



Women in Rail Scotland Survey Results

July 2020

When?
During
2019

24
Questions

Number of Respondents



119

Survey open for

6 weeks



Average time to
complete

Purpose

To identify and address the challenges women face across the rail sector in Scotland



Introduction

Women in Rail Scotland ran a survey with its members during the course of 2019 to find out what challenges women face across the rail industry in Scotland.

We have taken time to look at the data carefully and understand meaningful ways in which we can champion and raise awareness of the challenges that have been raised and then along came COVID. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed the way we live, and work and we realise that this may have had an impact on some of the results of the 2019 survey, both positively and negatively.

The rail industry had to adapt quickly during the COVID pandemic in order to keep the network safe and operational during lockdown. As a consequence, this meant a change in how many people worked across the sector. What we want to test now is - has COVID had any impact on the key finding of our 2019 survey? So, to find out, we are going to run a further short survey and it's really important that you take part.

This is an exciting time to work in the rail sector. It's a dynamic and innovative industry with unprecedented investments such as HS2 and other major projects to improve the infrastructure and keep up with the rising demand in passenger and freight journeys. The number of people using the railways is set to double over the next 25 years and in order to make sure the UK rail network has the capacity to meet this demand and for the railway to continue to provide a safe, reliable

service, there is a need to attract the best talent to the sector both men and women and make sure opportunity exists for everyone.

It is widely known that the rail sector employs significantly more men than women and while our survey results show that some progress has been made with engaging and recruiting women to build a career in rail, there is still much work to be done.

At the Women in Rail Awards, UK Transport Minister Nusrat Ghani said that 50,000 more people will be needed to work in rail between now and 2033 along with lots more across the wider transport sector. She stated that culture change was needed, and the creation of more diverse teams was key.

The purpose of running a Scottish based survey was to get right to the heart of the issues that Women in Rail Scotland members face and then to address how Women in Rail Scotland as a group could actively champion and support these challenges for its members.

By working with industry partners and like-minded bodies across Scotland, we aim to address and support our members concerns as well as of course supporting the wider Women in Rail agenda. In the spirit of diversity, the survey was open to men too, to get as balanced feedback as possible.



There are key themes emerging from this survey and these are as follows:

- Historically, the rail sector has been seen as **male-dominated** and while progress has been made, there is still much work to be done to attract more women into the sector
- **Long working hours, often shift or weekend working, and long travelling distances** are seen to make a role in rail less attractive to women particularly those with families this?
- While there have been improvements in benefits such as **flexible working and maternity and paternity support**, much work is still to be done to make the approach more consistent across the sector
- Out on sites, there is a great need for **improved welfare facilities as well as better fitting PPE for women**
- There is a perception that there are **limited options for women to progress to senior roles in the rail sector**. Many feel they reach a point with no opportunity for further growth. In some instances, this is reinforced by a **gender pay gap**.
- There is a **general lack of awareness of the wide range of diverse opportunities in the rail sector**. Education is required from a very early age to promote the rail sector as exciting, dynamic and vital to our society and economy.

Addressing the gender imbalance in the rail sector and supporting the Women in Rail agenda is at the core of our activities.

We hope that the survey results will help to inform employers in the industry sector and support them to attract more women into their businesses to improve the gender imbalance as well as helping them to understand more about the challenges women face.

By working collectively, we can help to create a diverse industry sector that includes a wide range of people, skillsets and perspectives. We can inspire and support women to join and build fulfilling careers within the rail sector and by doing this we will play a key part in filling the skills and talent gap and support the growth and future success of the industry.

Shona Clive and the Women in Rail Scotland Steering Group
July 2020



Why did we run the survey?

- to identify and address the challenges women face in the rail sector across Scotland
- but importantly because the rail sector is growing with the number of passenger journeys expected to double over the next 25 years and freight set to grow significantly, so attracting new talent and building a diverse resource pool is crucial in meeting the projected growth demands.

What will Women in Rail Scotland do with the information?

- It will help us shape the Women in Rail Scotland Strategy for years ahead
- Which will mean our agenda is aligned directly with our members' needs
- We'll address and debate the issues raised and work together with the rail sector in Scotland to resolve where possible.

For our members...

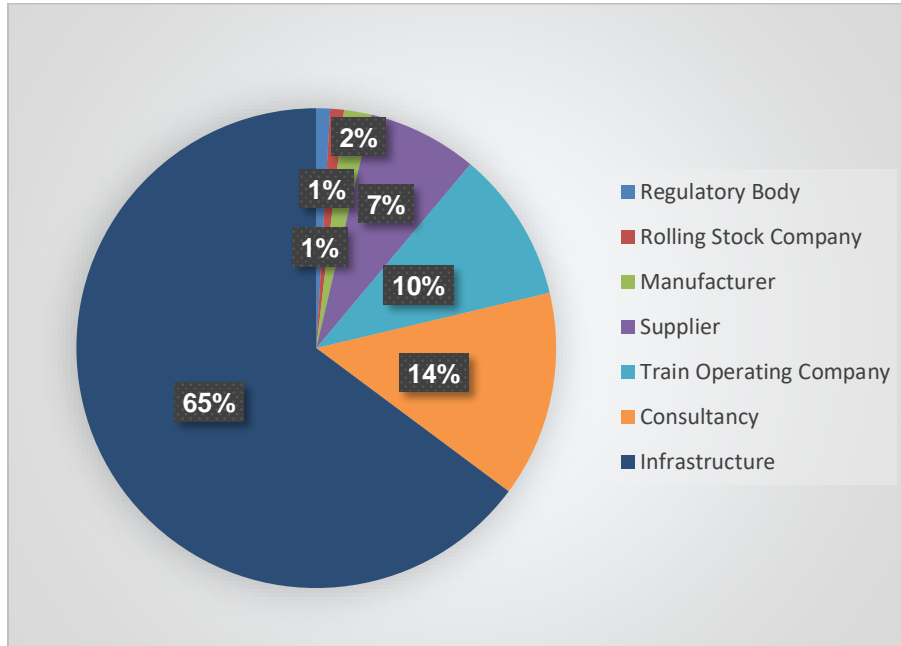
- it was a great opportunity to raise key issues and challenges that could be impacting the gender imbalance in the rail sector
- it provided a chance to be part of the catalyst for change to inspire more women to join and remain in the rail sector.



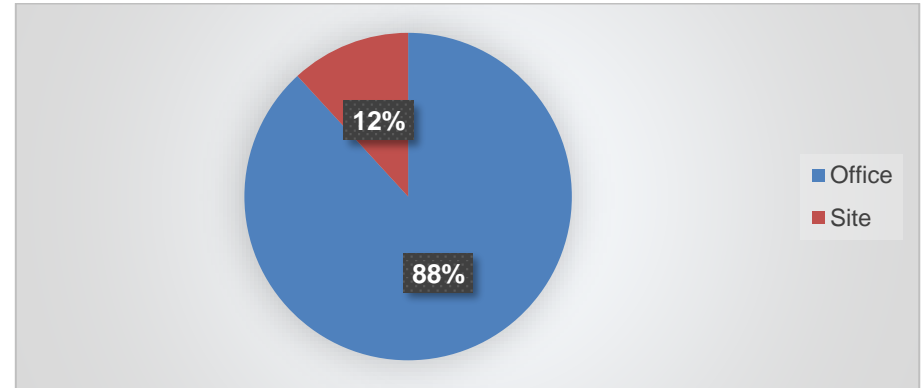
Headline findings

- **65%** of respondents work in infrastructure
- **88%** of our members work in an office environment
- **21%** work in engineering
- **24%** work in middle management
- The majority of respondents are from the **central belt of Scotland**
- In general, people who begin work in the rail sector remain for some time – **over half of the respondents have worked in the sector for over 5 years**
- The rail sector is still seen as **male-dominant**
- **Travel time, long working hours, anti-social hours and a lack of flexible working** make balancing family and work a challenge
- **Maternity/paternity support is inconsistent** across the industry
- **Better back to work support is required** across the rail sector following maternity leave to retain females after having a family
- **Flexible working** may be more likely to be offered to those with children than those without
- **Onsite facilities and PPE** are not always appropriate for females
- **Career progression** into senior roles is less likely as a female
- Females are likely to be **paid less** than their male peers
- More **promotion** of what the rail sector offers is required to attract more females into the industry – particularly at school age when pupils are choosing subjects

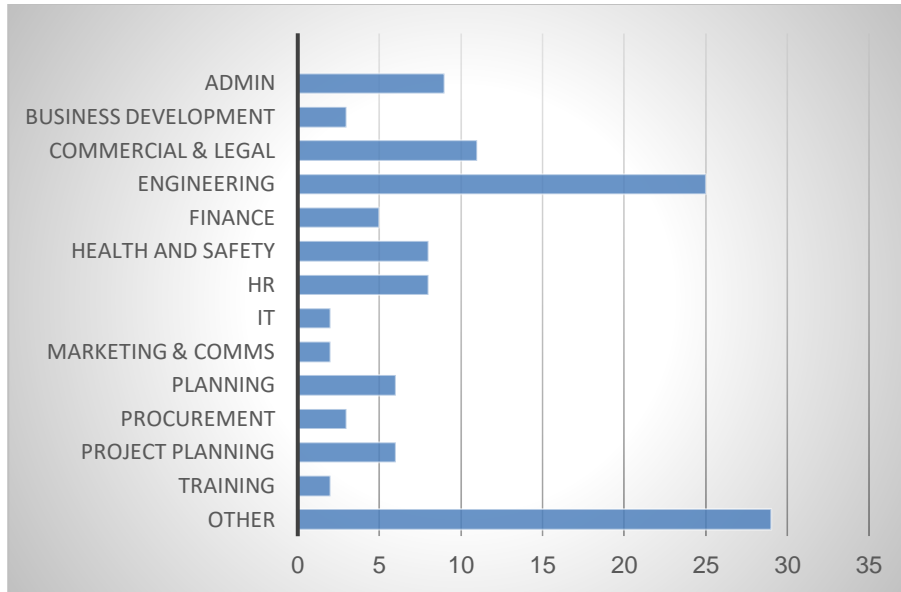
Q01: In which area of the rail sector do you work?



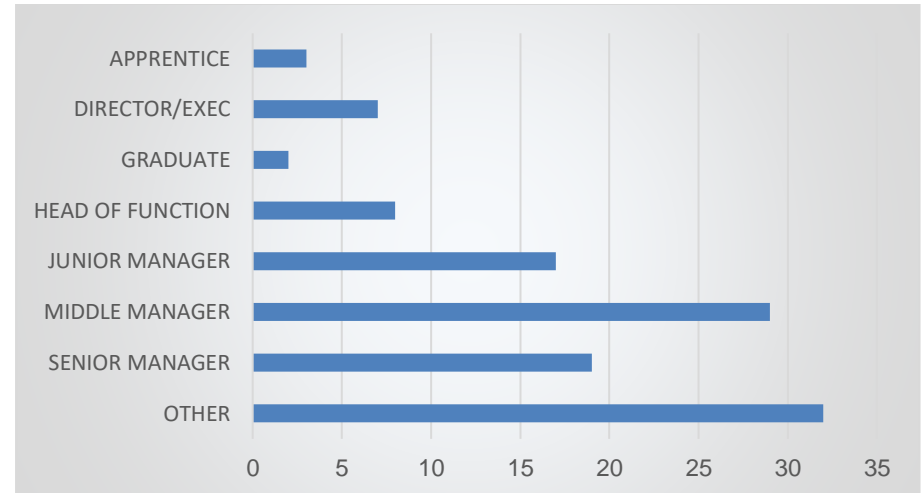
Q02: Are you site or office based?



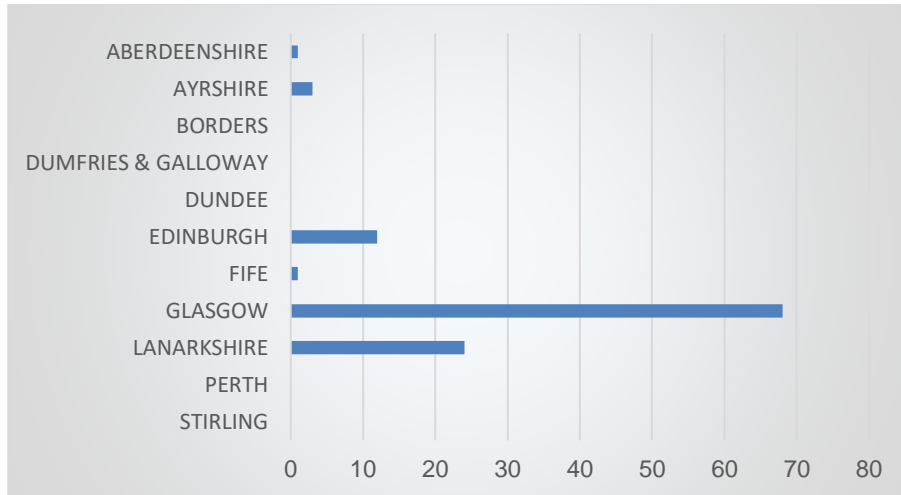
Q03: What is your job role?



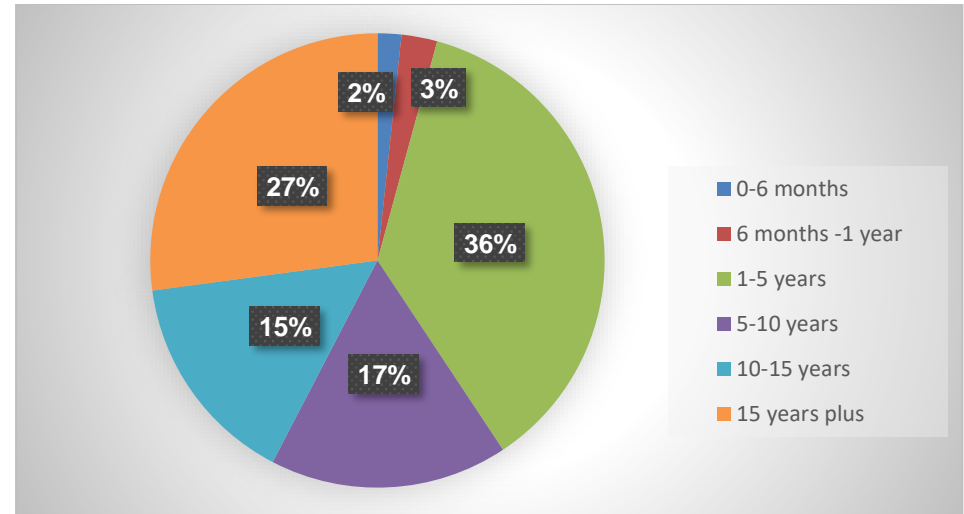
Q04: At what level do you currently work?



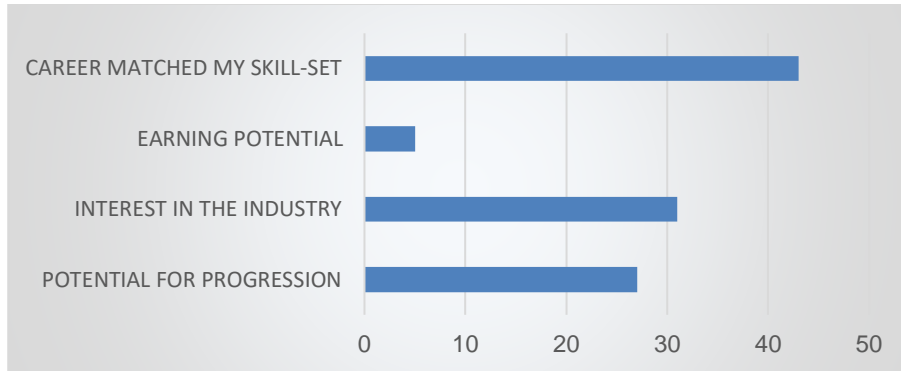
Q05: Where in Scotland do you work?



Q06: How long have you worked in the rail sector, in the aggregate?



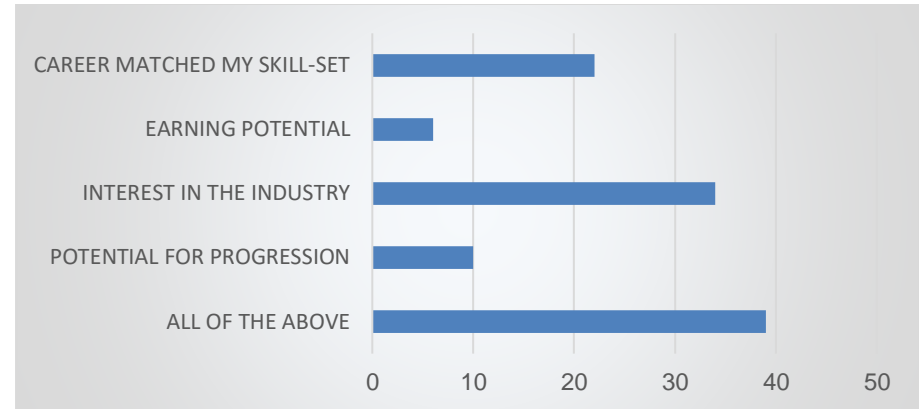
Q07: What made you join the rail sector?



Comment Highlights:

- Followed family into the rail sector
- An opportunity arose and haven't left since joining

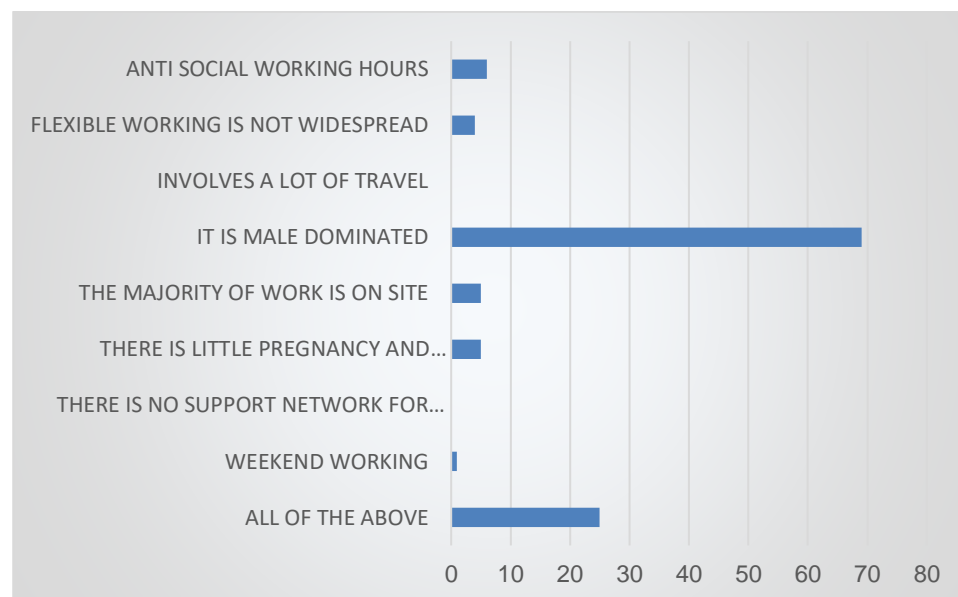
Q08: What are your reasons for remaining within the industry?



Comment Highlights:

- The Rail sector is dynamic, evolving and progressive
- Really enjoy the team I am working with

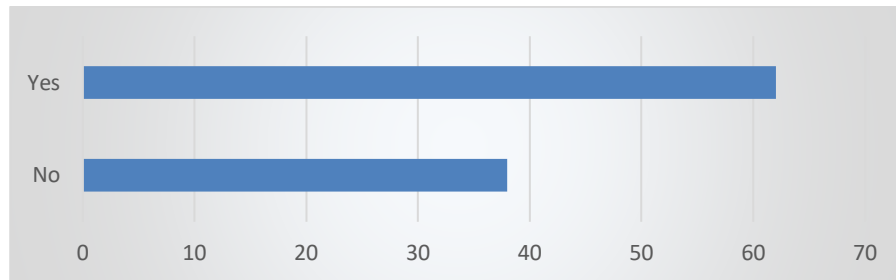
Q09: It is known that the rail industry is misunderstood and misrepresented; which of the statements below do you think women may traditionally associate with working in the rail sector?



Comment Highlights:

- Male dominated gets the highest score by far
- Nearly 50% of the written comments focus on the perception that working in the railway sector tends to weekend and shift working which may present challenges to those with families.
- A lack of flexible working and inconsistent maternity support is highlighted
- Around 25% of the written comments state that the range of opportunities in the rail sector are not widely publicised enough particularly opportunities for women.

Q10: Do you think any of the above statements in Q09 are reasons for women not remaining in the sector?



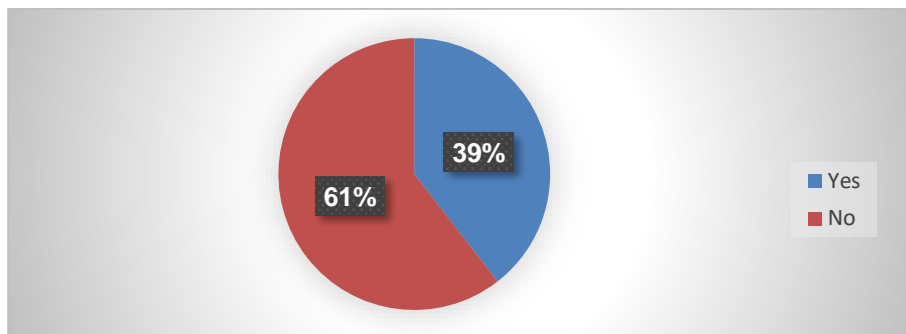
Comment Highlights:

- More than 50% of the written comments focus on the sector being male dominated with a reference to the lack of support for women and women feeling outnumbered by men
- This is closely followed by the lack of flexible working which is seen as a big issue particularly for those with families
- Anti-social hours and weekend working combined with long distances to travel are highlighted as being challenging for women in general
- Limited options for career progression is cited as a reason for women not staying in the sector with more senior roles being filled by men than women and the gender pay gap was raised in 25% of the comments.

Common phrases used in responses:

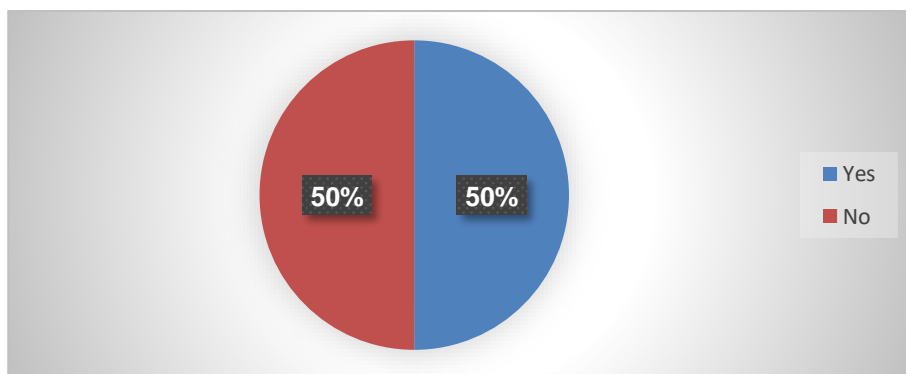
pregnancy maternity support flexible working
widespread family men work site lack hours unsociable
work support network women working unsociable work
weekends male dominated industry rail sector women
role weekends working hours

Q11: Do you know the male:female percentages in your organisation?



The comments show where known, on average an 80% male / 20% female split which ties in with previous surveys undertaken.

Q12: Have you ever felt you were treated differently because of your gender when working within the sector?



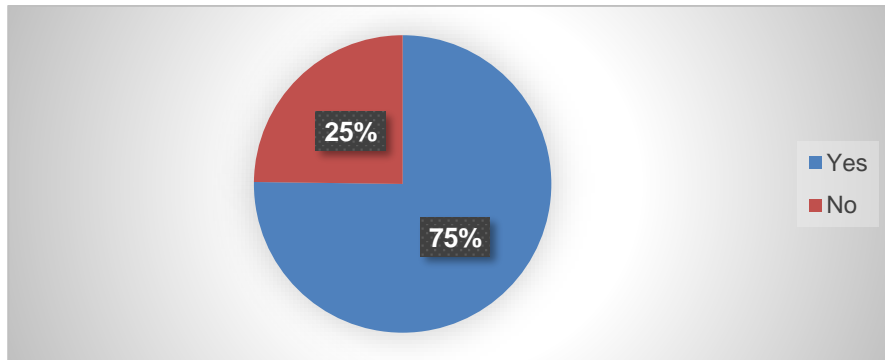
Comment Highlights:

- For those who selected yes, this includes an overall indication again with the rail sector being male dominated and for on-site operations, women out on site is still seen as being unusual, women are seen as being less able on site due to physical strength and there are challenges with ill-fitting PPE for women as well as a lack of welfare facilities out on site.
- For women who work in an office-based environment, there are observations that women in some cases are seen as being in more administrative/clerical/support roles and in some cases, women feel they have to work twice as hard to succeed at the same rate as men
- Gender pay gap and a lack of opportunities for progression are also cited as reasons for being treated differently.

Common phrases used in responses:

colleagues within **senior** people younger **male colleagues**
think male still job find work woman front site
treated differently role sometimes **female engineers**
men team **often** never

Q13: Are you able to balance your working life and non-working life easily?



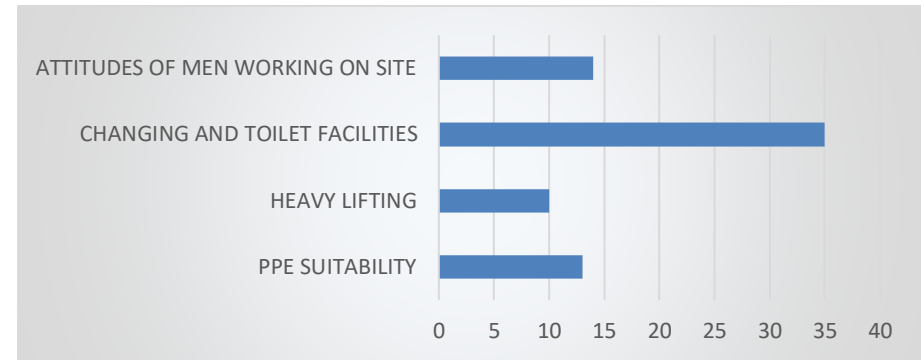
Comment Highlights:

While yes is the majority response, there are comments that suggest that long working hours, working away from home and travelling distances make it a struggle in some instances to balance home life and work life with a considerable amount of compromise being made.

The Rail sector is seen as an industry with long working hours. Even where working hours are set for example 8-4pm, people still feel that they must be available outside these hours.

There is an overriding feeling that a lot of juggling and managing home commitments alongside workload has to take place and, in some instances, sacrifices to home life are being made.

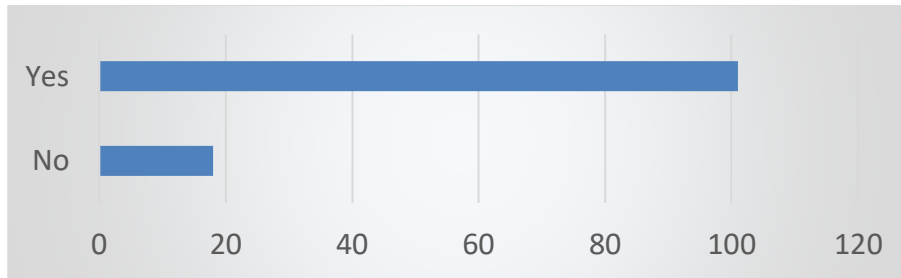
Q14: Are there any physical challenges that make working out on site a challenge?



Comment Highlights:

The biggest challenge out on site is seen as changing and toilet facilities, closely followed by ill-fitting PPE. There are comments that state that the general trend is that welfare provisions are improving although slowly in some instances.

Q15: Does your organisation offer flexible working?



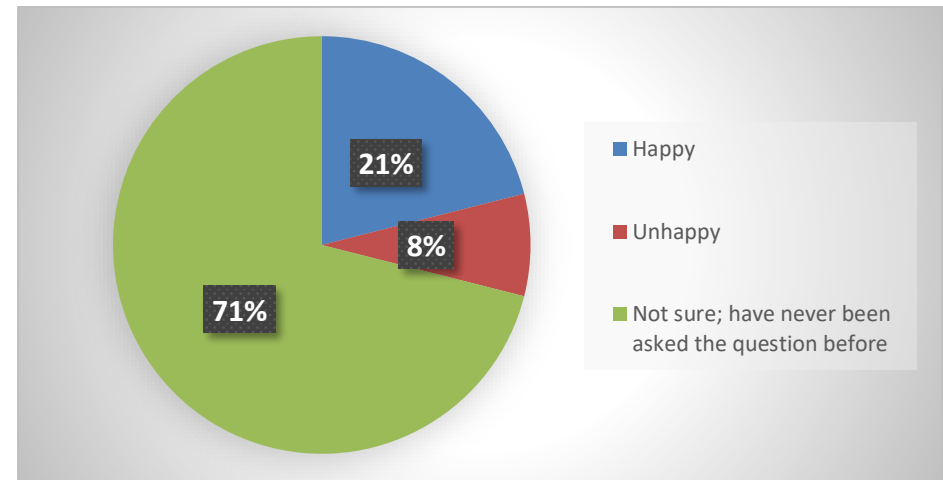
Comment Highlights:

While the results show that flexible working is offered by the majority of businesses, the comments show that this is a new introduction and the general trend is for those people with children being accepted for flexible working. Flexible working is seen as inconsistently applied across some businesses. It is also challenging to work in practice with high workloads.

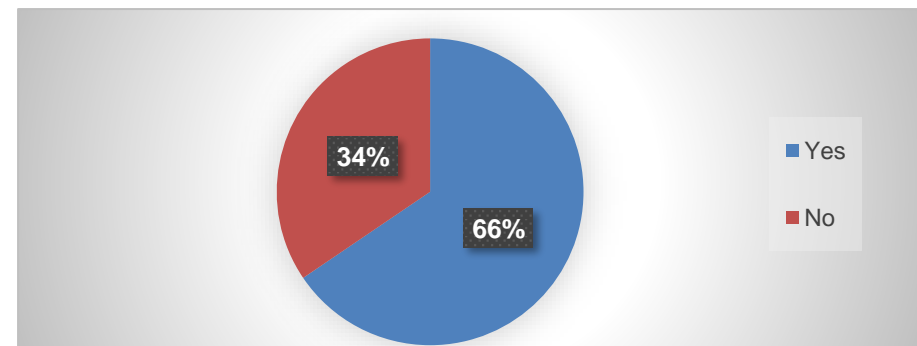
Common phrases used in responses:

day **week** work home **flexible working required** work
yet **Yes** feel hours **good days** time **considering**

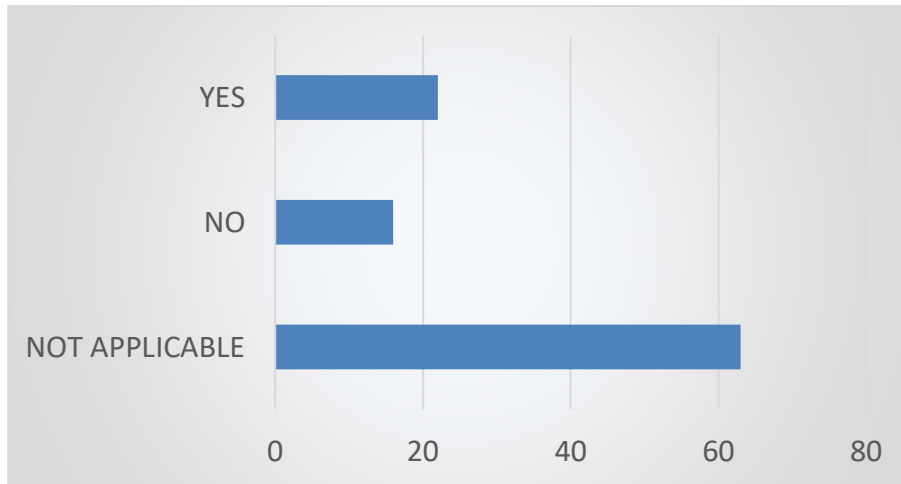
Q16: How do your colleagues feel about you requesting/being granted flexible working arrangements?



Q17: Would you be comfortable requesting flexible working with your organisation if there isn't a formal process in place?



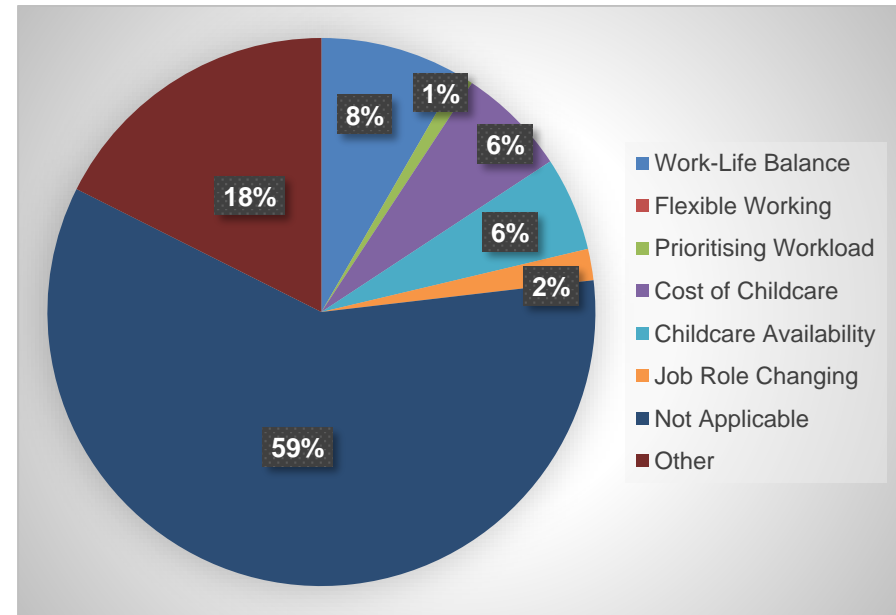
Q18: If you have been pregnant during your current employment, did you feel supported by your line manager/employer?



Comment Highlights:

- In the comments section of this question, a particular theme emerges regarding keeping in touch and back to work days. The general feeling is that more contact would be preferred, although it is noted that keeping in touch policies are becoming more prevalent.
- In some cases, assumptions were made that a person would not return to a senior position after having a family without a conversation taking place.

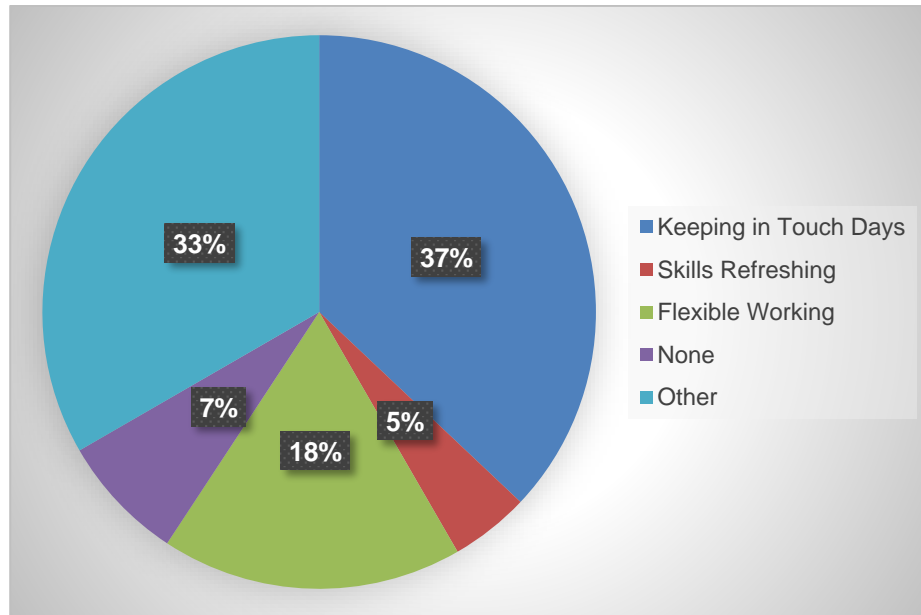
Q19: If you have been on maternity leave, what has been your biggest challenge returning to work?



Comment Highlights:

- Being exhausted combined with juggling work and home life and balancing childcare responsibilities (pick up /drop off) with working arrangements in the morning and afternoon
- Costs of additional childcare
- Flexible working in terms of managing workload and family in the allocated times and this not always being possible and having to do additional hours to keep up.

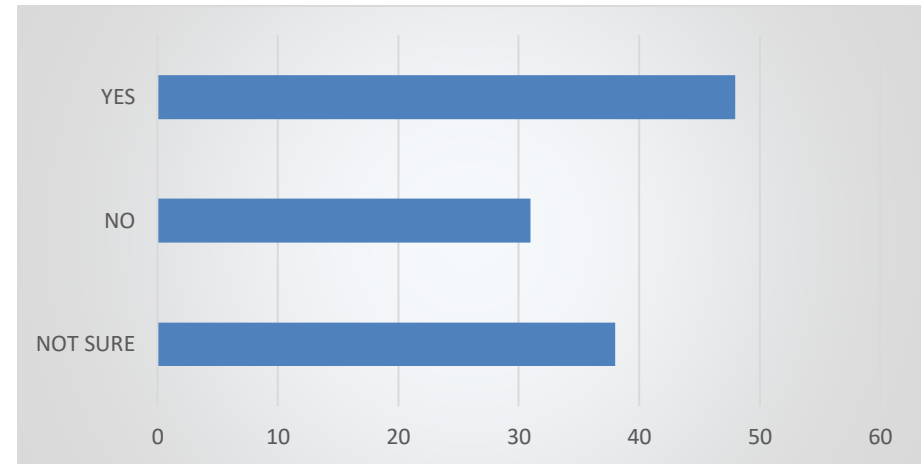
Q20: What support does your organisation offer when returning to work?



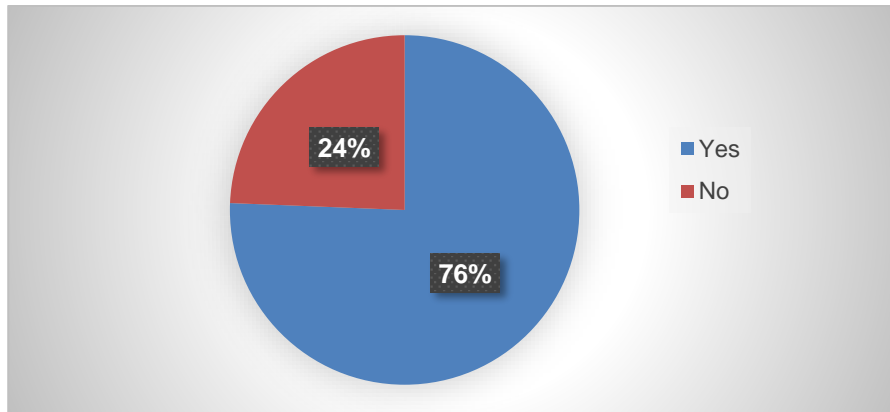
Comment Highlights:

- Most of the responses comment on keeping in touch days which are rated very highly

Q21: Do you feel your pay and rewards are in line with your male colleagues in equivalent roles?



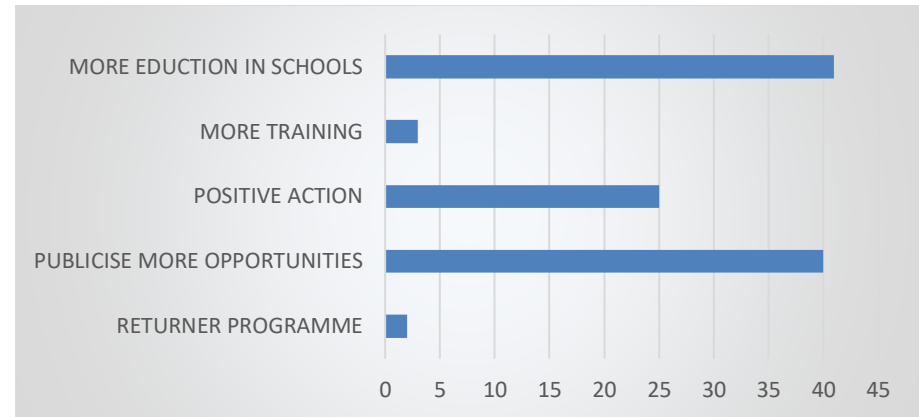
Q22: Do you feel there is opportunity for career progression and promotion?



Comment Highlights:

- While 76% of responses say yes that there is opportunity for career progression, those who have responded no have commented that a move down south is necessary for career progression and that there is limited opportunity in Scotland.
- Of those who said no, there is a recurring comment that mentions if someone stays in a company for a long time, they are overlooked for progression or new opportunities as it is assumed that they are content in their current role which is often not the case – loyalty is not rewarded.

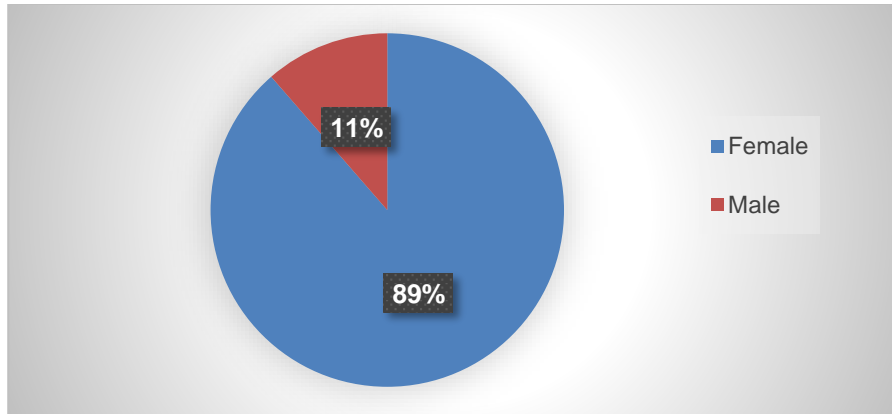
Q23: How do we encourage more women into the rail sector?



Comment Highlights:

- Education at an early age in schools is seen as key to change mindsets and increase awareness of opportunities
- Promotion of benefits such as flexible working etc
- Individual businesses must help by promoting the benefits of a diverse workforce
- Rail sector needs to change its image to dynamic and critical to society and economy and not just orange PPE
- Make sure Rail is more visible at STEM events
- Promote females into senior roles and showcase them as role models to help attract other females.

Q24: Are you male or female?



Next steps

- ✓ Invite Women in Rail Scotland members to discuss the findings from the survey
- ✓ Use the information to develop the Women in Rail Scotland agenda for 2020; tailor events that address some of the issues raised
- ✓ Work with industry stakeholders to address some of the issues raised
- ✓ Run a panel debate on the survey findings with key industry spokespeople



APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire

Dear colleague,

We have created a short survey to identify the challenges women face in the rail sector across Scotland and we would be very grateful for your input. The information provided will help us shape the Women in Rail Scotland strategy for the years ahead and it will be directly aligned to our members' needs, which is really important to us. The key findings will also be used to help develop our events programme going forward.

It's a fantastic opportunity to have your say and raise key issues that you believe are impacting the gender imbalance in the rail sector, as well as being part of a catalyst for change to inspire more women to join and remain in our industry.

The rail sector is a growing industry with the number of rail journeys expected to double over the next 25 years and freight set to grow significantly, so attracting new talent and building a diverse resource pool is crucial in meeting the projected growth demands.

The responses to this survey will be completely anonymous with no individual company names being identified.

We'll develop a report on our findings once the responses have been gathered and analysed and this will form part of a discussion session in the new year.

The survey should take you no more than 10-15 minutes. Please give as much detail as you can.

Sincere thanks for taking time to complete the survey.

The WR Scotland team

Survey Questions

1. Which area of the rail sector do you work in?

- Rolling Stock Company
- Train Operating Company
- Manufacturer
- Supplier
- Infrastructure
- Freight
- Consultancy
- Regulatory body
- Other (If other, please state)

2. Are you

- Site based
- Office based
- Other (If other, please state)

3. What is your job role?

- Engineering
- Project management
- Planning
- Health and Safety
- HR
- Commercial & Legal
- Finance
- Marketing & Communications
- Business Development
- Procurement
- Training
- IT
- Administration
- Other (If other, please state)

4. What level do you currently work at?

- Apprentice
- Graduate
- Junior manager
- Middle manager
- Senior manager
- Head of function
- Director/Executive
- Other (If other, please state)

5. Where in Scotland do you work?

- Glasgow
- Edinburgh
- Ayrshire
- Lanarkshire
- Highlands & Islands
- Lanarkshire
- Argyll and the Isles
- Dumfries & Galloway
- Stirling
- Aberdeenshire
- Fife
- Dundee
- Perth
- Borders

6. How long have you worked in the rail sector in the aggregate?

- 0 – 6 months
- 6 months – 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-15 years
- 15 years plus

7. What made you join the rail sector?

- Potential for progression
- interest in the industry
- earning potential
- career matched my skillset
- other (If other, please state)

8. What are your reasons for remaining within the industry?

- Potential for progression
- interest in the industry
- earning potential
- career matched my skillset
- other (If other, please state)

9. It is known that the rail industry is misunderstood and misrepresented: which of the statements below do you think women may traditionally associate with working in the rail sector?

- It is male dominated industry
- The working hours are unsociable
- You have to work at weekends
- It involves a lot of travelling
- There is no support network for women
- Flexible working is not widespread
- There is little pregnancy & maternity support
- Other (If other, please state)

10. Do you think any of the above are reasons for women not remaining in the rail sector?

- No
- Yes – If Yes, please specify which ones

11. Do you know the male and female percentages in your organisation?

- No
- Yes - If Yes, please state

12. Have you ever felt you were treated differently because of your gender when working within this sector?

- No
- Yes - If Yes, can you describe why?

13. Are you able to balance your working life and non-working life easily?

- Yes
- No - If No, why?

14. Are there any physical challenges that make working out on site a challenge?

- PPE suitability
- Changing & toilet facilities
- Attitudes of men working on site
- Heavy lifting
- Other - If Other, please state

15. Does your organisation offer flexible working?

- No
- Yes - If Yes, do you take advantage?

16. How do your colleagues feel about you requesting/being granted flexible working arrangements?

- Happy
- Unhappy
- Not sure never asked the question

17. Would you be comfortable requesting flexible working with your organisation if there isn't a formal process in place?

- Yes
- No - If No, why?

18. If you have been pregnant during your current employment, did you feel supported by your line manager/ employer?

- Yes - If Yes, how?
- No - If No, why not?

19. If you have been on maternity leave, what has been your biggest challenge returning to work?

- Work-life balance
- Flexible working
- Prioritising work load
- Cost of childcare
- Childcare availability
- Job role changing
- Other - If Other, please state

20. What support does your organisation offer when returning to work?

- None
- Keeping in Touch days
- Skills refreshing
- Flexible working
- Other - If Other, please state

21. Do you feel your pay and rewards are in line with your male colleagues in equivalent roles?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

22. Do you feel there is opportunity for career progression and promotion?

- Yes
- No - If No, why?

23. How can we encourage more women into the rail sector?

- More education in schools
- Publicise more opportunities
- More training
- Returner programme
- Positive action
- Other - If Other, please state

24. Are you?

- Male
- Female