

Chair

POWERful Women



POWERful WOMEN

Overview

“ Working for greater representation of women at the top of the UK's energy industry ”

POWERful Women is a professional initiative working for a gender-balanced, diverse and inclusive energy sector in the UK. Founded in 2014 by Baroness Verma and Laura Sandys and hosted by the Energy Institute, its goal is for women to be in at least 40% of middle management and leadership roles in the UK energy sector by 2030.

With a network of over 1,500 industry, academia, political representatives and women's groups that span all parts of the sector, PFW supports and encourages energy companies to appoint more women to senior roles as part of building stronger businesses and ensuring diverse talent in an exiting period for the sector as it transitions to net zero.

To achieve this, PFW challenges and reports on companies' progress; supports and connects women to develop and advance their careers (for example through mentoring and networking); and provides practical support to companies through sharing good practice and facilitating collaboration.

PFW has established the ELC (Energy Leaders' Coalition), which convenes fourteen of the leading CEOs from the UK's energy sector alongside the two regulators, all of whom are making a public declaration to improve gender diversity and inclusion in their organisations and in the sector as a whole.

[Website](#)

[YouTube](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

[Twitter](#)



135

Published **135** case studies & 'How To' blogs



>100

Run more than **100** events



>100

Supported over **100** mentees



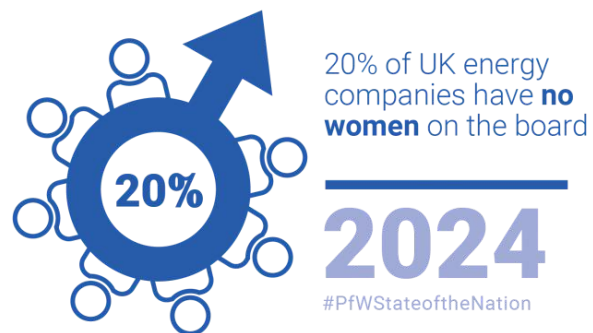
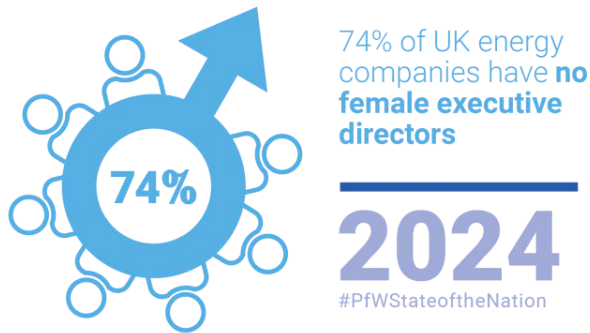
Built **10,000** LinkedIn followers & **1,500** newsletter subscribers



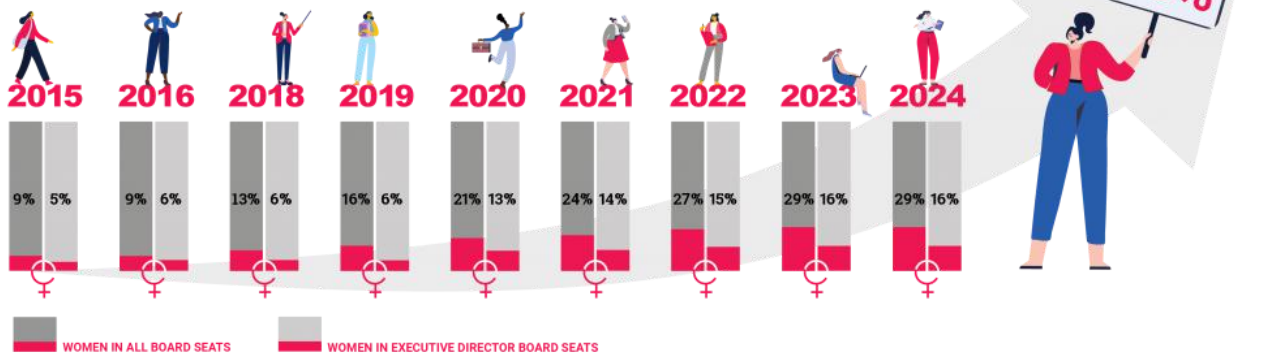
Supported by **97** PFW Ambassadors

2024 State of the Nation Report

In 2024, for POWERful Women’s 10th anniversary year, it collaborated with Bain & Company to gather and publish statistics on the number of women in board (executive and non-executive), leadership and middle management roles within the top 80 energy companies in the UK, focusing on the most significant employers. The data demonstrates the progress made towards reaching the 40% target for female representation, and beyond to gender parity, and provides positive recommendations for action. Here are some of the main findings:



10 years of POWERful Women - progress on women on boards



Women make up 34% of leadership roles in the UK energy sector**

* Defined as executive committee and their direct reports
 ** Data provided by 34 out of 80 companies surveyed, representing nearly 80% of the UK energy workforce



Women make up 32% of middle management roles in the UK energy sector**

* Defined as one and two levels down from 'leadership'
 ** Data provided by 31 out of 80 companies surveyed, representing nearly 70% of the UK energy workforce

Sponsors and Partners

POWERful Women is hosted by the Energy Institute, which manages the PFW Secretariat and provides support to its activities. PFW is also supported financially by a group of core sponsors and works closely with them to drive change, as members of the Energy Leaders' Coalition.



CORE SPONSORS



The Role

PfW's existing Chair Katie Jackson is stepping down after three successful and impactful years in the role. Prior to this, Ruth Cairnie led the growth of PfW from 2015 to 2021.

As the five year countdown to reach its 2030 targets begins, PfW are now seeking someone to take over as Chair in early 2025. This is a voluntary, part-time role to lead the Board and PfW's overall strategy, and manage key relationships, including those with industry and government.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- As the leading spokesperson for the initiative, attending and contributing to key external speaking engagements and media opportunities to influence change in the sector; supporting campaigns such as International Women's Day, as part of a wider community of leading diversity organisations
- Engaging and influencing a broad and senior range of stakeholders, including Government, Ministers and senior civil servants, energy industry CEOs and other stakeholders
- Working with the PfW Board, Energy Leaders' Coalition (made of UK Energy CEOs) and PfW secretariat to lead the creation and delivery of a future strategic roadmap and contribute to its implementation. This is focused on:
 - SUPPORT - supporting organisations and leaders and leaders to implement best practice and women to advance their careers
 - CHALLENGE - challenging companies to meet ambitious goals by reporting their diversity data
 - CONNECT - connecting through networking, mentoring and collaboration with other initiatives
- Ensuring the continued growth and effectiveness of the Board, through strong engagement and maximising advocacy opportunities through diverse succession and talent planning

Candidate Profile

The incoming Chair will bring a strong passion for advancing gender diversity, inclusion, and intersectionality and will be confident and credible in challenging CEOs of major energy companies, while fostering collaborative relationships with them and other industry leaders to catalyse a significant step change in diversity.

Whether currently advancing DEI initiatives or working within the industry, the successful candidate will be eager to lead a high-profile, progressive initiative and build the next generation of diverse leaders in the workforce.

Skills and Experience

Essential:

- An established leader with experience in chairing senior meetings
- Background in UK energy or a related field such as government, consulting or the third sector; has a well-rounded understanding of the energy sector and its challenges
- Passion for, and knowledge of diversity, equity and inclusion, including intersectionality with a proven track record in driving these initiatives

Desirable:

- Board experience
- A broad, influential network to leverage within the UK energy sector

Key Personal Characteristics

- A strong communicator with proven influencing capability and credibility at the most senior levels
- Sound judgment and the ability to collaborate effectively with team members to deliver organisational goals
- Curiosity and a willingness to learn from others

Time Commitment

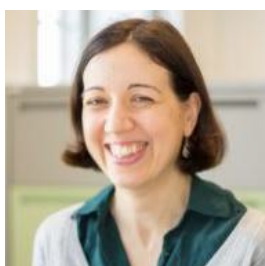
- This is a voluntary, part-time position requiring approximately 2-3 days per month. The role involves:
 - Chairing PfW board meetings in London, attending Energy Leaders' Coalition meetings, key PfW events, and other important external engagements
 - Providing ongoing support for the PfW secretariat and regular liaison with the Board and ELC as needed
- The role has a 3-year tenure, with the option for an additional 3-year extension (subject to Board approval)

Board of Directors



Katie Jackson | Outgoing Chair

Katie has been Chair since May 2022 and is currently Chief Executive of Rio Tinto's Copper business. Prior to this, she was President at National Grid Ventures and previously held the role of Executive Vice President for Acquisition, Divestment and New Business Development at Shell, where she first started her career in 1994 as a Drilling Engineer. She is also a NED at IMI.



Emily Bourne

Emily is the director for Energy Systems and Networks at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. She has responsibility for policy on: the Future System Operator; electricity networks on and offshore; interconnection; and smart systems and flexibility. She was previously director for Energy Development and Resilience, and has worked in energy policy for 16 years



Simon Fanshawe OBE

Simon is Co-Founder and Partner of Diversity by Design, a consultancy that works with organisations to develop diversity solutions in response to strategic questions in order to build greater performance. He was previously Chair of the University of Sussex governing Council and is currently on the Boards of Brighton Dome and Festival, Housing and Care 21. He was also a Co-Founder of the lesbian and gay equality organisation Stonewall.



Matthew Wright

Matthew is the former Head of Strategy and Regulation at National Grid ESO and was previously Managing Director of Ørsted in the UK. He also spent 10 years in the UK water sector, latterly as CEO of Southern Water, and 20 years in the electricity industry in a number of senior strategic and operational roles with ScottishPower in the UK and PacifiCorp in the USA.



Elizabeth Baxter

Elizabeth is Director of Finance at Vårgrønn, an offshore wind company, with responsibility for Green Volt, Europe's first large scale floating offshore wind project. She was previously Director of Project Finance at Sonnedix, a global renewable energy independent power producer backed by J.P. Morgan Asset Management.

Board of Directors



Rubina Singh

Rubina is the former Principal of Octopus Ventures. Prior to this, Rubina led e-mobility technology strategy and innovation at Centrica. She serves as an Advisory Expert to the Solar Impulse Foundation. For her achievements in enabling the transition to net-zero, she was selected as the Young Energy Professional of 2020 by Energy UK.



Loraine Martins OBE FRSA

Loraine is the Global EDI Director, at Arup. Loraine was previously the Director of D&I at Network Rail, which maintains and develops Britain's rail infrastructure. She was awarded an MBE for her work on delivering a programme of equality and inclusion in the construction of the London 2012 Olympic Park.



Nick Wayth

Nick has held a broad career at the forefront of change in the energy industry as it adapts to tackling climate change. He spent 22 years at BP in a variety of executive and management roles. Most recently, he was Chief Development Officer of Alternative Energy, where he led BP's strategy and business development in a broad range of renewable technologies, including solar, offshore wind and digital energy.



Tomi Issacs

Tomi is D&I Business Partner at Bloomberg LP, supporting the company's Corporate functions. Previously, she was Senior Director at Catalyst Europe, where she managed partnerships with companies across industries such as media, financial services, and tech. Tomi has previously worked at Moving Ahead, managing cross-company mentoring programmes for the 30% Club.



Joanna Whittington

Joanna is an independent Non-Executive Director at SGN and the Payment Systems Regulator. She was Director General for Energy and Security at BEIS from 2018 to 2022, where she also championed the women's network, Women Empowered. Prior to her portfolio career, Joanna was CEO of the Office of Rail and Road and held senior roles at Ofgem, including Partner for Markets, responsible for the regulation of wholesale gas and electricity markets.

Board of Directors



Francesca Putzu | Young Professional Board Member

Francesca is an energy data analyst leading power market analysis for EMEA at Lightsource bp. She has expertise in energy data analytics and power trading, with previous roles at Arenko, Statkraft, and the Association for Renewable Energy and Clean Technology. Francesca was previously involved with the Energy Institute's Young Professionals Network and was awarded the Lights on Women Scholarship.



Ola Balbaa | Young Professional Board Member

Ola is a Lead Engineer in Wells at bp, currently working in the central wells discipline team managing drilling operations in the North Sea. She has over eight years of experience in the energy field, having progressed from a graduate Wellsite Leader to her current role. Ola has lectured at conferences including SPE, ADIPEC, and IADC, and was named among the "Top 50 Women of Egypt" by the Minister of Planning and Economic Development. She is a mentor to engineering graduates and has led D&I initiatives at SPE YP and BP Egypt Women in Wells Network.

Founders & Alumni



Baroness Verma | Co-Founder

Baroness Verma currently sits on the European Union Committee and Chairs the EU External Affairs Sub-Committee. She served as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for International Development from 2015 to 2016. She has been a Conservative member of the House of Lords since 2006.



Laura Sandys CBE | Co-Founder

Laura is a business entrepreneur and political innovator. She is the CEO of the organisation Challenging Ideas, a creative space for businesses, as well as Chair of the Government's Energy Digitalisation Taskforce, Chair of Green Alliance, and NED at SSE Transmission. She set up the Food Foundation and was previously Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Energy Minister.



Francis Gugen | Founding Member

Francis is Vice Chair of SBM Offshore and was formerly Chair of Petroleum Geo-Services ASA. As an entrepreneur, Francis has been Chair of a number of companies from inception, currently Smart Matrix Limited (to eliminate skin grafts) and formerly companies such as CH4 Energy and Chrysaor, which has now become Harbour Energy plc.



Ruth Cairnie DBE | Former Chair

Ruth is the former Chair of POWERful Women (2015-2022). She is currently Chair of Babcock International Group and SID at Associated British Foods plc, where she chairs the Remuneration Committee. Ruth has served on the boards of Rolls-Royce Holdings, Keller Group, and ContourGlobal. She is a Patron of the Women in Defence Charter and a trustee of Windsor Leadership.



Louise Kingham CBE FEI | Founding Member

Louise joined bp in 2021 from the Energy Institute, where she was CEO for 22 years. At bp, she oversees business activities in the UK and Europe, focusing on decarbonised energy solutions and governance. Louise is a non-executive director of VH Global Sustainable Energy Opportunities plc and the Energy Saving Trust, and an ambassador for 25x25. In 2022, she was appointed CBE for services to the energy industry.