

CRACKS IN THE CEILING

GENDER EQUALITY

IN PROCUREMENT

The procurement profession is suffering from a gender disparity, where salaries and opportunities seem to favour men over women. This is not a surprise, nor is it anything new, and procurement is certainly not the only function affected by this outdated and damaging social issue. Businesses are taking steps to rectify the situation however, and although progress is slow, cracks are beginning to appear in the glass ceiling.

Earlier this year CIPS in partnership with Hays conducted their annual salary survey, part of which was intended to better understand the state of wage disparity between men and women in procurement.

For professionals in senior roles, the wage disparity is most apparent. Male leaders dramatically outnumber female professionals and command a salary up to 19% higher than their female counterparts.

In more junior roles, encouragingly, the disparity is far less pronounced, dropping to single digit percentages and levelling out. This would imply that the next generation of procurement professionals will experience a more balanced salary growth as their seniority increases.

There are also some areas in which women's salaries have overtaken those of their male counterparts. Supply chain managers, purchasing managers and contracts officers each earn between 3-10% more than their male counterparts; and while creating another disparity isn't an ideal situation, these statistics imply at least that the issue of female discrimination is being viewed seriously by industry leaders.



Bonuses too are a good indication of shifting trends, while more men than women received bonuses last year, the bonuses were at a similar rate of around 5%, This is a promising sign of a step towards pay equality between the genders and may also be a result of upcoming legislation changes in the form of mandatory pay gap reporting.

The Hays Gender Diversity Report 2016 revealed some interesting statistics for men and women working within professional services, including those in procurement. The findings of the report recognised that ambition to reach manager and director levels were higher in women than men, whilst men had greater ambition to reach MD or CEO positions.

It was also discovered that 56% of women in professional services felt they had the freedom to promote themselves and express their ambition. And while this is marginally less than the 64% of men who felt they had the same freedom, it is the largest proportion of women measured for any sector. This is a reassuring indication of progress for women coming into the industry.

Whilst there is a lot of ground to cover, businesses with dedicated procurement functions are recognising the problem, and reform seems to be coming from the ground up. More equality at entry level should, if managed carefully, persist as employees move up the ranks of seniority. We are at the beginning of a period of change, and making steps in the right direction to finally breaking the glass ceiling, but there is still much work to be done.