

United Kingdom

WBL 2.0 legal frameworks score	WBL 2.0 supportive frameworks score	WBL 2.0 expert opinions score
82.5	87.5	81.3

Women, Business and the Law 2024 (WBL 2024) identifies barriers for women’s economic empowerment in three areas: women’s legal rights, policy instruments designed to support the implementation of these rights, and how these rights are realized in practice. For that purpose, three new *Women, Business and the Law 2.0* indexes are presented for ten indicators: (1) legal frameworks, (2) supportive frameworks, and (3) expert opinions. For the WBL 2.0 legal frameworks index, 40 questions are scored across the ten indicators for 190 economies. For the WBL 2.0 supportive frameworks index, 30 questions are scored across the ten indicators for 190 economies. Overall economy level legal and supportive frameworks scores are then calculated by taking the average of each indicator, with 100 representing the highest possible score. The WBL 2.0 expert opinions index is created for a total of 164 economies. Expert opinion scores are not available for 26 economies due to an insufficient number of responses received from those economies during data collection. Individual responses at the economy level for 15 expert opinions questions across the ten indicators are scored by taking the median value of all responses per question. The economy level expert opinions index is equal to the simple unweighted average of the ten indicator scores.

For United Kingdom, data refer to the legal frameworks, supportive frameworks, and expert opinions that are applicable to the main business city (London). The scores for United Kingdom are shown in the table below.

Women, Business and the Law 2024 2.0 indicator scores

										
WBL 2.0 Legal frameworks score	50.0	100.0	75.0	100.0	100.0	75.0	75.0	50.0	100.0	100.0
WBL 2.0 Supportive frameworks score	75.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	66.7	33.3	100.0
WBL 2.0 Expert opinions score	75.0	100.0	75.0	50.0	100.0	100.0	50.0	87.5	100.0	75.0

In summary, the **WBL 2.0 legal frameworks score** for United Kingdom (82.5 out of 100.0) is higher than the global average (64.2) and lower than the High income: OECD regional average (84.9). When it comes to constraints on freedom of movement, laws affecting women’s pay, constraints related to marriage, laws affecting women’s property and inheritance and laws affecting the size of a woman’s pension, United Kingdom obtains a perfect score (100.0 out of 100.0). As an example, one of the lowest scores for United Kingdom is on the indicator measuring laws affecting women’s safety. To improve on the Safety indicator, United Kingdom may wish to consider introducing legislation on femicide and adopting comprehensive legislation on sexual harassment.

The **WBL 2.0 supportive frameworks score** for United Kingdom (87.5 out of 100.0) is higher than the global average (39.5) and higher than the High income: OECD regional average (68.1). When it comes to supportive frameworks affecting freedom of movement, supportive frameworks affecting women’s decisions to work, supportive frameworks affecting women’s pay, supportive frameworks related to marriage, supportive frameworks affecting women’s work after having

children, supportive frameworks affecting childcare and supportive frameworks affecting the size of a woman's pension, United Kingdom obtains a perfect score (100.0 out of 100.0). As an example, one of the lowest scores for United Kingdom is on the indicator measuring supportive frameworks affecting women's property and inheritance. To improve on the Assets indicator, United Kingdom may wish to consider putting in place awareness measures to improve women's access to information about marital and inheritance rights and publishing anonymized sex-disaggregated data on property ownership on a regular basis.

The **WBL 2.0 expert opinions score** for United Kingdom (81.3 out of 100.0) is higher than the global average (65.7) and lower than the High income: OECD regional average (82.9). When it comes to expert opinions on freedom of movement, expert opinions on marriage, expert opinions on women's work after having children and expert opinions on women's property and inheritance, United Kingdom obtains a perfect score (100.0 out of 100.0). As an example, one of the lowest scores for United Kingdom is on the indicator measuring expert opinions on women's pay.

WBL 2.0 legal frameworks data

QUESTION	ANSWER	LEGAL BASIS
Safety		
Does the law address child marriage?	Yes	Family Law Reform Act 1969, Sec. 2; Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022, Secs. 1 and 2; Marriage Act 1949, Sec. 2
Does the law address sexual harassment?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Does the law address domestic violence?	Yes	Family Law Act of 1996, Secs. 42 and 63(1); Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Sec. 1 and Part 3; Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004, Sec. 12; Crime and Security Act 2010, Secs. 24-28; Sexual Offences Act 2003, Sec. 1
Does the law address femicide?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Mobility		
Can a woman choose where to live in the same way as a man?	Yes	Domicile and Matrimonial Proceedings Act, Sec. 1
Can a woman travel internationally in the same way as a man?	Yes	Immigration Act 2016, c. 19, Part 8: Passports and civil registration
Can a woman travel outside her home in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Do a woman and a man have equal rights to confer citizenship on their spouses and their children?	Yes	British Nationality Act, Secs. 1 and 6(2)
Workplace		
Can a woman get a job in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Does the law explicitly prohibit discrimination in recruitment based on marital status, parental status, and age?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Does the law prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender?	Yes	Equality Act 2010, Secs. 11 and 39
Does the law allow employees to request flexible work?	Yes	Employment Rights Act 1996, Sec. 80F
Pay		
Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value?	Yes	Equality Act 2010, Ch. 3
Can a woman work at night in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Can a woman work in a job deemed dangerous in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Can a woman work in an industrial job in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Marriage		
Is the law free of legal provisions that require a married woman to obey her husband?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Can a woman be "head of household" or "head of family" in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located



Can a woman obtain a judgment of divorce in the same way as a man?	Yes	Matrimonial Causes Act, Part. I Sec. 1
Does a woman have the same rights to remarry as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Parenthood		
Is paid leave of at least 14 weeks available to mothers?	Yes	The Statutory Maternity Pay (General) Regulations 1986, Reg. 2; Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 (as amended), Sec. 166; Statutory Shared Parental Pay (General) Regulations 2014, Reg. 10
Are leave benefits for mothers paid solely by the government?	No	The Statutory Maternity Pay (Compensation of Employers) and Miscellaneous Amendment Regulations 1994, Reg. 4
Is paid leave available to fathers?	Yes	The Paternity and Adoption Leave Regulations 2002, Reg. 5
Is dismissal of pregnant workers prohibited?	Yes	The Maternity and Parental Leave Regulations 1999, Reg. 20(3)
Childcare		
Does the law establish the provision of center-based childcare services?	Yes	Childcare Act 2006, Secs. 2, 3, 6, 7, 18 and 19; Children Act 1989, Sec. 18; The Childcare (General Childcare Register) Regulations 2008, Schedule 5
Does the law establish any form of support for families for childcare services?	Yes	Children Act 2016, Sec. 1; The Universal Credit Regulations 2013, Secs. 31-32 and 34-36; Official Website of the Government of the United Kingdom: Get Childcare Step-by-Step; Official Website of the Government of the United Kingdom: Tax-Free and Taxable Benefits
Does the law establish any form of support for nonstate childcare providers?	Yes	Childcare Act 2006, Secs. 7 and 9; Early Education and Childcare: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, Secs. A3 and A3.2
Does the law establish quality standards for the provision of center-based childcare services?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Entrepreneurship		
Can a woman undertake entrepreneurial activities in the same way as a man?	Yes	Married Women's Property Act; Law Reform (Married Women and Tortfeasors) Act 1935, Sec. 1
Does the law prohibit discrimination in access to credit based on gender?	Yes	Equality Act, Secs. 4 and 29
Does the law prescribe a gender quota for corporate boards?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Does the law include gender-sensitive procurement provisions for public procurement processes?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Assets		
Do a woman and a man have equal administrative power and ownership rights to immovable property, including land?	Yes	Law Reform (Married Women and Tortfeasors) Act, Sec. 1 and 2
Do sons and daughters have equal rights to inherit assets?	Yes	Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependants) Act, Sec. 1(c)
Do male and female surviving spouses have equal rights to inherit assets?	Yes	Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependants) Act, Sec. 1
Does the law provide for the valuation of nonmonetary contributions?	Yes	Matrimonial Causes Act, Sec. 25
Pension		
Are the ages at which a woman and a man can retire with full pension benefits the same?	Yes	Pensions Act 2007, Part. 3, Schedule 3
Are the ages at which a woman and a man can retire with partial pension benefits the same?	Yes	No applicable provisions could be located
Is the mandatory retirement age for a woman and a man the same?	Yes	No applicable provisions could be located
Are periods of absence due to childcare accounted for in pension benefits?	Yes	Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, Sec. 23(A)

WBL 2.0 supportive frameworks data

QUESTION	ANSWER	SOURCE
Safety		

Has the government developed comprehensive mechanisms to address violence against women?	Yes	Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy; ACAS Steps for Employers to Prevent Sexual Harassment; Human Rights Commission Technical Guidance to Sexual Harassment and Harassment at Work; Legal Aid; Refuge's National Domestic Abuse Helpline
Are special procedures in place for cases of sexual harassment?	No	Insufficient evidence located
Is a government entity responsible for monitoring and implementing national services, plans and programs addressing violence against women?	Yes	Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Safeguarding)
Is an annual budgetary allocation devoted to violence against women risk mitigation, prevention, and response programs?	Yes	Budget Allocations for Violence Against Women Programs
Mobility		
Are passport application processes the same for a woman and a man?	Yes	Passport application procedures
Are the application processes for official identity documents the same for a woman and a man?	Yes	License application procedure
Does a current policy or plan explicitly consider the specific mobility needs of women in public transportation?	Yes	Department of Transport: Policy paper: The Inclusive Transport Strategy
Workplace		
Does a specialized body receive complaints about gender discrimination in employment?	Yes	Employment Tribunals Rules of Procedure, Art. 8
Has the government published guidelines on nondiscrimination based on gender in recruitment?	Yes	Government of the United Kingdom: Ways for employers to prevent discrimination
Has the government published guidelines on flexible work arrangements?	Yes	Government of the United Kingdom: Flexible Working Guidelines
Pay		
Are pay transparency measures or enforcement mechanisms in place to address the pay gap?	Yes	Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017
Have sex-disaggregated data on employment in different industries or sectors been published?	Yes	Office for National Statistics: Dataset EMP13: Employment by industry
Marriage		
Is there a fast-track process or procedure for family law disputes?	Yes	The Family Procedure Amendment Rules 2018, Sec. 7.8
Are there specialized family courts?	Yes	The Family Court and the Family Division of the High Court
Is legal aid available for family law disputes?	Yes	Civil Legal Advice (CLA)
Parenthood		
Is it possible to apply for maternity benefits through a single government application process?	Yes	Department for Work and Pensions, Maternity Allowance
Are incentives in place to encourage fathers to take paternity leave on the birth of a child?	Yes	Paternity and Adoption Leave Regulations 2002, Sec. 14(1)
Have sex-disaggregated data on unpaid care work been published?	Yes	Office for National Statistics: Unpaid care by age, sex and deprivation, England and Wales: Census 2021
Childcare		
Is there a publicly available registry or database of childcare providers?	Yes	Official Website of the United Kingdom Government
Is there a clearly outlined application procedure to request financial support from the government for childcare services by parents?	Yes	Official Website of the Government of the United Kingdom: Get Childcare Step-by-Step
Is there a clearly outlined application procedure to request financial support from the government for childcare services by nonstate childcare providers?	Yes	Official Website of the Government of UK, Local Authority Funding Operational Guide 2023-2024; Model Agreement on Early Years Provision Free of Charge and Free Childcare; Official Website of London Borough
Has the government published any reports on the quality of childcare services?	Yes	Official Website of Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)
Entrepreneurship		
Have sex-disaggregated data on business activities, entrepreneurship, or women-owned businesses been published?	Yes	Office for National Statistics; Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Small Business Survey



Are government-led programs supporting female entrepreneurs providing access to finance and training, coaching, or business development?	Yes	Taskforce on Women-Led High-Growth Enterprises; Innovate UK Program
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Does a current national government plan or strategy focus on women's access to financial services?	No	Insufficient evidence located
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Assets

Are mechanisms or incentives in place to encourage women to register immovable property (including joint titling)?	Yes	Law of Property Act, Sec. 36
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Are awareness measures in place to improve women's access to information about marital and inheritance rights?	No	Insufficient evidence located
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Have anonymized sex-disaggregated data on property ownership been published?	No	Insufficient evidence located
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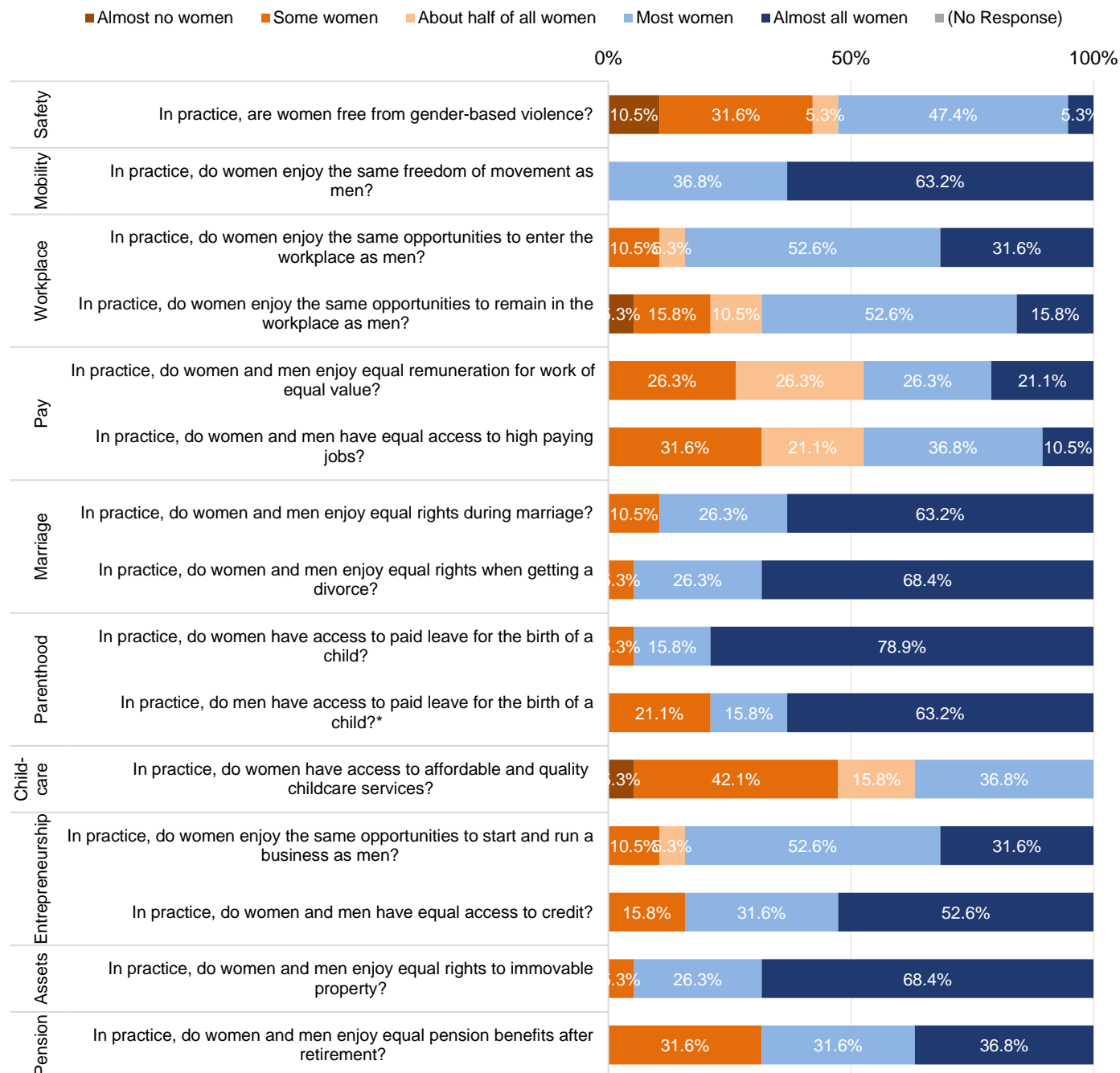
Pension

Are incentives in place to increase women's retirement benefits?	Yes	Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003, Sec. 308
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Is a procedure in place for pension beneficiaries to challenge the decisions of the competent authority regarding their benefits?	Yes	Pensions Act 2004, Sec. 274
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WBL 2.0 distribution of expert opinion responses



*Note: The response options for the second Parenthood question above are formatted as almost no men, some men, about half of all men, most men, almost all men.