

United Kingdom

Women, Business and the Law 2022 (WBL2022) presents an index covering 190 economies and structured around the life cycle of a working woman. In total, 35 questions are scored across eight indicators. Overall scores are then calculated by taking the average of each indicator, with 100 representing the highest possible score. Data refer to the laws and regulations that are applicable to the main business city (London). Different rules may apply in other jurisdictions so local legislation should be reviewed. Based on this approach, **United Kingdom scores 97.5 out of 100**. The overall score for United Kingdom is higher than the regional average observed across OECD high-income economies (95.2). Within the OECD high-income region, there are 12 economies that score 100 out of 100.

United Kingdom - Scores for Women, Business and the Law 2022



Relative Strengths

When it comes to constraints on freedom of movement, laws affecting women's decisions to work, laws affecting women's pay, constraints related to marriage, constraints on women starting and running a business, gender differences in property and inheritance, and laws affecting the size of a woman's pension, United Kingdom gets a perfect score.

Areas for Improvement

However, when it comes to laws affecting women's work after having children, United Kingdom could consider reforms to improve legal equality for women.

For example, one of the lowest scores for United Kingdom is on the indicator measuring laws affecting women's work after having children (the WBL2022 Parenthood indicator). To improve on the Parenthood indicator, United Kingdom may wish to consider making the government administer 100% of maternity leave benefits.

Recent Reforms

No reforms were observed during the past year (October 2nd, 2020 – October 1st, 2021).



Further data details for United Kingdom are available at:
<https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/data/exploreconomies/united-kingdom/2022>



	QUESTION	ANSWER	LEGAL BASIS
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 outside her home in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman apply for a passport in the same way as a man?	Yes	Passport application procedures
	Can a woman travel outside the country in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Workplace	Can a woman get a job in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Does the law prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender?	Yes	Equality Act 2010, Secs. 11 and 39
	Is there legislation on sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	Equality Act 2010, Secs. 26(2) and 40
	Are there criminal penalties or civil remedies for sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	<i>Criminal:</i> No applicable provisions could be located <i>Civil:</i> Equality Act 2010, Secs. 26(2), 40, 120(1)(a) and 124(2)(b)
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 there no legal provision that requires a married woman to obey her husband?	Yes	No applicable provisions could be located
	Can a woman be head of household in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Is there legislation specifically addressing domestic violence?	Yes	Family Law Act of 1996, Part IV; Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004, Part 1; Domestic Violence Act 2021
	Can a woman obtain a judgment of divorce in the same way as a man?	Yes	Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 Part I Sec. 1
Parenthood	Does a woman have the same rights to remarry as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Is paid leave of at least 14 weeks available to mothers?	Yes	The Maternity and Parental Leave etc. Regulations 1999, Reg. 4 The Statutory Maternity Pay (Compensation of Employers) Amendment Regulations 2003, Reg. 4
	Does the government pay 100% of maternity leave benefits?	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 there paid parental leave?	Yes	Statutory Shared Parental Pay (General) Regulations 2014, Regulation 10
	Is dismissal of pregnant workers prohibited?	Yes	The Maternity and Parental Leave Regulations 1999, Reg. 20(3)
Entrepreneurship	Does the law prohibit discrimination in access to credit based on gender?	Yes	Equality Act, Secs. 4 and 29
	Can a woman sign a contract in the same way as a man?	Yes	Married Women's Property Act of 1882; Law Reform (Married Women and Tortfeasors) Act, Sec. 1
	Can a woman register a business in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman open a bank account in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Assets	Do men and women have equal ownership rights to immovable property?	Yes	Law Reform (Married Women and Tortfeasors) Act, Secs. 1 and 2
	Do sons and daughters have equal rights to inherit assets from their parents?	Yes	Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependents) Act, Sec. 1(c)
	Do female and male surviving spouses have equal rights to inherit assets?	Yes	Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependents) Act, Sec. 1
	Does the law grant spouses equal administrative authority over assets during marriage?	Yes	Law Reform (Married Women and Tortfeasors) Act, Sec. 1
	Does the law provide for the valuation of nonmonetary contributions?	Yes	Matrimonial Causes Act, Sec. 25
	Is the age at which men and women can retire with full pension benefits the same?	Yes	Women: Pensions Act 2007, Part 3, Schedule 3. Men: Pensions Act 2007, Part 3, Schedule 3
Pension	Is the age at which men and women can retire with partial pension benefits the same?	Yes	Women: No applicable provisions could be located. Men: No applicable provisions could be located
	Is the mandatory retirement age for men and women the same?	Yes	Women: No applicable provisions could be located. Men: 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; Pensions Act 2007