

## How TCFM is embracing equality for International Women's Day, and every day

2 years ago



A piece by [TCFM](#) HR Director, Kelly Clark

This International Women's Day, we're viewing the female experience in the FM workplace through the lens of the 2023 theme; #EmbracingEquality.

According to the Asset Skills research in 2013, 38% of the UK FM workforce was female. Looking to more recent statistics, a 2022 study by the US Bureau of Labour Statistics found that approximately 25% of the FM workforce is female. However, at entry level, the split is a more even 50%. These figures aren't just a US problem; they are commonly reflected in FM (and broader workplace settings) around the world. This shows a decline over the last decade where equality and diversity in the workplace has progressively become a priority consideration.

There are myriad reasons for the differences in gender balance and how the numbers of women dwindle when rising through the managerial ranks. Maternity leave, the cost of childcare, lack of flexibility in hours or role and lack of opportunities for progression after returning from parental leave are all commonly experienced problems. But what can be done to solve them?

TCFM have successfully challenged each of these issues to embrace equality across their team. Through a sustained effort to support women in the workplace they have successfully maintained a 0% median gender pay gap for over 6 years, and a 50/50 gender ratio throughout their teams. Kelly Clark, HR Director at TCFM shares her thoughts on where TCFM have got it right and the work they continue to do to ensure equality for women.

"At TCFM it all starts with getting to know our colleagues from day one – something I think we do

exceptionally well. How can we attempt to solve a potential problem if we are not aware of one? In taking the time to get to know and understand our colleagues' individual situation at the point of recruitment we have the opportunity to formulate a role which really works for the individual, TCFM and the client. This level of genuine care and communication is something we strive to continue throughout a colleague's time with us, helping us to maintain our 85% employee retention rate. Our management structure ensures everyone has access to the support they need to resolve any challenges they're faced with and we really try to nurture a culture of honesty and integrity when it comes to supporting our teams.

Whilst flexible working is something we now legally have to offer, it's a working model which along with job sharing we have been championing for a long time. Years ago, when these different working patterns were less common, it did feel tricky having these delicate conversations with clients. But it's through having these conversations that we've been able to create meaningful change. Fortunately, our clients have been extremely receptive to these suggestions, which is hugely positive and reassuring for our teams. Now, we're a lot more confident and creative in our approach to recruitment and job modelling, helping us to attract and retain a greater pool of women.

Training is a big investment TCFM make into all employees, regardless of gender. We work with our female colleagues returning to the workplace following maternity leave to ensure they are not negatively impacted by their period of absence from the business. We will provide all possible support to ensure that their career progression is on the right track. Our career progression pathways ensure any colleagues who wish to gain additional qualifications or skills have every opportunity to do so. I feel this is particularly important for women with family commitments who maybe don't have the flexibility to do so outside of work.

We're also sympathetic to the additional life experiences women have to navigate throughout their career. Not just maternity or raising a family, but menstruation, menopause, and miscarriage for example. We work with partners, like the Miscarriage Association, to support us in creating a toolbox for best supporting our colleagues at work and in their daily life. They empower us with the resources, knowledge and skills to look after our women experiencing any of these challenges. It's this extra level of care that I really think makes all of the difference.

Additionally, our employee benefits package is enticing. We've noticed a lot of our female employees are drawn to us because of the additional enhancements to their life we offer. Such as, our Health Assured EAP which gives all colleagues 24/7/365 access to physical and mental wellbeing support for themselves and immediate family; a welcome safety net with the current long NHS waiting lists.

Finally, I think our 0% gender pay gap achievement is the biggest advantage for us. Our female colleagues are proud to work for a company which appreciates them and prioritises fairness and equality in the workplace. When the requirement for monitoring the gender pay gap appeared I think many businesses dismissed this as just being another statistic to report on. But now, everyone is really seeing the impact it is having. For TCFM it's become one of our biggest magnets to attracting female talent, especially in managerial positions."