half of women (53%), particularly those in agencies (58%). Three in four (75%) women in public affairs are also concerned they will have to reduce energy usage as a result of the crisis, with this being slightly less of a worry for 35 to 54-year-olds (68%). Other top concerns include effects on travel costs (53%) and mental health (51%) versus only 14% who said physical health.

Concerns as a result of the cost of living crisis



“Everything is getting more expensive, and salaries can't and won't keep up. Commuting is costing a fortune and the time it takes has impact on being able to make savings in other aspects of life too, i.e. making food at home as opposed to buying out.”

When openly asked why they felt concerned about the cost-of-living crisis, common themes pertained to the rising mortgage rate and the ability to save money to buy homes, in addition to the rising price of food and concern about how their family will cope.

Going beyond concerns for what *will* happen, most have already cut back on non-essential spending (70%) while 40% have cut back on essential spending or have had to dip into savings (39%). A similar proportion expect to further implement these changes in future as well (70%, 43% and 44% respectively).

In light of the cost-of-living crisis, respondents have also taken action in relation to their career, with 28% seeking a promotion and 18% seeking a new job. While the same proportion of women expect to have to seek a promotion down the road (28%), a significantly higher number plan to move jobs (27%) in the future.

Pay rises and bonuses are the most common way employers have offered support

The need for financial support from employers during this time is evident. While two thirds (66%) say their employer has offered some kind of support, that still leaves one in three (34%) feeling they have not been supported by their employer at all. Moreover, nearly half (48%) of those working in public affairs agencies said their employers have not supported them compared to 27% in-house as well as 44% in companies of less than 50 employees.

The main methods of support that have been offered by employers are pay rises (28%) and the introduction of one-off bonuses (25%), followed by relaxed expectations on travelling into the office (16%) and work from home allowances (14%).

When it comes to additional support women in public affairs want to see from their employers, the biggest theme is around work from home flexibility in relation to rising travel costs and the price of childcare. Some have suggested that their company should contribute more to their travel costs as well. Many also say pay rises have been insufficient and not in line with the actual inflation rate. Also related to this is calls for one-off bonuses, pension contributions and more frequent pay reviews.

“Flexibility on travelling into the office - for some people the travel cost is worthwhile to save on bills, but for others the balance tips the other way”

“Better pay rise - it was 3%. Also make it progressive so more for lowest paid staff rather than flat rate”

“Balancing work and care - those who have caring responsibilities are spending a lot of money on childcare. Ideally, employers should allow employees to work flexibly to balance work and care”

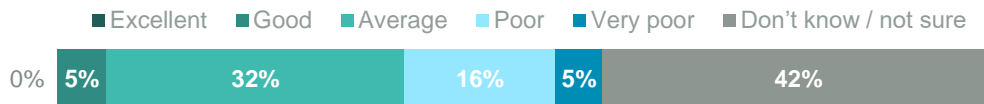
Women in public affairs feel insufficiently supported by the wider industry during the cost-of-living crisis

Awareness of how the public affairs industry is helping women during this time is lacking, as two in five (42%) are unsure how they would rate the industry in this effort and one fifth (21%) say that it's doing poorly. An additional third (32%) do give the industry some credit with an average rating; however, only 5% feel the industry is doing well in supporting women with the cost-of-living crisis.

Minorities feel particularly unsupported by the industry with a 'poor' rating of 32%, rising to 36% amongst ethnic minorities. At the same time, 'good' ratings reach their peak at 8% for those who work in agencies compared to 4% of those in-house.

With that said, nine in ten women (91%) are sure they will continue their career in public affairs in the next three years with 56% saying very likely and 35% somewhat likely. Those saying that they are ‘very likely’ to do so rises to 66% for those not in London and dips to 46% amongst minorities.

Rating of public affairs industry in supporting women during the cost of living crisis



Ways WiPA can support women

When asked what networks like WiPA can do to support women right now, there were three common areas:

- Continuing to offer events like networking, mentoring, training, workshops, and job coaching
- Providing information such as salary expectations, financial wellbeing, job boards, and best practices
- Engaging in advocacy and pushing issues women are facing, helping bring awareness and providing a platform for discussion

“Signposting to more development opportunities to help with progression. Workshops and discussions on wider societal issues (like c-o-l crisis) and how this can affect your career/development plans as a woman working in a male-heavy industry”

“Share what employers in the industry are doing to help support women in the industry and call for further action”

Demographic makeup of the Census

Who took part in the survey?

We spoke to **359** women working in public affairs

75% work in London

62% work in-house

33% work in agency

88% are white

76% have no dependants

6.6 years average tenure

