**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Energy regulator calls on industry to step up on gender balance**

The UK’s energy regulator, Ofgem [1], has raised the bar on achieving better gender balance in the industry with a set of ambitious targets within its own organisation and a call for the companies it regulates to follow suit.

In a pledge published with the POWERful Women Initiative [2], Ofgem says it wants its workforce to be 50% female at all levels by 2025.

Dermot Nolan, Chief Executive of Ofgem, said;

*“At Ofgem, we think it’s hugely important to put more effort and resources into becoming a more diverse organisation. We recently launched our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy which includes the target to achieve 50% female representation across all its pay grades, from the most junior roles all the way up to our Senior Civil Servants. Over the same time period, we aspire to achieving a minimum of 18% minority ethnic representation across all Ofgem pay grades, with at least 9% at each grade being women from an ethnic minority. This should render our gender and ethnicity pay gaps negligible.’*

*“We want to become a more diverse organisation, not just because it’s the right thing to do, but also because we think it will help us to make better decisions. Evidence shows that an organisation that has people from a wide range of backgrounds and with a range of experiences will be able to bring together new ideas and challenge established thinking.*

*“I am calling on the energy sector to also take steps to make their workforces more diverse, particularly at senior levels as that will help make you make better decisions and ultimately better serve your customers.”*

The full pledge Ofgem has published with PfW is:

* By 2025, Ofgem pledges to achieve 50% female representation across all its pay grades, from the most junior roles all the way up to Senior Civil Servant. Current (2019) levels are as follows: Grades A-C - 47.7%; grade D - 44.6%; grade E - 32.88% and SCS - 33.33%.

The commitment is part of a new internal diversity strategy published by Ofgem this year. It also includes a pledge on improving the representation of black, Asian and minority ethnic females [3].

Louise Kingham, Board Member of PfW and Chief Executive of the Energy Institute, said;

*“Ofgem’s commitment to drive inclusion and balance in the organisation is very welcome indeed. It’s right for the organisation, its people and the customers it ultimately seeks to serve. Ofgem is increasingly holding energy companies to account on this agenda, to understand actions companies are taking to change, and as they progress they will be able to share their learnings too.”*

The latest statistics on gender balance at senior levels in the UK’s energy companies show that progress across the sector is slow:

* Women still occupy only 16% of board seats (a marginal increase from 13% in 2018);
* Women still occupy only 6% of executive board seats (no improvement);
* 42% of the companies have no women on their boards at all (a small improvement from 50% in 2018).

Some other organisations in the sector are also showing leadership. The Energy Leaders’ Coalition [4], launched by POWERful Women in 2018, comprises 8 CEOs who have made a public commitment to improve gender balance in their own companies and across the energy industry. They have published research identifying barriers to diversity and inclusion and a plan of action to make concrete improvements. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is aiming to be a 50:50 department by embedding diversity and inclusion across its teams and acting as a role model for businesses [5].

**ENDS**

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**Notes to editors:**

1. **About Ofgem:** Ofgem is the independent energy regulator for Great Britain. Its priority is to make a positive difference for consumers by promoting competition in the energy markets and regulating networks.
2. **About POWERful Women:** POWERful Women is a professional initiative that seeks to promote the professional growth and leadership development of women across the energy sector. Our goals are to see 30% of executive board roles and 40% of management roles filled by women by 2030. We do this in three ways: campaigning and reporting (for example publishing annual board statistics), supporting women in their careers (for example through our mentoring programme, POWERful Connections) and providing practical support to companies committed to increase their gender diversity (for example through D&I working groups). More information at [www.powerfulwomen.org.uk](http://www.powerfulwomen.org.uk)
3. By 2025, Ofgem pledges to achieve 19% representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) females across all its pay grades. Current (2019) levels are as follows: Grades A-C – 14.25%; grade D – 8.02%; grade E – 4.11% and SCS – 2.56%.
4. <http://powerfulwomen.org.uk/energy-leaders-coalition/>
5. <http://powerfulwomen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Alex-Chisholm-PfW-Conf-final-1.mp4>